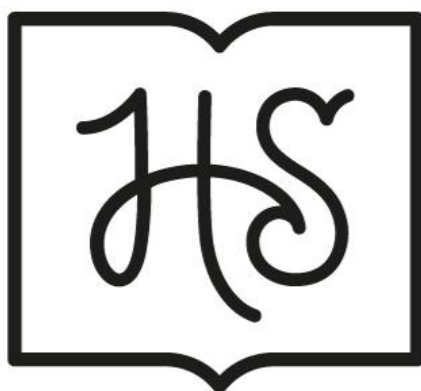


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Leo Thun von Hohenstein's oeuvre is of special significance in Central and East-Central Europe. The impact of his secondary school reform is still felt today, due to the Organisationsentwurf of 1850 that introduced the school-leaving examination and stabilised the system of curricular subjects in secondary schools in most countries of the Habsburg Monarchy. Higher education reforms are of similarly high importance: in Austria, it was the Universities Act codified in 2002 that brought along what seems to be a paradigm shift in the regulation of higher education. Thus, Thun's legacy is alive and intensively affects our presence. Its judgment and assessment generates confusion across linguistic borders and economic regions – as confirmed by the latest volume of comparative studies discussing the university reforms of the Thun era.

The studies in this volume can be put into two categories. The first group predominantly includes studies with an approach focusing on institutional history: they enumerate the histories of great university centres. Alois Kernbauer presents the network of higher education institutions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, reflecting on various academies as well as on the most well-known universities. In another study, Kernbauer provides a historical summary of the University of Graz in the mid-19th century. Further comprehensive studies include Christoph Aichner's essay on the University of Innsbruck, Mlada Sekyrková on the University of Prague, Maria Stynia on Krakow University and Alessandra Ferraresi on the University of Pavia. Also in this group, some studies take a more or less differing approach: although there is no summary written about the University of Pest, there is a study by Attila Szilárd Tar on changes that occurred in Hungarian law schools, while László Szögi gives a detailed account of the peregrination of Hungarian students. Simonetta Polenghi and Valentina Chierichetti offer a more comprehensive study of higher education reforms in Lombardy and Venice, discussing processes concerning secondary schools and concomitant pedagogical discourses as well. Several studies focus on developments in Vienna

– these, however, belong to the second group of the volume, displaying a problem history approaches.

One of the aims of the chapters connected to institutional history is to highlight the numerous individual specificities. Such local characteristics include Krakow's late integration into the Habsburg Monarchy and the significant role of the Catholic Church in the life of the university, as well as the determined yet unsuccessful attempt of the University of Graz to establish a Faculty of Medicine. The economic prosperity of northern Italian regions foregrounded the upholding of a special – polytechnic-like – faculty offering studies in Mathematics and Engineering. The influence of the Catholic Church was also exceptionally strong in Innsbruck, so much so that for decades an intensive debate was going on even in circles outside the university – the fate of the institution divided the local cultural and political elite in many ways.

The two great university towns, Prague and Vienna are a separate category on their own, due to their historical significance and role within the monarchy. As for Vienna, it is important to examine how relationships between the university and other scientific institutions developed. In the first half of the 19th century, science policy of the Habsburg Monarchy adhered to the idea that for an intellectual life reliable from the aspect of the monarch, the majority of scientific research needed to be conducted in the collections and institutions connected to the royal court. It was only in the 1830s when various professional societies, periodicals and scholarly volumes could change this situation and bring to the fore the symptoms of discontentment. Even demands for reform before 1848 were almost exclusively voiced by experts of these forums; therefore, the University of Vienna had limited opportunities to fulfil the function expected from the leading higher education institution of the empire.

In Prague, the relative tranquillity following Joseph II's reforms ended in the 1840s. From this point on, the university professors supported the democratic efforts, and the renewal of the institution was also fostered by the appearance of new subjects, specialisations and private instructors. For Thun, who was of Czech origin and had strong social ties with Prague, the radicalism of the revolution was a turning point in his way of thinking: he withdrew from cautiously supporting the Czech linguistic-national efforts and became rather reserved in this matter. Although the teaching of certain subjects in Czech was not forbidden in the 1850s, fewer and fewer students signed up for these courses, in fear of political retribution. Meanwhile, Thun's personnel policy strengthened the opposing pole: he invited a Bavarian Catholic professor to teach history and thus neutralised one of the main focal points of patriotic efforts.

The studies concerned with institutional history portray situations differing in several respects and approach them from several different viewpoints of their own field but, at certain points, they draw the same conclusions. Regardless of the province in question, Thun's higher education policies were characterised by observing and keeping an eye on the professors radicalised at the time of the revolution, as well as by attempting to subtly remove them from their position. The policy of appointing professors as a reaction against patriotism and on the basis of restoration and confessionality was prevalent everywhere. As a result, Catholic professors from Germany were hired in Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Prague, Krakow and Lemberg – foreign professors who were unbiased when it came to national issues and unrelated to local syndicates. In the 1850s these universities all experienced a drop in the number of students. In some cases, the change was drastic: the University of Prague, for instance, saw a more than 50% decrease in the number of students, as compared to the figures 30 years earlier, in 1825. It was a general tendency that the passage of the Thun-reforms concerning secondary schools generated serious problems, since the appearance of 8-year grammar schools demanded the redefinition of the tasks of Philosophy Faculties, and thus 'incomplete' institutions that functioned as academies found themselves in immediate danger.

