

ARTICLES

THE ORIGIN, GLORY AND FALL OF THE NEW BUSINESS NOBILITY OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

ROMAN HOLEC

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The study describes the origin, glory and fall of several important business families (Fries, Henikstein, Friesenhof and others), who gained noble status in Vienna at the end of the 18th century and retained considerable social prestige and wealth in the early 19th century. However, their minimal political influence as new noblemen did not correspond to their enormous economic and great cultural importance. The strong founding generation was usually followed by stagnation and often gradual decline with members of later generations not having the necessary persistence and qualities.

This development is shown in most detail in the case of the Friesenhof family, with Johann Michael (1739–1812) founding a tradition as the first baron. His son Adolph (1798–1853) still significantly applied himself in the field of business, but his younger brother Gustav (1807–1889) already settled at Brodzany in territory now belonging to Slovakia, where he devoted his attention to business on the local level rather than on that of the whole state. With a loyal attitude to the court and the monarch, strong links with Russia, the Slovak national emancipation movement and Germany, he became a representative of a unique type within the new aristocracy with very strong European connections. His children developed these tendencies further. All this made the Friesenhofs a very interesting and entirely atypical noble family, which only confirmed the variety of this social group.

Key words: Habsburg Monarchy. 18th – 19th centuries. New business nobility. Friesenhof-Oldenburg baronial family. Links with Russia and Slovak politics.

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Three businesses with representatives who became part of the so-called new nobility will be in the centre of the attention of this text. Two Viennese banking

houses from around 1800: Fries & Comp. and Henikstein & Comp with the now almost unknown personality Johann Michael Vogel, who was connected with both and interested in their deals. One of Vogel's sons followed his father's business career, while the other undertook various diplomatic missions abroad before settling in the territory now belonging to Slovakia before the 1848 revolution.¹

Our story begins in the French municipality of Beblenheim in Alsace, north of Colmar and almost on the border with present-day Germany. The founder of the Friesenhof family and first bearer of his name, the already mentioned Johann Michael Vogel, was born there in 1739. It is thought that the family originated from Mülhausen, then loosely connected with Switzerland. His father David died in 1746 and mother Verena, born Rack, in 1765.²

Johann Michael lived and worked in Vienna, capital city of the Habsburg Monarchy, where many financially demanding Enlightenment ideals and reform projects were in progress. Vienna was the centre of a large state and a place where ambitious and enterprising people could apply their talents. Johann Michael was clearly such a person. People like him came from abroad, bringing new forms of behaviour, culture and business. They decisively participated in the industrially backward country. They settled in Vienna, enjoyed religious freedom there and found new homes for themselves and their families.

The year of the outbreak of the French Revolution was also a turning point for Johann Michael. In 1789, at the relatively late age of fifty, he married a young compatriot, 18 year old Baroness Anna Maria Bössner, born 1771, daughter of Ambrose Bössner, a burger, senator and pharmacist in Colmar.³ Anna was niece of the banker Johann Jakob Bössner from the city of Brody in Galicia. Her ancestors show various indications of the Jewish origin of the family. Marriage with the young girl was clearly connected with a further important event in the life of Johann Michael.

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- 1 This text originated with support and in the framework of the project APVV-14-0644: *Kontinuity a diskontinuity politických a spoločenských elit na Slovensku v 19. a 20. storočí* (Continuities and discontinuities in political and social elites in Slovakia) and VEGA 2/0121/17: *Politická korupcia na území Slovenska v 19. a 20. storočí* (Political corruption in the territory of Slovakia in the 19th and 20th centuries).
 - 2 STEEB, Christian. *Die Grafen von Fries. Eine Schweizer Familie und ihre wirtschafts-politische und kulturhistorische Bedeutung für Österreich zwischen 1750 und 1830*. Bad Vöslau: Stadtgemeinde, 1999, p. 147. ISBN 3950120505.
 - 3 Archív Slovenského národného múzea (Archive of the Slovak National Museum) Bratislava (hereinafter ASNM), fund Brodzany (unsorted), Stammbaum; Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives) Bratislava (hereinafter SNA), fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Rodokmeň Bössnerovcov (Family tree of the Bössner family).

In the same year as his marriage, namely 1789, the Emperor Joseph II granted him the status of a hereditary baron of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation as Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof. This was preceded by a request to the Emperor for elevation to the rank of imperial baron, in which Vogel appealed to his already long ennobled and by then deceased chief Johann Fries and a detailed enumeration of his achievements in the economic and financial field, on the basis of which he proposed the above mentioned predicate.⁴

The request to the Emperor came soon after the wedding, and a wife appropriate to a baron was one of the strongest arguments. It was usually necessary for a person to gain noble status and only then apply for the title of baron. However, in the case of Johann Michael it was all very quick: first an advantageous marriage, and then an immediately application to be a baron, simply jumping over one step. Ennoblement for social reasons such as a family connection with the nobility was usual, but the granting of the title baron without prior ennoblement was exceptional. It appears that money was also decisive here. Ennoblement papers did not contain a request for remission of payment, which had to be appropriately large in such as case, which involved both becoming a baron and jumping over a stage (so-called *tax cum saltu*).⁵ However, for Johann Michael this was an investment like in an industrial enterprise. It was an investment that would increase in value and could be inherited by his descendants. The question arises of whether the marriage of Johann Michael and Anna was not a classic case of a marriage of convenience between social status and a bag of money or rather bank deposits.

We learn from the charter of ennoblement in almost identical terms to those in the application that the new baron gained merit mainly in the business sphere. For 27 years, since 1762 he had worked in the bill of exchange business and for the Fries family. As an employee in the banking and bill of exchange house Fries & Comp., he actively and significantly participated in founding and operating “*various very important enterprises of this house in Galicia*” and various other manufacturing or other businesses, such as the establishment in 1751 of the fustian manufacturing business at Obergrafendorf in Lower Austria with its management in Fridau Castle. In 1787 in the framework of the Henikstein banking house, he participated in founding a sugar refinery in Bohemia, as well

4 SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Johann Michael Vogel to the Emperor 9 June 1789.

5 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, fund Adelsarchiv (1500 ca – 1918 ca), Reichsadelsakten (1500 ca – 1806), Allgemeine Reihe, Johann Michael Vogel, Freiherrstand (von Friesenhof) und Prädikat „Wohlgebohren“ 1789 and fund Hofadelsakten (1600–1918), Allgemeine Reihe, Johann Michael Vogel, Freiherrnstand (von Friesenhof) 1789. I thank Jan Županič for profit-free provision of materials.

as expanding the silk manufacturing business belonging to this house and running a pressed calico factory at Fridau. These contributions to expanding the economy of the state were combined with activities in favour of the ruling dynasty “*both in financial operations and in the establishment of important manufacturing and commercial enterprises*”.⁶

We should not forget that we are dealing with the age of early capitalism, when the reform plans of Maria Theresa and Joseph II were directed towards the economic growth of the country. State policy supported the establishment of manufacturing enterprises. This often involved granting of permission to individuals to establish businesses. Efforts were beginning to rationalize agriculture and revive trade. Various measures aimed to fill the state treasury, which had been exhausted and emptied by war. The state granted the right to establish factories mainly to aristocrats, but also to monasteries, high state officials and ever more frequently also to businessmen, and without regard for their nationality or origin. They included Protestants, Jews, and whole commercial companies (Compagnien) associating individuals of the most varied types: noblemen, Jews, foreigners, domestic businessmen, speculators and various adventurers. Tradesmen became founders of manufacturing businesses, which was in the interests of the state, and so subject to the same pressure from its side. People from countries to the west of the Monarchy played a significant part, as in the case of Johann Michael Vogel.

While in the reigns of Charles VI and Maria Theresa, there were relatively clear social boundaries between the so-called court society, and the bourgeois, official and other groups, Joseph II began to “complicate” the structure with his ennoblement policy. The first bourgeois counts, including the above mentioned Fries came from the traders and manufacturers. Apart from them, many more businessmen and industrialists including the first Jews were raised into the lower level of the noble estate, where they formed the so-called second society. Their social prestige was raised, but the amalgamation of the nobility for which Joseph II strove was not achieved, in spite of various penetrations into its structures.

The businessmen with starting capital knew how to invest it in ways that brought the accumulation of ever increasing financial resources. They had the green light from a state that did all it could to help them. The above mentioned banking house Fries & Comp was such a business, strongly involved in the financial market of the Empire.

6 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), copy (kivonatos másolat) of the ennoblement charter of Joseph II from 1789. Similar information is also given in: *Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon. II*. Leipzig: Voigt, 1868, p. 403, but here the document granting ennoblement gives the date 1790. On bill of exchange deals also SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others.

The businessman, industrialist and banker Johann Fries (1719–1785) established it in 1766 in cooperation with the Frankfurt businessman Johann Jakob Baron Gontard. The latter was originally Fries' accountant, and his share of the legally required share capital of 60,000 gulden was a quarter, meaning 15,000 gulden. The rest belonged to Fries. According to the founding documents, the banking house also involved all Fries' existing business activities.

Fries was born in Alsace in the town of Mülhausen, south of Beblenheim, hometown of the Vogel family. Thus, the connection of Fries with Johann Vogel appears to have been facilitated by their shared origin. Fries came from an old Swiss Calvinist family involved in banking and trade. As a result of the Tolerance Patent, he became one of the founders of the orthodox Helvetic Confession in the Monarchy. The favourable business climate in an Alpine country and Protestant disposition gave the Swiss good pre-conditions for "*export of their abilities*".⁷ Fries entered the service of Austria, where he concerned himself, like many other non-Catholic or Jewish private bankers with trade and delivery experience, mainly with bill of exchange deals, financing of the trade in goods and supplies for the army. The integration of Jewish and Protestant businessmen into society happened at a time when Austria desperately needed money after the loss of Silesia. Especially in the case of the first group, it was a complicated and unfinished process.

Johann Fries achieved great success in obtaining financial support from abroad for the army of the Habsburg Monarchy and its allies. After the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748, he was entrusted with negotiating the payment of British support, which London owed to Austria, but was no longer willing to pay after the conclusion of the peace treaty at Aachen. Fries fulfilled this delicate task after a year of negotiations in London, and the Empress Maria Theresa gave him the right to settle in Vienna without the obligation to pay tax.

