Constructing a Periphery
Descriptions of Hungarian, Transylvanian, and Croatian Towns in Theater Periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire, 1760–1800

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Abstract. Based on the analysis of articles published in theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire, this study explores the enlightened cultural and symbolic geographies as reflected in the late eighteenth-century German theatrical press. Larry Wolff has shown that western travelers tend to locate the borders of civilized Europe in Habsburg lands situated east of Vienna, namely in Galicia and Hungary. If theatrical periodicals and travel memoirs by western travelers share a common interest in the frontiers of civilized Europe, the specific geography of civilization entails several contradictions in the two medias. Larry Wolff has shown that western travelers tend to locate the borders of civilized Europe in Habsburg lands situated east of Vienna, namely in Galicia and Hungary. By contrast, in theatrical journals based in the Holy Roman Empire, the borders of civilization seem to be concentrated south-eastwards, along the Ottoman frontier, namely in Hungary and in the countries of St. Stephen’s Crown. The article seeks to elucidate variations by pointing to geographical and political factors, as well as to differences between these two literary genres. Unlike travel journals, theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire had to give a general overview of contemporary theater life, by pointing to the mobilities of itinerant theatrical, especially German, companies, and by documenting their repertoire. This article reveals how the specific construction of an imagined European periphery reflected by the periodicals is determined both by their networks of contributors and by the taste for exotic, namely Turkish subjects, in eighteenth-century dramas and operas. Hence, such philosophic geographies are shaped both by the origin, the language, the genre and by the major themes of such periodicals.

Keywords: philosophic geography, civilization, German theatrical journals, Hungary

He “disseminated good taste in these faraway regions.” This is how an article in August Ottokar Reichhard’s Theater-Kalender für 1781, printed in Gotha, presented the arrival of theater impresario Josef Hülverding in Pest, Buda (Ofen),\(^1\)

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\(^1\) During the eighteenth century, German, Hungarian, Latin, and Polish topographical names were all alternatively used according to the language of each text. Current topographical names are used in this article in order to facilitate reading. However, in quotations, town names are left in the original language of the quoted text.
Sibiu (Nagyszeben, Hermannstadt), Timișoara (Temesvár, Temeschwar), and Košice (Kassa, Kaschau). Aside from a few exceptions, like Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg) or Fertőd (Esterhaus, Eszterháza), periodicals published in the Holy Roman Empire describe theatrical scenes in Hungary, Transylvania, and Croatia as distant and remote. For instance, the Berlin Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung in 1777 praised the introduction of regular plays in Sibiu, “on the model of other civilized countries,” thanks to Josef Hülverding. This article is an exact copy of the one published a few months earlier in the Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, Künste und Commerzien in Vienna. Similar assessments are found in Reichard’s Theater-Kalender in Gotha during the following years. In 1791, the same Theater-Kalender states that the establishment of Johann Weilhammer’s travelling company for three years in Zagreb (Zágráb, Agram) may be considered a “sign that Enlightenment and taste for the theater have no more strangers, even in Germany’s remotest regions.”

These narratives unquestionably recall the imaginary map of Civilization drawn by eighteenth-century travel journals analyzed in Larry Wolff’s seminal book, Inventing Eastern Europe on the Mind of Enlightenment. The author reveals how the polarization of the European continent between the South and the North, inherited from the Renaissance, tended to be replaced by an opposition between the East and the West. While barbarism tends to be relocated eastwards, according to Wolff, “Poland and Russia would be mentally detached from Sweden and Denmark, as associated instead with Hungary and Bohemia, the Balkan lands of Ottoman Europe, and even the Crimea on the Black Sea.” In travel journals by western travelers, Habsburg territories located east of Vienna were often apprehended as borderlands of civilized Europe: Galicia, Hungary, Transylvania, and the Banat are mainly concerned, while some travelers tended to locate these shifting borders much closer to Vienna.

