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Forgotten Memories – Contested Representations Early Modern Bohemian Migrants in Saxony

I. INTRODUCTION

The early modern era introduced an almost unique type of intra-European migration, strongly influenced by the confessional division of Europe. These confessionally-motivated migrants developed significant practices to shape a collective memory within their own group¹. But also the host societies in certain Central European countries created a specific image of these migrants, which endures to this day.

One of these migrant groups was the so-called »Bohemian exiles«, who immigrated primarily to the Electorate of Saxony in the 17th century. Although the immigrants numbered in the tens of thousands, our knowledge about them is relatively scarce. Compared to better-known emigrant groups such as the Huguenots in Brandenburg-Prussia, there is little to remind us of the Bohemian migrants today. This article explores the successes and failures in the construction of a collective memory of the Bohemian migrations by looking at historical representations and commemorative practices on both the migrants' and the host society's sides.

As the result of a historiography which has long failed to understand the heterogeneous structures and cultural identities of groups simply labeled as »Böhmische Exulanten« or Bohemian exiles, their memory has been limited to the image of steadfast Lutherans received by their protector, the Elector (*Kurfürst*) of Saxony. The fact that this collective memory is based on a very selective interpretation of these migrations has been widely neglected.

The following analysis aims at looking closely at the historical representations and collective memory of the Bohemian exiles in Saxony, from the actual circumstances of migration and settlement policies in 17th century Germany to the present day. Starting with the historical events leading to the Bohemian migrations and to the reception of immigrants in Saxony, their country of destination, I will examine the way different historiographical traditions were constructed on the basis of contemporary statements and a selective interpretation of historical sources. These traditions – an »exiles' history«, the view of the receiving country, and finally the traditions in the country of origin (Bohemia/Czechoslovakia) – partly derive from the self-images and the »self-

1 Heinz SCHILLING, Die frühneuzeitliche Konfessionsmigration, in: Klaus J. BADE (ed.), Migration in der europäischen Geschichte seit dem späten Mittelalter, Osnabrück 2002 (IMIS-Beiträge, 20), pp. 67–89; Alexander SCHUNKA, Glaubensflucht als Migrationsoption. Konfessionell motivierte Migrationen in der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 56 (2005) pp. 547–564.

fashioning of the migrants as well as from the dominant historical and political issues of the affected countries. I suggest that the self-representation and utilisation of exile traditions must be seen as a particular search for order, deriving from the heterogeneities of the migrational process as well as of the migrant groups.

II. BOHEMIANS IN EARLY MODERN SAXONY

From the early 1620s on, the German state of Saxony became the refuge of supposedly steadfast Protestants from neighbouring countries². These people sought shelter with the government of one of the most influential Lutheran rulers in Germany: the Elector of Saxony. Unlike in Brandenburg-Prussia³, Saxony did not attempt any centrally-organised settlement policy for the arriving refugees. The government was not acting, but rather re-acting to the influx of strangers. It was mainly the municipal or local governments which had to deal with integrating the immigrants into the local community structures⁴. However, accepting, welcoming, and hosting the immigrants has been primarily attributed to the reign of Elector Johann Georg I (1611–1656). The migrations continued throughout the 17th century, but are usually associated with the Thirty Years War.

Many immigrants from the neighbouring states south and east of Saxony, which were then part of the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and in the later 17th century, Upper Hungary/today Slovakia), fled either the cruelties of the Thirty Years War, or the ongoing, more or less forcefully applied efforts of the Habsburg administration to re-catholicise their Protestant populations⁵. They came to Saxony hoping to stay for just a few years, but a significant number of them settled permanently.

In many cases, people stayed together in groups consisting of former neighbourhoods in their cities of origin⁶. Still, perhaps the most striking feature of the Bohemian

2 I have dealt with the immigration into Saxony more extensively in my doctoral dissertation: Alexander SCHUNKA, *Gäste, die bleiben. Zuwanderer in Kursachsen und der Oberlausitz im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert*, University of Munich 2004 [in print: Münster et al. 2006]. On the socio-historical background see Georg LOESCHE, *Die böhmischen Exulanten in Sachsen*, Vienna, Leipzig 1923; Eduard WINTER, *Die tschechische und slowakische Emigration in Deutschland im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin (East) 1955.

3 On the Huguenot migration see, among others, Myriam YARDENI, *Le Refuge huguenot. Assimilation et culture*, Paris 2002; Heinz DUCHHARDT (ed.), *Der Exodus der Hugenotten. Die Aufhebung des Edikts von Nantes 1685 als europäisches Ereignis*, Cologne, Vienna 1985 (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 24).

4 Wulf WÄNTIG, *Kursächsische Exulanten Aufnahme im 17. Jahrhundert. Zwischen zentraler Dresdner Politik und lebensweltlicher Bindung lokaler Machsträger an der sächsisch-böhmischen Grenze*, in: *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 74/75 (2003/2004) pp. 133–174.