The Fries & Comp banking house was an example of vigorous rise, accumulation of great wealth and tragic fall. It meant combination of large-scale trade, finance and industry, simply: big business. This demanded a high level of qualification, numerous qualified forces, from the beginning exclusively foreign, and much new knowledge. These changes are also interpreted as pressure for modernization.⁸ The tendency towards autarchy gradually increased, and more competition created strong modernizing pressure on the businessmen of Austria.

7 On this see: MIKOLETZKY, Hanns Leo. Schweizer Händler und Bankiers in Österreich (vom 17. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts). In REDLICH, Virgil – FELLNER, Fritz (eds). *Österreich und Europa. Festgabe für Hugo Hantsch*. Graz; Wien; Köln: Styria, 1965, p. 150 and following.

8 For more details see: MITTENZWEI, Ingrid. *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Wiens frühe Bourgeoisie an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Böhlau, 1998. ISBN 9783205988724.

During the Seven Years War, Fries dealt with the French financial support of 12 million gulden per year, and mediated advantageous deals with the Ottoman Empire. Apart from the Orient, he had intensive contacts with Italian businesses. For a return of 0.5%, he administered 45 million gulden for the state military treasury until 1767. When payments were delayed, he provided advances from his own resources. For example, he financed the army of General Laudon after the Battle of Frankfurt an der Oder in 1759.

He became one of the leading figures in the development of Austrian industry in the capital of the Habsburg Empire. Maria Theresia granted him various economic privileges, which he used to establish various manufacturing operations, and the government behaved equally generously towards him. In spite of the fact that he was not a Catholic, Fries received a privilege in 1751 to establish a factory for the production of all types of fustian and silk fabrics in the Lower Austrian villages of Fridau and Rabenstein, properties of Baron Johann Georg von Grechtler. The above mentioned Johann Michael Vogel already contributed here. In 1764 Fries and Grechtler formed a joint consortium, and in 1770 at Fridau they engaged the important Augsburg expert and manager Johann Heinrich Schüle, thanks to whom the level of final adjustment reached the highest level. Apart from foreign experts, they imported the most modern technology, so the technical level of individual factories constantly rose.

In 1751, Fries and the Italian tradesman Peter Togniolo gained a privilege to establish a factory to produce velvet at Oberdöbling. They had the right to produce all types of velvet and silk. They appointed the Dutchman Friedrich Christian Ascher as the expert in this field. The number of the weaver's looms was not limited here, and neither was the number of journeymen and apprentices he had the right to train. Maria Theresia promised "*to defend the granted favour and freedom, and to provide peace for their factory, undisturbed production and development...*"⁹

A year later, in 1752, Fries and the artillery lieutenant Johann Schmidt received the right to establish a works for brass and metal production at Weissenbach in Lower Austria. The privilege from Maria Theresia guaranteed them a ten year monopoly on the mechanical equipment of the factory, including the equipment for using water power. It also provided an advantageous fixed price for obtaining iron bars from the state mines in Tyrol and Styria, as well as tariff free trade in the territory of the Monarchy and advantageous conditions for exporting their products beyond its frontiers. At the beginning of 1755, the privilege was extended to cover the production of various wire products, needles and files at

9 OTRUBA, Gustav (ed.). *Österreichische Fabriksprivilegien vom 16. ins 18. Jahrhundert*. Wien; Köln; Graz: Böhlau, 1981, p. 283 (the privileges from 28 March and 23 December 1851). ISBN 3205087291.

Lichtenwörth near Wiener Neustadt. The location of the new industrial operation was called Nadelburg, and the businessmen had an obligation to build a Catholic church or chapel dedicated to St. Theresa for the office staff and workers of the factory. Annual pay also had to be provided for two clergy from the Cistercian monastery in Neustadt. This shows that such privilege grants had not only economic, but also wider social parameters.¹⁰

However, these exclusive privileges granting monopolies were gradually broken by the issuing of further licenses to establish factories, which positively influenced the development of competition and initiated much more intensive industrial development and a more demanding business environment.

In 1752, Fries and the above-mentioned silk entrepreneur Togniolo were entrusted with management of the imperial silk factories. In 1754, on the basis of the privilege they had been granted, they founded an enterprise for the production of velvet and silk fabrics at Oberdöbling, where they used supplies and equipment from existing imperial stocks. Later they expanded the production of silk to further factories at Schottenfeld and Neubau. Fries established a woollen factory in the property of Baron Wolf K. von Neffzern at Hradec nad Moravicí. On the other hand, he did not succeed in gaining control of the trade in flax textiles in Bohemia through the Thun trading house. In 1759 Fries was made head of the administration of the transport of rocks from the state mines. In the course of 24 years the turnover of this enterprise reached 55 million gulden, and Fries lent it six million with a half-percent provision.

It was obvious that Maria Theresa was striving to compensate for the loss of Silesia by systematically supporting the establishment of manufacturing activities. Precisely Johann Fries was one of the most useful men, who organized numerous activities for which he received many privileges and financial reliefs.

From 1756 (also recorded as 1752) until 1776, Fries made immense profits from the so-called Thaler-Negotium, which was nothing other than a scheme for trade with the Orient invented by him, and in which he had a monopoly. More than 20 million Maria Theresa thalers were exported to the Eastern Mediterranean. The coins continued to be struck after the death of the Empress. They were demanded as a means of payment in parts of Asia and Africa until the Second World War because of their high silver content. Fries gained more than a million gulden in net profit from agio, namely the difference between the higher market value in comparison with the nominal value based on the value of the metal and cost of striking the coins. For one thaler he gained an agio of 10 kreuzers (120 kreuzers = 1 thaler). According to other data, he gained a third of the net profit. The legendary wealth from striking 20 million silver coins also

¹⁰ OTRUBA, ref. 9, pp. 374–375 (the privilege from 11 January 1755).

accumulated thanks to the fact that from 1769 Fries enjoyed freedom from tax. The mint adjunct Franz Kaschnitz in the mint office at Kremnica secured striking of the coins.¹¹

In 1774 we find Fries in Brussels, where in a further diplomatic mission, he equalized the new customs tariff between the German states and the Austrian Netherlands (mainly today's Belgium). He also secured increased exports of copper from Upper Hungary to the Austrian Netherlands. After the Monarchy gained Galicia, Fries & Comp built the manufacturing town of Ederow at a cost of 100,000 gulden. The company had representatives in the Galician cities of Brody and Lviv, as well as at Naples in Italy.

In the course of Maria Theresa's complex struggles for the existence of her state, Fries secured two state loans for Austria: in 1777 and 1779. Together with the banking house, he was also involved in a large trading organization, which specialized in trade down the Danube to the Orient. It had a base in Constantinople, which controlled trade with the Ottoman Empire. In 1781, he took over a suppressed Pauline monastery in Wiener Neustadt, and used it as a factory producing a wide range of silk products. A Swiss specialist became the chief of production. From 1783, Fries was the largest shareholder of a factor for cotton and printed calico at Kettenhof. Johann's brother Philip Jakob von Fries, ennobled as a baron in 1791, became one of its directors, as well as being director of a spinning mill for cotton at Schwechat. He was a forerunner of what we would now call a manager.

Among the many sided and sometimes very lucrative activities of Johann Fries we can mention the importing of the Blauer Portugieser vine variety to Bad Vöslau, where he had bought a grand mansion, and where he was responsible for the origin of the excellent reputation of the local wine. He was clearly close to the court, and although not all his aims went according to plan, he succeeded in accumulating immense wealth, which he invested mainly in the purchasing of real estate and palaces or in their construction and reconstruction. He had a luxurious palace, now called the Pallavicini Palace built near the Hofburg to a design by a court architect. He acquired the lordships of Vöslau, Dennenlohe and Oberschwanningen.

Fries was raised to the noble estate in 1752. He was made a knight in 1757, a baron in 1762 and an imperial count in 1783.¹² The future first Baron Vogel von

11 MATIS, Herbert. Die Grafen von Fries. Aufstieg und Untergang einer Unternehmerfamilie. In *Tradition*, 12 (München 1967), 4. Heft, p. 486–491. On this see also: SEMPLE, Clara. *A Silver Legend. The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler*. Barzan Publishing Lim., 2005. ISBN 9780954970109.

12 For polemics and doubts on this see: WALDERDORFF, Hugo Graf von. *Beweis dass Graf Johann Fries von Geburt an adelig war*. Landshut: Thomann, 1914. Later research overturned

Friesenhof, who had worked with Fries for many years, also appealed to this imposing advancement in his already mentioned application for ennoblement. We can suppose that his proposed noble predicate derived from the name of the then already Count Fries, who was more than Johann Vogel's ordinary superior, and can be considered his partner and benefactor. This is also confirmed by the striking similarity between the shields of Vogel and Fries. Many years of paternalism and cooperation played an important role in the Vogel-Friesenhof family, and tradition still had an important role.

The position of Johann Michael Vogel was strengthened by a basic change in the company in December 1782. He progressed from the position of a long-term cooperater with Fries and Gontard to that of a partner. He contributed capital of 50,000 gulden, and took up the management of a trading company.

In 1785, Fries was found drowned in a lake in the lordship of Vöslau. His death remained unexplained, with suicide under the influence of depression mentioned.¹³ His wealth was estimated at 6 million gulden. His widow Anna Fries, born Parish (1737–1807), daughter of a manufacturer and Polish – Saxon consul in Lyons prepared to act as guardian for his still underage children. She participated financially in the industrialization projects of the Fries & Comp. firm, including the sugar refineries at Rijeka, Trieste, Klosterneuburg, Zbraslav near Prague and Náchod, the cotton mills at Fridau and Kettenhof, which employed up to 20,000 on the basis of the putting-out system, the silk factory at Wiener Neustadt and the textile factory at Mödling. The property of the banking house up to 1800 reached 2.5 million gulden, from which up to 80% fell to the widow, that is to Fries's family. The half yearly profit varied in the range 300,000–400,000 gulden. The family had about 5–6 million gulden invested in state bonds, not to mention a huge amount of land in its possession.

After Fries died in 1785, guardianship of his underage children, Moritz and two daughters was held according to his wishes by his widow Anna, his former associate Gontard, nephew Philipp Jakob von Fries and another former associate Johann Michael Vogel, still without the predicate "von Friesenhof".¹⁴ In the

the claim from this publication.

