

Practices and Problems of Censorship in Inner Austria between Centralism and Federalism, circa 1780–1809

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ABSTRACT

This article extends the current focus of research on literature and political affairs in Habsburg eighteenth-century censorship toward practical, administrative, and economic aspects and the periodical press, using material that survived in Inner Austrian archives, especially at the State Archive of Trieste. In particular, the limits of Habsburg censorship and the interplay between central and provincial authorities are elucidated.

KEYWORDS

Trieste, Inner Austria, Enlightenment, pre-March era, censorship

IZVLEČEK

Prispevek razširja dosedanje težišče raziskav literature in političnih zadev v habsburški cenzuri 18. stoletja na praktične, upravne in gospodarske vidike ter na periodični tisk, pri čemer uporablja gradivo, ki se je ohranilo v notranjeavstrijskih arhivih. Posebej so pojasnjene meje habsburške cenzure ter medsebojni vplivi med osrednjimi in deželnimi oblastmi.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

Trieste / Trst, Notranja Avstrija, razsvetljenstvo, predmarčna doba, cenzura

Introduction

This article takes into account political, sociocultural, and economic dimensions in its approach. An overview of the literature shows that socioeconomic aspects and the periodical press as one of their major media have remained largely uncharted. The same is true of Inner Austrian archival sources that rest in storage largely untouched. Against this background, Inner Austrian examples show the problems of provincial and centralised censorship in general. A close look at the special case of Habsburg Trieste provides an informative stress test for this system and its practices. In broad and abstract terms, censorship practices are understood as control mechanisms of information flows that were exercised not only in the past, but also today.¹ Circulation of information

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¹ Cf. for a broad and pointed perspective: Burt, (Un)Censoring.

is necessary for sociocultural discourse. Access to information integrates social groups, and it is also a precondition for individual decision-making.² High-level transparency of legal and political actions, of administrative and executive bodies, characterises “liberal” governments, to use a term from nineteenth-century classical political theory; to a certain extent, this aim also applies to Enlightened theory.³ The same is true for communication in business and in the market economy as a whole.⁴ In contrast, restrictions certainly occur when military risks threaten borders as well as people, and when the security of the state and society is at stake.⁵ Moreover, regimes and interest groups strive to limit information to obtain advantages in economic competition or to restrict education and cultural participation along the lines of class, confession, and gender or between linguistic majorities and minorities, and to get rid of critical minds.⁶

Research on Habsburg censorship set in in the waning days of the pre-March era. Wiesner’s early deliberations⁷ could still draw on the communicative memory of late eighteenth-century discourse and experience. They are personal and politically motivated, and they must be read as a sociopolitical and sociocultural manifesto, but they deserve to be mentioned because they helped create the myth of “liberal” Josephinian censorship. Gnau’s comprehensive doctoral thesis⁸ profited from the advantage of being able to use the central censorship archives before they were destroyed in political upheaval in 1927.⁹ Probably due to this loss, the next important contribution came from the former Austrian Netherlands.¹⁰ After the Second World War, these findings were compared with Hungary, where the revolt against Josephinian reforms also resulted in early restrictions.¹¹ It is an undisputable merit of this study to have conceived the central and federal dimensions of Habsburg censorship precisely for the first time. Moreover, the author examined not only censorship, but also prerogative¹² – the twin sibling of censorship, so to speak. At approximately the same time, the Austrian refugee Ernst Wangermann

² Cf., e.g., the confession building in the early modern period: Plachta, *Zensur*, pp. 56–64.

³ Siemann, *Zensur*, pp. 377–379.

⁴ Sandgruber, *Ökonomie*, especially pp. 227–231; Tortarolo, *Invention*, pp. 128–133.

⁵ Siemann, *Schutz*.

⁶ Cf. Bourdieu, *Soziologische Fragen*, and Hobohm, *Macht*; Becker-Cantarino, *Geschlechtszensur*; Marcus, *Censorship*; cf., e.g., for Heine: Siemann, *Zensur*, 369.

⁷ Wiesner, *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

⁸ Gnau, *Zensur*.

⁹ For some sort of an archaeology of the remains: Schembor, *Meinungsbeeinflussung*.

¹⁰ Puttemans, *Censure*.

¹¹ Sashegyi, *Zensur*, especially pp. 144–151.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 141–142.

prepared his masterful volume on the transition from Joseph II to Francis II.¹³ He demonstrated that the latter's private records provide many opportunities to learn about censorship practices in the course of the prosecution of the Jacobins. In this connection, Zwitter-Tehovnik's doctoral thesis¹⁴ deserves to be mentioned. In describing Siegfried von Taufferer's (1750–1796) life, she also identified traces of censorship in the Carniolan state archives. Especially for Styria, but also for Inner Austria as a whole (for the period from 1784 to 1791), Kosch achieved an outline of regional censorship that concentrated on books and cited some causes célèbres.¹⁵

Current historiography once again received prominent input from outside contemporary Austria; namely, from Lavandier's overview of censorship ordinances.¹⁶ Bachleitner, Píša, Syrový, and Wögerbauer eventually set the state of the art by rediscovering distant and central archival sources.¹⁷ Focusing on literary censorship, they arrived at a sound interpretation of Habsburg censorship from Maria Theresa to 1848 in general. Research also resulted in a valuable database that includes books of all sorts.¹⁸ There are desiderata, however, because most quoted works concentrate on important events, persons, and more or less famous books. Approaches remain author-centred and work-centred. I go beyond this state of the art by focusing on administrative and economic, commercial, and financial details. Regarding media, there is a focus on newspapers and advertisements that have been neglected not only in Austrian historiography, but also in general.¹⁹ This dynamic field seems to be more rewarding than the more static book when it comes to limits of the censorship apparatus.