5 There is a wide range of literature on the Habsburg counter-reformation. See, for example, Thomas WINKELBAUER, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, Vienna 2003, vol. 2, pp. 112–147.

6 Lenka BOBKOVÁ (ed.), *Exulanti z Prahy a severozápadních Čech v Pirně v letech 1621–1639* [Exiles from Prague and North Western Bohemia in Pirna 1621–1639], Prague 1999, p. 96.

migrants in Saxony was their social, religious and even linguistic heterogeneity. The emigrations affected clerics as well as the nobility, traders, craftsmen, and urban as well as rural populations. Due to reasons of infrastructure and communication networks, they settled in the big cities as well as in the countryside of Saxony and the Saxon-administrated Upper Lusatia, with a particularly high proportion in communities along the river Elbe such as Pirna or Dresden, in border areas (Zittau) or in the cities and villages in the Saxon Erzgebirge⁷. During the 17th century, their numbers reached probably much more than 100,000 people, although any exact figures are very difficult to find because of the scarcity and inaccuracy of contemporary sources and of the difficulties in counting the average migration patterns between Saxony and the neighbouring countries⁸. Lutheran migrants mixed with followers of the Czech reformer Jan Hus, with Calvinists or Bohemian Brethren, sometimes even with Catholics. Depending on the area of origin, there were German-speaking as well as Czech-speaking people. Among them were people born in the Bohemian countries as well as others who had recently emigrated to Bohemia and were now returning to Saxony. Unlike the Huguenot case elsewhere, the varieties within the Bohemians made any homogenisation difficult and quite unpredictable.

However, the image as constructed by the migrants themselves – in sermons, historical works, and treatises as well as in petition letters – was one of persecution, victimhood, and faith. The authors made clear that they were forced to leave their beloved homeland for the sake of their Lutheran faith and against Catholic oppression. With the help of biblical examples, they considered emigration as a test of their faith and found consolation in the words of God. This image coincided with the high popularity of the neo-stoical notion of *constantia* (constancy), as developed in the writing of the Dutch politician and convert (and exile) Justus Lipsius⁹. The notion of *constantia*, with the meaning of steadfastness in the vicissitudes of life, was easily adapted by Protestant emigrants such as Johann Amos Comenius¹⁰. It became a means of coherence for the migrants and at the same time was very popular in baroque theatre plays, as shown at European courts such as the one of the Saxon Elector in Dresden.

But this was not the only intellectual building block for the shaping of a religious exile tradition. The migrants' journey to Saxony was in retrospect converted into a pilgrimage, based on Augustine's concept of *peregrinatio*, the life-long period of wandering in search of Christ¹¹. This is part of the ideological foundation for the fact that

7 See the map in Karlheinz BLASCHKE, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte von Sachsen bis zur Industriellen Revolution*, Weimar 1967, pp. 120–121.

8 The number of 36,000 families as found in the older literature and ascribed to a statement of the 17th century Bohemian politician William Slavata therefore bears a good deal of myth rather than being an accurate figure. This has been the basis for later guesses of around 150,000 emigrants. I have attempted another hypothesis on the migrant figures in SCHUNKA, *Gäste* (see note 2), chap. 3.

9 Justus LIPSIVS, *De Constantia. Von der Standhaftigkeit*, übersetzt, kommentiert und mit einem Nachwort von Florian Neumann, Mainz 1998.

10 Johann AMOS COMENIUS, *Trawren über Trawren/ und Trost über trost/ Sehr dienlich auf alle zeiten/ Sonderlich bei ietziger noht der gantzen Christenheit*, Preßburg 1626.

11 Cornelius MAYER, »Peregrinatio« bei Augustinus, in: Xenia von ERTZDORFF, Dieter NEUKIRCH (eds), *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit. Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 3.–8. Juni 1991 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, Amsterdam, Atlanta 1992*

many migrants primarily expected to return to Bohemia soon, their exile status being only temporary. Even some decades after it had become apparent that these people were not going back to Bohemia, some of them, similar to members of other diasporic communities in history, still called themselves »religious exiles« (*Exulanten*)¹². We find this description in their epitaphs as well as in wills, sermons, and signatures. Even their Saxon-born children sometimes called themselves exiles. The notion, however, owes more to the self-image and the theological foundations of their presence in Saxony – whether only a few years, a whole life, or some generations – than to historical reality, as has long been supposed.

To a very large extent, this argument became legitimised by the circumstances, namely the fact that these people had to stress their status as religious exiles in order to be allowed to stay in Saxony¹³. On the contrary, there are many examples of people who migrated voluntarily: some were Catholics and thus not affected by any religious persecution; others converted from Catholicism to the Lutheran faith and back; some migrated back and forth between Saxony and Bohemia before as well as after re-Catholicisation and war; and some Protestants remained more or less illegally in Catholic Bohemia. Still, the image of the persecuted Lutherans was one of the strongest foundations for a collective identity of the Bohemian exiles.

