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Immigration and the Garden as a Workshop: Resettling and Cultural Interaction of Bulgarian Immigrant Groups to Hungary (late 19th–early 20th c.)

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Abstract. The article focuses on the dual meaning of the "garden as a workshop", a concept developed by Bulgarian immigrant gardeners to Hungary in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The "garden" was not only a terrain for modernization but also a passkey of integration for Bulgarian immigrants in the host society. On the basis of diverse materials about the migration of Bulgarian gardeners to Hungarian lands, the article outlines the importance of factors, such as liberalization policies in the Habsburg Empire, land availability, water resources, and city markets, as having influenced the arrival and settlement of gardeners in the second half of the 19th century. All these factors are interpreted in the text from the perspective of their role in modernization processes, outlining thus the garden as a space that responded to the new rhythms and demands of modernity, by introducing new technologies for land cultivation, optimizing production, and linking it directly with the urban centres, making thus horticulture a substantial part of the modernizing trends. Highlighting the role Bulgarian gardeners had in this process at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the author argues that the innovative approach to vegetable growing and to agriculture in general shows an alternative pattern of modernization (different from those in the spheres of political systems, culture, and industry) – one that developed in the domain of agriculture. Whilst, on the one hand, this alternative path permitted the modernizing of this work activity and its optimization in line with the new social demands, it also allowed for the integration of Bulgarian gardeners' community in Bulgaria, laying the grounds for their long-term presence and interaction with Hungarian society.

Keywords: Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary, horticulture, modernization, cultural integration

The current article takes impetus from the work by the famous Hungarian cultural studies historian Peter Hanák, whose book dedicated to the cultural history of fin-de-siècle Budapest and Vienna bears the title *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (see Hanák 1997). In his study, Hanák discusses various aspects of the social and cultural life in Central Europe, focusing on the two capitals and drawing comparisons between them – what was going on in Budapest and Vienna as cultural movements, what was the transmission of ideas between the two cities, how were fin-de-siècle ideas and modern style of life taken up in the two cities. Outlining the numerous parallels, but also differences, between the two cities at the turn of the century, Hanák argued that as a capital city Vienna was very much epitomizing the image of a "garden", of cultivated space of luxury and appeal, as a cultural hub with an unconcealed inclination to high culture, beauty, and the arts. Whilst Budapest was also taking up and transferring ideas and inspirations, it was much more towards the image of the workshop. It was a city with intensive industrialization at the end of the 19th century, with new industrial enterprises and a new type of industrial modernity taking place in this city. Comparing the two capital cities in terms of the transfer of ideas, Hanák puts a stress on this specific line of distinction – Vienna as an imperial garden, a city of beauty and artistic impression and Budapest as predominantly an industrial hub, concentrating the dynamics of industrial life.

In the pages to follow,[1] I will draw on the symbolic resources proposed by Hanák in his analysis of the two cities, highlighting a largely overshadowed aspect of this parallel between the garden and the workshop, namely putting into focus cases when the garden was seen and was instrumentalized as a workshop, when the two symbols of social and cultural activities overlapped and mutually intensified each other. Dwelling on the example of Bulgarian immigrant gardeners in Hungary, I will focus on the social practices related to gardening since the middle of the 19th century as indicators of enhancing modernization and new relationships between the rural and urban setting at the wake of arising modernity. As the cases of the immigrant groups from Bulgaria to Habsburg lands in the last decades of the 19th century show, the garden turned as a venue for the introduction of new methods and cultivation practices, becoming also a profitable "enterprise", as a workshop for the immigrants where they would show their skills and knowledge and would prove as economic agents to the host society. The garden did not only provide for their work activity and economic

1 The article was prepared as a result of the research carried out on the project *Migrations, Modernities and Intercultural Contacts – Bulgarian Immigrant Groups to Hungary in late 19th and early 20th c. and Their Impact on the Social and Cultural Life of the Host Society* (ICHU/07/2022–2023), realized in collaboration of teams from the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum (IEFSEM), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Political Science, Centre for Social Sciences (CSS), Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A short-size Bulgarian version of the article has been prepared for the journal *Balgarski folklor*.

