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ARNE B. MANN:

**Rómski kováči na Slovensku**

[Roma Blacksmiths in Slovakia]

Bratislava, Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej  
výroby 2018, 400 p.

In 2018, the Centre for Folk Art Production (Ústredie ľudovej umeleckej výroby – ÚĽUV) published (in its edition Tradition today) a monograph titled *Rómski kováči na Slovensku* [Roma Blacksmiths in Slovakia]. The author of the monograph is currently one of the most important scholars in Romani Studies in Slovakia – Arne B. Mann. It is an extensive (400 pages) and thematically comprehensive work, which, in my opinion, is clearly one of the most important events in Romani Studies in the last decades. Actually, I prefer to label this monograph the best monograph in Slovak Romani Studies in ethnology since 1964, the year when a monograph by Emília Horváthová titled *Cigáni na Slovensku* [Gypsies in Slovakia] was published and which has not been surpassed till now (Horváthová, 1964). This

new publication is unique because, in essence, it is the first comprehensive monograph specialized in the traditional material culture of Roma in Slovakia (or Czechoslovakia). It might sound unbelievable, because of the quantity of published materials on the topic of Roma, but the Roma material culture has not been elaborated in any monograph until now. We have a relatively high number of quality studies, articles or chapters in books,<sup>1</sup> but elaboration in a monograph has been absent.<sup>2</sup>

The excellent quality of this monograph is based on the fact that, in this case, it is not a compilation of monitored literature,<sup>3</sup> but it is an outcome of real ethnological field research. The author was engaged in this work for several decades and he carried out, besides extensive multidisciplinary archival research, numerous field research trips too. Throughout the research, the author visited almost all regions in Slovakia, where Roma live. The research started in 1981 in the extinct village of Riečica, in the Čadca region. In total, the author carried out field research in 29 localities for this publication. As the author declared,

- 1 Let me refer to articles published in periodicals *Romano Džaniben*, *Bulletin Muzea romské kultury* (Bulletin Museum of Romani Culture) in Brno, or also in *Slovenský národopis* (Slovak Ethnology). There is a detailed outline of published materials as a part of reviewing monograph in the section *Pramene* (Sources).
- 2 A certain exception in this respect is represented by monothematic elaborations of collections of the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno. I want to draw attention, for example, to the publication of Jana Poláková as editor of *Tradiční profese a zaměstnání* [Traditional professions and employment] (Poláková, 2008), Helena Danielová as editor of *Sbírky Muzea romské kultury: 1991 – 2006: Textil, šperk* [Collections of Museum of Romani Culture: 1991 – 2006, Textile, Jewellery] (Danielová, 2007) or the latest publication of Jana Horváthová as editor of *Poklad Romů: Tajemství rómského šperku* [Treasure of Roma: The mystery of Romani jewellery] (Horváthová, 2016). But these publications are specific for museums and therefore they have a slightly different orientation as classic ethnological works.
- 3 Here I would like to mention at least the work of Irena Adamová *Antológia rómskych tradícií a remesiel* [Anthology of Roma traditions and crafts], which was published by Štátny pedagogický ústav (National Institute for Education) (Adamová, 2007). However, the aim of this publication is to be a supplementary material for teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

the base of the work is made of his research performed between 1986 – 1993 in 20 localities in Slovakia (p. 14). Such extensive individual ethnological research is unique in the (Czecho)-Slovak academic scene and it has no parallel in Romani Studies in (Czecho)Slovakia at all.

The monograph is divided into several integral thematic parts. The Introduction (pp. 12–32) is followed by a short chapter *Dejiny* (History) (pp. 33–56). This chapter is not an outline of universal Roma history as it is relatively often in other publications about Roma culture but the chapter is an actual historical view focused on the phenomenon of Roma blacksmiths and smithery (from the departure from India to the 19<sup>th</sup> century). In this place, I feel the need to make a personal remark. This approach to writing about the history of a concrete theme is completely common in other academic disciplines but, unfortunately, in Romani Studies literature, this chapter is often replaced by general historical introductions, which may be focused on Roma history, but they are usually very remote from the presented topic.