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3 The theater in Bratislava is described in the Theater Kalender in Gotha as “worthy of admiration”. Reichard, ed., Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1778, 101. See also the next issue of the journal (1779, 109).
5 “Schreiben aus Hermannstadt an Herrn R…t”, Rautenstrauch, Riedel, ed. Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, 1777, 610–11.
6 Reichard, ed., Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1781, CLVII.
7 Reichard, ed., Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1791, 250.
8 Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 4–5.
9 See Mozart’s travel notes from Bohemia. Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 8.
Travel memoirs, as well as theatrical and cultural periodicals, thus share a common interest in the frontiers of the civilized world. All these descriptions belong to the same enlightened cultural leaning for philosophic geography, namely, a willingness to define the European intellectual space by contrast, by inventing an intellectual “Other” meant to embody the precise opposite of European values. Yet, there is a significant difference in the specific geography of civilization drawn in German theatrical periodicals. While the semantics of remoteness recur in several articles concerning Hungary and the other lands of Saint Stephen’s crown, astonishingly, theatrical reviews about towns in the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire remain neutral; they focus on the presentation of itinerant theatrical troupes, of their repertoire, without attempting to hierarchize those cities according to any kind of philosophical geography. Furthermore, an article on the history of German theater published in the Gotha Theater-Kalender in 1783 places Vienna, Prague, Munich, and Saint Petersburg on an equal footing: all of these capital-cities were supposed to have been emancipated during the previous decades from the “rule of barbarism” in order to become cradles of “good taste.” News from Warsaw and Saint Petersburg was sometimes grouped within articles handling German theater, describing some smaller scenes in former Polish territories, such as Cracow, Lviv (Lemberg, Lwów), or Gdańsk (Danzig), and Vilnius (Vilnia, Wilno, Wilna). Compared to travel journals studied by Larry Wolff, the German theatrical press operated, thus, not only on an earlier model of Northern Europe’s civilized character, but also inscribed on this symbolic map some north-eastern regions. What would be the reason for this specific and early relocation of the civilized world’s peripheries south-eastwards, in the lands of the Hungarian crown? Did theatrical periodicals mobilize a specific set of criteria of their own in order to distinguish particular configurations of centers and peripheries of European theater?

Based on an analysis of articles published in more than thirty periodicals in the Holy Roman-Empire indexed by Wolfgang Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, and

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13 Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 5.
Michael Huesmann,¹⁴ this study explores enlightened cultural and symbolic geographies reflected in the late eighteenth-century theatrical press. Thus, the analysis does not focus on actual theatrical reviewing, but on the overview of geographical places mentioned in these sources. Therefore, almanacs largely prevail, as they deliver information on a wide range of theatrical companies all over Europe. Besides, several other types of periodicals are also used, such as yearbooks, calendars, and journals.¹⁵ My analysis focuses on the theatrical press outside Habsburg territories and makes comparisons with some journals and newspapers in Vienna, Hungary, and Poland. I thus contend that such philosophic geographies are shaped by the origin, language, and theme of the periodicals concerned.

An uneven knowledge of Hungarian and Polish theatrical life: practical reasons

The geographical origin of the periodicals included in this study is without any doubt a central factor that may explain variations in their assessment on the remote character of one region or another. News about the theatrical life in Central and Eastern Europe was most frequently published in Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard’s almanacs in Gotha, the Theater-Kalender (1775–1799) and the Theater-Journal für Deutschland (1777–1780), as well as in Christoph Seipp’s Theater Wochenblatt für Salzburg (1775–1776). A significant number of descriptions appeared also in Christian August Bertram’s Berlin periodicals, the Literatur- und Theater-Zeitung (1778–1784), the Ephemeriden der Literatur und des Theaters (1785–1787), and the Annalen des Theaters (1788–1797). Some other journals in Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Mannheim, Hamburg, and Hannover delivered only scarce news on this topic. Most of the articles in this study were, thus, published in the Dutchy of Saxe-Gotha and in Prussia. From the end of the seventeenth century, interactions between Saxony and Poland in the field of theatrical activity were facilitated by the fact that the electors of Saxony, Frederik-August I (1670–1733) and Frederik-August II (1696–1763), were also kings of Poland—August II (1694–1733) and August III (1733–1763).

¹⁴ This comparative study was made possible thanks to the following theater bibliographical databases where these periodicals are indexed: Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts, Tome 1, vol. 2; tome 2, vol. 3; tome 3, vol. 3. My analysis is mainly based on the section “Theatergeschichte der Orte”. Though extensive, estimations are not exhaustive, as some of the articles were classed according to the impresario’s name, without taking into account their location. My inquiry implicitly shares the same chronological frame, going from 1750 to 1800, with the bibliographical work directed by Wolfgang Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, and Michael Huesmann.

Later, the considerable territorial expansion of the Kingdom of Prussia at the expense of the former Polish Commonwealth (1772), as well as diplomatic ties between Frederik the Great and the Tsar Peter III, may also explain why periodicals published in Berlin, Gotha, and Leipzig did not describe Polish and Russian theaters as exotic and remote.