13 BRŇOVJÁK, Jiří. *Šlechticem z moci úřední. Udělování šlechtických titulů v českých zemích 1705–1780*. (Noblemen by official order. The granting of noble titles in the Czech Lands 1705–1780). Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, 2015, p. 228. ISBN 9788074644610; STEEB, ref. 2; MENTSCHL, Josef – OTRUBA, Gustav. *Österreichische Industrielle und Bankiers*. Wien: Bergland, 1965, p. 39 and following; KATZER, Ernst. *Ein Frühindustrieller. Johann Reichsgraf von Fries*. In: *Niederösterreichischer Kulturbericht 1985. Kunst und Wissenschaft. Bericht über Förderungsmaßnahmen der Abteilung Kultur und Wissenschaft des Amtes der NÖ Landesregierung*. St. Pölten: Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, 1985, p. 14 and following.

14 Valuable information about the business activities of the company but with some inaccurate names can be found in the study: MATIS, ref. 11, pp. 484–496.

instructions from the founder of the noble – business family for the guardians, they are told among other things to prevent unequal marriages, manage money economically and justly divide the property between the heirs. Each guardian apart from the widow would receive 1000 gulden each year. The widow considered that she had been harmed by her husband's will, and the guardians effectively restricted her tendency to use money for the most varied personal needs. The two daughters also had their own ideas about the use of money, and very skilfully exploited the disputes between their mother and the guardians.¹⁵

In 1787, Vogel and the other guardians became the joint owners of the silk factory in the buildings of the former Carmelite monastery at Wiener Neustadt. We know about the role of Johann Michael Fries in the Fries business and its spheres of interest in the varied business activities of the banking house mostly only from the ennoblement charter cited above.

After Joseph Fries (1765–1788) son of Johann came of age, he took up the leading place in the Fries family. He was a famous collector of art and founder of a world famous picture gallery. He lived mainly in Rome and Naples, where he had contact with Johann Wolfgang Goethe. He died suddenly of a high fever.

On the occasion of the accession of the Emperor Leopold in 1790, the company Fries & Comp produced a memorandum under the title "Promemoria", which summarized the company's huge property, rich business activities, achievements in the development of industry and reducing the trade deficit of the Austrian state. It was understandable that they wrote more about patriotism than about high profits. Ennoblement of the leading figures in the company was supposed to be evidence of patriotism and merit, but protection and favour from the ruling house was still required. A list follows of the enterprises in which the company had deposited its capital: the cotton factories at Fridau and Kettenhof (basic capital of more than a million gulden from which the Fries family held more than half, as well as 20,000 from the enterprise of dependent weavers, spinners and other workers), the weaving works at Wiener Neustadt (which concentrated manufacturing transferred from larger towns, and had capital of 300,000 gulden, with 120 weaver's looms), the cloth making factory at Mödling (entirely in the hands of the company), operations in the Galician town of Ederow (factory established in 1788 with capital of 100,000 gulden and more than 50 weaver's looms)¹⁶, the trading house Roesner & Comp. of Brody and its representatives

15 HAUGWITZ-EL KALAK, Johanna. Rodina Friesů. (The Fries family). In HAUGWITZ-EL KALAK, Johanna (ed.). *Panství Náměšť v proměnách času. Obraz v zrcadle evropských dějin*. Telč: NPÚ Telč, 2013, p. 133. ISBN 9788090424074. One of the sisters Sofia Fries (1769–1835) married Count Henrich Wilhelm Haugwitz in 1794.

16 On this see: *Provinzialnachrichten aus den Kaiserl. Königl. Staaten über Statistik, Oekonomie, Handel und Wissenschaften*, 1, no. 51 from 25 June 1788, p. 391.

in Lviv (which concentrated on the sale of Styrian scythes and Polish wax). The company supported trade in Czech cloth and glass, as well as other Austrian products. With the intension of strengthening links southwards to Trieste, the company cooperated with a Naples trading house (financial share amounting to 165,000 gulden), and with it supported a sugar refinery in Rijeka with capital of 250,000 gulden. The last enterprise also stimulated the establishment of a refinery at neighbouring Trieste, in which the Fries family was also involved. Finally, the most recent activities of the company included a newly established sugar refinery at Klosterneuburg. Their role was to compete with the refined sugar from Hamburg and Prussia, with the aim of completely excluding it from the Austrian market. Expanding the production of the refinery at Zbraslav (Königsaal) in Bohemia also had to play a key role in this. In this area, the company demanded state support and protective measures in terms of price in relation to foreign sugar.¹⁷

Another extensive document of all the guardians was produced in 1792. It shows that Baron Johann Michael Vogel von Friesenhof already had an important position. For example, Friesenhof received a quarter of the net profit. The legal representative of the company Moritz von Fries contributed half and Friesenhof a fifth (200,000) to the fund of a million gulden, which was ready to disposition. Friesenhof paid this sum gradually, paying interest on each capital instalment.¹⁸ The guardians bought the lordships of Neulengbach and Plankenberg in 1797.

The guardians also consistently cared for the education of the young Moritz von Fries (1777–1826), another son of the founder of the family and younger brother of Joseph. The Military Academy in Colmar had been disrupted by the French Revolution, but one of its leading teachers became a tutor to the Fries family, and Friesenhof was largely responsible for this.¹⁹ From the turn of the century Moritz von Fries took up the leadership of the banking house and management of his property, successfully enlarged by the guardians. According to an official record of tradesmen, entrepreneurs, artists and others from 1803, the firm had its headquarters at Breunerstrasse 1195. Johann Michael Baron von Friesenhof, Alexander Brevillier and Ludwig Peschier were mentioned as associates. Each of them was authorized to lead and represent the firm as a whole.²⁰

17 STEEB, ref. 2, pp. 156–160.

18 FRIES, August Graf von. *Die Grafen von Fries*. Dresden-Neustadt: Heinrich, 1903, pp. 182–190.

19 STEEB, ref. 2, p. 171 and 352.

20 *Vollständiges Auskunftsbuch, oder einzig richtiger Wegweiser in der k. k. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... auf das Jahr 1803*. Wien 1803, p. VIII.

During the period of greatest flourishing of the company, Johann Michael Baron von Friesenhof separated from the Fries & Comp banking house at the end of 1807 and became independent. The reason must have been his advanced age and weakened state of health. He received as a share of the property, 100,000 gulden paid in several precisely defined instalments, and 6% interest on the property of the company for himself and his heirs. The agreement guaranteed him another 40,000 gulden and a share of 6% as interest from profits in connection with the industrial enterprises that had been established and as compensation for their expected profits.²¹ With this financial securing, he could begin a new life. However, Friesenhof still closely cooperated with his former chief Moritz von Fries. They maintained friendly relations in spite of the age difference between them.

Further parties to this contract are also interesting to us. They give some idea of the circles in which the founder of the Friesenhof family moved, although he was much less rich and notable than Fries. Apart from the founder's son Moritz von Fries, we find at the bottom of the contract the signature and seal of Baron Johann Jakob von Gontard, one of the other founders of this successful firm. Another is the above mentioned Alexander Brevillier, Fries' associate, who came from Frankfurt am Main to Vienna in the 1780s and was Gontard's nephew. He later became one of the founders of the banking house. The Brevillier family lived in Fries' palace, now the Pallavicini Palace near the Hofburg in Vienna. In her youth, Alexander's wife had been a friend of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Their son Ludwig was an important entrepreneur and industrialist. We also find the signature of the above-mentioned Baron Ludwig Peschier, a relation of Fries and another successful banker. He participated in the firm, and together with other leading Central European bankers, he was involved in a contribution deal in France to a value of 55 million gulden.

The departure of Johann Michael from the company happened in a very complicated period. Brevillier died soon after aged only 48, and the young Count Fries had to leave art and devote more attention to trade, which certainly did not fill him with enthusiasm. To make matters worse, several of his children died in a short time, and the atmosphere in his house and household significantly changed, as was registered even by random visitors.²²

21 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, fund Merkantil- und Wechselgericht, Firmenakten, 1. Reihe, F 50, fol. 108r., contract from 21 December 1807; SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others, Societättrennungs-Vertrag.

22 REICHARDT, Johann Friedrich (ed.). *Vertraute Briefe geschrieben auf einer Reise nach Wien und den Österreichischen Staaten zu Ende des Jahres 1808 und zu Anfang 1809... I. Band.* Wien 1815, p. 126 and following; STEEB, ref. 2, pp. 222–224. Recorded in: *Vollständiges Auskunftsbuch, oder einzig richtiger Wegweiser in der kaiserl königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... auf das Jahr 1808.* Wien 1808, p. 9 these changes in the firm are still not recorded.

Moritz von Fries was equally a banker, patron and collector of art. He led a very expensive life, corresponding to the fact that contemporaries regarded him as the richest man in the Monarchy. He had about 5 – 6 million gulden in state bonds and real estate. Apart from this, the family had the privilege of tax freedom granted in 1769. If he was not the richest man in the Monarchy, his annual income of about 500,000 gulden placed him on the level of the richest princely families. However, this was not enough. He also surrounded himself with luxuries surpassing his fairytale income. His library contained about 16,000 volumes, and the artistic treasures of the Fries family, including more than 300 notable works that Moritz took over after the death of his brother Joseph, included works by Raffael, van Dyck, Rembrandt, Dürer and many others.²³ He also owned huge collections of minerals, coins and engravings. As a patron of art, Moritz von Fries financially supported Ludwig van Beethoven, who dedicated his Seventh Symphony to him.

The Fries company successfully expanded its “empire”. The weaving enterprises at Schwandorf and Neunkirchen were enlarged, as was the silk factory at Himberg established in 1804. The Styrian properties of Count Trautmannsdorf were bought in 1812. The last successful speculative purchase was the buying of the inheritance of the Duke of Otranto (Joseph Fouché) in Paris in 1818.

Appropriately to his fairytale wealth, Moritz von Fries married Princess Maria Theresa Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingfürst. The importance of such capital strong individuals and businesses increased during the Napoleonic Wars. The Jewish barons Nathan Adam von Arnstein and Bernhard von Eskeles, the non-Jewish Fries and Johann Heinrich von Geymüller Jr. from Switzerland and John and David Parish from Hamburg secured war loans and the provisioning of armies. In return, they were fantastically enriched.