Fundamental parts of the monograph form thematic parts – *Práca* (Work) (pp. 57–124) and *Produkcia rómskych kováčov* (The Product of Roma blacksmiths) (pp. 125–234). These parts consist of detailed description of processing of iron by Roma blacksmiths, of equipment in blacksmiths' workshops, materials used and tools. Separate sections study the organization of the work with a special focus on the most frequent activities. The following chapter on production of Roma blacksmiths, describes, in detail, the most frequent products of Roma blacksmiths divided into detailed thematic fields (products for farmers, tools for building houses, tools for craftsmen, etc.).

The present time of Roma blacksmithery is presented in the next chapter called *Storočie premien* (A century of changes) (pp. 235–274). The chapter presents both, the famous Roma blacksmiths in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as their work, which, mostly after the end of World War 2, shifted from the products and services of everyday use to the work of artistic blacksmithery.

In my eyes, this shift clearly shows that the idea and activities of some people about the need of renewal of traditional Roma crafts-



manship (including blacksmith) as a tool how to solve unemployment of Roma, are illusory. Or, we can say, they have very limited effect. And there is no sense in retraining the unemployed in this respect at all. Reskilling an unemployed person without any technical and artistic education into a creator of decorative products is almost impossible.

Also, the following chapter, the *Rómsky kováč v spoločnosti* (Roma blacksmith in society) (pp. 275–320) makes the publication unique. The previous chapters (along with the historical context) present rigorous ethnographical description of the phenomenon, but this chapter moves the whole publication to a broader ethnological context. Writing such a chapter without long-term field research in several localities is simply not possible. Arne B. Mann, in this chapter, points out a considerably broader frame of the problem, where he monitors the status of Roma blacksmiths, as well as the status of their family members or their place in Roma society or the context of Roma identity. A separate part is devoted to the status of Roma blacksmiths in the majority society. All of the author's findings are based, apart from his field research, also on historical and literary sources.

The end of the publication represents *Conclusion* (pp. 321–327) including a summary in Roma language (pp. 326–337) and extensive part *Annexes* (pp. 338–399). The Annexes consists of the list of research locations, the

list of sources, list of place names, list of illustrations and the list of abbreviations. Annexes also contain a translation of the letter from the Palatine of Hungary, György Thurzó from 1616, where the palatine asked for the opportunity for Romas and, namely, for Roma blacksmiths to settle down in towns and villages. The last part of the Annexes is the dictionary of blacksmithing terms in dialect.

It is natural, that all chapters are supplemented with extensive notes. What is not conventional is the translation to English. I would like to highly appreciate this approach of the publisher. The translation is a part of all chapters. Thanks to that fact, the monograph has the capacity to reach out to foreign readers.

At the end, I would like to present my personal remark. There are some books which are difficult to read. And there are also books, which I can read in one breath. The monograph by Arne B. Mann certainly belongs to the second category. It is very difficult to write a review on the publication, where I personally have nothing to criticise and which is, basically, unrivalled. This a top quality monography and it should become compulsory reading for all scholars in Romani Studies, ethnology, and cultural anthropology. And in the first place Roma should read it. I hope it will be the case.

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KRISZTINA LAJOSI, ANDREAS STYNEN (Eds.):  
*The Matica and Beyond: Cultural Associations and Nationalism in Europe*  
Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020, 384 p.