News from the German, French and Italian theaters in Saint Petersburg was frequent in Reichard’s almanacs in Gotha from 1770 up to 1790, and occasionally in Berlin and Frankfurt periodicals (see Table 1). In turn, during the same period, the theaters in the newly conquered towns of Wroclaw (Breslau) and Gdańsk (Danzig) were closely surveyed in Bertram’s almanacs in Berlin, yet only scarcely featuring in other periodicals. These two towns received just as much attention in Berlin as theaters in Hamburg and Mannheim. Betram’s almanacs, as well as those of Reichard in Gotha, also attentively surveyed the theaters in Warsaw during the 1770s, but only occasionally during the following two decades. Several other towns in the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth were scarcely mentioned, like Poznań (Posen), Głogów (Glogau), and Szczecin (Stettin). Concerning Hungary, only Reichard’s Gotha periodicals report frequent news, while those in Berlin recall Sibiu (1778), Bratislava, Fertőd, Pest (1779), and Buda (1792) only once. From 1777 onwards, most mentions in Gotha concern Bratislava, and also Buda from the 1790s. During those years, their mentions were similar in number to those of Tallinn (Reval), Riga, Regensburg, and Linz.

The regions and towns in Hungary and the other lands of St Stephen’s Crown noted in these German periodicals are modelled on the routes taken by itinerant German actors, often close to the German Theater Reform movement. These actors were mainly visiting Bratislava, Sopron (Odenburg), Győr (Raab), Pest, and Buda. From there, two routes led towards Galicia and Transylvania, either northwards—through Košice—or southwards—through Timişoara. These towns were but seldom included in foreign theater chronicles. As a consequence, the first mentions of Bratislava, Fertőd, and Pest are linked to the arrival of Carl Wahr (1745–1799), and the first mention of Zagreb was tied to the coming of Johann Weilhammer (1745–1788). Similarly, the first articles on Timișoara, Sibiu, and Košice are

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17 According to Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, both journals contained seven mentions of theatrical activity in Warsaw between 1775 and 1799.


19 Bertram, ed., *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (october 1778): 658–59; (1779): 413–14 (article on Carl Wahr in Bratislava, Fertőd, Pest and Salzburg); no. 10 (1792): 84

associated with the establishment of the theater companies of Benedict Dominic Anton Cremeri (1752–1795), Josef Hülverding (1730–1797), and Christoph Seipp (1747–1793). During the following years, Sibiu was systematically included in the Gotha Theater-Kalender. Astonishingly, Kronstadt, an important commercial town in Transylvania, frequently visited by the theatrical troupes based in Sibiu, is mentioned only once in Reichard's 1791 Theater-Kalender.

Some smaller towns in the Banat, like Pančevo (Pancsova, Pantschowa) and Zemun (Zimony, Semlin), come up in an article on Franz Josef Diwald playing in Transylvania and in the Banat from 1785 to 1789. The same impresario gives the first news of Eger and Nitra (Nyitra, Neutra) in 1792. The first mentions of Karlovac (Károlyváros, Karlstadt), Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau), Banská Štiavnica (Selmecbánya, Schemnitz), and Prešov (Eperjes, Eperies) in 1789–1791 are linked to a tour of the company of Barbara Göttersdorf, who used to play in Lviv, as well as to the activity of Heinrich Bulla's company heading from Pest/Buda towards Lviv. Similarly, 1791 articles on Johann Christoph Kunz's group recall their tours in Győr, Trnava (Nagyszombat, Tyrnau), Novi Sad (Újvidék, Neusatz), and Petrovaradin (Pétervárad, Peterwardein), while in 1797, we are informed of their arrival in Bardejov, (Bártfa, Bartfeld). Vác (Waitzen), Varaždin (Varasd, Warasdin), and Pécs (Fünfkirchen) each feature only once, during the tours of Gottlieb Stephanie and of Jakob Morelli in 1791, and later of a certain Schiller in 1792.

During the years 1797–1798, articles on the impresarios Philipp Berndt, Franz Xaver Rünner, Joseph Holzmann, and Johann August Stöger also talk of Sopron, and some other towns less frequently visited by German actors, like Szombathely, Gyöngyös, Miskolc, Debrecen, Oradea (Nagyvárad, Groswardein), Baia-Mare (Nagybánya, Frauenbach), Arad, Oraviţa (Oravicabánya, Orawitz), and Lugoj (Lugos, Lugosch). No mention concerns Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg), the future headquarters of Hungarian actors and the seat of the Transylvanian Gubernium from 1790 onwards.
Men of a thousand faces, these impresarios were actors, playwrights, and critics. Some of them were also writing in theater journals, thus actively contributing to the dissemination of information about these regional scenes.\textsuperscript{28} The construction of a permanent theater often resulted in regular news on their towns, when the building was possessed or visited by German actors, as was the case of the theater in Buda directed by Franz Heinrich Bulla.\textsuperscript{29} We can recognize in these articles the overall appreciation of permanent theater architecture within the milieu of the German theater reform. Such constructions were meant to facilitate the settlement of itinerant actors at a time when itinerance was associated with low morals.