However, the end of the Napoleonic Wars and of the continental blockade and devaluation of currencies foreshadowed economic decline of the banking house and its industrial activities. In 1820 the share of the Fries family in the ownership of the business declined to 40%. In the first quarter of the 19th century, the huge property of the Fries & Comp business shrank to a minimum, and the owners had to declare bankruptcy in 1826. The reason was the unbearably expensive lifestyle of the Fries family, huge investments and devaluation of the currency during the Napoleonic Wars. The whole of the family’s art collection was auctioned to pay the most urgent debts. The pictures now hang in many leading European

23 PREYSING, August Graf. Das Familienbildnis der Grafen Fries. In *Jahrbuch des Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien, Band 9*. Wien 1951, pp. 91–109; SANDGRUBER, Roman. Einkommensentwicklung und Einkommensverteilung in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts – einige Quellen und Anhaltspunkte. In PLASCHKA, Richard G. (ed.). *Österreich im Europa der Aufklärung. Bd. 1*. Wien: Verlag der ÖAW, 1985, pp. 256–257. ISBN 3700107129.

galleries. After receiving the news of the suicide of his associate Parish, Moritz von Fries, now married for the second time to a French dancer, declared the firm's inability to make payments in 1826 in Paris. He placed his son Moritz von Fries junior (1804–1878) at the head of the banking house, but he was also unable to avoid catastrophe.

The renting of the coal mine at Brennberg, now Brennbergbánya near Sopron and only a kilometre from the present Austrian frontier, is the field of business of the Fries & Comp banking house that has been best studied by historiography.²⁴ The mines belonged to the town of Sopron for the whole 200 years of operation from their discovery in 1759. However, in the period 1822–1827, thanks to intervention from the Emperor, they were rented by a businessman from Fries & Comp, namely the above-mentioned Moritz. This was the critical period for the banking house, which finally had to give up any business activities after its bankruptcy.

We know almost nothing about the employees of the banking house. We find Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof in 1812 as the main provider of credit for the textile factory at Meidling near Vienna, and he clearly developed similar activities in other cases.

Like Johann and Moritz von Fries, Johann Michael Baron Vogel von Friesenhof also undoubtedly accumulated considerable financial resources in the framework of the business during the period when the banking house was still in its best period. He gained ennoblement precisely thanks to his activities in it.²⁵ Even almost a hundred years after his death, in connection with his granddaughter Duchess Nathalie von Oldenburg, it was said that she came from an honoured Viennese family, and her grand-father was an associate of the “world-famous banker” Fries.²⁶ Thus, Johann Michael had passed into historical memory as a guarantee of solidarity and business success. Until his death, he devoted his attention to extensive bond deals. However, in his business activities, he did not disdain enforcement action concerning an ordinary house and garden in Penzing,

24 FALLER, Jenő. Brennbergbánya a bécsi Fries és Társa Bankház bérletében (1822–1827). (Brennbergbánya rented by Fries & Comp. from Vienna, 1822–1827). In *Soproni Szemle*, 11 (Sopron 1957), no. 1–4, pp. 10–33.

25 On this see: STEKL, Hannes. *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz. Zur Geschichte der Fürstenhäuser Liechtenstein und Schwarzenberg*. Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1973. ISBN 370280059X; STEKL, Hannes – WAKOUNIG, Marija. *Windischgrätz. Ein Fürstenhaus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Wien; Köln; Weimar: Böhlau, 1992; HÖBELT, Lothar. Bürokratie und Aristokratie im Österreich der vor-konstitutionellen Ära. In *Etudes Danubiennes*, 1995, 11, pp. 149–162. ISSN 0769-3656.

26 Aus dem Gerichtssaale. In *Tages-Post* (Linz), 41, no. 11 from 14 January 1905.

in which he engaged at the beginning of 1809 through his employees.²⁷ Johann Micael apparently also lived in Penzing, now part of Vienna.

When he died on 2 September 1812, a “foundation”, or in modern terms a “fund” began to be interesting for his sons: Adolph Johann Friedrich (1798 – 1853) and Gustav Viktor (1807–1889). The foundation began its existence in Vienna on 1 February 1816. Johann Michael’s widow Anna Maria Vogel von Friesenhof concluded an agreement with the children’s guardian Karl von Löhr on the detailed functioning of the fund.

While he was still alive, the head of the family directed according to paragraph 16 of his will from 9 April 1808, undoubtedly on the basis of the already mentioned generous agreement with the banking house Fries & Comp, that an “appropriate existence” should be secured for all his descendants. Johann Michael himself described the basis of the fund as “not much property”, although we know from the agreement, that a really large amount of money was involved.

According to the will, 25,000 gulden had to be invested in “state bonds”, mainly obligations, and from the interest on this sum, half-yearly payments had to be made to the heirs. These interest payments had to accumulate separately, and after 60 years they had to be divided in accordance with Austrian inheritance law. The heirs would be children, grand-children, great-grand-children... The basic 25,000 gulden had to be deposited again in a similar way for another 60 years. However, if there were no descendants, the deposited sum had to be divided into four equal parts: for servants, for charitable purposes or public fund for the poor, for invalids and for the orphanage in Vienna founded by Joseph II and among the largest in the world. Administration of the money had to be entrusted to a “solid bond management house” in return for a provision. A supplement to the will from 22 March 1811 spoke of a further sum of 20,000 gulden, which had to be deposited either for 5% interest or in state bonds. In the end, the money was invested in 1815 in the ninth state loan with an interest rate of 2.5%.²⁸ We have a bill of exchange of a Vienna bank from 1811 confirming the receipt of 25,000 gulden in the first form of paper money, so-called *Bancozettel*. This was the basis of the will of Johann Michael.

We do not know much about the fate of this money. On one side, it is possible to suppose that the fund did not have a long duration. State bonds gradually

27 Some bills of exchange are preserved in the SNA, fund Rod Friesenhof – Brodzany, separately deposited correspondence of others; Licit. Widerrufung. *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 3 from 11 January 1809.

28 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), Stiftbrief (Abschrift). It concerns an agreement from 24 February 1816 concluded by the widow and guardian of the children on the detailed functioning of the foundation.

lost value, and the good intention of an old father and founder of the Friesenhof family probably did not reckon with inflation, state bankruptcies in 1811 and 1816, and radical changes in the Austrian currency of which such funds often became the victims. However, everything could have been entirely different.²⁹

The money the old Johann Michael secured a little less than five years before his death from the agreement with the firm Fries & Comp could have been an excellent launch pad for his sons' own business and career activities. We suppose that precisely this inheritance meant a financial basis for them and enabled them to lead relatively expensive although not ostentatious lives.

We do not know much about Adolph Friesenhof, who was ten years older than Gustav, and question-marks remain in his personal and public life. The abundant correspondence, which survives only from Gustav's pen, shows that there was a close relationship between the two brothers, perhaps that Adolph cared for Gustav almost like a father. Gustav trusted his older brother with all his problems and largely followed his advice. He did not take an important or even a less important step in life without Adolph's agreement. In a situation where his father had died during his early childhood and his mother on 4 November 1816 without leaving a will as a "*widow of a big businessman with an imperial and royal grant of privileges*",³⁰ Adolph took a fatherly role in relation to his younger brother. Apart from this, the two brothers were entirely different in nature. Adolph became a successful businessman and an energetic person, who directed things more from the background, while Gustav headed more towards provincial activities, as if he still needed support, whether from his brother, a good administrator and secretary in one person or an understanding wife.

Adolph Friesenhof most probably started his career in the field of sales for commission in cooperation with the Fries & Comp banking house. In 1823 he was described in the press as a trader. This is also shown by his close connection with the Fries family, with us almost always finding him by the side of members of this business family. In 1819 we already find both brothers among the shareholders of the Austrian National Bank, which is noteworthy, especially when we consider that Gustav was aged only 12. Even in the case of 21 year old Adolph it was

29 The state bankruptcy was declared by patent on 20 February 1811 (that is a month before the above mentioned supplement to the will), but kept secret and announced to the public only on 15 March. It is questionable to what degree Friesenhof could have been informed about its principles or how he could have protected himself. It is a complicated problem and I refer to the works by STIASSNY, Paul. *Der österreichische Staatsbankrott von 1811*. Wien; Leipzig: Hölder, 1912 and PRESSBURGER, Siegfried. *Das österreichische Noteninstitut 1816–1966*. Wien: Österreichische Nationalbank, 1959, pp. 60–73. A further state bankruptcy followed in 1816.

30 Konvok. Vogel Freyin v. Friesenhofscher Nachlassansprecher. In *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt ... zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 34 from 11 February 1817.

not obvious... However, if we notice among the bank shareholders the whole Fries dynasty, including the actual Fries & Comp firm, much is explained.³¹ It was a time of business paternalism, when care for the employee or the family of a former associate occurred in the informal sphere, and we can speak of closer links between the Fries and Friesenhof families.

The role of the privileged Austrian National Bank was to stabilize the state finances after the two already mentioned state bankruptcies. We still find Adolph Friesenhof among its shareholders in 1839–1841. He was accompanied by names such as Erggelet, Henikstein & Comp., Sina, Geymüller & Comp. and other personalities from the Viennese banking world, as well as aristocrats such as Prince Liechtenstein, Count Dietrichstein and others.³² Adolph was much more established in this world than his brother Gustav, who drew on it where possible.

A document surviving from the period of Gustav's university study shows that a year before the final examinations, he interrupted his study so that he could travel to Milan with his brother Adolph.³³ We know nothing about the purpose of this journey, but we cannot suppose business purposes. It was the beginning of extensive travel by the two brothers, from Paris to St. Petersburg and Odessa, from the Italian peninsula to the German states and Scandinavia.

Gustav regularly wrote to his brother until Adolph's early death, about his work in foreign services, his first diplomatic posts, social relations, views on politics and public life. Some of Gustav's letters have survived. He solved in them especially his personal emotional problems, family and financial matters. Since he did not react to similar themes connected with Adolph, it is clear that the older brother was probably not sending similar things, but only advising, helping and influencing Gustav, who was much less decisive. This made Adolph one of the most important factors in Gustav's life.

This was best seen before the conclusion of Gustav's second marriage, in many ways rather sensitively, when soon after the death of his first wife, Gustav's prospective bride Alexandra N. Goncharov sought Adolph's favour, and Gustav trusted his brother with all his plans, doubts and the circumstances of this serious step. It is possible to say that Adolph gave the green light, and

31 *Alphabetisches Nahmen-Verzeichnis der sämmtlichen Herren Actionäre der privilegierten Oesterreichischen National-Bank, am 31. December 1819*, no page numbers.

