

New colonies and migratory movements in the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 18th century.

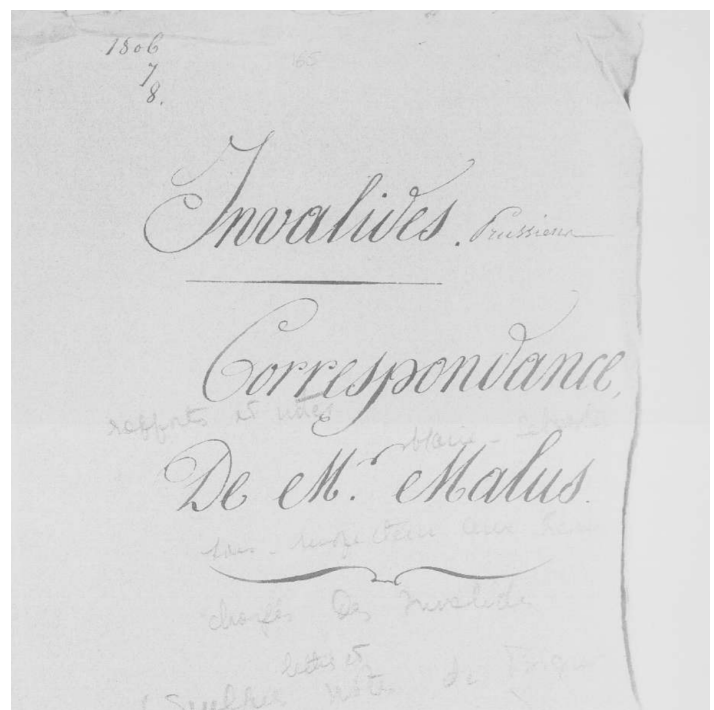
By Laura Partal Ortega

This research project has been made possible by a research grant awarded by the European Archives Portal Foundation, which is not only part of the researcher's own work but also of the DE-BIAS project for the detection and cure of harmful language in European cultural heritage collections.

In this way, a thorough research of documentation related to the repopulation of large parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia in the 18th century has been carried out.

The reason for this study stems from a widespread and current political and social concern: depopulated Europe. The attraction of large cities and the unfavourable conditions of the peripheral territories of European states have favoured massive population migrations and the abandonment of the land and its production. This is a process of long historical duration that has affected, to a greater or lesser extent, all the countries of Europe. These countries have had to face different contexts in which to apply policies to mitigate this problem. These policies have all focused on promoting colonisation, repopulation and the founding of new populations, but in each case the methods and results have been, if not different, then varied.

The repopulation projects carried out in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were carried out by the Habsburg emperors Leopold



Archives Nationales (France), *Prussians Invalids*, 1806, available in APE

I, Charles VI, Maria Theresa and Joseph II mainly from the Southern and Southeastern areas of the empire, to their new territories in southern Hungary liberated by the Turks, in an area comprising present-day Romania

and Serbia. In the Prussian case, the repopulation project was carried out under Frederick II the Great, who recovered the regions between the Küstrin and Landsberg an der Warthe in present-day Poland.