The migrants dominating the discourse on »exile« were mostly clerics and intellectuals. Looking at their own itineraries, it is quite surprising to see that although they bitterly mourned the loss of their Bohemian fatherland, they had usually entered it only a few years before the migration started. Thus, most of them were not native Bohemians, but native Germans, even Saxons, who now only re-entered their original homeland after leaving Bohemia. Their choice for the country of exile was therefore obvious¹⁴.

After some years, the exile community managed to receive permission from the Lutheran consistory to conduct religious services in the Czech language. These services started in the city of Pirna in 1628, in Dresden in 1650, in Zittau even later. All these church communities went through considerable trouble to foster a sense of coherence among the Bohemian migrants. At the same time, they were the prime institutions for keeping emigrant traditions alive. Although it is most likely that the vast majority of the migrants were German-speaking or at least understood enough German to get along in their new surroundings, the church communities claimed the right to be the keepers of Bohemian/Czech traditions and the Bohemian/Lutheran faith, for Czechs as well as for Germans, who in other respects soon vanished into the local population.

Whereas the Pirna community almost crumbled due to interior conflicts, the Dresden community quickly grew in importance. Its parochial organisation was exempt from the municipal church administration and thus stood directly under the authority of the Supreme Consistory. Their strategy for integrating Bohemian immigrants into their church and social structures was twofold. It was based on the Czech language

(Chloe, 13), pp. 67–80; Juergen HAHN, *The Origins of the Baroque Concept of Peregrinatio*, Chapel Hill 1973, pp. 114–173.

12 On this notion see Franz EPPERT, *Exulant und Emigrant bis etwa 1750*, in: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Sprache* 26 (1970) pp. 188–192.

13 See, for instance, *Staatsfilialarchiv Bautzen, Oberamt 4278*, fol. 35v (1650).

14 SCHUNKA, *Gäste* (see note 2), chap. 4.

and on the traditions of German-based Lutheranism in Bohemia. The services were held in Czech, but the preacher had to be fluent in both Czech and German. All church registers up to the end of the 18th century were written in Czech and in German, and the officials usually descended from important Protestant migrant clerical families, for instance the long-time Dresden priest Benjamin Martini, a second generation immigrant¹⁵. Even in the 18th century, when it became extremely difficult to find a preacher with both sufficient knowledge of the Czech language and a Protestant education, the community undertook a long, exhausting search rather than accept a German preacher¹⁶. These Czech traditions were kept until the 19th century. The community existed until 1945 and was reinstated in the wake of the German reunification, though under different administrative conditions.

The second feature was the legitimisation of the community not on Czech, but on German, though Bohemian-Lutheran traditions. Most importantly, the community established a connection to the Church of the Saviour (St. Salvator) in Prague. This particular church had been erected in the decade just before the outbreak of the Thirty Years War and the beginning of re-catholicisation, due almost solely to the massive publicity and financial efforts of Lutherans in Germany¹⁷. It had been used by the German-speaking Lutherans in Prague until the start of the war and the expulsion of their preachers. The expulsion of the priests from Prague, which took place in 1621/22, was again accompanied by lots of printed matters such as sermons and broadsheets. It served as one major example of the cruelties of the Catholic Habsburg government. In the 1660s, the Dresden Bohemian church community managed to obtain the sacred items and some church property and, from then onwards, considered their own church the legal successor to St. Salvator¹⁸. Furthermore, the date of foundation of the Dresden community, the Maundy Thursday before Easter 1650, acquired the status of an informal immigrant holiday for the Bohemians¹⁹. In Christian tradition, Maundy Thursday is the day when the sinner is readmitted to the Christian community i.e. the church. This fitted extremely well with the situation of the Bohemian exiles, now back in their own church, whose roots went back to Bohemia.

In daily life, the Bohemians in Saxon cities segregated from the host society in some respects, but in most others they integrated after some decades. Sometimes the Bohemians lived more densely together in certain areas than in others, or were over-represented in certain occupations such as selling wine or trading goods between Saxony and the Bohemian countries. At the same time, the practical issues of being an »exile« or a »foreigner« decreased in importance after only one or two generations. Still, it was not just the church communities that were responsible for keeping Bohemian tradi-

15 Archiv der Erlöser-Andreaskirche Dresden (Exulantengemeinde), Rechnungsbücher; Stadtarchiv Dresden, Ratsarchiv, D XXIII 2 (1680).