Inner Austrian archives offer substantial holdings to tackle these questions. The extraordinary Trieste holdings consist of fourteen boxes for the period from 1776 to 1808. Whereas five of them deal with commercial matters and state commissions, the majority contain records that densely document censorship practices.²⁰ In contrast, the relevant records of the Carniolan Provincial

¹³ Wangermann, *Joseph II.*

¹⁴ Zwitter-Tehovnik, *Wirkungen.*

¹⁵ Kosch, Bücherrevisionsamt.

¹⁶ Lavandier, *Livre au temps de Marie-Thérèse*; Lavandier, *Livre au temps de Joseph II et de Leopold II.*

¹⁷ Bachleitner, *Zensur.*

¹⁸ Bachleitner et al., *Verpönt.*

¹⁹ Cf. Wilke, *Pressezensur*, especially p. 27, and also, symptomatically, the minor role of the periodical press in Eisenhardt, *Aufsicht*, pp. 13–14, 19, 33, 49, 53, 102–104, 107–109, 116, 123, 126, 128–130, 153.

²⁰ ASTs, Governo, boxes 156, 962–965; 42, 954–961. In addition, box 1219, which contains miscellaneous content on cultural affairs, is relevant.

Archives were nearly totally annihilated in 1867 by a civil servant that deemed most of the materials from 1784 to 1809 to be “useless”,²¹ which was certainly true from the practical administrative standpoint at his time. The Styrian Provincial Archives also only host scant remains of records that are limited to one box for the period between the mid-1780s and 1808.²² However, its large collection of lists and catalogues of banned books contains the complete memory of censorship from the Theresian period through the pre-March era.²³ Finally, the Carinthian Provincial Archives provide two boxes that combine censorship records with documents from the board of education.²⁴ Interestingly, the focus is on economic and financial matters. In all the archives mentioned, indices and protocols survived and allow some insights even under the worst conditions of preservation.

Principles of Censorship

Continuities and evolution prevailed from the last years of Maria Theresa into the pre-March era. There were three major legal texts that actually summed up the state of affairs in 1781, 1795, and 1810.²⁵ Between these significant steps, various amendments modified each earlier version until it seemed necessary to combine the additions into a coherent new law. The administrative shift to the police in 1801 certainly has an iconic dimension,²⁶ but it is conspicuous that the police had already played a prominent role as an active supporter of censorship earlier (see below). Pre-censorship dominated most of the time. Only between 1787 and 1790 was it allowed to print books without prior consent. It is, however, not clear whether this regulation was valid throughout the Habsburg Monarchy or only in a limited number of dominions.²⁷ The wording of the 1790 instruction that ended this short episode²⁸ also suggests that post-censorship was restricted to books and not applicable to newspapers, advertisements, and prayers, which were not centrally censored in Vienna, but dealt with in the dominions. It is particularly important to understand this dual system of

²¹ AS 14, box 4, no. 5377 ex 1784.

²² StLA, Gubernium, box 40.

²³ StLA, Manuscript collection.

²⁴ KLA, Gubernium, boxes 182 and 183.

²⁵ Printed in: Bachleitner, *Zensur*, pp. 427–430, 431–438, 474–477.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 69–70. Cf. for Britain as an early example of post-censorship with its specific problems: Winkler, *Nachzensur*.

²⁸ Bachleitner, *Zensur*, p. 431.

censorship in the metropolis on the one hand, and so-called “book revision” (*Bücherrevision*) as well as censorship of newspapers, advertisements, and prayers in the capital cities of the dominions on the other. Although gubernatorial censorship was commissioned to allow or ban newspaper content, commercial as well as private announcements, prayers, and, later on, also (potentially slanderous) brochures, hitherto unknown circulating books and monthly magazines had to be submitted to Vienna.²⁹ Regularly, circulating lists provided information about the central authority’s decisions.³⁰ It was one of Joseph II’s first innovations in 1781 that not only banned and tolerated titles were communicated, but also allowed publications. This would spare time because unnecessary correspondence between the provinces and the centre could be avoided.³¹ However, two recurring problems occurred in this system. First, provincial censorship and revision were usually entrusted to the head of the provincial board of education. This demanding core task did not leave much time for the laborious control of the printed word, and, as a rule, there was only one assisting and notoriously underpaid clerk with a limited intellectual scope. Second, this approach took precious time, which became increasingly unacceptable to the expanding book trade and its customers in the 1780s. The Prussian periodical *Olla Potrida* (1778–1797) is a rewarding example in this respect.³² Banned at the beginning of its publication due to the Austro-Prussian conflict, it was either permitted or tolerated from 1781 onward, and probably banned in the end³³ again. The time that passed between the release of a quarterly issue, or its first circulation in the monarchy, and the censorship decision differed widely. Whereas the authorities usually needed more than six months – and, in one case, even fourteen months – until 1781, the speed increased in the 1780s, and the procedure tended to be accomplished in three weeks to half a year. With the return of more severe censorship, especially after the French Revolution, longer intervals between six and ten months prevailed once again. As a detail, it is interesting that the title of this magazine was Italianised in an early case,³⁴ and this hints at the fact that the clerk that copied the lists had never heard of, let alone seen, the actual publication. Eventually, the administrative reorganisations in the period analysed also gave rise to problems. After the partition of the Inner Austrian provincial government in 1791, the new Carinthian provincial government had to wait

