3.3 The Professionalization of the Historical Discipline

_Austrian Scholarly Periodicals, 1840-1900_

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_Introduction_

Scholarly periodicals are important pacemakers and trendsetters in the process of academic professionalization and institutionalization: they not only reflect developments within scientific disciplines or their relationship to other scientific fields, they also influence such developments decisively by way of an active editorial policy.1 Already in the course of the eighteenth century many journals dealing with ‘historical’ issues had been founded, i.e., treating genealogical, numismatic, and statistical contents.2 Most of them were media of education which intended to spread and discuss established ideas within a circle of educated readers.3 At that time and also during the early years of the nineteenth century, before the distinction between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ historian became clear-cut and complete, scholars working in the historical field did interest themselves in local history periodicals.4 Yet by the middle of the nineteenth century the ‘periodical’ in general had become a medium explicitly meant to address a specialized audience.5

As part of a multinational process, numerous such periodicals have been established since the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite many structural differences and challenges, most of them have to be seen against the national-political backdrop of this time as well as in the context of the then increasing professionalization of the discipline.6

This paper attempts to elucidate historical methods and patterns of professionalization in Austria between the 1840s and 1900 by means of an analysis of three case studies corresponding to three scholarly journals: _Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher_, the _Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte_, and, finally, the _Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung_. The reason for the selection of these three examples is that they all reflect typical characteristics of Austrian historical research in this period. First of all we have to face the prob-
lem of an ‘Austrian’ history in connection with a national representation within the heterogeneous, multinational Habsburg Monarchy. On the one hand, this question has always been closely related to the issue of the model effect German historical undertakings and enterprises had on Austrian works. On the other hand, we find numerous attempts of dealing with the history of the Gesamtstaat – which means the entity of the Habsburg Monarchy not only as a complex of various more or less independent lands, but based on a common identity for the entire state. Furthermore, we have to take into consideration the development of specific philological methods for collecting, preparing, and editing historical sources. In Austria, efforts like these were parts of a longer tradition: following the examples set by the Bollandists and Maurists, some monks in the archives and libraries of various Austrian monasteries and abbeys had been organizing big historical source collections and editions during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. All in all these trends already anticipated the constitutive significance of the archive in nineteenth-century historiography.

A historical repertory: Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher

Our first case study deals with the journal Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher, a short-lived periodical, published around 1840. It originated from a private initiative by Joseph Chmel, a very ambitious archivist of the Habsburg Privy House Archive in Vienna. While serving as a priest in an Abbey in Upper Austria, Chmel became acquainted with intensive studies on sources in the archive and the library of the monastery. A self-educated historian, he developed a deep passion for medieval historical sources and for patriotic history. He regarded his journal as a historical repertory for the writings of the widely dispersed historians of the entire Habsburg Monarchy. Information stemming from manuscripts, charters and books was provided as a guide to find material dispersed to the same degree. He believed that the historical sources of Vienna and other parts of the Monarchy should make it possible to write a ‘complete and truthful history’. In the periodical, Chmel gave researchers clear instructions as to how to achieve this aim: ‘Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher must deliver solid building materials and should start building from below’.

The periodical certainly failed in its purpose of being an aid for historians to become acquainted with yet unknown sources: its structure and contents were very heterogeneous and therefore the material was not very easy to handle for contemporary readers. Each volume consisted of three numbers, which included – without any chronological or thematic limitation – charters for an Austrian Codex Diplomaticus as well as materials related to Austrian financial history, numis-
matics, sphragistics, heraldry, diplomatic affairs, and other matters of historical interest. At the beginning most contributions were authored by Chmel himself, who wanted to give publicity to some of the documents he had found during his previous travels to various archives.16

When Chmel was planning the first volume, he had no idea which principles he should apply to arrange his material, which various scholars sent to him in great numbers every day.17 For this reason, the arrangement of the periodical exactly mirrors the ‘confused state of the documents’ prevailing in the archives.18 Theodor von Sickel, the founder of modern diplomatics (critical document research),19 copied some documents in an Italian archive for Chmel, long before he started his career at the Viennese university. And even Sickel laconically stated that ‘the chaos of his own work’ corresponded to the disorder of the archive.20

As editor of the periodical, Chmel accepted the manuscripts of his collaborators without any changes, as he freely admitted.21 In many cases no hints of the origin and the transmission of the edited texts were given.22 Specific information on cartularies or archival signatures was often not provided to the reader. The form of presentation comprised excerpts of manuscripts, texts of ‘Regesta’ as well as complete texts. Basically the Geschichtsforscher represented a mere collection of materials, only now and then interrupted by smaller treatises.23