16 The efforts to find a Czech-speaking priest are documented in: Stadtarchiv Dresden, Ratsarchiv, D XXI-II 9 (1746).

17 Rudolf SCHREIBER, ANTON ERNSTBERGER et al., *Das Spenderbuch für den Bau der protestantischen Salvatorkirche in Prag*, Freilassing 1956.

18 Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Geheimer Rat, Loc. 7431/13 (1665).

19 I owe this observation to Frank Metasch's paper »Religiöse Festkultur und kirchliches Personal der böhmischen Exulanten in Dresden während des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts«, presented at the conference »Migration und kirchliche Praxis«, Jauernick, Germany, 26–29 July, 2004.

tions alive. From the time of the early migrations, the whole phenomenon was accompanied by extensive writing.

III. MEMORIES AT STAKE THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS

The publications on the so-called Bohemian exiles were not restricted to published sermons or treatises of consolation. The meaning and importance of printed works for the shaping or neglect of migrant traditions became manifest in other respects as well.

The historiography of the migrations written by emigrants or their descendants usually derived from reflections on the exiles' present situation. Just as for other early modern migrant groups such as the Huguenots²⁰, there was usually at least one historical volume that contributed to the manifestation of a religious-based migrant tradition. This type of immigrants' historiography was influenced by contemporary stories of persecution and faith, of comfort in times of exile. Yet, there was another basis for this type of historiography: the »martyrologies«, manuals consisting of martyrs' biographies. Important exiles like Comenius and his circle were influenced by the example of martyrs' biographies, and worked on the first historical study on the Bohemian migrations: the anonymous »*Historia persecutionum*«²¹. The original Latin text was soon translated into Czech. It was re-published in German in 18th century Berlin, interestingly at the height of Huguenot historiography²². Subsequently, German-language works on the migrants of the 17th and 18th centuries usually consisted of biographical collections of migrants; mainly of clerics or intellectuals, because, in the eyes of the historians, they were the most pious avantgarde of the exiles and deserved the most attention. Furthermore, the source material was best for members of these social groups. The biographical works were mainly written by clerics, who were usually themselves descendants of Bohemian migrants and served as examples of piety and martyrdom²³. In the 19th century, together with the rise of historical studies in Germany, these works were followed by historical books which either explicitly or implicitly supported the traditions of the Lutheran-Bohemian exiles. Again, authors like Christian Adolph Pescheck or Karl Gottlob Morawek were descendants of Bohemian migrants²⁴. Now, they used archival

20 Viviane ROSEN-PREST, *L'historiographie des Huguenots en Prusse au temps des Lumières. Entre mémoire, histoire et légende*: Jean Pierre Erman et Pierre Chrétien Frédéric Reclam, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des Réfugiés françois dans les États du Roi* (1782–1799), Paris 2002.

21 *Historia persecutionum Ecclesiae Bohemicae* [...] [1632], [Amsterdam] 1648.

22 Johann Theophilus ELSNER, *Martyrologium Bohemicum oder die Böhmisches Verfolgungs-Geschichte vom Jahr 894 bis 1632* [...], Berlin 1766.

23 For example Georg Heinrich GÖTZE, *Diptycha Exulum, Oder Exulanten-Register. Darinnen die Namen derer Beständigen Lutheraner angeschrieben stehen, Welche Um der Lehre des Evangelii willen, zwar verfolgt, und ins Elend vertrieben worden, doch gleichwohl aber Göttl. Beschirmung und Seegen mit denen Ihrigen wieder gefunden haben*, Altenburg 1714.

24 Christian Adolph PESCHECK, *Die böhmischen Exulanten in Sachsen. Zur Beantwortung der von der Fürstlich Jablonowskischen Gesellschaft gestellten historischen Preisfrage*, Leipzig 1857; Karl Gottlob MORAWEK, *Geschichte der böhmisch-evangelischen Exulantengemeinde in Zittau* [...], Zittau 1847.

sources such as charters or even petitions. The documents served as proof of the martyrdom and the hardships of their antecedents. The German Gustav-Adolf-Verein, an organisation dedicated to the support of diasporic Lutheran communities, took part in this exiles-renaissance in the middle of the 19th century, publishing small booklets. It was then that the »Historia persecutionum« was re-issued in a new German edition²⁵. Later, even the more thorough works of the early 20th century, such as Georg Loesche's »Die böhmischen Exulanten in Sachsen« (The Bohemian Exiles in Saxony), were based on these preliminary Protestant works, and propagated the image of persecuted Lutherans²⁶. Besides, non-professional historians such as people with genealogical interests and Bohemian ancestors researched their own roots or just collected archival sources, like the teacher Alwin Bergmann of Dresden, who left a huge collection of biographical information on some 60,000 immigrants²⁷.