survival – it was also a testing ground for new technologies and means of labour organization, which ensured immigrants' competitiveness in the local society. It was through the garden, its cultivation, and the products that it yielded that immigrants could interact with the locals, could be accepted by them, and could undergo the pathway of cultural adjustment and integration to Hungarian society. All this took place in the midst of arising modernization in Hungarian lands, where alongside the enhancing rhythm of labour and life in general, there ran processes of land acculturation and arable land expansion (through draining swamps, river control systems, and new irrigation practices) – a process in which Bulgarian gardeners were major agents in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The photographic evidence reflecting the history of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary[2] abounds with group photos of peasants standing with their vegetable production in front and the garden landscape in the background. Taken mostly in the 1920s and 1930s (i.e. half a century after the first documented cases of Bulgarian gardeners travelling to Hungary), these photos show other generations of Bulgarian gardeners, different from that of the 1870s when individual immigrants and small groups of garden-workers moved seasonably from the Ottoman Empire to Habsburg lands. In many of these photos, we can see families – there are women in the group, probably daughters, wives, children. We have families together. Maybe not all of them together, but we certainly see different family members – men, women, elderly, younger members, etc. In the majority of the cases, we face staged photographs – their purpose is for people to show themselves to the audience. The people in the photos know they have attracted importance – they were evidently important for the photographer, for those who were documenting them. They are conscious of the value that they have, and they are aware of the input, of the contribution that they had given and continued to give to Hungarian society. In the photos, they stay in a confident manner and are confident of the place they take in the host society.

A permanent position in all the pictures is given to the products resulting from gardeners' work, arranged in vegetable stalls (with cabbage, cauliflower, onion, peppers, etc.). These are the products that gardeners have collected and selected as valuable, as the contribution to Hungarian society that actually justifies their presence in Hungary. The stalls are usually arranged aesthetically, with a sense of beauty that nurtures the gardeners' pride and seeks to be appealing to the photo

2 As N. Rashkova points out, the visual evidence about the history of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary can be seen in some of the public spaces of Bulgarian community in Hungary (such as the Cultural House and the Orthodox church St Cyril and Methodius in Budapest), but also in exhibitions presenting the history of the community and the Bulgarian–Hungarian relations (see Rashkova 2005: 91). They are abundantly presented in books, albums, and journals on the history of the Bulgarian community and its institutions in Hungary (Changova-Menyhart 1989, 2001; Petkova-Papadopulos 2005).

viewers. As the landscape shows, the photos were taken at the places where the gardeners worked, the stalls were evidently arranged not for the market but for the photographer. The fields in the background show that this is not the centre of the city but the garden itself, where Bulgarian gardeners worked and produced.

In the photographs, we can also see the means of transportation, carts, baskets, and sacks – visual testimonies of how they transported these vegetables and how they delivered the produce to urban dwellers. Alongside huts for storing the production, one can also see the irrigation technology of *dulap*, which gardeners introduced to vegetable growing in Hungary: it does not only indicate the presence of technology in agricultural production but also reveals the gardeners' technological contribution to the local practices. Last but not least, in many of the photos one can see the major agent of gardening activity and vegetable production – the river. It outlines the major destination of gardeners' settling and work – the lands near water flows as sources of irrigation, as well as transportation channels for vegetable production. The river shows the gardeners' interaction with nature, their intervention into the natural space, but also the transformative power that their work has on the surrounding environment. This is the panorama in the background of which the encounter occurs between the traditional rural-based agriculture and the modernizing impact ensuing from new technologies and changing urban demands.