32 *Österreichischer Beobachter*, no. 330 from 26 November 1839; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 328 from 26 November 1840; *Lemberger Zeitung*, no. 111 from 27 September 9. 1841.

33 Институт русской литературы АН РФ Санкт Петербург (Institute of Russian Literature Saint Petersburg, hereinafter ИРЛИ), рукописный отдел (Department of Manuscripts), фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, (fund no. 409 Vogel von Friesenhof), п. 1., Documents about the education of Gustav von Friesenhof; *Gazetta di Milano*, no. 279 from 5 October 1824.

without his agreement, it is doubtful that the marriage would have happened. The hesitant Gustav would not have decided, although he wanted and wished for a union with Alexandra.³⁴

The correspondence before this wedding and statements in it clearly show that Adolph must have been in St. Petersburg at some time in the years 1834–1836. Gustav always regularly informed his brother about social life in the Russian capital, where he worked as a diplomat, and various statements show that Adolph must have been familiar with things there. It is even possible that he got to know personally the poet Alexander Sergejevich Pushkin and people close to him. At least Alexandra seemed familiar to him, as if they had met years before and he should have remembered her. Gustav's letter written in Naples in 1837 informing in detail about the course of the fatal duel and Pushkin's death, gives the impression that Adolph must have known Pushkin personally and not only as a poet.³⁵ In the end, Adolph's artistic interests lead us to expect this.

A diploma appointing Adolph as an honorary member of the Austrian Imperial Academy of Fine Art in Vienna survives from 1836. It shows his strong relationship to art, which may have originated from the collecting passion of the Fries family. However, such a diploma was not issued only for love of art, but mainly for support and contributions in this field, as is clearly expressed in the text of the diploma.³⁶ At the same time, we know that Adolph was also a collector of fine art, and especially a patron, precisely from the 1830s, which agrees with the date of the diploma. For example, in 1832 he bought a picture by the Austrian painter Friedrich Gauermann, and soon after two pictures by Friedrich Amerling, the most notable Austrian portrait painter of the 19th century. He also owned one of a pair of pictures by the Austrian painter Peter Fendi. The Archduchess Sophia, mother of the future Emperor owned the other.³⁷ In 1843 he became a member of the Kunstverein art society of Vienna, and two years later he donated an oil painting by an artist from the German Reinhold family to a lottery.

34 For more details see: LUKÁČOVÁ, Alexandra. *Kaštieľ v Brodzanoch a jeho majitelia v regionálnom i slovenskom kontexte (1844 – 1945)*. Rigorózna práca na FF UK. (The manor house at Brodzany and its owners in the regional and Slovak context (1844–1945). Dissertation at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University). Bratislava 2016, p. 59 and following.

35 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд н.о. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustáv Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 7 March 1837.

36 The diploma is part of the collections of the Slavonic Museum of A. S. Pushkin SNK Brodzany. On this see also: *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 78 from 6 April 1836.

37 Nekrolog. Peter Fendi. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 276 from 6 October 1842; FRIMMEL, Theodor von. *Lexikon der Wiener Gemäldesammlungen*. München: Müller, 1913, p. 439.

The cultural and collecting activity of the Fries family and Adolph Friesenhof only confirm that the field of culture had become an important arena for enhancing one's social prestige. It was also some compensation for the fact that these and other business families of the highest rank, as well as many individuals, still remained cut off from direct political influence, in contrast to the wealth that was concentrated in their hands. Therefore, they gained greater influence in the cultural sphere. Especially during the Congress of Vienna, there were efforts to use cultural salons to enter the field of international politics.³⁸

The support of rich business families for gifted artists, patronage, investment in art, and following the example of the first and second societies, organizing regular salons, theatre performances, concerts and reading societies contributed to the development of cultural activities and cultural life, mainly in the capital of the Monarchy. They played a significant part in promoting modernization, cafe life and Free Masons' lodges, which developed a public space, as well as politicizing the public in the environment of an absolutist state. Although they were monitored by the secret police, we often encounter in their environment members of all the above mentioned business families. These social phenomena facilitated connections and cooperation between them.³⁹

It is not surprising that we keep encountering the same names in business, and they also pursued deliberate marriage strategies. Instead of competition, cooperation and respect for spheres of influence came into the foreground. Let us show this using the example of Adolph Friesenhof. We have only selective information about how he made his living and what he was concerned with. We repeat that we have available only letters from his brother, and they indirectly testify that Adolph was the leading person in joint business activities. He was always in the places where decisions were taken about important questions concerning the economic development of the Habsburg Monarchy. Therefore we can suppose that he had enough capital and possibilities to properly invest and accumulate it. Adolph Friesenhof undoubtedly belonged to the big business world. For example, in 1831 we not only find him among the shareholders in the privileged first railway company (*K. k. Privilegierte Erste Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft*), which built the first railway in the Monarchy: from České Budějovice to Linz, but he was also one of its two directors. The other was Baron Johann Heinrich von

38 DE LA GARDE, August Graf. *Gemälde des Wiener Kongresses 1814–1815. I. Bd.* München: Müller, 1914, pp. 188–193, 390–394, 450–451.

39 MITTENZWEI, Ingrid. Wiener Grosskaufleute und ihr Anteil an der Durchsetzung der „Moderne“ (1763–1815). In HARTMANN, Anja Victorine – MORAWIEC, Małgorzata – VOSS, Peter (eds.). *Eliten um 1800. Erfahrungshorizonte, Verhaltensweisen, Handlungsmöglichkeiten*. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2000, p. 178. ISBN 3805326696; REICHARDT, ref. 22, pp. 226–227, 302 and following.

Geymüller, a Swiss banker and industrialist.⁴⁰ The company regularly entrusted Friesenhof with various responsible tasks. For example, at a general meeting in February 1843, he was entrusted as a member of a special committee with investigating the possibility of the railway company (shares were already for sale) participating in constructing railway track to specific Czech coal mines. They would also consider how such track could be connected to the company's existing track.⁴¹

We also find Adolph Friesenhof in the highest bodies of the Danube Steam Ship Company (*Erste Donau Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft*), founded in 1829 with the aim of sailing ships on the Danube and all its tributaries. Its founding general meeting was held on 13 March 1829. The meeting decided to require payment of 20% of the price of every share, to accumulate the resources to build the company's first ship. For this purpose, a five member committee was formed from Barons Johann Heinrich von Geymüller, Johann Baptist von Puthon, Adolph von Friesenhof, Johann von Sina and Johann Baptist Benvenuti, who had to conclude a contract with the British Andrews and Pritchard, work out statutes and bring the whole matter to a successful conclusion. The company issued shares in 1830. The owners included Archduke Ferdinand, the Palatine of Hungary Archduke Joseph, Count Reviczky, the Chancellor Prince Metternich, the two British founders John Andrews and Joseph Pritchard, as well as the most important members of the Vienna banking world: Johann Baptist Benvenuti, Baron Nathan Adam von Arnstein, Baron Bernhard von Eskeles, Baron Johann Heinrich von Geymüller Jr., Adolph von Pereira-Arnstein, Johann Baptist von Puthon (until 1840 president of the company), Rudolph von Puthon, Salomon Meyer Baron von Rothschild and Johann Baron von Sina (until 1866 second president).⁴² Although the traditional aristocracy looked down on this constellation of barons with undisguised scorn, in reality anger and envy lay behind their views, because these financial sharks and the elite of the "second

40 Kundmachung. In *Der Wanderer*, no. 40 from 9 February 1831, p. 69; *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien und Fabriken in der kais. Kön. Haupt- und Residenz Stadt Wien ... für das Jahr 1831*. Wien 1831, p. 93; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 14 and 101 from 19 January 1. and 4 May 1831.

41 Auszug aus dem Protokolle der am 15. Februar 1843 abgehaltenen General-Versammlung... In *Allgemeines Intelligenzblatt ... zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 63 from 4 March 1843.

42 The individual Hungarian nominations are attributed to Count István Széchenyi as the greatest expert on transport problems, but he had reservations about the character of the company in relation to Hungarian interests (from the first 200 shares only 13 were in Hungarian hands). Friesenhof was not a politician (like Metternich), or a person of the highest rank (like an Archduke), or a Hungarian representative. He clearly gained this position because of his merits in the business and financial field.

society” of the Monarchy knew how to buy everything: palaces, coats of arms, respect, the love of women and positions in society.

Puthon and Friesenhof were entrusted with obtaining a place at Erdberg in Vienna to store wood for the building of ships. Almost quarter of a century later, they saw their steps as “prehistoric” or the “good old days of childhood” in the then already well functioning business organism. The two directors personally investigated the situation at the place where the first ship was going to be built, they checked the wood, coal and iron that were going to be used. In less than a quarter of a century, these activities had become highly sophisticated work for a whole professionally organized department.⁴³

The most important task for Puthon and Friesenhof was to obtain a privilege document for operating ships on the Danube and its tributaries. The result of their work and of the whole five member committee was the fact that in 1830, the first steam ship *Franz I* already ploughed the waves of the Danube between Bratislava and Pest. It took 14 hours and 15 minutes to sail downstream, and 48 hours and 20 minutes to sail upstream.⁴⁴ The course of the Danube was then substantially more divided and longer than today.

The company was granted the privilege for operating ships on the Hungarian part of the Danube in 1831. It was not the most favourable period. Some sections, for example, Pressburg (Bratislava) to Gönyű with extensive sandbanks and shallow water, were impassable. Cholera broke out in Hungary and profits remained behind expectations. We have evidence of the committee of five people including Friesenhof running the Danube Steam Ship Company until 1837.⁴⁵ By then the company had five ships.

The pioneer of economic reforms and basic changes in transport infrastructure, Count István Széchenyi had great influence on the orientation of the whole company. From June to October 1830 he undertook with several friends a memorable voyage up the Danube from Pest in a small boat called the *Desdemona*. In this way, he demonstrated his interest in the river and its national economic importance. Regulation of the Danube and its tributaries, bridging of the river between Buda and Pest, navigation of the Iron Gates and the problems

43 Geschichte der Entwicklung der österreichischen Dampfschiffahrt auf der Donau. In *Deutsche Vierteljahrs Schrift. Zweites Heft*. Stuttgart; Tübingen 1853, p. 215.

44 *Denkschrift der Ersten k. k. privilegierten Donau-Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft zur Erinnerung ihres fünfzigjährigen Bestandes*. Wien 1881, pp. 8–10.