Whereas the Huguenots already had a solid place in the German collective memory since the 18th century, and were a hundred years later lauded by the Prussian chancellor Bismarck as the »best Prussians«²⁸, the Bohemians did not receive such attention. Their image did not comprise any successes for Saxony, but was reduced by Protestant historiography to martyrdom and hardship. From the 18th century onwards, with the decline of Saxony's political importance and the rise of Prussia, the Bohemians drew even less attention outside Saxony; their small settlement in Prussian Berlin was overshadowed by the city's Huguenot culture²⁹.

It is interesting to see how the Bohemian migrants were presented within the local historical tradition of the Saxon communities, from their own time to the present. In the 17th century, chroniclers of cities and villages noticed the increase of immigration even before the beginning of the Thirty Years War. What was most striking to the authors was not the quality of migration, but the different quantity. Yet there are some exceptions. Whenever anything occurred which at first seemed unusual or disturbing, the chroniclers wrote these events down to preserve them. This can be shown in one striking example. When Bohemian nobles arrived in the Saxon Erzgebirge in the first decade of the Thirty Years War, it was an extraordinary event to the locals as well as to their cities' chroniclers. As a matter of fact, the nobility was usually the least mobile group within early modern society, not at all prone to migration. Furthermore, noblemen usually did not live in cities, but in their country courts. Thus, the chroniclers put considerable effort into describing their immigration into Saxon cities in order to deal with the extraordinary³⁰.

25 Georg BUCHWALD, *Böhmische Exulanten im sächsischen Erzgebirge zur Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, Barmen s. a. [1888] (Für die Feste und Freunde des Gustav-Adolf-Vereins, 58); ANON., *Das Persekutionsbüchlein. Geschichte der Verfolgungen des Evangeliums in Böhmen seit Einführung des Christenthums bis auf die Regierung Kaiser Ferdinand II. (894–1632)*, Gütersloh 1869.

26 LOESCHE, *Exulanten* (see note 2).

27 Alexander SCHUNKA, *Digitalisierung der »Bergmann'schen Exulantensammlung«*. Eine Kooperation zwischen der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München und dem Sächsischen Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, in: *Familie und Geschichte* 12 (2003) pp. 426–428.

28 Etienne FRANÇOIS, *Vom preußischen Patrioten zum besten Deutschen*, in: Rudolf von THADDEN, Michelle MAGDELAINE (eds), *Die Hugenotten 1685–1985*, Munich 1985, pp. 198–212, 205.

29 On Rixdorf see Werner KORTHAASE (ed.), *Das böhmische Dorf in Berlin Neukölln (1737–1987)*. Dem Kelch zuliebe Exulant, Berlin 1987.

The main goal of early modern local historiography was the display of a stable social order. Whenever extraordinary events occurred – such as disasters, monstrosities, diseases or wars – it was most important to write about them in order to adapt these events to the world view of the writers and the society they lived in³¹. Thus, the underrepresentation of the Bohemian migrants in the long run shows that they did not disturb the authors' views considerably.

The end of the early modern era, together with the institutionalisation of the so-called »Landesgeschichte« (local history) in the 19th century, saw the emergence of historical clubs, historical undertakings sponsored by the ruling dynasties in Saxony and elsewhere, and the opening of the Saxon State Archives in 1834³². The historians then focused on Saxon rulers and diplomacy. If the Bohemian exiles were of any interest, it was only their politically significant figures. Still, with the rise of population history and historical demography at the end of the 19th century, Saxony, particularly the University of Leipzig, became the centre of cooperation between geographers such as Friedrich Ratzel, and historians like Karl Lamprecht. What came out of this cooperation was the geographically and demographically-based historical research on Saxony. The development of the »historische Landeskunde« (historical regional sciences) was not limited to Saxony, and gained some importance from the political situation in Germany after 1918, particularly with the growing popularity of »völkische« ideas preceding the rise of the National Socialist party. Like most other German university institutions, the Leipzig Institute of »Siedlungskunde« (sciences of settlement) was not at all free of these issues, as we can easily see from works published by the leading Saxon historians of the time, like Rudolf Kötzschke or Walter Schlesinger³³. This historical-geographical approach, together with the »völkische« ideology, was the basis for the resurgent popularity of the Bohemian migrants. Now historians like Franz Pohl referred to 17th century demographic sources like immigrants' lists, which had been of little interest before. Pohl showed the historical connections between Germany/Saxony and the German-speaking territories in Czechoslovakia, and thus indirectly justified NS German imperialism³⁴. At the same time, the Saxon historical associations focused their interest on the German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia, i.e. Bohemia. Just after the invasion of the »Sudetenland« by Hitler's army, historical congresses were held by Saxon historians on former Czech territory, like the Annual meeting of the

30 See, for instance, Georg ARNOLD, *Chronicon Annaebergense continuatum* [...], Annaberg 1812 [1658], Repr. Stuttgart 1992, p. 289; SCHUNKA, *Gäste* (see note 2), chap. 1.