The numerous aristocratic private theaters in Hungary are rarely covered. Only the Esterházy’s theaters at Eisenstadt (Kismarton) and Fertőd, as well as János Nepomuk Erdődy’s opera in Bratislava are frequently described.\textsuperscript{30} Prince Miklós Esterházy’s theater in Eisenstadt and Fertőd represented perhaps the most dynamic theatrical and musical scene in Hungary in the 1770s.\textsuperscript{31} Both were frequented by the impresarios Carl Wahr, Josef Hülverding, and Christoph Seipp. There was scarce news, however, about the theater in Bischdorf (1788) and Hainburg (1791) belonging to Fülöp Batthyány,\textsuperscript{32} the one in Prešov (1788) held by noble dilletantes, and those of Antal Glassalkovich in Ivanka pri Dunaj (Iwanka an der Donau, Ivánka) and Bratislava.\textsuperscript{33} Erdődy’s private theater in Varaždin (Warasdin) is mentioned only in periodicals published in the Habsburg Monarchy.\textsuperscript{34} Yet, those itinerant impresarios who used to send letters to these periodicals were alternatively performing in public and several other private theaters.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{28} Czibula, “Zum Theaterwesen in Pressburg,” 30–32. The author draws a connection between the establishment of Carl Wahr in Bratislava and the creation of a section for theater in \textit{Preßburger Zeitung}, as well as between the arrival of Josef Hülferding in Sibiu and the grounding of a theater journal in town. See also Cesnáková-Michalcová, \textit{Premeny divadla}, 24.

\textsuperscript{29} Reichard, ed., \textit{Theater Kalender auf das Jahr} 1788, 114; Knigge, \textit{Dramaturgie Blätter}, no. 1 (1788): 15; Schmieder, \textit{Allgemeines Theaterjournal} no. 2 (1792): 117–18. A large echo was given to this building, described in no less than three foreign journals.


\textsuperscript{31} For a detailed study of this theater, see Staud, \textit{Magyar kastélyszínházak}, vol. 3, 111–25.

\textsuperscript{32} Reichard, ed., \textit{Theater Kalender auf das Jahr} 1788, 198. See also (1791): 257–58.

\textsuperscript{33} Reichard, ed., \textit{Theater Kalender auf das Jahr} 1787, 203–5. The best study on this topic remains Staud, \textit{Magyar kastélyszínházak}, vol. 3, 12, 23–24, 27.

\textsuperscript{34} [Korabinsky], \textit{Allgemeine deutsche Theater Zeitung}, Presbourg, no. 1 (1798): 29; no. 2 (1799): 11–12.

\textsuperscript{35} Staud, \textit{Magyar kastélyszínházak}, vol. 1, 13–18 (Felix Berner), 112 (Count János N. Erdődy’s opera in Bratislava); vol. 2, 20 (Glassalkovich’s theater in Gödöllő; vol. 3, 24–34 (Fülöp Batthyány’s theater in Hainburg).
No article deals with dramas written in Hungarian, even though professional theatrical troupes were playing from 1790 onwards in Hungary, and from 1792 onwards in Transylvania. Croatian theater is also entirely ignored in these periodicals. Only in the Hungarian press was the activity of Hungarian playing actors surveyed and encouraged. Local theater journals in Pest like the *Magyar teátroni zseb-könyvetske* and the *Magyar Teátroni Kalendáriom*, as well as general journals like the *Magyar Hírmondó, Pozsonyi Hírmondó, Mindenes Gyűjtemény*, and the *Ephemerides Budenses* contributed to another theatrical geography, one that was entirely eluded by the theatrical journals in the Holy Roman Empire: László Kelemen's tour to Cegléd (Zieglet), Nagykőrös, and Kecskemét (1796), the transfer of some actors to Cluj-Napoca, the tours of the Transylvanian company to Jibáu (Zsibó, Siben), Debrecen, and Oradea (Nagvyárad, Großwardein) (1798–1802, 1803–1807), then Târgu-Mureș (Marosvásárhely, Neumarkt) (1803–1807), and Pest (1807–1814). Except for Oradea, and Arad (Arad), briefly pointed out by Reichard in 1797, none of these towns appear in German theatrical journals. Several other towns that were from time-to-time hosting both German and Hungarian theater were also absent from the periodicals published in the Holy Roman Empire. This was in fact the case for Szekesfehérvár (Stuhlweißenburg), Baia-Mare, and Szeged.