45 *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien und Fabriken in der kais. Kön. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien ... für das Jahr 1831*. Wien 1831, p. 93; Magyarországi. In *Jelenkor*, no. 48 from 16 June 1832, p. 378 and *Adressen-Buch der Handlungs-Gremien ... für das Jahr 1834*. Wien 1834, p. 141; *Denkschrift der Ersten*, p. 30.

of the Danube Delta were on the agenda of this “greatest Hungarian” and his reform proposals.⁴⁶

Adolph Friesenhof’s undoubted public influence is shown by his voyage on the Danube with Széchenyi in July 1836. While in Banát, probably Orsovo, they had a long conversation, which Széchenyi recorded in his diary.⁴⁷ The Hungarian reformist politician was in constant contact with leading representatives of the Danube Steam Ship Company.

His position as a director was very important for Friesenhof. In 1835 he arranged for the company to establish the first shipyard for building steam ships in Buda, and up to 1880 it developed the largest inland ship-building operation in the world. Friesenhof left the position of administrator in 1837, after holding the highest position in the company from the beginning. Baron Adolph Friesenhof returned to the position of director in February 1842 by an almost unanimous vote. By then, the company was already achieving significant profits and dynamic growth.⁴⁸ It is not surprising that we find Count Moritz von Fries in the voting committee elected from the most important shareholders of the company.

Baron Friesenhof retained his function for two years. A general meeting of the shareholders of the Danube Steamship Company was held on 20 March 1844. Among the shareholders, we find the social, political, economic and financial elite of the Monarchy, including Count Moritz von Fries and Baron Adolph von Friesenhof. The last appeared among the administrators together with Karl Klein, Baron Johann Sina, Baron Adolph Pereira-Arnstein and Rudolph Puthon. Klein, Friesenhof and Pereira stood down from the administration at this meeting, and could not be persuaded even by Count Fries that in relation to the commercial results, they could remain in their places and be useful. Other elite experts were elected to take their places.⁴⁹

This important function was not an episode in Adolph’s life, and it indirectly testifies to his position, possibilities and social recognition. Széchenyi also mentioned Adolph’s resignation in his diary. Adolph Friesenhof remained a shareholder in the Danube Steamship Company. Many contacts from this business also passed to Gustav, for example, close contacts with Baron Wilhelm

46 On this see: WEITHMANN, Michael W. *Die Donau. Ein europäischer Fluss und seine 3000-jährige Geschichte*. Graz; Wien; Köln: Styria, 2000, p. 382. ISBN 9783791717227 and following; OPLATKA, András. *Széchenyi István*. Budapest: Osiris, 2005, p. 193. and following, p. 228 and following. ISBN 9789633897584.

47 *Gr. Széchenyi István naplói. V. kötet (1836–1843)*. (Diary of Count István Széchenyi. Vol. V. (1836–1843)). Budapest 1937, p. 13.

48 Dampfschiffahrts-Chronik. In *Allgemeines Wiener Polytechnisches Journal*, 1, no. 35 from 22 March 1842; Oesterreich. In *Regensburger Zeitung*, 1, no. 63 from 4 March 1842.

49 Sitzungs-Protokoll der General-Versammlung der österr. k. k. priv. ersten Donau-Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft am 20. März 1844, p. 4, 9, 24 and 31.

Protivenský, who was one of the supporters and promoters of shipping on the Danube from 1841.⁵⁰

Adolph also developed many other public activities. We know most about his charitable and support activities, which were recorded in the press of the time, and belonged to the agenda of every nobleman, especially the richer ones. In March 1838, he donated 100 gulden to the victims of extensive floods in the Kingdom of Hungary. Adolph von Friesenhof and Moritz von Fries, who were apparently always in contact and communicating, are found among the buyers of an impressive multi-volume publication about the Kingdom of Dalmatia from the beginning of the 1840s. In the same way, they also indirectly supported the publication of the *Nibelungenlied* (The Song of the Nibelungs) and many other scientific and artistic works. Count Fries and Adolph also subscribed to a literary almanach, the profits from which went to help the victims of floods in Bohemia in 1845. Adolph also donated to this cause an oil painting by Reinhold, which was auctioned to help the victims. The wider Viennese business and aristocratic elite united in this charitable effort.⁵¹ Adolph and his brother Gustav subscribed to the reports of the Lower Austrian business society. Gustav was a regular member of it from 1842 and must have followed his brother Adolph in this.

According to the addresses in the brothers' letters and mentions in the press, we know that Adolph's mobility was admirable, and Gustav also participated in a similar life style and activities. At a time when trains were only beginning their victorious journeys, long distance travel was mostly by stage-coach and very physically demanding. It is possible to hope that further research will enable us to reconstruct in detail the course of the sometimes very logistically sophisticated commercial journeys of the two brothers.⁵²

Adolph spent most of his time in Vienna or at Ischl, where he received spa treatment for his health problems. In Vienna he owned part of a house at Hohebrücke 144 in the city centre. In 1822 he exchanged it for a nearby house at Wipplingerstrasse 26. It dated from 1684, occupied an area of 1054 square metres and after reconstruction it contained 39 flats on 4 floors. The Friesenhof family is also supposed to have owned a two-storey house at Tiefe Graben 35 with an area of only 65 square metres, containing four flats.⁵³ Both houses were

50 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд no. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustáv Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 29 August 1851.

51 *Album. Zum Besten der durch Ueberschwemmungen im Frühjahr 1845 in Böhmen Verunglückten*. Wien 1845, p. 432 and 436.

52 A parallel from an earlier period is the work: OTRUBA, Gustav (ed.). *Europäische Commerzreisen um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts von Ludwig Ferdinand Prokopp, Aloisius Graf Podstatzky und Karl Graf Haugwitz*. Linz: Trauner, 1982.

53 Verschwindende Häuser. In *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 39, no. 36 from 5 February 1905.

bought by one baronial family, the larger being sold by Gustav in 1870. From 1848, Adolph also had a house with a garden at Ischl, where he liked to do physical work during his rare free time. He also invited there his brother Gustav and friends from the business world, or made the house available to them when he was absent, for example to the family of Baron Ergelet.

Perhaps the only time Gustav acted against his brother's view, was when he bought in the half of 1840s the Renaissance manor house at Brodzany and gradually also the whole of its lordship from the Kvassay family, in spite of opposition from Adolph.⁵⁴ In this way, Gustav secured a regular family seat for himself and his descendants in the upper Nitra basin. The noble Friesenhof family could be associated with one place, in which there could be a gallery of ancestors, graves for deceased members of the family, and an extensive network of social connections. Gustav could extend his business activities to the surroundings of Brodzany, and invest money in expensive renovation of the manor house and elimination of considerable debts.

Many of Gustav's letters to his brother, especially from the last period of Adolph's life, were addressed to the banking and commercial company Henikstein & Comp. It was another leading firm belonging to the strong league of Viennese financial sharks, already mentioned in the Friesenhof ennoblement document, which shows that the commercial contacts with them reached back to the 1780s.

However, to find the beginning of the Henikstein activities, it is necessary to go back another two decades, to 1764, when a consortium of associated traders paid to hold the tobacco monopoly in the Czech Lands and Austria. The contract was concluded for ten years and was extraordinarily successful for both the contractors and the state. Not surprisingly, it was extended. The individual Jewish businessmen acquired and gradually strengthened privileged positions, as a result of which many of them were ennobled. They included especially the heads of the consortium – Hönig, father and sons, originally from western Bohemia. They had experience of the tobacco monopoly in Prague, and when they were able to gain the whole state monopoly nothing stopped their rise. After moving to Vienna, accepting Catholicism and founding their own trading house, they widened their activity and obtained more and more privileges from Maria Theresa. One of the sons, Adam Albert (1745–1811), already a privileged large-scale trader, received baptism in 1781 and asked Joseph II to ennoble him. This was granted in 1784 with the predicate Hönig, nobleman from Henikstein. He became director of the salt chamber at Wieliczka, and gave the state valuable,

54 Xavier de Maistre to Angela de Vignet from 5 December 1846. In MAISTRE, Gabriel de (ed.). *Xavier de Maistre. Lettres a sa famille. Tome IV. 1844–1852. Saint-Petersbourg*. Clermont-Ferrand: Paleo, 2006, p. 60. ISBN 9782849091753.

mainly financial services during the wars with revolutionary France. It was natural that he gained the status of knight in 1807.

Adam Albert's eldest son Joseph (1768–1838) and youngest son Albert born in 1776 followed in their father's footsteps. The latter died single and without descendants. As a large-scale trader and finance expert, Joseph became one of the directors of the Austrian National Bank and a member of the bank committee. The paths of members of the Fries, Henikstein and Friesenhof families inevitably crossed in the framework of this bank. Joseph was a great lover of music and a friend of W.A. Mozart. This could also have brought him close to the art and music loving Fries and Friesenhof families. One of them of Adam Albert's daughters Josephina (1769–1848) married Baron Johann Erggelet, who often appears in the correspondence of the brothers Gustav and Adolph Friesenhof, who both knew him well.⁵⁵

In the end, Joseph's second son Wilhelm (1800–1876) continued in the finance business, taking over his father's Henikstein & Comp. Ennobled as a baron, he also had a key position in the Viennese finance world. His name also appears in familiar form in the correspondence of the brothers Gustav and Adolph Friesenhof. Later, in the 1870s, he acted as chairman of the Duna insurance company. From Joseph's daughters, Carolina (1797–1844) is interesting to us. In 1816 she married the famous Orientalist, diplomat and court adviser, Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856).⁵⁶ Adolph Friesenhof had a close correspondence relationship with him, as a collection of surviving letters shows.⁵⁷ From October 1841 we have information that Adolph Friesenhof travelled from Hainfeld in Lower Austria to Vienna with Captain Alfred Henikstein (1810 – 1882).⁵⁸ He was Joseph's youngest son, who went down in history as the officer of Jewish origin, who achieved the highest rank. From 1859 he was a general lieutenant, and from 1863 chief of the general staff of the Austrian army.

The financial influence of the Henikstein family gradually declined, although individuals continued to do business. However, they avoided pauperization in contrast to other lines of the Hönigs: the Hönighbergs and Hönighofs.

As the preceding account shows, there were more than enough inter-connections between the Fries, Erggelet, Henikstein and Friesenhof families.

