

Aufklärung habsburgisch. Staatsbildung, Wissenskultur und Geschichtspolitik in Zentraleuropa 1750–1850.

By Franz Leander Fillafer.

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The study of the interaction between the Baroque and the Enlightenment is considered a traditional historical problem. At least as important—though less researched—is the study of the afterlife of the Enlightenment after the French Revolution. The independent examination of these research questions for even just one European country or region is a sufficient task for an author who wishes to work on his subject in a monographic way. Franz Leander Fillafer, however, has taken on an even more complex task: in his new book he attempts to answer both questions, even though the geographical limits of his investigation are not limited to a single country, but rather to the entire Central European conglomerate of the Habsburg Monarchy. The author makes the heterogeneous problem of the Enlightenment into the subject of a complex study in the Central European region, with its different cultures and levels of development. The reader is introduced to the process of the Enlightenment and Habsburg state-formation over a hundred-year period of major political, cultural, and social transformations.

Franz Leander Fillafer is a well-known author in Austrian Enlightenment studies, having defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of Konstanz in 2012, and is currently a research fellow at the *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (ÖAW). The work of the author is characterised by philosophical and historiographical interest and a strong international embeddedness as well.¹ In his studies, Fillafer combines the approaches and methodologies of the history of ideas and the history of science and global history—this is also reflected in this monograph.

1 For some of the author's major studies and edited volumes, see: Fillafer and Wallnig eds. *Josephinismus*; Fillafer, Feichtinger and Surman, eds, *The Worlds of Positivism*; Fillafer, "Die Aufklärung in der Habsburgermonarchie"; and Fillafer, "A World Connecting?"

The aim of the book is formulated by the author as follows: “The core concern of this book is to open up the Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy as a historical event in its long-term formative power, without forcing it into the Procrustean bed of secular-democratic modernity, without assuming that the Enlightenment found its actual fulfillment in revolution and liberalism.”² (p. 15). Achieving this goal is a very difficult task, not only because of the constant historical reflection and critical reinterpretations, but also because of the extensive literature and source base, which is particularly challenging in Central Europe due to the linguistic diversity. However, Fillafer’s book is the result of thorough and mature research; the author has conducted research in several ecclesiastical and secular archives of five countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia), and even more remarkable is the 80-page bibliography of the book, which does not only contain English, German and French items, but also provides a rich list of Czech, Croatian, Hungarian and Slovak literature. Reading the volume, it soon becomes clear that the Hungarian and various Slavic-language literature in the bibliography is not only for representational purposes but also due to their becoming an integral part of the author’s thought flow. The author’s linguistic competence and historiographical knowledge must therefore be commended.

The monograph contains many innovative approaches, which can be seen not only in the geographical and temporal framing of the study, but also in the methodology, narrative, and the structure of the volume. In addition to the introduction, the book consists of nine chapters, of which, apart from the last two summarising and overview chapters, the other seven chapters form larger thematic units, which are further subdivided into subchapters. The first chapter (*Von der Vaterlandsliebe zum Völkerfrühling 1770–1848*) describes the development and transformation of state patriotism (*Landespatritialismus*), then of linguistic nationalism, and its relationship with the past, and the government and the surrounding countries from the late eighteenth century to 1848. In the chapter, Fillafer pays special attention to the analysis of the related works and activities of two important authors, the publicist and professor of the *Staatwissenschaften* Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732–1817) and the Tyrolean-born lawyer and historian Joseph von Hormayr (1782–1848). The second thematic unit (*Die katholische Aufklärung*) is one of the most exciting chapters of the book, in which the author both interprets the relationship of the Theresian and Josephin governments to the Church from a new perspective and draws attention to the scientific reforms within the Catholic Church (including the reception

2 “Das Kernanliegen dieses Buches besteht darin, die Aufklärung in der Habsburgermonarchie als historisches Geschehen in ihrer langfristigen Prägekraft zu erschließen, ohne sie in das Prokrustesbett der säkular-demokratischen Moderne zu zwängen, ohne davon auszugehen, dass die Aufklärung in Revolution und Liberalismus ihre eigentliche Erfüllung fand.”

of Newtonian doctrines). The third chapter (*Die Erfindung der Allianz von Thron und Altar*) is closely related to the previous thematic unit and can be seen as a direct continuation of it, in which the author looks behind the assumed perpetual alliance of the altar and the throne, identifying the church propaganda in the dissemination of this ideal in the period of the post-Revolutionary Restoration.

The fourth chapter (*Wissenskulturen des Vormärz*) takes stock of the state of scientific thinking in the Habsburg Monarchy in the first half of the nineteenth century, with a special focus on the discipline of philosophy. In the subchapters, Fillafer reconstructs the hidden legacy of the Enlightenment in several areas with great precision; examples include the seminal work of the ecclesiastical mathematician and philosopher Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848), and the critical biblical hermeneuticists. The next thematic unit (*Vom Merkantilregime zum Binnenmarkt: Die Monarchie als Wirtschaftsraum*) examines the leading economic trends of the Habsburg Monarchy and the impact of changing economic thinking on state formation, with a special sub-chapter on the Kingdom of Hungary, which was in many ways in an exceptional situation. The sixth chapter (*Naturrechtspraxis und Empire-Genese. Kodifikation, Rechtsstaat, Wissenschaftsgeschichte*) is the longest and most detailed thematic unit of the monograph, comprising 11 subchapters and 120 pages. The chapter provides a richly detailed picture of the monarchy's transformation into a legal state, a process convincingly reconstructed by the author along the lines of the changes in natural law thinking, detailing the activities and influence of (among others) Karl Anton von Martini (1726–1800) and Franz von Zeiller (1751–1828). The seventh chapter (*Aufklärungserbe und Revolutionsabwehr: Selbst- und Feindbilder der Restauration*), the last major thematic unit of the book, analyses the confrontation between the camps of the *Josephiner* and the *Romantiker*, and their ideas about the revolution and those responsible for it. At the end of the monograph there are three shorter summarising and concluding chapters, which, especially the theoretical conclusion of the chapter *Was war Aufklärung?* serve as a very useful synthesis of what has been presented.

Franz Leander Fillafer's book is undoubtedly an important milestone in the study of the Central European Enlightenment. The volume is to be commended not only for its broad chronological and spatial scope, but also for the new research results, which have been developed with a precise methodology and which in many ways add nuance to our present knowledge, and which will certainly stimulate further research. The monograph provides a complex picture of the process and legacy of the Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy—which, while not dominated by the radical Enlightenment, benefited from Enlightenment ideals much more than many historians have conceived, whether in the government, the Catholic Church or the universities—by revealing internal contradictions and differences of interest

and by purifying them from many contemporary and later historiographical judgments. The book is quite substantial in length, almost 650 pages, but if the reader is only interested in specific topics they will get comprehensive information by reading single chapters. An index of subjects and names helps one to find their way around the book. However, it is worth noting that, despite the author's narrative style and contextualising intentions, it is not an easy read, and a firm logical arc and a real understanding of some of the analyses require solid background knowledge. The Czech–Austrian context is the one most deeply rooted in the Central European region, and several chapters focus on the Hungarian and Croatian aspects, but there are only few examples from the Balkan and Transylvanian areas of the Habsburg Monarchy; furthermore, it would have been interesting to read more about the spread of the Enlightenment outside the academic and governmental spheres—for example, the changes in the curriculums of the gymnasiums or the problems of the Masonic movement. The reviewer's obligatory criticisms do not, of course, detract from the value of the monograph, which can be summarised as an attractive, well-illustrated volume that presents the results of very thorough and mature research. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the Central European Enlightenment or the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Literature

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