While studies of national and/or ethnic identity generally take a comparative approach into account, the default models tend to be the West European model of strong nation-states, in contrast to which the Central European model of cultural nation-building within an imperial power appears as a pale imitation. The new collection edited by Krisztina Lajosi and Andreas Stynen, which grew out of a conference held in Budapest in 2011, takes the specifically Slavic case of the Matica as the central basis for comparison, and considers West European minority national movements in relation to this Central European paradigm. What is perhaps most interesting about the Maticas (whose name alludes to the “queen bee” but resonates with “mother” in all Slavic languages) is that nearly every Slavic group under Habsburg rule established one at least briefly: not only the more dominant nations such as the Serbs and Czechs, but also groups that attained political recognition relatively late (such as the Slovenes and Slovaks) as well as those that never gained independence (Sorbia, Moravia, Dalmatia, and Galicia). While *The Matica and Beyond* begins

with individual case studies from across the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, which offers a panorama of Pan-Slavic national awakening, Lajosi and Stynen have included studies of parallel movements among marginalized Celtic and Romance-language groups, who faced their own issues of identity by developing social organizations similar to the Matica (if not using that distinctively Slavic metaphor of a hive of productive activity.) Thus, Central Europe is implicitly positioned not just geographically, but also conceptually, at the center of European nationalism.

The author of the introductory essay, Joep Leerssen, is perhaps best-known for his work on imagology, or the cultural stereotypes that form the image of foreign cultures. His starting point, as with so many other works in this field, is Benedict Anderson's theory on the textual formation of the imagined national community, in this case the Pan-Slavic publishing and translation activities that "made all the separate nation-building movements benefit individually from the others' cultural and ideological proximity". Leerssen emphasizes an important distinction between "translational" and "situational" cultural practices: "Transnational phenomena can be translational or situational; they may be the result of direct transfers and communicative influences –" [such as the Matica] "– or else result from parallel responses to similar circumstances." (p. 7) He suggests that the studies in this collection offer useful material by illustrating "the relative weight of translational communication or situational parallel", counterbalancing the deterministic impulse of comparative history to "reduce all transnational phenomena" to the situational aspect (p. 8). He also cites Miroslav Hroch, not only as a leading theorist from within the region, but for his focus on "embodied" or social/cultural communities.

Zsuzsanna Varga's opening chapter focuses on the multinational publishing program of the Buda University Press, which played a particularly key role in the Serbian, Romanian, and Slovak national movements (each of which she discusses individually.) While the present-day Central European University Press arguably plays a similar transnational role in disseminating contemporary research from across the region, almost entirely in English,

the Buda University Press published in Latin and German as well as the national languages of the empire, including dictionaries and history books. The University itself was "less specifically national in character" than that in Vienna, both because of the continuing use as a vehicle of multiethnic communication in Hungary but also because the central authority appointed foreign professors (p. 15). Varga points out that the Hungarian capital served as a space of "rapprochement" between Slovaks like Anton Bernolák and Ján Hollý, writing in the early codification of literary Slovak, and those like Ján Kollár who continued to write in Biblical Czech (Slovak literary historiography rarely emphasizes that both Bernolák's West Slovak grammar and the earliest edition of Kollár's mytho-national epic *Slávy dcera* were published by a Hungarian university). This multinationalism led to the role of Pest-Buda as the center of literary production not only for the Slovaks, who were fully under Hungarian rule, but for the Serbs and Romanians, whose central territories were outside the kingdom. Thus in 1825 it became the home of the Serbian Pan-Slavic annual *Letopis*, and the following year the location of the pioneering *Matica srpska*, which finally moved to Novi Sad almost four decades later.