Each number of the periodical was accompanied by an appendix in which the editor offered bibliographical information as well as information on studies and projects undertaken or planned by numerous researchers in the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy.24 These appendices enable us to become acquainted with Chmel’s extensive network of correspondents and collaborators: these were mainly colleagues like librarians and archivists, but also civil servants in filing departments and teachers in secondary schools who were also active as researchers. Chmel’s private correspondence bears witness to lively contacts with researchers in various parts of the Monarchy, especially in Moravia and Bohemia, among others with František Palacký, historiographer of the Bohemian Estates.25 This is in accordance with the general findings of present-day scholars, that the connection between the Habsburgs’ German hereditary lands and Bohemia was much more fundamental and enduring in intellectual terms than its connection to Hungary or Galicia.26 It is interesting that Chmel fervently recommended the translation of some late medieval letters published in Palacký’s Archiv Český – yet not into German, but into Latin, ‘for the good of the historical researchers of all nations’.27

In his Geschichtsforscher, Chmel gives the impression of being the focal point of historical research in ‘Austria’, whose history he constantly equates with that of the Gesamtstaat. Nevertheless, his periodical remained thematically restricted
mainly to Lower and Upper Austria. After its second volume, the journal Geschichtsforscher was given up: its circulation was low, and public interest in a periodical of this kind was yet lacking in Austria. Nevertheless numerous contributions had been sent in to Chmel as editor – and also his own journeys had made him realize that the mass of material stored in the archives was enormous. But for Chmel himself it was nearly impossible to critically select the material that should be published: he preferred to have everything printed and wanted everybody to help him in this respect.

A printed archive: The Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte

Nevertheless, the basic conception of the Geschichtsforscher proved to be trend-setting. This leads us to the second case study dedicated to a journal published not by a private person, but by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna, which was founded in 1847, on the eve of the Revolution. As one of its first members the above-mentioned archivist Joseph Chmel influenced significantly the design and orientation of its first publications. He initiated the formation of the Historische Kommission, a department for Historical Research within the Imperial Academy, which should prepare, organize and publish editions of certain sources and also a specific historical journal. According to its title, Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte, the journal, first published in 1848, was meant to be a ‘printed’ archive to make historical material available and accessible to all researchers in the Habsburg lands. At the same time these researchers themselves should participate in this historical ‘source collection program’. Parallel to the Archiv the sources of the individual crown lands were to be separately published in series of larger editions – as so-called Fontes rerum Austriacarum, Bohemicarum, Hungaricarum, Polonicarum and Italicarum. As acknowledged model for both, the Archiv and the Fontes, served a German enterprise: the popular Monumenta Germaniae Historica.

In the Austrian enterprise, the different meanings of ‘Austria’ became visible: on the one hand historical sources of the whole Austrian Monarchy had to be edited, on the other hand the Res Austriacae should be only one part of a total of five and were supposed to represent the German hereditary lands. In combination with the Fontes the journal Archiv was conceived as a collection of source material; but the Archiv also provided smaller historical treatises. Its main function was to prepare the groundwork for a big comprehensive history of the Austrian Empire (Österreichischer Kaiserstaat), which was revitalized after 1848. Apart from purely historical items the periodical was open also for historical-geographical, topographical, archeological and linguistic studies.
It is significant that the Archiv soon was regarded as a methodologically stand-
ardized journal and therefore was declared to be an ‘academic publication’.35 Yet, the conceptual policy paper of 1848 had welcomed all ‘friends of patriotic his-
tory’, without maintaining any professional differentiation.36 For this reason the 
journal represents an interesting interface between dilettante and increasingly 
professional claims.

In contrast with the practice of the predecessor Der österreichische Geschichts-
forscher, the Imperial Academy established an editorial staff that had to review
the articles and editions before publication. It certainly is instructive to take a look at the reports and the persons who were doing this work. Most of them were members of the Historische Kommission and therefore closely related to the Academy, i.e., as full members. One of the first persons responsible for re-
viewing the incoming manuscripts was a specialist in German studies, Theodor
von Karajan, who held a leading position as a court librarian.37 Apart from him, leading archivists, such as the above-mentioned Joseph Chmel as well as Alfred
von Arneth, the future director of the Privy House Archive, were busy writing 
reviews and reports.38