31 See, among others, Peter JOHANEK (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, Cologne, Vienna 2000 (*Städteforschung A*, 47).

32 Georg KUNZ, *Verortete Geschichte. Regionales Geschichtsbewußtsein in den deutschen Historischen Vereinen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 2000; Werner BUCHHOLZ, *Vergleichende Landesgeschichte und Konzepte der Regionalgeschichte von Karl Lamprecht bis zur Wiedervereinigung 1990*, in: Id. (ed.), *Landesgeschichte in Deutschland. Bestandsaufnahme, Analyse, Perspektiven*, Paderborn 1998, pp. 11–60.

33 Esther LUDWIG, Rudolf Kötzschke – Das schwere Bemühen um die Bewahrung der »unantastbaren Reinheit des geschichtlichen Sinnes«, in: Wieland HELD, Uwe SCHIRMER (eds), Rudolf Kötzschke und das Seminar für Landesgeschichte und Siedlungskunde an der Universität Leipzig. Heimstatt sächsischer Landeskunde, Beucha 1999, pp. 21–70.

34 Franz POHL (ed.), *Die Exulanten aus der Herrschaft Friedland im Sudetenland*, Görlitz 1939.

Upper Lusatian Academy of Sciences, in Friedland/Frýdlant in 1939³⁵. Saxon historians stressed the historical connections between Germany and (German-speaking) parts of Bohemia: first in order to reverse such post-World War I developments as the founding of Czechoslovakia, then in order to support the invasion of the Sudetenland³⁶. When in 1940 the famous NS historian Günther Franz first published his book on the re-population of Germany after the Thirty Years War, he attributed to the exiles an important role in the rebuilding of Germany in the 17th century³⁷. He hardly bothered with the fact that many of these people had not been ethnically German according to NS ideology.

After 1945, and particularly after the dissolution of the historical German states by the GDR government in 1952, the development of Saxon »Landesgeschichte« almost came to a halt³⁸. The Bohemian exiles did not fit into a Marxist-materialist image of history. Still, one of the most important books on the topic was published in East Berlin in 1955. Its author was the historian and philologist Eduard Winter, a native Austrian who had taught at the University of Prague even under the Nazi regime, and eventually had emigrated to the GDR. His book refers to the notion of a Slavonic internationalism as based on and derived from the Bohemian migrations. Being a philologist of Slavonic languages he mainly looked at the Czech-speaking migrants³⁹. In this respect, he produced a somewhat artificial gap between the German-speaking and the Czech immigrants. In his opinion, the migrants carried important parts of a Bohemian-Czech cultural heritage with them on their journeys through Saxony and other places in Europe. This Czech heritage, according to Winter, could only be preserved by the migrants outside of Bohemia, not by those who had remained.

In this respect, Winter constructed a close and completely new tie between the two socialist countries, the GDR and the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia, with the help of the Bohemian migrants. Winter's position is important, for his book can only be understood by looking at the way the migrants and their place in Bohemian collective memory were treated by Czech historians.

- 35 Nachrichten aus der Gesellschaft, in: Neues Lausitzisches Magazin 115 (1939) p. 217; on National Socialist tendencies found in Saxon/Upper Lusatian Historical Journals as well as on very subtle criticism, e.g. in book reviews, see the issues around 1940 of the Neues Lausitzisches Magazin esp. the regularly printed protocols of the annual meetings; for the Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte see the protocols of the meetings of the Historical Commission of Saxony, *ibid*.
- 36 See, for instance, Walter SCHLESINGER, Entstehung und Bedeutung der sächsisch-böhmischen Grenze, in: Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte 59 (1938) pp. 6–38.
- 37 Günther FRANZ, Der Dreißigjährige Krieg und das deutsche Volk. Untersuchungen zur Bevölkerungs- und Agrargeschichte, Jena 1940; Wolfgang BEHRINGER, Bauern-Franz und Rassen-Günther. Die politische Geschichte des Agrarhistorikers Günther Franz (1902–1992), in: Winfried SCHULZE, Otto Gerhard OEXLE (eds), Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus, Frankfurt a. M. 1999, pp. 114–141.
- 38 On the changes in Saxon Landesgeschichte see Wieland HELD, Die Bemühungen um die Weiterführung der wissenschaftlichen Traditionen des Leipziger Seminars für Landesgeschichte und Siedlungskunde nach 1935, in: Id., Uwe SCHIRMER (eds), Rudolf Kötzschke und das Seminar für Landesgeschichte und Siedlungskunde an der Universität Leipzig – Heimstatt sächsischer Landeskunde, Beucha 1999, pp. 71–90; Karlheinz BLASCHKE, Die sächsische Landesgeschichte zwischen Tradition und neuem Anfang, in: Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte 64 (1993) pp. 7–28.
- 39 WINTER, Emigration (see note 2).