²⁹ Cf. Sashegyi, *Zensur*, pp. 67–88.

³⁰ On these lists in general: Marx, *Verbotslisten*.

³¹ ASTs, Governo, box 42, no. 602 ex 1780.

³² Based on data from StLA, Manuscript collection.

³³ The last entry, which stated the permission of the third quarter of 1797, was crossed out.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, manuscript no. 827.

three years until the complete catalogue of admitted, tolerated, and banned books from 1784 to 1791 arrived.³⁵

Censored content also showed consent over time. Like in all censorship regimes of the Enlightenment and pre-March period, three main offences provoked bans: blasphemous, anticlerical, and antireligious positions; criticism of rulers, states, the administration, and the military; and slander and indecencies of all kinds. Whereas defamation and obscenities were a matter of interpretation, there are considerable emphases and developments in the other two categories. As for religion, toleration brought a major shift in terms of content,³⁶ and conservative Catholic influence was generally rebutted.³⁷ However, as the Carinthian case most clearly demonstrates, this did not lead toward a relaxed relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism. Strict scrutiny of the Carinthian Protestants continued because they maintained excellent contacts with German centres of the book trade, which made them suspect in dispatches of illegal printed matter of any kind.³⁸ Regarding rulers, civil servants, and the military, the trend to tighten censorship set in with the revolt in the Austrian Netherlands (1787) and with the last Habsburg-Ottoman War (1788–1791). Newspaper censorship can most clearly elucidate this development. The Luxembourg *Journal historique et littéraire* shows the stages of escalation between journalism and censorship.³⁹ When early assaults against Habsburg rule occurred, the journalist was repeatedly admonished. At the beginning of 1788, however, the newspaper was the first domestic journal to be banned. Before that, only foreign newspapers that were published in enemy countries during wartime were forbidden. When Leopold II entered office, sedition and criticism against the Church, state, ruler, and legislation ranked considerably higher on the censorship agenda.⁴⁰ The military dimension was the most difficult because newspaper editors relied on military officers as correspondents, and they sent their letters through channels that were difficult to control.⁴¹ It took several years to curtail these informants' influence.⁴² In 1798, eventually, all newspaper articles on military affairs had to solely refer

³⁵ StLA, Index 1794, entry "Bücher Katalogen".

³⁶ Cf. Sashegyi, *Zensur*, pp. 194–206.

³⁷ Cf. Gnau, *Zensur*, pp. 71–112.

³⁸ Cf., e.g., KLA, Gestionsprotokoll 1792, nos. 82, 214, 2206, 3212 and 5832 ex 1792; KLA, Gestionsprotokoll 1793, no. 2348.

³⁹ Cf. Sashegyi, *Zensur*, pp. 144–145.

⁴⁰ Bachleitner, *Zensur*, pp. 72–73.

⁴¹ Golob, Skirmishes.

⁴² For early attempts: Sashegyi, *Zensur*, p. 147 (in the first year of the last Habsburg-Ottoman War); ASTs, Governo, box 954, no. 3812 ex 1790 (Leopold II).

to the semi-official *Wiener Zeitung*.⁴³ Similar regulations concerning current legislative and administrative reforms were decreed in 1802 and 1803.⁴⁴ It is probably noteworthy at this point that *Wiener Zeitung* was actually not used for propaganda, but primarily to communicate strictly censored and plain news about the Court, military operations, and promotions of all kind, and to rebut rumours. It was only at the onset of the disastrous War of the Fifth Coalition (1809) that the central government issued instructions to collect and publish examples of patriotic behaviour on a large scale.⁴⁵

The medial scope generally covered all public utterances. Theoretically, this had already been framed by Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732–1817), the chief Habsburg political philosopher, but only the censorship law of 1810 endorsed this practice officially,⁴⁶ after it had been exercised by ambitious censorship and revision officers. In 1790, for instance, tobacco tins with obscene pictures circulated in Styria,⁴⁷ and in 1793 a leading Graz copperplate engraver was accused of producing “offensive visiting cards”.⁴⁸ Three years later, the Klagenfurt revisor pursued a local inspection in the main hall of a bourgeois house that was allegedly decorated with improper allegories and epigraphs.⁴⁹ The Trieste revisor took action against vendors of fashion accessories in 1798.⁵⁰ He had found hand fans with “insulting prophecies that the English Crown would fall and other indecencies”; he recommended supervising “everything that includes pictures or print as well as figurines”.⁵¹

It must also be pointed out that censorship tried to be cautious. In his first month as emperor, Francis II himself pointed out that newspaper censorship should not result in “disrupting the thread of time”;⁵² that is, the logical flow of reported events. Plain reports could continue, but reasonings had to stop. At the end of November 1792, the newspaper censors were instructed to delete critical sentences and paragraphs. Bans of newspapers had to be strictly avoided, though, because harsh measures would only stir public interest.⁵³ The example of a prominent almanac, *Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1801*,

⁴³ StLA, Index 1798, entry “Militär Verfassungen Gegenstände”.