The Immigration of Bulgarian Gardeners to Hungarian Lands

The multifarious aspects of immigration of Bulgarians to Central Europe and to Hungarian lands specifically have been an object of research by a range of historical and ethnographic studies.[3] As noted by researchers, the migration of Bulgarian ethnic population to the territory of present-day Hungary proceeded historically in several major waves – in the Medieval period, after the 1688

3 The scholarly research on the history of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary and Central Europe in general dates back to the late 19th century (Geshov 1888, Ginchev 1988 [1887]) and continued to attract interest until the interwar period (see Georgiev 1917, Manev 1938, Sirakov 1922), followed by a decrease of scholarly attention during the first three decades of the communist rule. In the 1980s and after the end of the communist rule in 1989, there has been a visible increase in studies on this topic in relation to the explorations of Bulgarian diasporas in different countries of Europe and other continents. Among the works related to this topic, one can mention here monographs and edited volumes dedicated to Bulgarian immigration in Central Europe and specifically to the Bulgarian community in Hungary – *Balgari i ungartsi* 2002; *Balgarite v Sredna i Iztochna Evropa* 1994; Changova-Menyhart 1989, 2001; Ganeva-Raicheva 2004; Gyurov 2001; Menyhart 2016; Penchev 2017; Peneva-Vintse–Petkova-Papadopulos 1999; Petkova-Papadopulos 2005; Peykovska 2011; Rashkova 2011; Ruskov–Kyoseva 2005; Ruskov 2015; Yankova 2014). The ethnographic aspects of gardening practices are presented in detail in the works of Rayna Simeonova-Hargitaine and Vasil Mutafov (Mutafov 1980, 2018; Simeonova-Hargitaine 2014).

Chiprovtsi uprising (predominantly to the Banat region), in the second half of the 19th century and during the 20th century, with its different phases of the interwar period, the communist rule, and the post-communist transition.[4] In modern times, particularly strong was the so-called "gardeners' march" to Central Europe (see Glasnova 2015, Penchev 2017), when in the course of three-four decades many Bulgarian immigrants undertook seasonal trips from their local places to areas of the Habsburg Empire. Whilst this march was directed not only to Central Europe but also eastwards and northwards (to Istanbul and other towns in the Ottoman Empire, to the Russian Empire, etc.), Central Europe was actually the main pathway of this immigration related to gardening from Bulgarian lands. Taking place mostly in the territories around the Danube and its adjacent rivers, it showed the efforts of the Bulgarian population to find a place where they could have this type of economic activity, to export it beyond the confines of their towns and villages.

The impetus of carrying out economic activities abroad, outside the Ottoman Empire, was characteristic for the mid-19th century and included a wide array of professional endeavours, most notably related to the spheres of agriculture, commerce, and education. Among these, gardening took a special place – as one of the possibilities for the predominantly rural Bulgarian population to offer and sell their skills and knowledge – of working the land and doing it in an economically and nutritionally feasible manner. This is what gardeners could offer, and they persisted in probing this possibility in different places in nowadays' Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, etc. Elicited mostly from towns and villages of North Central Bulgaria (in the areas of Gorna Oryahovitsa, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Lovech, etc.), this labour migration was basically an economic one – it was determined by the economic conditions, by the lack of sufficient arable lands in the native villages in Bulgaria, and by the wish to ensure material well-being for their families (see Rashkova 2015: 27). It was based on the idea of profit, of making use of one's professional and agricultural skills, but it was also a possibility for an easy interaction with lands where they could have a better environment to live and work. For the population coming from the Ottoman Empire, this interaction with the Habsburg Empire was giving opportunities for doing their economic activity much more freely and – despite dependence on local landlords and aristocrats – a certain sense of self-reliance and liberty. As L. Mód remarks in relation to this possibility, Bulgarians had at their avail vast territories they could occupy and work on (Mód 2015: 63). Beyond doubt, the immigration wave to Habsburg lands in the middle of the 19th century was completely different from those in previous periods. It became possible after the 1848 revolution and was enhanced after the Great Compromise in 1867 when the policies of liberalization were accompanied by enormous transformations in the

4 About the different waves of Bulgarian immigration to Hungary, see esp. Gyurov (1999, 2005).

economic, social, and cultural life. It was in that period when the gardeners from Bulgarian lands started travelling and establishing themselves in Central Europe.