In many cases the publication process was a lengthy procedure, including
much communication between the authors and contributors and the members of
the editorial staff. It is worth mentioning some of the individual approaches and 
arguments for accepting or declining a publication: Chmel, for example, want-
ed to ensure that really ‘new’ and yet unprinted source material was going to be 
published. For this reason, he often compared the editions with material kept in 
his own archive, and his final decision was predicated on this comparison.39 His
colleague Karajan often was unsatisfied with the stylistic competence of some 
scholars who sent in their treatises. Moreover, he was not interested in any coop-
eration with ‘all friends of history’, because in his view the ‘academic’ publications 
by all means should be for ‘professionals’ and not for ‘amateurs’ or ‘laymen’.40 As a
specialist in Austrian eighteenth-century history, Arneth felt that the journal did 
not treat this period adequately enough, which led him to approve the publica-
tion of an edition of materials from this century despite serious methodological 
defects.41 Most of the reviewers insisted on the relevance of the chosen source 
material for the political history of the Habsburg crown lands. But even here we
find interesting exceptions: sometimes historical sources without any political 
significance were published if they concerned the history of very remote parts of 
the Monarchy.42

In spite of some attempts to represent the historical research of the Monarchy 
as a whole, all in all the periodical did not succeed in fulfilling these self-imposed
requirements. Even internal communications within the editorial staff very soon 
designated the Archiv as a ‘German’ periodical.43 Indeed, the majority of the re-

viewers and contributors originated from the German hereditary lands. However, there was an increasing personal and professional interconnection between the Academy and the rising universities, especially with that of Vienna, where the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung played a prominent role in the methodological standardization of the historical discipline. Since the 1870s more professional historians can be found among the reviewers as well as among the contributors of the Archiv. As a consequence, the lengthy review procedure was shortened: From 1875 onwards it was not considered necessary anymore to write reports on treatises or editions, which already ‘at first sight’ did not deserve to be published. A short oral report was supposed to be sufficient to decline a submitted manuscript. None other than the above-mentioned historian Theodor Sickel, professor at the University of Vienna and member of the Historische Kommission since 1872, had made this proposal. The research standards that requested the use and quotation of ‘original’ sources from the contributors were finally taken for granted.

However, the proportions of historical treatises and mere editions of sources within the Archiv were continuously changing: during its first decades the treatises accounted for around 46%, whereas between 1895 and 1900 the percentage rose to 67%. Of course, these treatises were firmly based on historical source material and archival studies as well. This remained a characteristic feature of the periodical; but the process of professionalization also becomes evident when looking at the structure of the annotations and indices. Especially since the 1890s there were not only archival references and signatures but also numerous references to secondary literature.

Promoting professional auxiliary sciences of history: The Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung

In 1880 the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, located at the University of Vienna, began publishing its Mitteilungen, our third case study. It was the first scholarly historical periodical in Austria to survive to the present and is still one of Austria’s most important journals in this field. In addition to the methodological efforts of the Archiv, the new journal Mitteilungen was specifically designed for promoting certain historical disciplines: its initiators, first and foremost Theodor Sickel, mainly aimed at introducing auxiliary specializations in history, such as paleography, diplomatics, and archival science to the scientific community. These disciplines had been continually developed and taught at the Institut for the previous twenty-five years, i.e., since its foundation in 1854. However, according to the publisher’s advertisement the journal should be as universal
as possible and was not restricted to a certain historical epoch or discipline: legal history was meant to be presented as well as art history, cultural history, and Christian archeology.50

But in contrast to the aforementioned Archiv, the Mitteilungen provided critical treatises and articles in the field of the auxiliary sciences of history rather than mere source editions. According to Theodor Sickel, all the peers and colleagues who had been working in this research area were supposed to benefit from this new journal: It was meant to ‘glue together’ scholars interested in the auxiliary sciences of history.51 Therefore the periodical can also be seen as a professional collaborative project. Its aim was that the community and solidarity of professors, readers, lecturers, and current and former students of the institute would be underlined and strengthened. Many of the contributors of the Mitteilungen stood in close personal and functional relation to the institute where they were teaching or had been taught in the above-mentioned historical skills. It is interesting to see that this network of historians, which had been constituted during the time of the Monarchy, remained existent even after the First World War.52 A lot of contributors also held positions as lecturers or professors at renowned, especially German universities. This is why it might not have been necessary to ‘peer review’ the articles sent in for the Mitteilungen. Its editors just selected one colleague from among the Institute’s members to do the editorial work and to communicate with the authors.53