Magdaléna Pokorná's chapter focuses on the *Malice česká*, whose foundation in 1831 was inspired by its Serbian counterpart. The Czech foundation, specifically created to support the publication of scientific and literary works, was under the auspices of the National Museum (then the Museum of the Czech Kingdom). Pokorná cites Miroslav Hroch's research on the Matica's membership data, showing that the largest groups of subscribers were clergymen and students. In addition to publishing key works on language and historiography, the organization held literary competitions and helped to develop Czech literary culture more generally by "discuss[ing] the need for scientific criticism of the highest quality, both in terms of the process of writing reviews and literary criticism in general" (p. 37). What is distinctive in the Czech case is that its publishing program focused not only on original works in Czech and reedited historical documents, but it also included a 36-volume series of Shakespeare's works in translation, as

well as Milton and classics from Greek and Latin literature. Its academic publications in various scientific disciplines established the relevant Czech terminology in those fields. However, in the late nineteenth century it faced increasing competition from independent publishers and after a final period of growth it was severely repressed under both the Nazi and Communist regimes, from which it never substantially recovered. Nonetheless, several of the other articles in the volume allude specifically to the Czech Matica as a formative influence.

The chapter on the Slovak Matica by Benjamin Bossaert and Dagmar Kročanová is divided into two sections: Bossaert examines its precursors (including Bernolák's Slovak Learned Society from 1792) while Kročanová discusses the history of the Matica proper from its founding in 1863 to its dissolution in 1875. While Slovak intellectuals were inspired by both the Serbian and Czech models, their own Matica was established decades later due to internal divisions over language and religion. An early group that bridged these conflicts, founded in Pest in 1834, was the Association of Lovers of Slovak Language and Literature, whose tiny membership consisted almost entirely of Catholics, while the largely Protestant society Tatrin, established in 1844, ended after the revolutionary period of 1848. It was not until 1861 that the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation issued in Turčiansky Svätý Martin called for the establishment of a Matica. Although the Matica's by-laws, approved the following year, excluded religious and political agendas, Kročanová points out (citing the literary historian Karol Rosenbaum) that "the Matica was a unity of lovers of the Slovak *nation*, whereas previous associations [...] had united lovers of Slovak *language and literature*" (p. 60). The Matica also had a much larger membership than the earlier organizations, although there were disagreements over its mission. After the 1867 *Ausgleich* gave Hungary equal status with Austria within the empire, "some members wanted it to be a scientific institution, while others favored mass education or entrepreneurial activities" (p. 64). Pan-Slavic reciprocity played a key role in its literary and cultural activities, such as commissioning an epic poem by Andrej Sládkovič for

the tricentennial of the Croatian national hero Nikola Subiž Zrinski's 1566 defense of Szigetvár from Ottoman forces. Such intercultural links were perceived by the Hungarian authorities as a threat, even though the Matica explained in 1873 document to the prime minister that unlike Germans and Italians, "the Slavs had never had a common state, language, or religion [and] the safest strategy against Pan-Slavism would be to enable the various Slavic nations to develop" (p. 67). Such reasoning did not convince the Hungarians, who closed the Matica in 1875. While Slovak immigrants to the United States formed a short-lived Matica abroad in 1893, the original foundation was not re-established until 1919, but it played an active role in interwar Slovakia, as well as the wartime Slovak State, until it was suppressed again for most of the Communist period. Kročanová's chapter is one of the few in the volume to propose additional lines of research on the topic discussed, including "the Matica's position and role in discussions of the new rules of Slovak orthography in 1931–32, the Czecho-Slovak federation in the 1960s, or the Czecho-Slovak split in the 1990s [...] One could also research the activities of the Slovak Matica Abroad (*Zahraničná Matica slovenská*)."