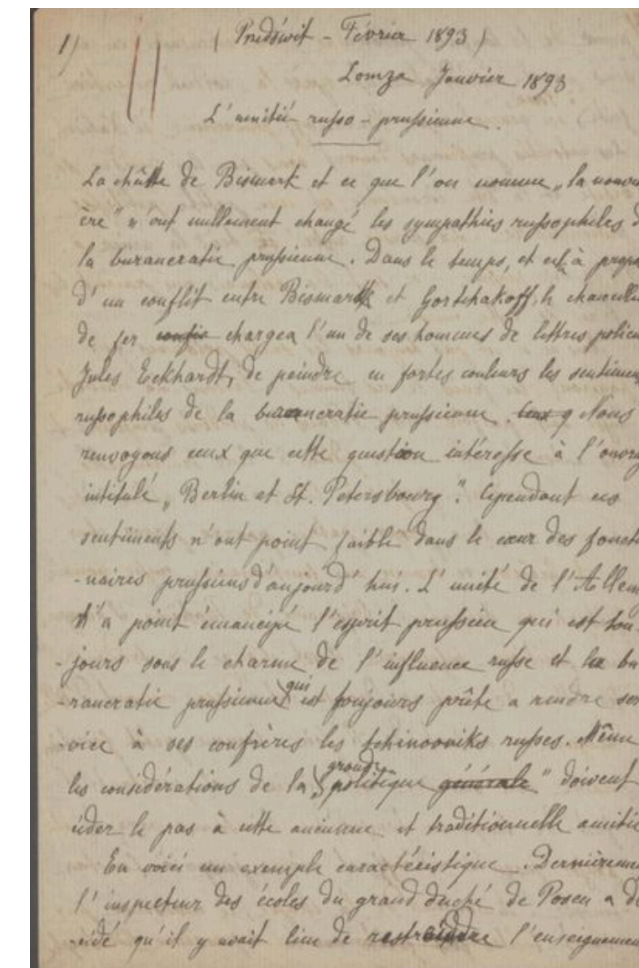
Thus, in the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a visit to the National Archives in Vienna was essential, taking into account its two sites where the collections are located, on the one hand, the Austrian State Archives, Department of the House, Court and State Archives in the centre of the city; and those of the General Administrative Archives, Treasury and Judicial Chambers.



Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen (Germany), *Map of the war theatre in Germany, 1806*, available in APE

In both collections, we have managed to study a set of documents whose main focus has been on the settlers, their geographical situation and the ethnic minorities that were found in the empire at that time.

In this way, lists of settlers between 1779-1804 were reviewed, with special attention to the presence of Jews, romanes and other minorities. For the former, documentation relating to their settlement, tolerance and matters related to their economic activities, dated between 1757 and 1778, has been reviewed. In addition, a draft of a general regulation for Jewish



Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (The Netherlands), *Russo-Prussian friendship, 1893*, available in APE

For the Prussian case study, on the other hand, it has been essential to review the collections of the private archive of Prussian culture located in Berlin. Thanks to a previous search in the database available on the website of this archive, it was possible to locate the section that was the object of the review, called “Westpreussen und Netzedistrikt-Poliseiverwaltung (Materien) 1716-1810”, which corresponds to police matters in the new colonies of Frederick II.

A total of 28 documents have been reviewed from this collection, all related to the settlement of settler families. What is interesting about this document is that it provides statistical data on all persons who entered and left the department corresponding to our study area, East Prussia, as well as matters related to pardons, settler claims and

citizenship in the city and in rural areas dated approximately around 1776. In relation to the romani population, the revision of a document entitled “Military, Russian, Polish and Gypsy Settlement” has been fundamental, as it shows the reality of the romani ethnic group in those times and the other population minorities that arrived in the Banat.

In addition to all this, and taking as a principle the coexistence of all these inhabitants of the Banat, it has been considered convenient to review the documentation related to deserters and thieves.

However, thanks to previous studies carried out for the case of new settlements in Spain in the 18th century, we are aware of the importance of cartography for these studies. Cartography provides us with a great deal of information (territorial divisions, toponymic, military, communication routes...) that can even distinguish inhabitants or populations by means of emblems. For this reason, not only documentation but also cartography has been reviewed, highlighting the section “IX Österreich-Ungarn, Politische Karten” of which a total of eleven maps dated between 1723 and 1795 have been reviewed.