However diverse the regions in the Empire, it was particularly the Hungarian lands and the areas around the rivers that were most appealing and attractive for Bulgarian gardeners due to the presence of water and irrigation systems as stimulating vegetable production. This prompts another very important factor – the transportation means, as along the river, the population in Northern Bulgaria could easily make the tour and reach different parts of Central Europe. Despite the prevalence of the Danube as a route into Central Europe, the first historical evidence of Bulgarian gardeners' appearance in Hungarian lands is in Southern Hungary – in the towns of Szeged, Szentes, and Pécs –, and only afterwards did it spread to Budapest and other cities. According to St. Uzunova, the first Bulgarian garden (in Southern Hungary) was organized in 1864 by Iliya H. Bonev in the town of Pécs (Uzunova 1999: 192). In Budapest – according to data presented by A. Gyurov –, the first Bulgarian gardeners arrived in April 1865: they took uncultivated lands on lease from the estate of Count István Károly in Káposztásmegyer (currently in District IV of Budapest) and started the production of vegetables (Gyurov 2005: 57). With their production activity, choice of vegetable growing, and the irrigation technology, they enabled the transfer of traditions from the Mediterraneum and the Ottoman Empire to Hungarian lands (Gyurov 2005: 58). Within a decade after the first documented cases, the number of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary was visibly growing. The newspaper *Gazdasági Lapok* reports (on 13 April 1873) about 18,000 Bulgarian gardeners working in Hungary – only eight years after the first arrivals (ibid.). A significant role for the increase of Bulgarian gardeners in the last quarter of the 19th century was played by the official regulation, issued by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture in 1875, which recommended its economic units in Csanád, Szabolcs, Torontál, Arad, etc. to accept Bulgarian specialists in vegetable growing in view of the proper supply of vegetables to the Hungarian population (Uzunova 1999: 192). Within a decade after the first arrivals, Bulgarian gardeners spread in most parts of Hungary, forming three main areas of Bulgarian gardeners' presence – Budapest, Northern Hungary (Miskolc and Ózd), and Southern Hungary (Pécs, Szeged, Szentes, Torontál) (see Penchev 2017: 79–80). Between 1865 and 1910, Bulgarians were registered in 62 Hungarian towns and villages (*Balgarskite sledi* 2019: 6). This increase could be traced not only in Hungary but also in other immigrant destinations for Bulgarian gardeners. Whilst in the last decade of the 19th century their number abroad was more than 10,000 people, in the beginning of the new century it reached 15,000 people (see Glasnova 2015).

Until the beginning of the 20th century, this migration followed predominantly a seasonal pattern. In the beginning, the immigrants came to Hungary around 1 February (St. Tryphon's Day) and remained there until the second half of October

or the beginning of November (around St. Dimiter's Day), when they divided the earnings among themselves and toured back to their places of origin (Gyurov 2005: 59). In such a way, they spent half a year in Hungary, half in their homes in Bulgaria. The first documented cases of staying in Hungary for the winter date back to 1890. Whilst in the beginning the gardeners' group consisted only of men who had left their families behind and returned to them on an annual basis, with the onset of the 20th century, many gardeners settled in Hungary together with their families, and their descendants formed the basis of contemporary Bulgarian community in Hungary (*Balgarskite sledi* 2019: 6). Some of the young men started marrying Hungarian women. Significant changes also occurred in the gardeners' economic activity and way of life. The leaders of gardeners' groups (*gazdi*) leased the land plots not for a single but for several years; some of them bought lands, houses, or rented rooms, and did not return to their country on a yearly basis (Donchev 1999: 36). Gardens were worked on in cooperation and collective labour, within an intensive labour process with the participation of the entire immigrant community. This specific pattern of vegetable growing was known as "the Bulgarian way" and included gardens' intensive use, the yielding of 2-3 harvests per year, dividing gardens in plant beds, and abundant watering and fertilizing for generating very high produce (Uzunova 1999: 199).