55 For example, ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 27 June 1850.

56 ŽUPANIČ, Jan. *Židovská šlechta podunajské monarchie*. (Jewish nobles of the Danubian Monarchy.). Praha: Lidové noviny, 2012, pp. 355–360. ISBN 9788074221804.

57 HÖFLECHNER, Walter – WAGNER, Alexandra (eds.). *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall: Erinnerungen und Briefe. Bd. 3. Briefe von 1790 bis Ende 1819*. Graz: ADEVA, 2011, p. 1770. ISBN 9783201019521.

58 Angekommen. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 286 from 16 October 1841.

These and many other names are constantly repeated in business, charitable and presentation activities in the capital city and in the “provinces”. Adolph’s position in the Henikstein company, to what degree he worked for it or held a leading position remains an open question...

The outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and the gradual abandoning of its legal platform placed every noble family in the Kingdom of Hungary in a serious dilemma: whether to take the side of the Hungarian liberal nobility, even in armed struggle for the rights and greater constitutional freedom of the country, or to remain loyal to the Emperor and court? Similar dilemmas were also solved in Austria. The Friesenhof family did not have a clear answer at first, although it had received the title of baron from the Emperor less than 60 years before and the two brothers had closely cooperated until then.

At the end of April 1848, Adolph was elected to a committee in Vienna which had to find candidates for the constitution writing Parliament in Frankfurt. Soon after, he donated 200 gulden, a very large amount for the time, to the Ministry of the Interior to pay for National Guard uniforms.⁵⁹ Sometime in the first half of 1848 he bought the above mentioned house at Ischl, and, at the same time, decided to donate 100 gulden to the local guard to buy weapons. He was equally generous with donations to poverty relief and hospital funds.⁶⁰ These facts show that Adolph welcomed the revolution and placed himself on its side.

Gustav’s position was diametrically different. As a man who had worked in the state diplomatic service at least until 1841, he had and needed to have an appropriately loyal and conservative position, which put him in a conservative position in relation to his immediate Hungarian or Magyar surroundings. This drew him ever more into the whirlwind of events. On 26 September 1848, at the instigation of Gustav Friesenhof, the court judge Baron Franz Scheiner wrote to the mayor of Oslany about the course of the armed uprising and the situation in the ranks of the Slovak “revoltants” at Brezová pod Bradlom, in the framework of the so-called September volunteer campaign. Scheiner received detailed information about the leaders of the campaign Hurban and Štúr, armaments, mood, battles and the intention to march on Pest, from Friesenhof’s scribe, who had spent some time among the forces of the uprising. “*God knows how it will all end ... If somebody gives up nothing will happen to him, but whoever resists will be burnt and slaughtered*” as the suggestively written declaration concludes.⁶¹

59 Nicht-amtlicher Theil. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 121 from 1 May 1848 and Inland. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 123 from 3 May 1848.

60 Oeffentlicher Dank. In *Wiener Zeitung*, no. 185 from 6 July 1848.

61 Štátny archív Nitra (State Archives Nitra) (hereinafter ŠA Nitra), fund Tekovská župa – kongregačné písomnosti, (County of Tekov, administrative documents), box 681, inv. no. 2002,

In June 1849, at the time of culmination of the Austrian – Hungarian fighting, Friesenhof's office worker Peter Schrimf suffered exemplary punishment in Nitra. He had left his usual work to serve in the ranks of the forces of the imperial General Šimunič and Jablonowský in the Malé Karpaty area. Leader of the Hungarian guerillas Arnošt Simonyi had Schrimf executed as a suspected spy. As can be seen, the situation around Brodzany was as tense as it could get, and various indications pointed to the pro-Austrian position of the baron's family. This could substantially complicate its situation at a time when placing oneself on one meant a threat to one's life from the other. Testimony from more than 60 years later says that Gustav Friesenhof almost ended up on gallows.⁶² We have no more definite information, but such things were not mentioned in Hungary if there was not at least a little truth in them...

In summer 1849 Russian Cossacks stopped at Brodzany and were very surprised to find a Russian Baroness Nathalie Friesenhof, born Zagriazschka and a nine year old Russian speaking boy Grisha Friesenhof, with whom they entertained themselves in the large park.⁶³ The Hungarian nobility certainly looked resentfully at Friesenhof with his pro-Vienna and pro-Russian views. It was clearly no accident that Gustav also attributed the death of his first wife Nathalie Zagriazschka in October 1850 to the “storms in Hungary” or to the “sad times in Hungary”, which exhausted her and undermined her health.⁶⁴

In this spirit, it is also necessary to note the fact that in March 1853, in the period of the most rigid neo-absolutism, he donated 100 gulden to the construction of the Votivkirche in Vienna, built to express thankfulness for the young Emperor surviving an assassination attempt in February 1853.⁶⁵ With this act, he clearly declared his political position. He also contributed to the construction of Protestant schools, and at the end of 1854 he invested 6,000 gulden, a really substantial amount, in a state loan through the Austrian National Bank.

Thus, in the period of neo-absolutism, Gustav Friesenhof remained a loyal supporter of the most conservative views. He welcomed the removal of the

1848/1464, F. Scheiner to Mayor Tagány of Oslany from 22 September 1848 (also published in: RAPANT, Daniel. *Slovenské povstanie roku 1848–49. Dejiny a dokumenty. Diel II., časť 2.* (The Slovak Uprising of 1848-49. History and documents. Volume II, part 2.). Turčiansky Svätý Martin 1948, p. 353).

62 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Kézirattára Budapest (Manuscripts of the National Széchényi Library), XI/729, Arthur Odescalchi to Lajos Thallóczy from 15 July 1912.

63 Xavier de Maistre to Éloi de Buttet from 4 August 1849. In MAISTRE, ref. 54, p. 115.

64 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 18 October 1850.

65 Verzeichniss. In *Oesterreichisch-kaiserlich-privilegierte Wiener Zeitung*, no. 73 from 26 March 1853.

constitutional responsibility of the government and its dissolution as a collective body. His interpretation of events was as follows: “*The Emperor has declared himself absolute. That could be so important that it would interest me in spite of my political apathy. It could give a strong stimulus to future even more unpleasant movements, especially in Hungary... Yesterday’s Lloyd brought us the abolition of the constitution from 4 March [it was the Constitution from 7 March 1849 – R. H.]. That may be welcome to me. You know that it did not have a greater opponent than me... However, at present, we find ourselves in pure absolutism, as we already were in reality, only a fiction has ceased to exist.*”⁶⁶ He considered these steps to be the best for the Kingdom of Hungary, in spite of them being strongly criticized from the Hungarian side. However, it was difficult to live in Hungary with such views

Adolph’s life remains veiled in mystery and so does his death at a relatively early age. Several months after the marriage of Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Goncharov, Adolph underwent a serious operation in Vienna in November 1852. Gustav went to his brother and sent to letters to his wife at Brodzany, informing her about Adolph’s health.⁶⁷ Gustav’s last known letter to Adolph written at Brodzany at the end of November 1852, testified to a surprisingly rapid improvement and the various possibilities for rehabilitation. Gustav also wrote to his brother about commercial matters, about bills of exchange reaching the end of their validity, peasants relations at Brodzany and the mechanisms for emancipation of peasant farmers (compensation for abolition of peasants duties was set at more than 12,000 gulden in 1855), as well as the problems of distilling alcohol.⁶⁸

Even at the beginning of the last calendar year of his life, Adolph supported new year charities, and his state was apparently clearly improving. On 8 January 1853, the two brothers travelled to Magdeburg. We do not know whether the aim was treatment or other activities. They were probably together because we do not have correspondence between them. Adolph’s death came as a surprise, with Gustav announcing it from Magdeburg. His funeral was held there on 18 May 1853.⁶⁹

66 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 29 August 1851.

67 Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Friesenhof from 12 November 1852 and 13 November 1852. In ОБОДОВСКАЯ, Ирина – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, Михаил. *После смерти Пушкина. (After Pushkin’s death)*. Москва: Советская Россия, 1980, pp. 223–224.

68 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд но. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 28 November 1852; *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, no. 285 from 2 December 1855.

69 Gustav Friesenhof to Alexandra Friesenhof from 17 May 1853. In ОБОДОВСКАЯ – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, ref. 67, p. 224

Adolph's death was a huge loss for Gustav. Even during Adolph's illness, Gustav wrote: "I don't have to tell you how much I regret that I don't have dearest Adolph any more."⁷⁰ Death made this situation entirely real and permanent. Gustav was left alone, and although he became the universal heir to his brother so that he could most probably invest the additional resources at Brodzany, which freed him from many burdens and made him an independent estate owner, it did not really help him very much in the end. The financial situation of Friesenhof family began to significantly worsen in the second half of the 1860s. This reduced the possibility to invest in the high quality education of Gustav's growing daughter Nathalie, born in 1854. After sale of the house in Vienna, Gustav went to the capital less frequently, and appropriate home tutors for Nathalie could not be found at Brodzany.⁷¹

The joint business activity of Adolph and Gustav had concentrated on bill of exchange deals, mortgage loans, real estate deals, securities deals involving especially promissory notes but also agricultural commodities. Such business was often very untransparent and difficult to reconstruct. Change came only with systematic publication of stock exchange reports, and the integrative communication possibilities of the telegraph, which substantially improved the effectiveness of the financial markets.

In any case, if in earlier decades, the extent and profits of the activities of banking companies were identified with the general interests of the state, and so could acquire a patriotic added value, from the 1840s the Friesenhofs' deals changed into financial operations on a much smaller scale. We have exact information on only some deals by the two brothers. For example, there was the Vienna property without known heirs or legal representatives of the former owner from the Edle con Lauch family, which the two Friesenhof brothers "took over" and had to "free" from all financial "burdens" so that it could be sold. There were also the debts of Simon Bossányi and his wife Johanna born Stahl, bought in 1856 for 6,000 gulden, and eventually solved in court by Gustav in 1856 already after Adolph's death.⁷² We know the mechanisms of these deals from other environments. We suppose that after the revolution, skilled people could advantageously obtain large properties that had been taken from participants in the revolution and convicts, especially in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁷³ Land also

70 ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд no. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 16 May 1852.

71 ОБОДОВСКАЯ – ДЕМЕНТЬЕВ, ref. 67, p. 232.