⁴⁴ ASTs, Governo, box 960, no. 3228 ex 1802; ASTs, Governo, box 960, no. 2041 ex 1803.

⁴⁵ ASTs, Governo, box 961, no. 1898 ex 1809. Cf. Siemann, *Zensur*, p. 366.

⁴⁶ Cf. Marx, *Zensur*, pp. 59–64.

⁴⁷ StLA, Index 1790, entry “Dosen”.

⁴⁸ StLA, Index 1793, entry “Kauperz”.

⁴⁹ KLA, Gestionsprotokoll 1796, no. 6902.

⁵⁰ ASTs, Governo, box 958, no. 2771 ex 1798.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., box 955, no. 1095 ex 1792.

⁵³ Ibid., box 1219, no. 259 ex 1792.

shows subtle censorship at its best. In general, this literary masterpiece was in line with Habsburg laws and sentiments, but there was one offending detail: a copperplate print advertising a cobbler named Kaiser could suggest that the emperor would act like a despot and that everyone was suffering under his rule. In order to eliminate this flaw, the revisors had to cover the incriminating word with ink “carefully and quietly”; thus, it was possible “to erase even the slightest trace without public sensation”.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, censorship was visible in public, in particular in newspapers. The tax stamp, which represented restrictive state influence by fiscal means, offered a conspicuous clue. Even censorship marks occurred in considerable number.⁵⁵ For instance, the first issue of *Graz Bauernzeitung* after its three-month ban displays the characteristic hyphens that are best known from Heinrich Heine’s (1797–1856) famous chapter that criticised censors.⁵⁶ As in many other cases, it is hard to tell whether this was a sign of official censorship, of self-censorship,⁵⁷ or of something like a play with censorship practices.

Apart from quarrels over content, censorship and book revision offices became arenas where competitors fought for state commissions and claimed or contested privileges. As an instructive regional example, Josef Ignaz von Kleinmayr (1745–1802) submitted a request to be granted prerogatives for his newspapers in Klagenfurt and Laibach (now Ljubljana) in 1791.⁵⁸ The desired monopolies for advertisements would have ruined his competitor in Laibach and two rivals in Klagenfurt. It is remarkable that the Josephinian notion of free trade inspired the response of Kleinmayr’s opponents.⁵⁹ As a main argument, they claimed that their tax contribution would exceed the lump sum that the monopolist had offered. In Klagenfurt, the newspaper editors even literally quoted Joseph von Sonnenfels, the Theresian and Josephinian mastermind of free trade. The newspaper editors also defamed Kleinmayr’s lobbyism, which had already resulted in a range of commissions that made the leading printer a dictator of prices. He would also abuse his position to deliver products of minor quality. The Inner Austrian provincial government eventually decided

⁵⁴ Ibid., box 959, no. 4902 ex 1800. For the (uncensored) illustration: *Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1801*, p. 207 (ÖNB); p. 176a (UB Freiburg).

⁵⁵ Differing from Wilke’s assumption of their absence in the eighteenth century: Wilke, *Pressezensur*, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Anon. [Ambros], ———, p. 113. For Heine: Siemann, *Zensur*, p. 369.

⁵⁷ Cf. Bödeker, *Raisonnement*.

⁵⁸ KLA, Gubernium, box 182/33, no. 670/557. For the Carinthian part of the matter, in favour (!) of Kleinmayr’s argumentation: Cefarin, *Beiträge*, pp. 546–547. On Kleinmayr in Laibach: Dular, *Commerce*, pp. 209–213.

⁵⁹ KLA, Gubernium, box 182/33, nos. 1342/148 (Carinthia) and 1174/716 (Carniola).



Figure 1: Title page of *Bauernzeitung* immediately after its ban had been lifted. (CC BY-NC-SA AT 2023), www.landesbibliothek.steiermark.at.

