

# Border Territory Targeted by Rival National Narratives – The Burgenland-debate between the Austrian and Hungarian Historical Writings (1918/1921–1945)

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# Nationalizing Border Cities I.: Sopron

- The referendum of 1921 as the focus of attention on both sides
- The result is not legitimate
  - Viktor Miltschinsky: *Das Verbrechen von Ödenburg* (1922):
    - Sopron is a part of an ancient German territory and the assimilation policy of Hungary between 1867 and 1918 (the period of the dualist Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) was not successful here

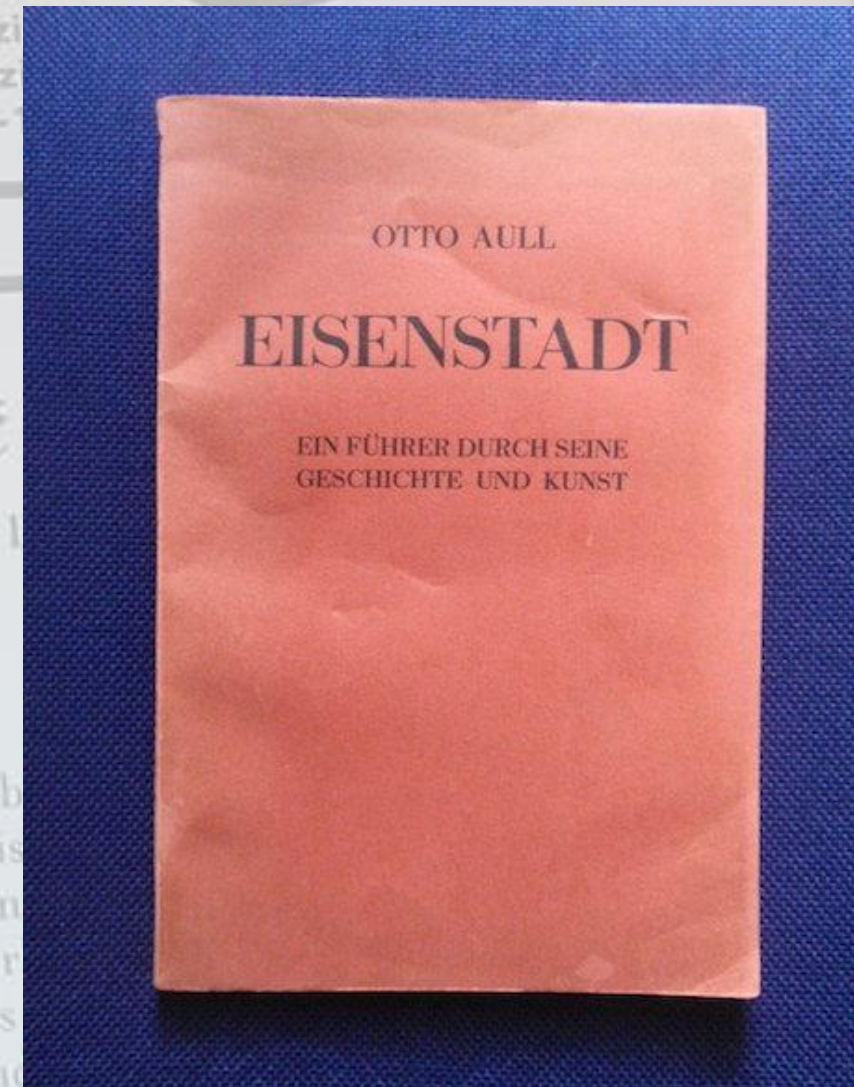


## The result is legitimate

- *Sopron. Civitas fidelissima* – 1925 (edited by Gusztáv Thirring):
  - The result is the natural consequence of a historical development. According to Thirring, the German citizens of Sopron were always loyal to the Hungarian nation-state

# Nationalizing Border Cities II.: Eisenstadt

- **Otto Aull:** *Eisenstadt. Ein Führer durch seine Geschichte und Kunst.* 1931.
- Eisenstadt had a German character throughout its history (even Hungarian nobles communicated with the town folk only in German)
- Protestant German civilians against the catholic, absolutist rulers of the family Esterházy
- Jenő Házi: The city became an European city (in a cultural respect) only because of the Hungarian aristocratic families



# The Impact of the German Volksgeschichte on the Study of Burgenland

- Local historians and teachers (Otto Aull, Heinrich Kunnert, Viktor Miltschinsky, Paul Eitler) in Burgenland allied themselves with research centres in Vienna and in Germany
- Austrian historians cooperated with Historians of the „Volksgeschichte”: Ernst Klebel, Otto-Albrecht Isbert, Konrad Schünemann, Otto Brunner, Heinrich Kunnert
- The key elements of the (ethno-) national historical narrative - Otto Brunner: Das Burgenland (1932)

# The Adaptation of Volksgeschichte in Hungary

- Elemér Mályusz, Márton Kovács



as representatives of Volksgeschichte („népiségtörténet”) in Hungary

- According to Kovács,

„the more one nation sacrifices for a land, the more historical right it has to claim it. Hungarians could not have defended even a single foothold only with diligent and great agriculture, industry, commerce or with other burgeoise virtues if they weren't a warrior, patriot and self-sacrificing nation. Preparedness for fight and blood sacrifices are undeniable signs of patriotism and a sense of community. After their military task has come to and end, the population of Felsőőr was ready for every sacrifice that the interests of Hungarians demanded.”  
M. Kovács, A felsőőri magyar népsziget, (Budapest: Sylvester Nyomda, 1942). 59.

- **The different uses of history in border conflicts**

- **Interplay between nationalism and historical professionalism**

- **National histories masking social differences**

- **Border situations in historical writings**