By contrast, German, French, and Polish plays were all recorded in the articles dealing with theatrical activity in Warsaw, even if Polish performances did not always receive positive reviews. Criticism of Polish actors is quite frequent, especially

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40 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr* 1797, 318.
42 MNL OL, C51, 1795, F6/74 (Wolfgang Stephan asks for the right to play in the former Jesuit refectory.).
43 MNL OL, C51, 1800, F5, 1802, F5.
in articles about the collaborations between Polish and German actors.\footnote{Bertram, ed., \textit{Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters} (1776): 65 (Note stating that except for three actors in the Polish troupe who did not deserve to be qualified as such). Reichard, ed., \textit{Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797}, 298–303 (Despising letter on Polish theater, where the language is presented as inscrutable for the author, while greeting the arrival of a German theatrical troop). Bertram, \textit{Annalen des Theaters}, no. 17 (1796): 7–17 (article praising the appetite for the theater shown by the Polish aristocracy and qualified the skills of Polish actors and ballet dancers as almost perfect). [Unknown], \textit{Rheinische Musen}, no. 2 (1794): 85.}{45} Polish theater had gained visibility since the founding of a National Theater under Stanislas August in 1765, where Polish, as well as German, Italian, and French shows were staged. During the same years, Christian August Bertram’s \textit{Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung} in Berlin translated Polish poems by Jan Gawinsky from Kaliningrad (Königsberg, Królewiec) “in order to give an insight into the taste of Poles for this kind of poetry.”\footnote{Bertram, \textit{Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung}, no. 5 (1782): 677–80: “damit Sein den Geschmack der Polen auch in dieser Art der Dichtkunst bemerken könnten”.}{46} Whether criticized or praised, these articles show that Polish theater was well known in these periodicals. Even news about Cracow and Lviv handled some Polish plays: in 1782 and 1783, August Ottokar Reichard’s \textit{Theater Journal für Deutschand} records the activity of a Polish troupe and quotes its repertoire.\footnote{Reichard, ed., \textit{Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1782}, 284–85; (1783): 314–19.}{47}

Some of the performances of Wojciech Bogusławski in Warsaw and Lviv are also recorded. After Warsaw (1783–1785), Bogusławski played alternatively in Vilnius (Wilno, Wilna) and Dubno from 1785 to 1790, visiting from time-to-time Hrodna (Grodno) and Lviv. Then he acted principally in Lviv (1794–1799) and Warsaw (1790–1794, 1799–1814). Only his stays in the latter two towns are documented in German periodicals. This demonstrates that reviews of Polish theater were also far from exhaustive. Not a word is there in these periodicals about several other towns hosting permanent or occasional Polish theatrical troupes, like Lublin, Kaunas (Kowno, Kauen), Polotsk (Polock, Polatsk, Polockas), Vitebsk (Witebsk, Witebskas), Mogilev (Mahylow), Jytomyr (Żitomierz), Kiev, Kamianets-Podilskyi (Kamianiec Podolski, Kamenyec Podolski), Odessa, Liepāja (Lipawa, Liepoja, Libau), Jeglava (Mitau), and Kalisz (Kalisch).\footnote{Sivert, ed., \textit{Dzieje teatru polskiego}, Tome II, 15–64. Klimowicz and Wołoszyńska, “Le théâtre en Pologne à l’âge des Lumières,” 59.}{48} Nor was any attention given either to the numerous theatrical halls installed in country houses from the 1770s onwards, as a consequence of the transfer of Polish theater in the aftermath of the partition of the former kingdom. No less than twenty private theatrical halls were in use in the former Polish territories.\footnote{Król-Kaczorowska, \textit{Teatr dawnej Polski}, 26, 41–86. The author counts about twenty permanent theater halls installed in noble mansions: those of the Radziwill in Biała Podlaska (1750–1780),}
the Polish press gave a slightly more detailed overview. We discover in the *Gazeta Warszawska* [Gazette of Warsaw] and in the *Gazety pisane z Wilna* [Gazettes Written in Vilnius] the existence of theatrical shows in Poznań (1765), Slonin (Slonin) (1775), Siedlce (1777), Vilnius (1785–1786), Radomyśl (1786), Lublin (1786), and Lviv (1792–1798). Admittedly, news from the Polish theater was far from comprehensive, yet it was undoubtedly more varied and better appreciated than the news about Hungarian theater.