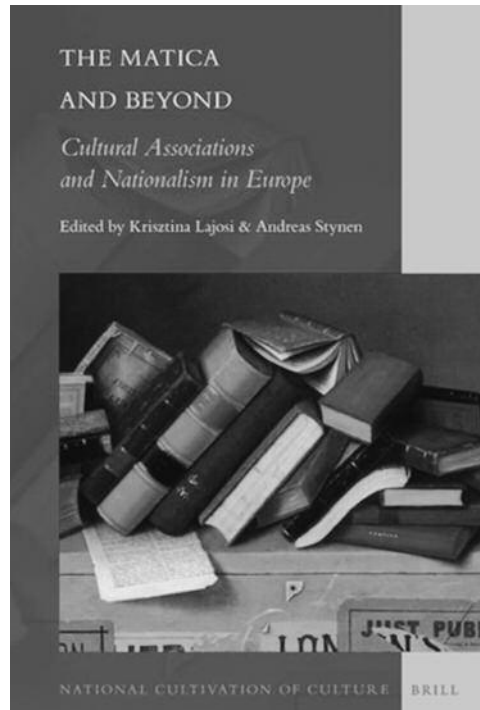
Unlike its Czech counterpart, the Slovak Matica has attempted to assert its role in post-Communist society, but it has remained rather marginalized, and Kročanová points out more generally that despite its non-political mandate, "its intrusion into the political scene, especially in the 1930s, the 1990s, and also during Communism, needs to be researched more thoroughly" (pp. 69–71). However, these intriguing suggestions have been left for future scholars.

The collection includes several other discussions of Slavic case studies before moving on to parallel examples. In his comparison of the Sorbian and Czech-Silesian organizations, Miloš Řezník suggests that "the spread of Maticas—both as a form and as the name of the institution—can be considered as a sign that national movements had reached their agitation phase and that their speakers referred to ideas of Slavic solidarity or mutuality, since the Maticas remained reserved to the non-dominant South- and West-Slavic groups" (pp. 75–76). Marijan Dovič's study of the



Slovenian Matica illustrates how the central symbol continued to evolve: “Apart from the well-known ‘queen bee’ and ‘bee-hive’ imagery, it introduced another inventive set of metaphors: an image of the family, consisting of fourteen Slovenian ‘sisters’ (the reading rooms), a ‘brother’ (the ‘Sokol’ gym society), and a ‘mother’—the Matica” (p. 106). Dović, like Kročanova, brings his discussion of the Slovenian organization up to the present time, with an observation that holds somewhat true for its Slovak equivalent: “it seems interesting that in many respects, the Maticas are still able to lean upon the obsolete nineteenth-century rhetoric. This is particularly visible in the cases of Croatian or Serbian Maticas that effortlessly legitimize themselves within the nationalist legacy, enjoying unanimous, virtually sacral reverence in their homelands” (p. 112).

Another parallel with the Slovak case is the role of the Slovenian Matica in maintaining communication with expatriate groups: “The Izselska Matica (Exile Matica) was founded in Ljubljana in 1951 as an institution for coordinating the cultural activities of Slovenian emigrants around the world and connecting them with the homeland” (p. 115). Daniel Baric examines the case of the Dalmatian Matica centered in Zadar, which was distinct from the “Illyrian” or Croatian Matica in Zagreb until they merged in the early twentieth century. As Baric points out, the initiator of this organization was from an Orthodox background, originally edited a journal with a “Serbo-Dalmatian” identity, and was partly inspired by the example of the Czech Matica. In 1901, the Dalmatian organization founded a literary magazine whose intention was partly to review books published in Cyrillic, in order to “tear down the Chinese wall that separates Croatian from Serbian literature” (p. 127). In the pre-Yugoslav context, the Maticas played a specific role that “allowed people to gather and mingle ideas and texts beyond confessional definitions that were becoming national, and thus contributed to the development of a regional identity understood as a matter of Slavic reciprocity” (p. 129). After the establishment of a Yugoslav kingdom, the regional Matica no longer needed to serve its function to “expose and spread a specific identity in the face of a dominant national culture”, although Baric ends with the example of the



Montenegrin Matica founded in 1993 as an expression of resistance to Serbian culture (p. 134). Moving south in the Balkans, Liljana Gushevska discusses the emergence of the Secret Macedonian Committee and Young Macedonian Literary Society in Sofia, at a time when Macedonia was still under Ottoman rule, pointing out that “this is a case where in defining cultural and ethnic particularities the issue of language relations and its treatment should be considered separately” (p. 149).