72 Erinnerungen. Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung, no. 139 from 19 May 1848 and Amortisationen. Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung, no. 165 from 18 July 1856. See also ИРЛИ, рукописный отдел, фонд no. 409 Фогель фон Фризенгофы, п. 6, Gustav Friesenhof to Adolph Friesenhof from 10 October 1845, 13 August 1846, 29 August 1851, 2 June 1852.

73 MOTTRAM, Ralph Hale. *Wesen und Geschichte der Finanzspekulation*. Leipzig: Insel, 1932,

became a tradable asset after the revolution, so there were more than enough possibilities for deals.

Gustav continued similar business activities, although without Adolph's range of knowledge and contacts, certainly to a smaller extent, more in the regional framework of the upper Nitra district and with less success, sometimes even with fatal mistakes. This was also why he had the ambition or was forced to do business on the Brodzany estate, although not very successfully. He did not have an expert education, and his son Gregor, known as Griša, who had excellent qualifications and pre-conditions for business soon became independent.

In addition, political clouds filled the Brodzany sky. A loyal attitude to the court during the revolution, a French speaking household and the Russian wife of an Austrian baron all aroused distrust of Gustav Friesenhof and his family among the neighbouring noble families. This did not change in the post-revolution period. The passive resistance of the liberal Hungarian nobility in the period of strengthening absolutism led to them avoiding, ignoring and not communicating with the Friesenhof family. The pejorative designation of Gustav Friesenhof as a "*Regierungsmann*" – a man who approved the policies of the Vienna government and was devoted to it without reservations in his thoughts and actions, originated in this period. Even in September 1863, his son Gregor complained in a letter to Karol Kuzmány about his father's complicated position in an environment of hostility from the Hungarian nobility.⁷⁴

Gustav's son from his first marriage Gregor (1840–1913) gained a close relationship to the peasantry, the Slavs and the Slovak national emancipation movement from his Russian education, childhood among Slovak peasant children at Brodzany and relationship to Russian literature of ideology, known as narodnichestvo (form of agrarian socialism). Perhaps youthful idealism and enthusiasm led the young baron into Slovak public writing and contact with Štefan Moyzes, Karol Kuzmány, Daniel Gabriel Lichard and his economic magazine *Obzor* (Horizon). He placed himself by word and deed on the side of the Slovaks, becoming a member of the first committee of the newly founded Matica Slovenská cultural organization.⁷⁵

p. 136 and following; CLEMENS, Gabriele B. – REUPKE, Daniel. Kreditvergabe im 19. Jahrhundert zwischen privaten Netzwerken und institutioneller Geldleihe. In CLEMENS, Gabriele B. (ed). *Schuldenlast und Schuldenwert. Kreditnetzwerke in der europäischen Geschichte 1300–1900*. Trier: Kliomedia, 2008, pp. 111–238. ISBN 9783898901246.

74 Archív Matice slovenskej Martin (Archives of Matica slovenská), fund Matica slovenská I. (1857) 1863 – 1875 (1912), sig. 56 194, Gregor Friesenhof to Karol Kuzmány from 18 September 1863.

75 HOLEC, Roman. *Zabudnuté osudy*. (Forgotten destinies.). Martin: Matica slovenská, 2001, pp. 72–103. ISBN 9788070906293.

Therefore, it was no accident that in August 1863 a letter from the Office of the Governor of Hungary to the Sheriff of the County of Tekov asked for more information about the political views of the Friesenhof family. It was certainly connected with the energetic activities of the son Gregor, but also with the political views of the still ostracized father Gustav. The sheriff's reply mentioned Gustav's diplomatic past in Russia, but evaluated his political views as loyal, which was certainly true. He could not or did not want to express his view on Gregor, because he had been away from the county for a long time studying.⁷⁶

The family at Brodzany was certainly socially rather isolated, and the situation gradually changed only in the mid 1860s. This is shown by albums with photographs of representatives of neighbouring noble families, which began to establish social contacts with the Friesenhofs. In 1872 Gregor established a unique Economic Society for the Nitra Valley with democratic tendencies and great attention given to economic education of the Slovak small farmers and improvement of their position.

Gustav freed himself from financial problems only with the marriage of his daughter Nathalie to the solvent and highly placed Duke Elimar von Oldenburg in 1876. However, we should not forget that this was also the year of the division of the accumulated interest on the inheritance from the founder of the family Johann Michael von Friesenhof, if the money invested in state bonds had actually survived until this time. We do not have the marriage contract, so we cannot distinguish how much money came from the inheritance and how much from the marriage. The fact that in inheritance of the family properties, the younger daughter took priority over the older son shows that the marriage with a Duke of Oldenburg was an important event in the life of the family, and must have provided considerable financial help.⁷⁷ In any case, the matter was concluded and the family entered a new period of its life.

When an account was written in 1867 of the most important ennoblements of the reign of Joseph II and the origin of the so-called second society, it also emphasized the name of Fries' associate and newly ennobled Baron Johann Michael Vogel von Friesenhof. His family "*is still [in 1867 – R.H.] one of the most important, although its original name Vogel has not been used for a long time*".⁷⁸

76 ŠA Nitra, fund Tekovská župa – hlavný župan, (fund County of Tekov, chief sheriff), prez., box 14, inv. no. 17, 1863/126.

77 ASNM, fund Brodzany (unsorted), box 1, Testament of Gustav Friesenhof from 6 February 1887.

78 Aus der Geschichte der Wiener Gesellschaft im Vormärz. VI. In *Neues Fremden-Blatt*, 3, no. 357 from 29 December 1867.

Seven decades and two generations later, the situation was already diametrically different. The marriage of Baroness Nathalie to the Duke of Oldenburg was the last upsurge of the third generation of Friesenhofs. Her half-brother Gregor became a notable personality from the point of Slovak national emancipation efforts, from the point of view of the development of democratic organized activity of small farmers, which was unique in the period of dualism, and finally also from the point of view of the dynamic development of agricultural science, meteorology and sociology.⁷⁹

The example of the Fries, Henikstein and Friesenhof families shows that business and making money on a large scale, the activity from which they arose and gained ennoblement, was already a thing of the past. In the second and third generations, spending of money and gradual decline in wealth came into the foreground. Only traditional means such as marriage strategy, economizing and social closedness associated with gradual social marginalization served as survival strategies. On the other hand, the family played a positive role on the regional level, where its publicly beneficial and charitable activities fulfilled many absent social functions of the state.

DIE ENTSTEHUNG, DER GLANZ UND STURZ
DER UNTERNEHMERISCHEN ART DES NEUEN ADELS
IN DER HABSBURGERMONARCHIE

ROMAN HOLEC

Die Studie beschreibt die Entstehung, den Glanz und den Sturz von einigen unternehmerischen Familien (Fries, Henikstein, Friesenhof und geläufig auch weitere), die in Wien am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts zur Nobilitation gelangten und noch zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts über merkliches gesellschaftliches Ansehen und den Reichtum

79 For more details see: LUKÁČOVÁ, ref. 34, p. 94 and following; HOLEC, Roman. „Ako Martin Rozumný zbohatol a s ním celá dedina“ (Poľnohospodárska didakticko-osvetová literatúra na Slovensku v rokoch 1848 – 1914 a jej zdroje). (“How Martin the Wise enriched himself and his whole village” (Agricultural didactic public information literature in Slovakia in the period 1848–1914 and its sources).). In *Zemědělské školství, výzkum a osvěta jako předpoklad hospodářského a sociálního rozvoje venkova v 19. a 20. století*. Studie Slovákého muzea 9/2004. Uherské Hradiště: Slováké muzeum, 2004, pp. 39–49. ISBN 8086185389; HOLEC, Roman. *Barón Friesenhof v kontexte veľkej doby a malých dejín*. (Baron Friesenhof in the context of large and small-scale history), Biografické štúdie, 38 (Martin 2015), pp. 39–55. ISBN 9788081490576.

verfügten. Ihr geringfügiger politischer Einfluss aus neuen Adels entsprach jedoch dessen enormer ökonomischer und großer kultureller Bedeutung nicht. Nach der starken Gründergeneration folgte gewöhnlich Stagnierung und oft ein schrittweiser Niedergang, wenn die Mitglieder weiterer Generationen über notwendige Ausdauer und Voraussetzungen nicht verfügten.

Am ausführlichsten wird diese Entwicklung auf der Familie Friesenhof dargestellt, bei welcher Landsmann aus Elsaß, Johann Michael (1739–1812), zu den Gründern der Familientraditionen gehörte und zum ersten Baron und Träger des unternehmerischen Erfolgs im Rahmen des Bankhauses Fries & Comp. wurde. Sein Sohn Adolf (1798–1853) setzte sich in der zweiten Generation sehr bedeutend in der Geschäftswelt durch, der zweite Sohn Gustav (1807–1889) siedelte sich jedoch im Gebiet der heutigen Slowakei, in Brodzany, an, führte hier die Bauernwirtschaft und gab die Unternehmertätigkeit auf staatlicher Ebene auf. Durch enge Verbindungen zum Russland dank zwei russischen Ehefrauen und durch loyale Haltung zum Hof und dem Monarchen wurde er zur weißen Krähe unter dem Adel in der Region. Dies intensivierte noch mehr sein Sohn Gregor (1840–1913) durch seine Neigung zu der slowakischen nationalemanzipatorischen Bewegung und seine Mitgliedschaft im Ausschuss von Matica slovenská, sowie durch die Gründung eines demokratischen dreisprachigen Wirtschaftsverbandes. Die jüngere Tochter Nathalie (1854–1937) heiratete den Herzog von Oldenburg, Enkelsohn des schwedischen Königs, womit sie noch mehr den europäischen Kontext der Familie verbreitete, die zu einer seltenen und sehr interessanten Art des neuen Adels wurde. Sie verlor ihr Vermögen dank ihrem Lebensstil und dessen Unzweckmäßigkeit, aber auch dank den getroffenen Maßnahmen gegen den Adel in der Tschechoslowakei. Die letzte Generation des Geschlechts Friesenhof-Oldenburg war nur noch ein anschaulicher Beweis für die Agonie und den Niedergang.

prof. PhDr. Roman Holec, Dr.Sc.
Historický ústav SAV
P. O. Box 198, Klemensova 19, 814 99 Bratislava

Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave
Filozofická fakulta, P. O. BOX 32, Gondova 2, 814 99 Bratislava
Slovenská republika
e-mail: rh1918@yahoo.com