The geographies of theater towns appearing in the eighteenth-century press were, thus, mainly determined by the geographical origin and the language of the journals. Just as news from Hungary reflected the circulation of German actors, news from Warsaw and St Petersburg was sometimes grouped within descriptions of so-called “northern” scenes within articles handling German theater in the region. Nevertheless, we notice a certain interest in Polish theater, which may be explained by the ties between the Saxon, Prussian, and Polish theatrical milieus. In turn, aside from the notable exception of the imperial city, Habsburg lands are less present: even towns like Graz and Linz have relatively few mentions, and Galicia and Hungary even fewer. The lack of vocabulary hinting at a peripheral position in articles about the Galician capitals, Cracow, and Lviv may be due to the fact that they were linked, at least in the authors and readers’ minds, to the route to St Petersburg.

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52 For instance, Graz counts for 1781–1790 only one mention in Hamburg, for 1791–1800 two in Gotha, one in Berlin, six in Mannheim; Linz for 1770–1780 one in Offenbach and another one in Salzburg; for 1781–1790 eight mentions in Gotha, one in Hamburg, for 1791–1800 four in Gotha, and two in Mannheim. Estimations based on the database of Bender, Bushuven, Huesmann, see footnote 14.
Enhancing exoticism by referring to the Ottoman proximity

Hungary was not only geographically further removed from Gotha and Berlin, but it was also associated with the route towards Constantinople. In fact, in eighteenth-century texts, every reference to the Ottoman Empire seemed to arouse a sense of exoticism. The field of the theater was particularly concerned with ideas of the exotic, as Turkish motifs were highly appreciated in the operas and dramas of the period. Even if they probably shared audiences, we should remember that travel journals and theatrical periodicals served different purposes. Therefore, unlike travel memoirs, theatrical periodicals used different criteria for qualifying exoticism. We will see here that the popularity of Turkish motifs in eighteenth century dramas can explain the specific concentration of the borders of civilization in the lands of the Hungarian Crown.

In travel journals, remoteness and strangeness are frequently linked to comments on inhabitants’ attire, on the architecture of the settlements visited, or on the comfort provided by the conditions of travel. It was according to these criteria that western travelers labelled former Polish territories as exotic. One may recall the descriptions of Warsaw by Count Louis-Philippe de Ségur, who was astounded by the contrasts of “palaces and mean houses”, or William Coxe’s views of Poles, stating that “in their features, looks, customs, dress, and general appearance, [they] resemble Asiatics rather than Europeans.”

Roads in Galicia were considered to be no better than those in Hungary. One may recall that William Coxe’s travel journal, a central example to support Larry Wolff’s argument, emphasizes the “impassable” roads, the low rate of urbanization and the “wretched” state of villages. Yet, none of the theatrical reviewers addressing former Polish territories recall travel vagaries. About Sibiu, the Transylvanian capital, Seipp’s Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg (1776) argues that “if the town had not been so remote, the theater may have been profitable”. Instead, “the weak theatrical troupes that go there […], the inconveniences of the journey, and the public, [in other words] several hindrances make it impossible for a good actor to get there.”

Concerning Timișoara and Košice, Seipp’s article points out their inconvenient location in relation to the networks of theatrical troupes, as well as the absence of an important nobiliary theater nearby.

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54 Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 26.
56 Seipp, ed., Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg, 188.
Chief-editor of a periodical in Salzburg in 1776–1778, correspondent of Reichard’s *Theater-Kalender* in Gotha, and author of two travel journals, Christoph Seipp was not an ordinary author. Born in Worms and boasting multiple connections to the theatrical milieu of the Holy Roman Empire, he delivered first-hand information on the Habsburg Monarchy’s eastern territories to several periodicals, as this was where he pursued part of his career. He was the only correspondent to describe the difficulties of local impresarios, and to emphasize the concerns caused by difficult travel conditions for itinerant theatrical troupes. Yet, Seipp’s most precise descriptions are found in his travel memoirs, rather than in the theatrical journals.

About the theater in Košice, he wrote in his *Reisebuch*:

“A good theatrical company will never come to Kaschau. Where would it come from? And where would it be heading for? For what reason would it undertake such a journey? In order to perform in front of Kaschau’s inhabitants, at its own expense, art, taste, and purity? Time, place, and circumstances are against such a [magnificent] building in Kaschau.”