Even among the migrants and their Czech contemporaries in the 17th century, the issue of how a Bohemian or Czech nation could be defined was highly debated. Intellectuals like Comenius and Pavel Stránský saw the common bonds of a people (*natio/národ*) in descent and origin, but mainly in a common language⁴⁰. It would appear that the migrations, either forced or voluntary, were the starting point for reflections on Czech history and politics and on the purity of Czech culture, and for a boom in writings on the Czech nation⁴¹. People either interfered with the political circumstances, or they wrote the first descriptions of the country of Bohemia, as Stránský did from his exile in the Netherlands. Throughout his life, the writings of Comenius touched upon the issue of a re-unification of the exile communities in the lands of the Bohemian crown and thus the re-establishment of the devastated Bohemian nation. Later on, the exiles around Comenius and his followers who had migrated to Poland, gained continuous prominence in Czech historiography, while the Bohemians in Saxony largely remained forgotten⁴².

The most common view in Czech historiography after the time of war, re-catholicisation and migration was the notion of »temno« (darkness), as promulgated by the author Alois Jirásek in the 19th century⁴³. Historians associated the emigrations with the loss of the most important features of Czech culture, Bohemian religion, and intellectual variety, and with a forced Germanization of Bohemia under the auspices of the Catholicism of the Habsburg Empire. However, much of this view originates from 19th century Czech historiography.

The interpretation derives from the time of national rebirth in the 19th century. The idea of a common bilingual Austrian-Bohemian patriotism, as promoted by the Prague intellectual Bernhard Bolzano at the beginning of the 19th century, did not prove decisive in the long run. The notion of »temno«, on the other hand, seems to be a constructed national trauma which proved useful to stress the Czech national movement connected to intellectuals like František Palacký⁴⁴. It is the current task of Czech historians to re-evaluate the key dates of the 17th century. The more research is done, the clearer it becomes that the dividing line of the period before and after the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), when Catholic Habsburg troops forced the Calvinist Bohemian »Winter King« into exile, was never as sharp as has long been supposed by Czech and even German historiographers.

Czech historians dealing with the questions of 17th century emigration were thus either concerned with the national losses, or, like the early 20th century researcher

40 On 17th century Czech historiography see František KUTNAR, *Přehledné dějiny Českého a Slovenského dějepisectví* [Concise History of Czech and Slovak Historiography], vol. 1, Prague 1973, pp. 64–76; a short outline is: Vladimír URBÁNEK, *Patriotismus pobělohorského exilu* [Patriotism in the Exile after the Battle of the White Mountain], in: *Historické Listy* 4 (1995) pp. 3–6.

41 Norbert Kersken currently prepares an article on this matter.

42 Recently Lenka BOBKOVÁ, *Die Gemeinde der böhmischen Exulanten in der Stadt Pirna 1621–1639*, in: *Herbergen der Christenheit* 27 (2003) pp. 37–56, here p. 53.

43 On the time of temno see Ivana ČORNEJOVÁ, *Das »Temno« im mitteleuropäischen Kontext. Zur Kirchen- und Bildungspolitik im Böhmen der Barockzeit*, in: *Bohemia* 34 (1993) pp. 342–358.

44 Roland GEHRKE, *Bernard Bolzano 1781–1848*, in: *Ostdeutsche Gedenktage* 1998, pp. 283–290; on Palacký and the reception of his thoughts in 19th century Europe see Ernst BIRKE, *Frankreich und Ostmitteleuropa im 19. Jahrhundert*, Cologne, Graz 1960, pp. 235–264.

Otakar Odložilík, were themselves migrants⁴⁵. In the course of the 20th century, the most prominent emigrant, Comenius, continued to be a Czech national hero. The minister of culture under Klement Gottwald, Zdeněk Nejedlý, who was an admirer of Jirásek's notion of »temno« under the auspices of socialist historiography, went as far as comparing the Peace Treaty of Westphalia and subsequent German dominance to the 1938 Munich Agreement⁴⁶. Apart from these statements, the historical treatment of the Bohemian migrants in Czechoslovak historiography was rather scarce.

In short, due to the historical borders and political circumstances, historical representations of the Bohemian migrations were dispersed for centuries. The views on this matter seemed quite different, sometimes even incongruent, depending on the positions of the members of the group of migrants, the historiography of either host country or home country.

IV. BETWEEN REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING MIGRATIONS IN PUBLIC MEMORY

It is sometimes hardly predictable how historiographical traditions are handed down to the people dealing with public statements and collective memory. Still, it can be illuminating to see how the immigrant traditions were kept and transformed over a very long period of time. A particularly good indicator in this respect are public celebrations such as anniversaries. For any community or group, anniversaries serve as self-assuring rituals by selectively reproducing history and thus producing memory as well as forgetting. The centennial founding anniversaries of the city of Johanngeorgenstadt in Saxony, one of only two urban communities in Saxony founded by Bohemian emigrants, therefore reveal the self-image of a migrants' community which kept its cultural heritage as a city of exiles⁴⁷.