to support the protesters and endorsed the free-trade policy.⁶⁰ It is also necessary to dwell on the stamp tax at this point. Sashegyi minutely described how it emerged and interpreted it as the turning point in Josephinian economic, fiscal, and censorship policy.⁶¹ The idea came from the journalist Charles Grandmenil (birth and death dates unknown), the editor of *Gazette de Vienne*. Thus, once again, a representative of the periodical press tried to influence the market.⁶² It obviously needed to be purged of economically less successful competitors to his mind. The wide coverage originally included not only the periodical press and brochures, but also sheet music, maps, portraits and other copperplate prints, advertisements of all kinds, and even visiting cards as well as playing cards. The emperor welcomed this concept, but his advisers mitigated it. The Court Chancellery and the Commission for Education and Censorship criticised this scope for fiscal, educational, juridical, and administrative reasons. Joseph II eventually decided that the stamp tax should apply to weekly and daily newspapers, to brochures, and also to individual copies of theatre plays. The execution would be entrusted to stamp offices and to the toll administration. However, practical obstacles occurred at once: foreign newspapers that were sent directly to official foreign representatives could not be stamped, but there would be a rise in postal fees instead. A look at the records of the Inner Austrian provincial government reveals some details that have not been mentioned in research literature yet. The instruction entitled the provincial government to independently classify writings as brochures.⁶³ Thus, the local civil servants gained the preliminary right to determine whether smaller submitted texts of about twenty to fifty pages were a tax-free book or a brochure subject to taxation. Authors' complaints would have to be referred to the central commission for final decision. Regarding practices, post offices and stamp offices were instructed to proceed as quickly as possible when it came to newspapers, in order that "those that ordered them do not have to wait long for them".⁶⁴ The circulation of news and expectations of the public were respected this way. Capacities to stamp foreign newspapers were finally created in Graz, Leoben, Cilli (now Celje), Pettau (now Ptuj), Klagenfurt, Villach, and Laibach.⁶⁵ Monthly scholarly journals had to be stamped and delivered to their subscribers with a delay of only one working day, as the chief

⁶⁰ Ibid., 2098/1005.

⁶¹ Sashegyi, *Zensur*, pp. 228–234.

⁶² On the intervention of members of the trade systematically: Slaughter, *Who Owns the News*, pp. 15–50.

⁶³ StLA, Gubernium, box 40, no. 19040 ex 1789.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., no. 17566 ex 1789.

post office demanded. Subscribers that complained about delayed dispatches would be politely asked to be patient.⁶⁶ The preserved issues of the semi-official *Laibacher Zeitung* and *Grazer Merkur* eventually displayed the stamp, too. This means that the printers did not request exemptions, which would have been possible if they had published all announcements of the central and provincial governments for free.⁶⁷ Apparently the income from the fees for these announcements exceeded the stamp tax.

Finally, censorship and revision also took sociocultural differentiation into account. This becomes clear when exceptions from the rules occurred. For instance, the regulation of the Klagenfurt Lyceum library in the mid-1790s called for strict observation of the banned books, kept in the collection. Within their special fields of study, however, students were entitled to read any book, including the forbidden ones,⁶⁸ before this loophole was closed in 1802.⁶⁹ Another local example reveals which interests converged when it came to accessing banned journals. A seigneurial clerk in Windisch-Feistritz (now Slovenska Bistrica) desired to subscribe to the newspaper *Neueste Weltkunde*, later better known as *Allgemeine Zeitung*.⁷⁰ This was only possible with the Court's consent. The reader's ally was the postmaster of Windisch-Feistritz. He guaranteed the good character of the future subscriber,⁷¹ and subsequently, he would profit from the charges that were conventionally paid for newspaper orders and the administration of subscriptions.⁷² Finally, peculiar differentiation also happened when punishments were imposed. Indecent riddles in a Graz calendar carried penalties for the bourgeois publisher and his humble typesetter. The former had to pay the legally defined fee, whereas the latter had to serve a three-day prison sentence.⁷³

⁶⁶ Ibid., no. 19247 ex 1789.

⁶⁷ Ibid., no. 19040 ex 1789.

⁶⁸ KLA, Gestionsprotokoll 1795, no. 7035.

⁶⁹ ASTs, Governo, box 960, no. 2871 ex 1802.

⁷⁰ StLA, Index 1798, entry "Deschmann". Cf. Lang, *Cottas Tageszeitung*; Marx, *Schedenwesen* (for the practices of exceptions in the pre-March era).

⁷¹ StLA, Index 1798, entry "Deschmann".

⁷² Cf. for the profit of postmasters in general and the nature of their clientele: Lachenicht, *Zeitungen*, pp. 12–15, 18–20.

⁷³ StLA, Index 1798, entries "Kalender", "Leykamische Buchdruckerey", and "Räthsel".

Trieste: Censorship in a Commercial and Multicultural Hubbub of Voices

Trieste is unanimously renowned as the most eminent Habsburg port, with a thriving stock exchange, trading houses, insurance companies, diplomats, and a multinational, multilingual, multi-confessional, and even multireligious community. After it was declared a free port in 1719, business surged.⁷⁴ However, this was only true for commodities, and not for printed matter, as Governor Karl Count Zinzendorf (1739–1813) regretted in 1779.⁷⁵ Reporting to Maria Theresa on the control of the book market,⁷⁶ he bemoaned that there was no “public library”, nor a proper bookstore. “Book binders and bad book dealers” would sell commercially successful prayer books, schoolbooks, and moralistic writings. Merchants would be only interested in their business, and the “burgers” would have to engage in agriculture and artisanship to earn a living. As a result, Trieste’s inhabitants were not fond of reading at all. Against this background, the civil servant judged that censorship deserved minor attention. Thus, it would suffice that the bishop and the police would be responsible for the prosecution of banned books, as communicated by the Viennese lists. Moreover, the “gubernatorial revision” would closely watch the printers’ production. In the course of censorship reorganisation in 1781, Zinzendorf repeated his statement and added that a special revision office could not be established with the financial resources available.⁷⁷ He also explained that the prerogatives of the free port hampered revision and censorship because shipping from the sea would be out of range. The only chance to tackle this problem was close collaboration with the customs authority. As a supplement to this report,⁷⁸ the Italian-speaking police marshal added that he had indeed found books from suspicious publishing places such as London, Amsterdam, and Marseilles. The court was still satisfied with this procedure and even recommended Trieste’s censorship practices to neighbouring Inner Austria.⁷⁹ Letters from Styria and Carniola that requested details arrived in the free

⁷⁴ For the rise of Trieste: Faber, *Litorale Austriaco*.