Such criteria related to travel vagaries, the architecture, and the urbanization of the towns concerned are not entirely missing from German journal articles on theatrical life. Still, they do not seem as central as in the travel journals, even if they were undoubtedly serious problems for impresarios and actors.

By contrast, references to the Muslim religion of the Ottomans and to the Habsburg conquest are more frequent in these medias. In several descriptions, the diffusion of the enlightened reform of regular German theater is modelled on the map of Habsburg military victories against Ottoman possessions. From 1782 to 1784, the *Theater-Kalender* persistently published an article on the history of German theater each year where it claimed that Hülverding “successfully implemented German theater on the Turkish border.” Already in 1778, August Ottokar Reichard had referred twice to the Ottoman rule when describing the theater in Pest. In the *Theater-Kalender*, he asserted that the so-called *rondella* theater was installed in a former mosque, and in the *Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, he presented Carl Wahr’s installation as the arrival of an “apostle of civilized theater” in a former “Turkish dominion.”

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58 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1782*, 141: An die Türkische Gränze hat Hülverding das deutsche Schauspiel, mit gutem Fortgang, fortgepflanzt. The expression is also used in “Geschichte der deutschen Bühnen” published in the issues for 1782, 141–42 and 1784, 186.

tions later reappeared in the travel literature: Justus Wilhelm Christian Fischer’s travel journal published in 1802 asserted that the building used to function as a Turkish bath.60 Wahr’s theater was, though, not installed in a former religious building or in a former bath, but rather in a fortified round tower built during the Ottoman rule. In the same articles, the author notes that the diversity of this theater’s public was composed not only of noblemen from Hungary, Slavonia, and the Banat, but also from Walachia, as well as of Greek and Turkish merchants.61

As for Slavonia, an article published in the news section about foreign lands and various nations describes it as a region waiting to be civilized:

“The outer image of the Kingdom of Slavonia and of the principality of Sirmia is similar to the ancient German image drawn by Tacitus: *Terra in universum aut fluis horrida, aut paludibus foeda*: endless swamps and stumps, immense plane surfaces, forests without light, mountains just emerging from the chaos! In the meanwhile, Nature smiles here and there, waiting for help and development in order to achieve victory and abundance.”62

The fact that Hungary had a long frontier with the Ottoman Empire and that a significant part of the Kingdom had been an Ottoman possession was, thus, a central argument in German theatrical periodicals. Furthermore, describing Hungarian towns was an opportunity to communicate to the field an assumed real geographical description of motifs inspired by contemporary Turkish operas and plays. From the seventeenth century onwards, Tartar, Chinese, Indian, Ottoman or, in some rare cases, even African settings embodied imaginary lands that framed strange events unthinkable in a European context. Vaguely inspired by legends or historical events, the action of most of these plays was meant to enhance particular aspects and to define characters free from established moral constraints, manners, and customs. In these exotic geographical settings, Turkish subjects were not only particularly in vogue in Central Europe, but their interpretation was also peculiar. Instead of the image of a remote exotic land represented in French and Italian operas, the Ottoman Empire appeared in the Central European cultural imaginary both as a political rival and as a close form of exoticism.

60 Fischer, *Reisen durch Oesterreich*, 53.
More than thirty-five plays and operas on Turkish themes are recorded in German theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire. Moreover, some of the settings of these works are described in detail, such as that of: "Mustapha und Zeangir" in the Theaterchronik from Giesen (Krieger) in 1772, "Die Befreite Wien" in Klemm's Wienerische Dramaturgie and in the Bagatellen: Litteratur und Theater in 1776, "Bajazet und Tamerlan" in Reichard's Theater-Journal für Deutschland in 1780, and "Sklavonnier," "Sklavinnen," and "Tartarische Gesetz" in Bertram's Litteratur und Theater-Zeitung. Famous operas as Voltaire's "Mahomet" translated into German by Johann Friedrich Löwen (1767), Charles Simon Favart’s “The Three Sultanas or Soliman II.” (1761) and Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio” (1781) are also repeatedly described in several journals, including the ones that contain descriptions of the Hungarian towns.