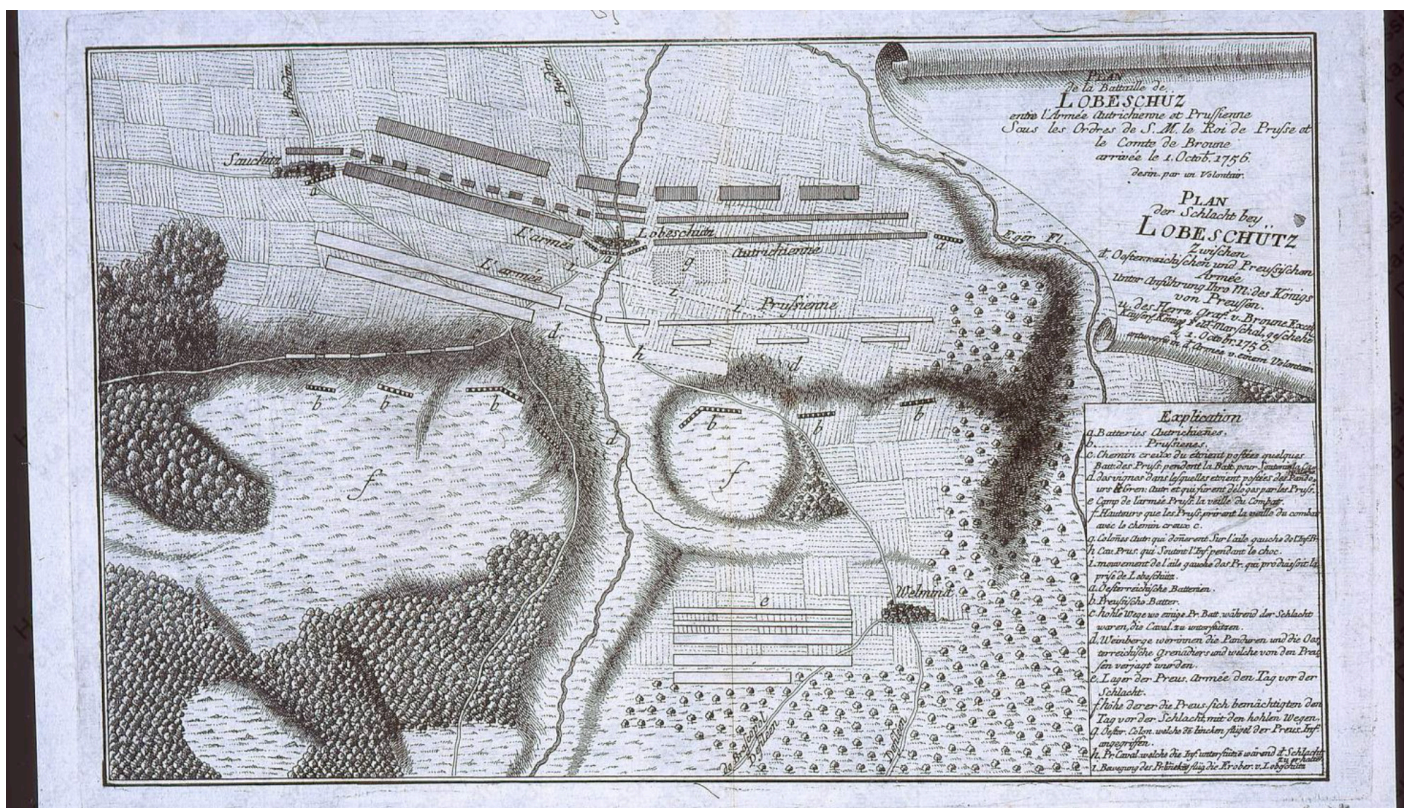
economic activities.

Although the information in the catalogue cards does not specify any ethnic or minority population, a religious minority, the Mennonites, is mentioned in a revised documentation. Despite this, within the statistical information and other protocols related to the aforementioned subjects, it is possible to intuit the presence of populations from different places, taking into account the king's open-minded religious policy and the general convulsive situation throughout Europe, which meant that migratory movements were very numerous.

As with the Austro-Hungarian case, this documentation has been supplemented with cartography dated between 1733 and 1798 located in different sections. Maps and plans of some of the colonies have been found, as well as a territorial evolution of Prussia throughout the century, which is an important question to take into account in order to understand the conflicts with other powers.

This brief description of all the documentation studied demonstrates the great potential of its contents, not only from a strictly historical point of view, but also allows for the aforementioned migratory study promoted by the DeBias project.

From the objectives that were set at the beginning of the research grant, a global vision of the reasons that led to the carrying out of these repopulation projects, their planning and execution will be achieved; added to all this, a profound social and demographic study, as the new colonies could not have existed and lasted over time without the people from different origins who formed part of them and who enriched the diversity of these vast areas of Europe.



Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt (Germany), *Plan of the Battle of Lobositz between the Austrian army under Count von Browne and the Prussian army under Frederick the Great on 1 October 1756, available in APE*