Around 1880 similar historical periodicals were founded, i.e., in France, Italy, England, Belgium and the United States.54 Twenty years earlier the Historische Zeitschrift in Germany had already marked the transition from a journal addressed to an educated public to a scholarly historical periodical.55 When founding the Austrian Mitteilungen its first protagonists criticized the lack of a corresponding historical periodical for southern Germany and Austria. In the eyes of the Austrian professors and scholars, the Archiv of the Imperial Academy in Vienna had an excellent reputation; however, the complicated publication procedure did not meet the actual demands any more, which were aiming at a more timely publication process.56 Apart from that, and this is a significant structural detail, the Archiv did not contain book reviews or brief notices about specialized historical literature. By contrast, the new Mitteilungen emphasized the importance of extensive book reviews and reports on historical literature. These parts of the periodical contributed greatly to standardization: the attempts to exclude contributions which were not accepted for scientific reasons combined with the attempts to establish a professional solidarity within the academic environment.57 The editors of the Mitteilungen paid particular attention to this part of the journal for another reason as well: they wanted specialists to report regularly about the research results in the non-German parts of Austria-Hungary. Thus,
the periodical offered extensive reports, e.g., on the *Monumenta Historiae Hungarica* or on the source publications of the Academies of Sciences in Kraków and Zagreb. The reviewers compared these editions to the standards represented by the Viennese Institute, and they also dealt with the problem of using the national languages in the introductions and annotations of the editions. In particular, the Hungarian publications were strongly criticized for using the Hungarian language instead of Latin.\(^5^8\)

In any case the structure of the *Mitteilungen* enabled the periodical to respond rather quickly to new subdisciplines and trends such as economic and social history around 1900.\(^5^9\) The growth and diversity of historical knowledge became part of the scholarly exchange by the inclusion of longer and smaller articles, book reviews and research reports. The photographic reproduction and the method of using facsimile editions for paleographic studies, as it was done in the teaching courses at the Institute, found their way into the journal. This approach soon was taken up by related disciplines such as musicology and art history. There were corresponding articles and reports on similar undertakings dedicated to photographic reproductions not only within the Habsburg Monarchy or in Germany, but also in France and Italy.\(^6^0\) Despite its concentration on historical research in Germany and 'Austria', the periodical tried hard to become more international.

**Conclusion**

To sum up: around 1840 *Der Österreichische Geschichtsforscher* had an antiquarian slant and consisted of a mere collection of various historical sources. Its primary aim was just to promote historical and archival research in general within the Habsburg 'Gesamtstaat'. Not only promotion and advancement, but also standardization was demanded by the *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte*, edited by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna since 1848. In order to achieve this, the Academy established its own staff for reviewing the incoming articles and source editions. The increasing personal interconnection between the Academy and the university made the distinction between 'amateur' and 'professional' historian more pronounced. Our last case study, the periodical *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, founded in 1880, was already a university cooperative enterprise. Its main purpose was to promote the auxiliary sciences of history. In the context of German historical research at the end of the nineteenth century, the journal also offered interesting attempts to distinguish itself by special 'Austrian' literary supplements and book reviews, which also tried to include the research results
of the eastern and southern lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. The structure of the Mitteilungen as a whole strongly correlated with other national scholarly historical periodicals and facilitated rapid reactions to new developments in the historical field.

The case studies reveal changing professional as well as political approaches in combination with the quest for methodological standardization. As part of the ‘making of’ the historical discipline scholarly periodicals should therefore be regarded as important elements in the very complex academic process.

Notes


Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher (see n. 12), vol. 1, iii-viii (my translation).

Chmel, ‘Bericht über eine Reise’ (see n. 14).

Archiv des Stiftes St. Florian (hereafter: AStF), Letters of and to Joseph Chmel, Chmel to Johann Friedrich Böhmer, 1831 October 14.

Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher (see n. 12), vol. 1, ii (my translation).


ASF, Letters of and to Joseph Chmel, Theodor Sickel to Chmel, 1854 November 1 (my translation).

Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher (see n. 12), vol. 1, 566.

See, for example, Anton Emmert, ‘Monumenta Tirolensia’, Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher (see n. 12), vol. 1, 566-585.

24 Der österreichische Geschichtsforscher (see n. 12), vol. 1, 166f., 397-399; see Notizenblatt in vol. 1, after 201: i-xxvii, esp. xxvi-xxvii.

25 Chmel was not only in contact with František Palacký, but also with Moravian archivists and historians; see AStF, Letters of and to Joseph Chmel: Peter von Chlumecky to Joseph Chmel (20 letters between 1852 and 1858); AStF, Beda Dudík to Joseph Chmel (21 letters between 1849 and 1857); for Palacký, see Jiří Kořalka, František Palacký (1798-1876). Der Historiker der Tschechen im österreichischen Vielvölkerstaat, Studien zur Geschichte der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie, vol. 30 (Vienna, 2007).