The Garden as a Workshop

Here I would like to stress again the image of the garden as a workshop. The second half of the 19th century was for all Europe and for the Habsburg Empire (particularly for Budapest and the larger cities) a period of population growth and enhancing industrialization. The industrial world was coming into the picture: workshops and enterprises started appearing, and they developed as manufacture units that accumulated human experience. Although perhaps some of the immigrants were engaged in other activities (not only gardening) and joined other workshops, for the majority of immigrants from Bulgaria, the garden was this workshop and manufacture – it was the unit where they could intensify labour and gain more profit with their work. The garden was the place where they could "modernize" the manual work activity, to make it more intense, to introduce new methods of cultivation, and to gain higher produce. By modernizing this unit, the garden, they could make their own work more efficient and profitable, but at the same time they could also integrate more easily into the host society. For them, the garden was a passkey to modernization – by modernizing vegetable production, they could better integrate into the modernizing world in the Habsburg Empire.

It is not by chance that the destinations where the Bulgarian gardeners settled en masse scale were the areas around the cities with the most rapid industrial

development at the turn of the new century. As A. Gyurov points out, in the second half of the 19th century, Budapest was the only European capital where 85% of the country's industry was concentrated; in Miskolc and in the nearby Ózd, large metallurgic plants had been functioning since 1754; and Pécs was the most dynamically industrializing city in Southern Hungary (Gyurov 2005: 58–59). A direct result of the industrialization pace was the concentration of population and the development of markets for satisfying its growing needs. The authors of the guidebook on the history of Hungarian agriculture remark in this respect, "the turn of the century was the heyday of fairs. Markets became separated according to their produce. The trade of products for everyday use (poultry, milk, bread, vegetables, fruits) still went on in the center of settlements" (*The History* 2008: 36). Such markets developed particularly in larger cities, enabling the supply of unlimited amount of agricultural production – a factor that should have played a decisive role in Bulgarian gardeners' choice of settlement and garden cultivation. In the capital of the Dual Monarchy, Budapest, Bulgarian gardeners sold their produce mainly in the Central Covered Market in Budapest, which was built in the period of 1894–1897 to satisfy the needs of the growing city and to enhance the distribution of food products in the city's vicinity.[5]

As hubs for new consumption patterns in capital cities, central markets were also sites for new and more intense economic activities, as well as for a direct access to product distribution and consumption. Seeking economic survival and labour realization in the host society, Bulgarian gardeners were clearly seeing large cities and their markets as spaces where they could offer the products of their agricultural work and would secure their sale in larger quantities. The markets were the places where gardeners would also act as salesmen, putting in practice their trading skills and commercial sense. These were the spaces where they could perform as modern subjects of taking economic initiatives of their own, of being part of the modernizing system of economic exchange and urban life. It was not by chance that – according to the well-known pattern, shared as community knowledge until today – Bulgarians leased and then purchased land plots for vegetable cultivation in the areas around the cities, at a distance where they could still see the chimneys of industrial plants: meaning that the distance would be not too long as to permit them to make trips to the city and sell their produce.

The above-mentioned circumstances permit outlining the geographical spaces of settlement of Bulgarian immigrants at the end of the 19th century, with two major factors that played the role in this: the proximity of water sources and the

5 According to K. Menyhart, "the intensive development of cities and industry in the middle of the 19th century created opportunities for the economic success of Bulgarian gardeners, who made use of the situation to provide vegetable production on a mass scale" (Menyhart 2016: 85). [Translation from Bulgarian. All translations of non-English texts are mine throughout the paper.] A. Gyurov and F. Bódi also stress the presence of large markets for vegetable production as the major factor attracting the gardeners (Gyurov 2001: 58, 145; Bódi 2017: 116).