The next several chapters provide examples from minority national groups in Western Europe, including the (Iberian) Galicians, Occitans, Welsh, and Irish, as well as Dutch speakers in both Belgium and the Netherlands. Despite the differing political backgrounds, the authors at least gesture toward similarities with the Slavic Maticas. In their article on Galician nationalism, Xosé M. Núñez Seixas and Alfonso Iglesias Amorín describe the “Galician Folklore Association”, one of the societies in various parts of Spain that “celebrated the conservation and promotion of folklore and local tradition, establishing a link between regional and local culture and state national

identity” (p. 167). As the authors note, “Unlike the East-Central European Matica model, the movement did not have a single ‘house’ or headquarters but rather several centers devoted to the task of spreading the new cultural creed in the main Galician cities and in their surrounding countrysides” (p. 176). Philippe Martel’s discussion of the Occitan case points to the “not so strange contradiction” familiar from Central European history: “it was precisely those who had freshly acquired access to official French culture who acquired at the same time the intellectual tools that would permit them to question this official culture” (p. 184). Unlike most of the minority cultures discussed in this volume, Occitan had a writer of world renown, Frédéric Mistral, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature, but as Martel suggests, he was “used in a struggle—esthetic and political—that was really none of his business and had no positive implications for the recognition of Occitan as a legitimate literary language” (p. 185). The local groups that served a “Matica-like” function in the Occitan region were known as “escolo”, although one was named Lou Bournat (the beehive) (p. 189). In discussing the widespread phenomenon of young intellectuals “devoting themselves to arid research about the language of their territory as a token of their people’s identity”, Martel discusses the problem of comparing local idioms “with more or less closely related varieties of the same linguistic group”, specifically mentioning “the case of Slovak, and the debate between the supporters of an ‘old Slovak’ closely related to Czech and those advocating a ‘new Slovak’ built upon divergent rural forms” (p. 196). The Occitans, like the Slovaks, were part of “a global strategy of distantiation from a State in which they felt unwillingly included”, the difference being that they were not socioeconomically marginalized in the same way as the Irish, Catalans, and Slovaks: “All the pieces of the nationbuilding weapon were on hand and ready to work; what was lacking was the finger on the trigger, since no one really felt the need to shoot” (pp. 201–202). Jan Rock discusses several organizations promoting Enlightenment ideals among Dutch-speakers, such as the Society of Dutch Literature in Leiden, which “had important features in common with the matica: it set up

a scholarly infrastructure for nation-wide philological study, it tried to spread knowledge among its members and to the broader public, it published books, and it was not established as a government initiative” (pp. 214–215). He also notes that the Dutch/Belgian experience of Austrian rule in the eighteenth century was notably different from that of the nineteenth-century Slavs: “the Habsburg government itself founded an Imperial Academy in Brussels and entrusted it with studying the history of the land” (p. 219).

The final chapters in the volume mention the Matica model only in passing, if at all, but do occasionally allude to Central European parallels. Marion Löffler’s chapter notes that “Irish and Welsh Pan-Celts measured themselves against Slavic cultural efforts”, and points out that the Czech-language instruction at the university of Prague was favorably compared to the English-only higher education in Wales, while the “efforts of Douglas Hyde, the leader of the Gaelic League, were likened to the work of František Palacký on behalf of Czech half a century earlier” (p. 243). Roisín Higgins examines the “Young Ireland” movement, which helped to lay the groundwork for Irish independence, initially affiliated with the *Nation* newspaper, who later promoted Irish nationality to the middle classes through reading rooms, and a book series called the *Library of Ireland*, with an emphasis on historical works. As Higgins points out, “The emphasis on Irish history offered Young Irelanders the possibility of creating a nationhood that was rooted neither in religion nor in ancestral blood, both of which were seen to exclude Protestants (and therefore many Young Irelanders). However, the construction of Irishness as springing from environment rather than race ignored the inequalities in Irish life and the consequences of its sectarianism” (p. 264). On the other side of northern Europe, according to Jörg Hackmann’s chapter on the Baltics, “for the issue of supporting indigenous cultures there was hardly a German model apart from the Herderian concept of collecting folk songs. Instead, when protagonists from the small nations began to broaden their activities, the Finnish and Czech cases were cited in particular” (p. 284). Returning to the Habsburg context, Iryna