The chronology of the descriptions of Hungarian towns matches the publishing of developed critiques of plays and operas on Turkish subjects. In 1777, the German translation of Favart’s “The Three Sultanas or Soliman II” was published, and in 1778 and 1780 several of its performances were recorded in the Litteratur- und Theater Zeitung. 1782 marks the premiere of Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio”, which was repeatedly and extensively reviewed in theatrical periodicals. The particular central European significance given to Turkish literary and artistic themes are present in several of these dramatical works, as noted by Thomas Betzwieser and Larry Wolff. The imaginary of the conquest, ever present in the descriptions linking Hungarian towns to the former Ottoman presence, belongs to the same tendency of encouraging topics of slaves and battles in central European Turkish operas. Taste for the Turquerie and its specific Central European

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64 Theaterchronick, Gießen, Krieger, 1772, 186–87.
67 Bertram, Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung, no. 2 (1779): 217, 219, 231
68 Bertram, Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung, no. 3 (1780): 168.
71 Reichard, ed., Theater-Journal für Deutschland no. 2 (1777): 158.
interpretations thus crucially impacted the philosophical representation of territories belonging to the Hungarian Crown.

**Conclusion**

Although they intended to give a complete overview of the contemporary theatrical culture of the continent, German theatrical periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire appear to provide only partial news of European theatrical life. While by 1770 Northern and North-Eastern countries had entered the geography of European enlightened theater, the frontiers of civilized Europe tended to be relocated eastwards, to the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The paper has shown that, in Gotha or Berlin, they see the expansion of the German theater in Hungary by referring to the Habsburg conquest of former Ottoman possessions. By doing so, these periodicals recall common themes of Turkish operas. On the contrary, they do not apply the same patronizing vocabulary in describing Galicia, even if operas on Russian enhancing exoticism themes did also exist. After all, German theaters had already been recorded in the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and in Russia well before the entry of some of those lands under Prussian and Habsburg dominion. Besides, even Polish theater had been documented in these periodicals. Therefore, the vocabulary of the conquest appears only in theater reviews on Galicia published in journals in the Habsburg Monarchy. Ironically, it is a Hungarian journal—the *Neuer Kurier aus Ungarn von Kriegs- und Staatssachen*—that delivers an accurate example in 1789: “The construction of so many new houses, the transformation of the once so irregular fortresses in the most delightful promenades, rank Lviv amongst the most pleasant and lively capitals of the hereditary crownlands of the Monarchy. To this, one may add the entertainment assured by Bulla’s theater company recently arrived from Buda”.

From the perspective of those in Buda, Lviv may have appeared just as remote, as not only was it only recently integrated to the Monarchy, but it appeared as a destination for a theatrical troupe having initially played in Hungary. Centers and peripheries of European Civilization were thus constantly inflected by the location and type of the journal, by its network of contributors, and by its thematic content.

74 Russia was also represented as exotic in Hungarian and Galician theatres: a highly successful drama enhancing exoticism in Hungary at the turn of the century is a vernacular translation of the drama on Russian theme initially composed by Kotzebue for the theatre in Lviv in 1795, “Das Mädchen von Marienburg”. Czibula, “Politische Moden”, 188.

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**Literature**


Chappey, Jean-Luc, Sébastien Côté, Maxime Gohier, Sylviane Leoni, Jean-François Lozier, Pierre Serna, nd Camille Noûs. “Barbares, sauvages et civilisés. Contradictions et Faussetés.” In *Barbaries, Sauvageries?*, edited by Jean-Luc Chappey, Sébastien Côté, Maxime Gohier, Sylviane Leoni, Jean-François Lozier,


### Table 1 Comparative account of towns mentioned from former Poland, Hungary, and Russia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theater periodicals</th>
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<th>Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth</th>
<th>Russia and other north-eastern countries</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bertram Christian August ed., Ephemeriden der Literatur und des Theaters, Berlin, Friedrich Maurer, 1785–1787</td>
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Though selective, the comparative account presented here gives an overview of the repartition of the mentions of towns studied in periodicals in different regions of the Holy Roman Empire.
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- **Gdańsk (1771–1780)**
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- **Cracow (1771–1780)**
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## Theater periodicals

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<tr>
<th>Journals in Frankfurt, Offenbach, Mannheim &amp; Stuttgart</th>
<th>Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bertram Christian August ed., Allgemeine Bibliothek für Schauspieler und Schauspielliebhaber, Frankfurt 1 1776.</td>
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<th>Journal of Ch. Seipp in Salzburg</th>
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<th>Journals in Leipzig</th>
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<tr>
<td>[Unknown author], Neues Theater-Journal für Deutschland, Leipzig, Carl Friedrich Schneidern, 1–2, 1788–1789.</td>
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<td>SCHMIDT Christian Heinrich, Chronologie des deutschen Theaters, [Leipzig], 1775.</td>
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<th>Journals in Hamburg</th>
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<td>[Unknown author], Hamburgisch- und Altonaische Theater-Zeitung: nebst Nachrichten von auswärtigen Bühnen. Altona, Bechtold, 1. 1798–2.1798</td>
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