⁷⁵ For Zinzendorf: *Europäische Aufklärung*; on his reading matter: Wagner, *Lektüre*. Recently on Trattner’s branch in Trieste: Delogu, *Webs*. On the region in general: Guagnini, *Letteratura*. For the background: Butschek, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 74–99.

⁷⁶ ASTs, Governo, box 42, no. 1005 ex 1779.

⁷⁷ ASTs, Governo, box 42, no. 1351 ex 1781.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ ASTs, Governo, box 42, no. 82 ex 1781. Cf. from the Styrian perspective: Kosch, *Bücher-revisionsamt*, pp. 49–50.

port some time later.⁸⁰ Thus, at the beginning of the 1780s, Trieste played a key role in controlling the production and distribution of the printed word in Inner Austria, although it was much less important in print production and readership than the Inner Austrian centre Graz. Similarly, Trieste functioned as an example when censorship and revision were professionalised in 1795.⁸¹ Franz Philipp von Roth (died 1804), the gubernatorial officer, reported that the main customs office would be a reliable partner. The subordinate revision officer also had valuable contacts with theologians and physicians, who helped censor brochures in these areas. Experts in foreign languages would be at hand, too. Thus, the only step to professionalisation would be remuneration for the responsible civil servant, and this extra pay was eventually conceded. The Trieste archives even contain a unique instruction for the revision officer, authored by Roth.⁸² This item reflected legislation since 1781 and also took experience from regional practices into account. Once again, the court gave its consent.

The rejection of clerical influence – which was most obvious when the complaint of the Trieste bishop about an advertisement for an Italian-language version of Ovid's *Ars amatoria* in the newspaper *Osservatore Triestino* was rebutted⁸³ – resulted in collateral damage in the periphery because secularisation also meant that well-educated ecclesiastic personnel that could have easily supported revision and censorship had to be sacrificed. In Trieste, this shift finally occurred in 1801. When the first revision officer in the strict sense resigned in 1796, after only one year of service, a cleric was at hand. Georg Novack (birth and death dates unknown), a Trieste cathedral canon, had already served as a school inspector and as a commissioner in clerical affairs.⁸⁴ This civil servant proved to be highly educated and was aware of the local organisational problems.⁸⁵ Unlike his predecessor, he did not complain because of the insufficient allowance for his additional duty.⁸⁶ When this obvious Josephinian follower retired, financial incentives and the helping hand of a secretary were necessary to find a worthy successor. Finally, from the ranks of the Trieste notables, Lorenzo Rondolini (1752–1844) was able to be convinced

⁸⁰ For Graz: ASTs, Governo, box 42, no. 257 ex 1781. For Laibach: *ibid.*, no. 602 ex 1782.

⁸¹ ASTs, Governo, box 956, no. 966 ex 1795.

⁸² ASTs, Governo, box 956, no. 1774 ex 1795.

⁸³ ASTs, Governo, box 954, no. 2881 ex 1786. Cf. for the repression of ecclesiastical power: Gnau, *Zensur*, pp. 71–123; Klingenstein, *Staatsverwaltung*, pp. 111–116, 188–191.

⁸⁴ ASTs, Governo, box 959, no. 4308 ex 1800. Cf. for the larger pool of suitable personnel in Vienna: Fournier, Gerhard van Swieten; Olechowski, *Zensur*.

⁸⁵ Cf., e.g., his first report: ASTs, Governo, box 957, no. 69 ex 1797.

⁸⁶ ASTs, Governo, box 956, no. 3792 ex 1796.

to do the job, which also included the self-responsible censorship of Italian-language literature by then.⁸⁷ In fact, he was a physician and veterinarian that was well rooted in the Trieste sociocultural elite. Assuming his new office, he pointed out that his original occupation was indispensable to earn his living, and thus he would restrict his office hours to only two hours a day.

The interplay between the revision office and the main customs office can be traced as a specific problem. Answering an inquiry from the Court in 1793, the customs administration recommended that revision should take place at its facilities and under its lead.⁸⁸ This would smooth administrative procedures, and commercial activities would profit as well. Apart from the two administrative branches involved, the receiving parties, either professional or private, should be present. Lastly, the sanitary commission was invited to take common action as well.⁸⁹ The Court accepted this plan;⁹⁰ however, very quickly it became obvious that coordination between these agencies and interested parties only worked in theory. As a result, revision returned to its own office, and problems continued. In 1797, the revision officer complained that packs of printed sheets arrived with undue delays.⁹¹ This common shipping of unbound books was especially problematic when the bundles were not declared as book matter, but part of larger orders of all kinds. The revisor also accused the custom officers of sloppiness. Last but not least, the massive quantity of shipped books would make the revision office a book warehouse that lacked storage capacities.