easy access to markets where they could sell their produce. Both of these locations were objects of substantial transformation and adjustment to modernizing trends. Whilst the markets were indicators of the increased demographic presence, the growing consumption needs, the intensifying rhythm of economic exchange, the water sources and their adjacent land plots would need the application of methods and techniques that would enable more rigorous and fruitful vegetable growing. The two factors were inextricably linked, as both the enhancing development of urban life and the new market opportunities conditioned the development of intensive vegetable production in the areas around the city centres; on its turn, the optimization of vegetable growing boosted vegetable production, posing an impact on the trade system and consumption patterns in the urban centres. The significance of the two factors – the urban centres with their markets and the land plots with the accessible water sources – largely determined the immediate spaces of settlement of Bulgarian immigrants at the time in the areas around the cities, in arable plots at a relative proximity to urban centres. They were thus inhabiting the intermediate spaces between the town and the village – living in the garden areas around the city confines but crossing these confines on an everyday basis and enabling the supply of products needed for the growing urban organism. The two spaces of activity – the land plots and the market – were mutually enhancing themselves and triggering each other for a speedier and better performance in accordance with the demands of the modern society that was in its making. In this exchange, Bulgarian immigrants were both intermediaries and important agents that could additionally stimulate this social and economic intensity with new techniques of production, higher productivity, and commercial fervour.

The seasonal migration and gradual settlement of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary was in the context of substantial transformations occurring in all of Europe in the sphere of agriculture, finding expression in the utilization of new territories for agricultural work, expanding of the arable lands, reorganization of peasant work, etc. For Hungary, during the second half of the 19th century, a policy of increasing land use was undertaken as part of the processes of industrialization and urbanization. This resulted in the drying of vast plots around rivers, turning the previous swampy areas and wetlands into arable lands. Whilst the systematic policies of wetland utilization were expressions of the state impetus to exercise control on its territories and the population, they also evidenced the impetus of enhancing land productivity through the enlargement of land plots and the development of more farms. The period was one of substantial changes in the rural landscape with a wide range of consequences – river regulations, land acquisition, cultivation of the new land plots, practices of renting and leasing of reclaimed territories, turning the former swamp areas into gardens, introduction and cultivation of new plants, etc. To put it briefly, river regulation policies in the end of the 19th century changed

society as a whole, leaving their mark on land use, landscapes, state control, agriculture, nutrition – to name just a few of the major dimensions. Another important factor in that period was the phylloxera epidemic, which destroyed the vineyards in most of Europe, opening new land areas that were often turned into orchards and vegetable gardens (The History 2008: 40).

In fact, until the mid-19th century in Hungary, wheat and corn were grown predominantly, whilst vegetables were less present in the kitchen (Mód 2015: 64). They were known and consumed, but mostly by aristocrats, and were not common for the population at large. The acquisition of new lands as a result of river regulation and the destruction of previous vineyards opened the ground for increasing vegetable and fruit production and introducing some of the plants more widely, making these more accessible to different strata of the population. Thus, whilst Bulgarians did not exactly "discover" the vegetables and fruits with which they acquired fame in Hungary (tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, strawberries, etc.), they actually introduced the techniques of growing these vegetables intensively and transformed it truly into mass production.[6]

In this context of agricultural transformations, the appearance of Bulgarian immigrants needed both to adjust to the ongoing processes and to offer competitive models of production so as to advance and get established as economic agents in the host society. The major input that was associated with Bulgarians' appearance in Hungarian lands was related to the innovations they introduced in irrigation. As the guidebook on Hungarian agriculture points out, "with the appearance of industrial horticulture especially next to towns, and due to the influence of German and Bulgarian gardening methods, an intensive, irrigated horticulture developed" (*The History* 2008: 38). This new system of vegetable growing included the use of a "Bulgarian wheel" (*dulap*)[7] to extract water from a nearby river and to channel it in irrigation ditches (*Balgarskite sledi* 2019: 6). In this way, the crops could be regularly watered and the gardens could yield several harvests per season, starting from early spring and continuing to late autumn. The use of greenhouse techniques for protecting the crops from the early spring cold was another step that enabled Bulgarian gardeners to offer vegetables as early as possible for the growing needs of the market (see Mód 2015: 64). The technology of intensive vegetable production that Bulgarians brought to Hungary was generally unknown to Hungarians due to the previous agricultural pattern

6 L. Mód comments with regards to Southern Hungary (but this is valid for other parts of the country too): "Bulgarian gardeners enabled making popular such vegetables that were previously unknown in the region. Among them, peppers had the largest significance, as the areas around Szentes were famous in all the country for their production" (Mód 2015: 62; 2024).