Orlevych describes the (Ruthenian) Galician organization, which had been inspired by the Czech model as early as 1847: "The main aim was to found an institute similar to the Czech Matica that would be a defender of Ruthenian literature, publish literary works, collect historical relics, bring Galicians into contact with scholars of all Slavic nations, and would be 'a body of Pan-Slavic reciprocity'" (p. 294).

However, as in the Slovak case, unresolved language conflicts delayed the establishment of a unified cultural foundation until the 1870s, when Austrian support for the Poles weakened Austrophile sympathies among the Ruthenian intellectuals. In the final chapter, Diliara M. Usmanova turns to the contrasting case of a non-Slavic minority under Slavic rule: Tatar cultural organizations in the Russian Empire. In the Turko-Tatar Renaissance, she explains, "Tatar society simultaneously underwent a number of different trends, including the intensification of the process of secularization, the formation of a national (ethnic) consciousness, opposition to this trend from more traditional confessional concepts of identity, and a drive for Muslim unity", or Pan-Islamism (p. 325). She notes that under the repressive conditions of Russian rule, Tatar "charity" organizations often carried out fundraising for cultural activities that had no other means of support: "The Tatars could not rely on the cooperation (on either a moral or material level) of any governmental institution in the realization of any of their cultural initiatives, which included the establishment of mektebs and madrasa, the opening of libraries with reading rooms, and the founding of periodical publications" (p. 330).

Alexei Miller's afterword, "The Matica in a World of Empires," provides a concise summary of the volume's objectives and conclusions. After referring to the context of nationalism studies used by Leerssen in the introduction, Miller situates the Maticas in the related, but distinct context of imperial studies: "We need to see particular Maticas in terms of complex center-periphery relations in order to understand how different agendas were represented in and by various institutions" (p. 354). He briefly discusses the establishment of the Serbian and Czech Maticas, described in the opening chapters, comparing

these national Maticas with the "regional particularism" of the Moravian and Dalmatian organizations, whose "hidden potential" of alternative national identities can be compared with the Ruthenian/Galician example in Ukraine: "Neither Czech nor Croatian nor Ukrainian historiography can (or wishes to) offer us much help here, as they are not prepared to consider potential alternatives to the implemented scenarios of nation-building". Miller also uses the concept of "national indifference" which describes "the resistance of ordinary people to nationalist agitation and mobilization" (p. 359). This began to change following the *Ausgleich* of 1867, when in Hungarian-ruled Transleithania, "the Magyars, in accord with the dominant tendency of the epoch, launched an active policy of nation-building in the imperial core", while Austrian-ruled Cisleithania gave each national group the "right to preserve and cultivate its nationality and language", an approach which Miller calls "absolutely unique for the European empires of the nineteenth century", which "was possible because the imperial elites could no longer promote a German nation-building project" (pp. 360–361). However, other than a brief mention of Russia in reference to Usmanova's and Hackman's chapters, he does not discuss any lasting relevance of the Maticas beyond the later nineteenth century, nor does he offer substantial reflection on the non-Slavic examples discussed in the volume. Nonetheless, for Slovak and Czech scholars, as well as other researchers on the region, *The Matica and Beyond* offers a detailed look at the concrete and modest beginnings of the Central European national movements that only took political form as nation-states after 1918 (or in some cases only after 1989). Its comparisons with the experience of marginalized national groups in Britain, France, and Spain are particularly constructive, especially at a time when the future of a unified Europe no longer seems self-evident.

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