Trieste's multilingual nature created further obstacles. As in Lombardy-Venetia,⁹² it became necessary to censor Italian-language books on the spot because mere revision was no longer reasonable, especially taking into account the output of nearby Venetian printshops. Shipping costs from and to Vienna as well as the time factor demanded this step, which implied federalisation and a gain of autonomy. The most interesting piece in this respect came from Capo d'Istria (now Koper). It shows most clearly how the particular features of distant regions frustrated centralisation. In 1804, the administration of this newly integrated area self-consciously claimed that the Viennese lists of permitted and banned books would be totally "needless" in Istria.⁹³ They would primarily contain German and French books, and only a tiny fraction

⁸⁷ ASTs, Governo, box 959, nos. 470, 741 and 1329 ex 1801. Cf. Formigini, *Vita*, pp. 11, 14, 19.

⁸⁸ ASTs, Governo, box 955, no. 1549 ex 1793.

⁸⁹ ASTs, Governo, box 955, no. 4177 ex 1793.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ ASTs, Governo, box 957, no. 69 ex 1797.

⁹² Gottardi, *L'Austria*, pp. 214–239.

⁹³ ASTs, box 961, no. 2777 ex 1804.

of Latin titles. In contrast to this bias, the small Istrian reading public would only read Italian books and to a much lesser extent Latin-language works. Thus, the administration suggested relying on control mechanisms in Trieste and Venice, where most books came from. Another example involved the Greek Orthodox community in the free port. In 1803, the chancellor of the parish allowed a shopkeeper that was not commissioned as a bookseller to distribute Greek-language schoolbooks among Greek Orthodox pupils. The dignitary's autonomous decision that the books would be "harmless" received an upset response from the central Viennese police authority.⁹⁴ It stressed that contemporary Greek literature should be handled with utmost suspicion and that self-responsible censorship within the Greek "nation" would be absolutely unacceptable. The gubernatorial statement confirmed that the books would only circulate among Greek Orthodox pupils, who would use them in language instruction and religious education.⁹⁵ It would be necessary to import them because the Trieste book market did not sell Greek-language literature. The revision office also declared that the chancellor could be trusted thanks to his excellent moral reputation. Finally, it was decreed that the books should be sold within four months. Thereafter, the shopkeeper would have to desist from selling books, as the professional booksellers had already demanded.⁹⁶

Commercial necessities also left their imprint. In 1795, a local printer complained that censorship procedures would harm commercial workflows.⁹⁷ He especially referred to lists of prices, waybills, insurance policies, bills of exchange, certificates, and visiting cards. According to the letter of the law, these simple items had to be submitted in two manuscripts before print; then a single print had to be compared with the manuscript before large-scale printing could take place. The gubernatorial official confirmed this obstacle. Due to local commercial activity, these printed items came in in such volumes that their control in the strict sense of the law would require hiring a further officer that would only be responsible for this task. Supporting the printer, the civil servant requested an exception for these "innocent" commercial forms: this would save time in both commerce and administration. As a minimum, he advocated that leading trading houses should be eligible for exemptions. Another solution could consist in accepting printed submissions instead of handwritten ones. The Court eventually denied general exceptions, and it did not even waste a single word to comment on the wish for additional personnel.

⁹⁴ ASTs, Governo, box 960, no. 4065 ex 1803.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ ASTs, Governo, box 961, no. 882 ex 1804.

⁹⁷ ASTs, Governo, box 964, no. 2396 ex 1795.

However, the central authority conceded individual exemptions from the rule in individual very urgent cases, and the provincial government would be free to grant these punctual dispensations.⁹⁸ Finally, a very special lawsuit with commercial dimensions centred around the illegal possession of a mobile and handy printing press. Such devices were strictly outlawed a decade before the incident because they were deemed to constitute the main production means for seditious leaflets.⁹⁹ The incriminated merchant revealed that he had secretly purchased his gadget in Venice three weeks earlier.¹⁰⁰ He had planned to use it to produce forms only – which corresponded with the printable character set that had been confiscated. To cover his own requirements of print would have speeded up his business. Unluckily, the accused person quickly realised that his device did not work properly; eventually, however, this was good luck because this fact mitigated his delinquency. The revision officer tried his best to understate the crime and to ensure the delinquent's moral trustworthiness,¹⁰¹ probably also to play down the administration's fault in preventing the offence. He recommended that the merchant pay the considerable fee of fifty guilders, but he should be given the chance to sell the printing press abroad. The provincial government did not grant this favour, however, and ordered the destruction of the *corpus delicti*.¹⁰²

In addition to free trade, the numerous foreign representatives were also a source of problems. According to accusations from the Sardinian ambassador, his French adversary would spread “inflammatory brochures” via Trieste.¹⁰³ This Jacobin would own a printing press that he would use to print the Hungarian translation of a French pamphlet. This piece would then enter the monarchy in Trieste and Fiume (now Rijeka). However, the frantic search for this plot did not yield any results. Whereas this case rather demonstrates imagined danger, a second one was more concrete. In 1806, the gubernatorial councillor reported on his own initiative that the Venetian *Notizie del Mondo* would dare to insult the queen of Naples¹⁰⁴ (Maria Karolina, 1752–1814, one of Maria Theresa's daughters). As the co-addressees of this account, the stock exchange and the insurance house, suggest, this newspaper was primarily read for its economic and financial information. Nevertheless, action was justified because the increasing revolutionary leaning of the newspaper would

⁹⁸ ASTs, Governo, box 956, no. 1774 ex 1795.