29 Joseph Chmel, ‘Bericht über den Fortgang einiger akademischer Unternehmungen, namentlich der Monumenta Habsburgica’, in Sitzungsberichte (see n. 27), 22 (Vienna, 1856), 29-90, at 32.

30 Johannes Janssen (ed.), Johann Friedrich Böhmer’s Briefe, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1868), Johann Friedrich Böhmer to Christoph Friedrich Stälin, 1848 August 15, 516.


Stourzh, Umfang, 8.

34 [Joseph Chmel], ‘Vorwort’, in Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen (since 1865; Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, hereafter: AÖG), 1 (1848), iii-xi.

35 Archiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Historische Kommission (hereafter: AÖAW, HK), Karton 1, Alte Akten 1851-1869, Nr. 155, Joseph Bergmann, Letter to the Academy, 1862 June 18.

36 [Joseph Chmel], ‘Vorwort’, iv; AÖAW, Allgemeine Akten, Aktenzahl ad 1042 ex 1851, Joseph Chmel, Nachricht, 1851 October 1.

37 For all the members of the Historische Kommission, see Gudrun Pischinger, Geschichtsministerium oder Verlagsanstalt? Eine Funktionsanalyse der Historischen Kommission der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien 1847 bis 1877 (PhD thesis, Graz, 2001), 261f.

38 Already in 1852 Arneth was called on to write a review on an article; AÖAW, HK, Karton 2, Protokolle der Sitzungen 1851-1870, 1852 January 26, fol. 11v. In 1853 Arneth became a member of the Historische Kommission and in 1868 director of the Privy House Archive in Vienna; Richard Meister, ‘Das Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv und die Akademie der Wissenschaften’, Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 226.3 (1949), 3-82, at 57, 65f.

39 AÖAW, HK, Karton 1, Nr. 24, AZ 119 ex 1852, Theodor von Karajan and Joseph Chmel, 1852 March 1.

40 AÖAW, HK, Karton 1, Nr. 7, AZ 1038 ex 1850, Theodor von Karajan, Report, 1851 November 9; AÖAW, HK, K 1, Alte Akten 1851-1869, Nr. 93, AZ 352 ex 1855, Theodor
von Karajan, Report, 1855 October 31; ibid., Nr. 3, Theodor von Karajan, Review, 1851 November (sine die).

41 AÖAW, HK, Karton 1, Alte Akten 1851-1869, Nr. 194, sine Aktenzahl, Alfred von Arneth, Report, 1866 April 23.

42 AÖAW, HK, Karton 1, Alte Akten 1851-1869, Nr. 218, Joseph Fiedler, Report, 1868 November 2.

43 AÖAW, HK, Karton 1, Alte Akten 1851-1869, Nr. 79, sine Aktenzahl, exped. July 24 1854, Theodor von Karajan, Letter (Concept), 1854 July 24.

44 Pischinger, Geschichtsministerium, 167-169.


46 AÖAW, HK, Karton 2, Sitzungsprotokolle der HK, Meeting 1875 November 24.


48 See, for example, the treatise: Adolf Beer, 'Die österreichische Handelspolitik unter Maria Theresia und Josef II', AÖG 86 (1899), 1-204.

49 Abbreviated as MIÖG (= Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung).

50 Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung (hereafter: IÖG), Bestand MIÖG, Karton MIÖG-Akten, Mappe 2, Faszikel 2, Konvolut: Vorverhandlungen, Promemoria der Wagner'schen Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1878 May 25.

51 Theodor Sickel, 'Das k.k. Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung', MIÖG 1 (1880), 1-18, esp. 17f. (my translation).


53 Alphons Lhotsky, Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 156-158, 261.

54 See the corresponding articles in Middell (ed.), Historische Zeitschriften im internationalen Vergleich (see n. 1); for Belgium: Jo Tollebeek, 'Voorgeschiedenis en vormverandering. Historische Tijdschriften in België, 1870-1922', Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire 76 (1998), 847-870, esp. 853f.


56 IÖG, Bestand MIÖG, Karton MIÖG-Akten, Mappe 1: Buchhandlungen, etc., Fasz. 1, Engelbert Mühlbacher, Promemoria, 1879 October 22.


60 Just to give an example: Guido Adler, [Review:] Paléographie musicale: les principaux manuscrits de chant grégorien, ambrosien, mozarabe, gallican publiés en fac-similés phototypiques, vol. 1, ed. Benediktinerpatres in Solesmes (Solesmes 1889), MIÖG II (1890), 327-328.