Although the interior development of the city after its foundation in 1654 was for a long time based on massive economic and social difficulties, the inhabitants showed to the outside world their exceptional status as true believers and their astonishing successes. The regular celebrations of the city's anniversary strongly contributed to this tradition. Whereas celebrations of city anniversaries elsewhere in Saxony and the rest of Germany tended to become secularised during the 18th and 19th centuries, the people of Johanngeorgenstadt preserved their religiously-founded traditions even

45 Ivo BARTEČEK, *Exil jako předmět výzkumu a životní zkušenost – Otakar Odložilík* [Exile as a Matter of Research and Life Experience – Otakar Odložilík], in: Michaela HRUBÁ (ed.), *Víra nebo vlast? Exil v českých dějinách raného novověku* [Faith or Fatherland? Exile in Early Modern Czech History], Ústí nad Labem 2001, pp. 44–50.

46 Zdeněk NEJEDLÝ, *Odkaz našich dějin* [Our Historical Heritage], Prague 1948, p. 11; quoted in: Bedřich ŠINDELÁŘ, *Comenius und der Westfälische Friedenskongreß*, in: *Historica* 5 (1963) pp. 71–107.

47 I have treated this issue more extensively elsewhere. Alexander SCHUNKA, »St. Johanngeorgenstadt zu kurfürstlicher Durchlaucht unsterblichem Nachruhm«. Stadtgründung und städtische Traditionsbildung in der Frühen Neuzeit, in: *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte* 75/76 (2003/2004) pp. 175–205.

until the 20th century. The stories of the persecution of the Bohemians and the city's foundation with the help of God and the Elector were crucial for the city memory. Sermons, addresses as well as processions referred to the exiles' myth regularly. Due to a fire in the 19th century and primarily to the destruction of the old city in the 1950s by the GDR government to make way for a mine, there are almost no architectural remnants of the exiles' history. Still, the 350th anniversary in 2004 kept the traditions of the exile's heritage, now visible only in a statue of the founding elector Johann Georg I, and some street names like »Exulantenstraße« (exiles' street).

The case of Johanngeorgenstadt proves that the traditions of persecution and exile in public memory are closely linked with the historiographical tendencies shown above. This seems to be reversely true for historical forgetting. Political and social circumstances during the last decades have not put the topic of the Bohemian exiles high on the agenda, neither in the academic nor in the public sphere. Thus, it is not surprising that apart from Johanngeorgenstadt, there is not much to be found of the Bohemians in Saxony in public memory. The Dresden exiles' community lost their church building after the bombings of World War II, the exiles' cemetery in the city of Zittau lay in ruins, and Johanngeorgenstadt no longer visibly resembled the exiles' community it always claimed to be. The distinctive borders of national states and, after 1945, the Iron Curtain have eroded the relationships and accentuated the differences between the Bohemian and Saxon neighbours. Only after 1989 did the situation begin to change. Since the end of the Cold War, the scientific exchange between the Czech Republic and Germany has increased, which is visible in international cooperation such as conferences and research projects, or within the framework of the so-called »Euroregion Neisse« and its scientific and cultural enterprises. The Czech immigrants' books housed in the Christian Weise Library in Zittau are now being catalogued and researched. At the same time, the Dresden exiles' community has re-established its traditions, and celebrated its 350th anniversary in the year 2000⁴⁸. Events like the big Zittau exhibition in 2002 on Habsburg and Upper Lusatia, now usually treat the history of the Bohemians as well, and in due course the »Heffterbau« in Zittau, which hosted the exiles' church community and their cemetery, was renovated⁴⁹.

For centuries, the distinctive and distinguishable feature for coherence among the so-called Bohemian migrants in Saxony was neither language nor, strictly speaking, region or even religion, but their common, sometimes exaggerated or even invented fate as persecuted exiles. Only now, in recent years, is one of the largest migrant groups in early modern Europe slowly regaining their importance as well as their historical plurality. This is just as true for their historiographical representations as it is for their public memory. The unification of Europe as well as the current discussions on contemporary migration issues are helping to shape this awareness. Thus, we might assume that the historical changes of our own time significantly affect the past as well, inasmuch as they affect our treatment of its remnants.

48 Marie-Luise LANGE et al., *Um Gottes Wort vertrieben. 350 Jahre Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinde Böhmischer Exulanten in Dresden*, Dresden 2000.

49 Joachim BAHLCKE, Volker DUDECK (eds), *Welt – Macht – Geist. Das Haus Habsburg und die Oberlausitz 1526–1635* [exhibition catalogue], Görlitz, Zittau 2002.