⁹⁹ StLA, Index 1792, nos. 16501 and 19067.

¹⁰⁰ ASTs, Governo, box 960, no. 222 ex 1803.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ ASTs, Governo, box 955, no. 1880 ex 1792.

¹⁰⁴ ASTs, Governo, box 961, no. 462 ex 1806.

be obvious. Although he was willing to wait for the Viennese decision, the reporter promised to impede circulation cautiously with the help of the post office and the sanitary magistrate. Not even a ship's captain would have the chance to dispatch a single issue unofficially, and this way the officer hoped to avoid anything that could threaten European *anciens régimes*. The authorities carried out these measures, as is known from a necessary exception. The Portuguese consul-general complained and achieved delivery of *Notizie del Mondo* and *Journal de Francfort*, which was also revolutionary at that time.¹⁰⁵

Conclusions

By extending the prevalent focus on organisational and legal details as well as on literature and political key events toward more general sociocultural, economic, and financial issues, the analysis of relatively unknown but rich Inner Austrian source material shows the spread and sometimes the divide between the Viennese central censorship authority and the court on the one hand and, on the other hand, humble, plain, and proper civil servants in the dominions that administered censorship, as well as persons, professions, and institutions that were not only subjugated to censorship, but also tried to have censorship applied, especially in commercial competition. The multilingual and multicultural nature of Trieste and its thriving commercial environment, perceptible in the periodical press as the most important public communication channel, placed serious limits on centralising trends in Habsburg administration. Censorship was faced with other administrative responsibilities and special features, with the principally legitimate needs of merchants, with diplomats and their special rights, and last but not least with the Italian-language mainstream and with a vibrant and self-confident Greek-speaking community. These requirements of and obstacles to administration, business, and everyday sociocultural life were best understood at the local level and communicated to Vienna, but concessions from the centre could only rarely be achieved. On the whole, censorship cannot be reduced to the image of an enlightened friendly educator or to a manifestation as the sharp scissors of Habsburg reaction – rather, it was a multiheaded creature, an interaction and a negotiation process displaying not only top-down components, but also some bottom-up ones with mediation in between. It is true that censorship is a creature of centralism; however, the federal arms in the dominions made it stand (even if it faltered), but never fall.

¹⁰⁵ ASTs, Governo, box 961, no. 738 ex 1806.

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Prakse in problemi cenzure v Notranji Avstriji med centralizmom in federalizmom, ok. 1780–1809

Povzetek

Raziskave o habsburški cenzuri v 18. stoletju in predmarčni dobi so v zadnjem desetletju skokovito narasle in z analizo doslej zapostavljenih arhivskih virov z obrobja cesarstva prinesle pomembne rezultate. Na ta način so bile jasneje opredeljene tako pravne kot upravne strukture in prakse. Na splošno cenzura ni bila več mistificirana in se je začela obravnavati kot preplet različnih dejavnikov. V središču raziskav je še vedno literatura, in sicer dobro dokumentirani avtorji in slavna dela, v manjši meri pa tudi pomembne politične zadeve.

S pomočjo bogatega gradiva, ki se je ohranilo v notranjeavstrijskih arhivih, zlasti v Tržaškem državnem arhivu (Archivio di Stato di Trieste), je stanje raziskav v pričujočem prispevku razširjeno z gospodarskimi in tudi finančnimi vidiki in z medijskim poudarkom na periodičnem tisku. V strukturnem pregledu habsburške cenzure v organizacijskem, vsebinskem, medijskem, gospodarskem, davčnem in družbeno-kulturnem smislu, ponazorjenem z notranjeavstrijskimi viri, se poseben položaj Trsta kot trgovskega in diplomatskega vozlišča z večjezičnim in multikulturnim značajem kaže kot pomembna študija primera meja habsburške cenzure. Izbrani primeri razkrivajo zlasti trenja med osrednjimi in deželnimi cenzurnimi organi, med lokalnimi deli uprave, pa tudi konflikte s tržaškimi interesnimi skupinami, kot so trgovci, verske skupnosti ali diplomati, ki so zahtevali in celo pridobili nekaj možnosti izjem od splošnih pravil. Lokalni cenzurni uradniki so imeli pomembno vlogo pri posredovanju med udeleženi na eni strani in strogo črko zakona na drugi. Širše področje

uporabe pa končno prispeva tudi k celovitejšemu razumevanju cenzure v njenih interaktivnih, procesnih, upravnih, družbeno-kulturnih, gospodarskih in finančnih razsežnostih ter njenih uspehov in neuspehov. Izkazalo se je, da je bila cenzura na obravnavanem območju in v preučevanem obdobju otrok centralizma z bolj ali manj delujočimi povezavami na pripadajočih ozemljih.