It is quite intriguing to compare studies in terms of their discussion of the issue of Germanization. In the history of several nations, the 1850s are linked to efforts of Germanization. Historiographic assertions suggest that this phenomenon explains Italian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish historians' fairly moderate interest in Thun's oeuvre. At the same time, several thorough research studies show that accusations of Germanization are exaggerated. It seems indubitable – especially in light of what the case study in Prague indicates – that Thun, who initially sympathised with reform efforts, albeit cautiously, was frightened by the radicalism of the revolution. In the 1850s Thun reacted to nationalist endeavours accordingly, which resulted in the removal of unreliable professors and the gradual disappearance of university courses and programs that cultivated the national language. On the other hand, some progress was detectable in the further development of Polish and Czech scientific language, as Thun's university policy concerning this issue was rather strong but by no means rigorously biased.

The aforementioned question highlights the debated elements of classifying Thun's mentality and policies well. Several studies in the volume attempt to position him in the political and conceptual stage of the era: besides Christof Aichner and Brigitte Mazohl's introductory chapter, there is Walter Höflechner's study, which discusses Thun's higher education reform in the context of the history of scholarship; Thomas Maisel's writing, focusing on changes in the freedom of the Academy in Vienna; Franz Leander Fillafer's political and intellectual historical study; and Mitchell G. Ash's essay, exploring the connection between the structure of the University of Vienna and the Humboldtian model of higher education. A conclusion we can draw from all these studies is that intellectual classification is highly difficult to record.

According to Maisel, Thun's predecessors, Sommaruga and Feuchtersleben, with their supporting attitude at the time of the revolution, had already generated discontent among the students demanding academic freedom. This indicates that the neo-humanism of those directly concerned with the governance of the university could at best lead to greater academic freedom, that is, to a modernised, yet state-supervised version of the traditional corporative model. Fillafer's study adds new shades to the simple narrative which declares that Thun was firm in his hindering of the opportunities emerging at the time of the revolution. The study emphasises the interpretation that Thun, in fact, belonged to the group of conservative enlightened decision makers and had strong familial relationships with Ferdinand Kindermann, the central figure of the Czech school reform. After the revolution, Thun undoubtedly became more cautious but still did a lot for the competency of university education and enabled a more scientific approach gaining ground. This claim is underlined by Höflechner's statement according to which Thun created a system controlled from the above but, to various degrees, he generally aided the strengthening of the reformist party. For Höflechner, a crucial aspect of this phenomenon was the role Franz Exner and Hermann Bonitz – both with significant scientific connections in Berlin – played in the process, and the confidence Thun had in them.

The hybrid nature of Thun's reform is mapped by Mitchell G. Ash, stressing that reform efforts at the University of Vienna did not follow the Humboldtian model much. Thun and his colleagues only had indirect relations with Berlin, and their aims, scopes of action and structural circumstances revealed notable differences with regards to fundamental questions. Prussians thus could not really have a career as professors, and there was no real mobility of professors in the Habsburg Monarchy. The highly Catholic character of Vienna and Prague had an impact on the development of their universities, and there were very few, if any, examples of rigorous rules in Berlin, either. Thun tended to ignore the intention of the faculties when it came to appointing deans or professors, considerably limited the proclaimed freedom in teaching and studying, and generally sided with the firm state control. While in 1847 the Academy of Science was finally established in Vienna, the universities remained centres of education and research, in many ways only imitating the Humboldtian model.

Johannes Feichtinger and Franz Leander Fillafer's study closing the volume points out that the assessment of Thun's oeuvre repeatedly causes great political difficulties in Austria – a phenomenon revealed through the examination of three time periods. As early as the 1860s, a strong opposition to Thun's policies emerges in the person of Eduard Herbst, an enlightened environmental lawyer and radical liberal. In Herbst's view, Thun took a concealed Catholic turn and in 1848 he eliminated certain passages of academic freedom, not *de jure* but *de facto*. Herbst described Thun's actions as a politics of centralisation, Germanization and Catholic restoration. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, Herbst's critical stance was shared by Gustav Strakosch-Grassmann, a crucial figure of research on the history

of universities in Austria. Restriction on the freedom of teaching and studying was likewise considered to be a central question by liberal Catholic legal historian Hans Lentze in the early 1960s. The rights that ensured a greater autonomy for universities had come into force six months before Thun took his post, and he distorted and restricted them, thereby supporting the functioning of an authoritarian regime by covert means – as Lentze’s thesis indicates.

Strakosch-Grassmann found his opponent in Salomon Frankfurter, while Lentze was disputed by Richard Meister. Salomon published a fundamentally apologetic writing on the 55th anniversary of the act, and Meister did the same on its 100th anniversary. While the former emphasised the liberal tendencies of Thun’s reforms and presented his actions as the perfection of Exner and Bonitz’s ideas, Meister formulated his opinion more carefully: he acknowledged the restriction of academic freedom but claimed that it was a necessary stage on the way to a domesticated autonomy; that is, he argued for justified boundaries for the freedom of teaching and studying.

The reader may wonder why Thun’s actions generated so much turmoil for generations to come. The closing study reveals the answer: Thun’s system of higher education remained formally valid until 1955 (although in the National Socialist period Austrian universities lost all their autonomy). Nevertheless, not even the higher education act of 1955 took a firm stance with regards to the autonomy of universities or concerning the issue of the function of scientific research versus the training of state officials. It was only the University Act of 2002 with its European spirit that finally brought change in this respect.

This way, in the former countries of the monarchy, Thun’s legacy remains to be seen as a continual burden, a task to work on not only by historians of the university and of ideas but also by politicians and researchers of education as well. Surely, in spite of all the unsolved basic issues and complicating factors, his legacy lives on in every educational region of the former Monarchy, markedly determining each aspect of its secondary and higher education. And one of the most important lessons learnt from the present volume, written by historians of the university, university archivists, as well as historians of education, political ideas and cultural historians in cooperation, is that local specificities are counterbalanced by far more similarities than we could think of.