7 As V. Yankova points out, "albeit with a forgotten origin from the Orient, in Hungary, *dulap* is recognized as 'Bulgarian', and this is reflected in its popular name of 'Bulgarian wheel'" (Yankova 2014: 50–51). About the *dulap* and its use by Bulgarian gardeners, see also Mutafov (1980).

that relied mostly on grain production. The evident results of this technology made a strong impression on the local population, and it was soon embraced by the local people who not only worked on some of the Bulgarian gardens but also applied the techniques in their own agricultural practices (see Boross 1980).

All this portrays the gardeners from Bulgaria not only as participants but also as agents of the social changes at the time. They made a modernizing impact on the host society in horticulture, irrigation system, land use, and nutrition. Whilst the new gardening techniques triggered and transformed the sphere of vegetable production, the introduction of new plants, seeds, and food products laid a strong impact on Hungarian nutrition and culinary patterns. The intensive vegetable growing prompted new possibilities of feeding the population, but it also directed the attention to the consumption of fresh products and to their access on the table not only in the summer period but also all the year round. The acceleration of work rhythm in the garden was not only a possibility of investing the modern and industrial spirit in the garden space but also a proof that new forms of production could help improving the life of the population – its feeding in a sufficient, accessible, and healthy way. Last but not least, with their social groups that worked as one joint organism, Bulgarian gardeners also introduced a new sense of community organization, new forms of social organization and collaboration within the professional network, to the extent that they all had their roles and share in the professional system. It was a system of hierarchy and equal division of tasks, with the clear impetus that hard work can be a key to economic success; to a certain extent, it was also a system of peer relations where everybody's involvement was needed and where success depended on the dedication and labour of every participant in the community.

If we refer back to Peter Hanák and to his idea of the "garden as a workshop", we can note again that when discussing Vienna and Budapest, he actually discussed multiple modernities. In this interpretative framework, some societies go along the modernity of the type of arts, culture, opera, etc., whilst others get modernized rather through industrial work. Following this approach, Bulgarian gardeners actually gave a different input – through agriculture, through modernizing agriculture. For them, the garden and the applied agricultural practices were a possibility to become part of the modernizing world. Beyond doubt, they were not the only ones doing this – a clear example is the one of German gardeners who are often mentioned together with Bulgarians as influencing Hungarian agriculture. However, with the wide array of the contributions, the persistence, and long-term impact, immigrant gardeners from Bulgaria were a primary example of this different form of modernization – of making spheres of life more functional and more modern through optimizing the practices of land cultivation.

An important aspect of this modernizing impact was its sustainability over several decades despite the changes that occurred with the patterns of

immigration. As already mentioned, the first two generations of immigrants maintained a seasonal migration (half a year in Hungary and half a year back in Bulgaria), preferred not to settle, and generally did not enter into mixed marriages. For them, the tour to Hungary was a work trip – an industrial enterprise that enabled them to sell their labour and to earn profit that they could have hardly accomplished at their home places. Still, despite this reluctance of settlement, they were also learning some of the local customs and language, to the extent that they had to interact with the Hungarian society: they had to communicate with landlords and tradesmen, had to know where to sell and what to sell, had to be aware of the needs and preferences of the host society. Bulgarian gardeners were maintaining contacts with local population and – bringing skills and products from Bulgaria – were also taking practices and cultural habits with them from Hungary. Among the cases in point, it is important to mention the transferring back of paprika, some types of peppers, the high use of red pepper in cuisine, as well as vegetables that were unknown in Bulgaria, such as celery, kale, small onions, etc. (Uzunova 1999: 199). The influence was palpably expressed on the level of daily life, social habits, and customs too. Taken together, these allow us to see modernization not merely as related to the host society but also as an ongoing process that affected in a specific way the immigrants' lands of origin. It was a matter, thus, not only of multiple modernities but also of multiple channels through which modernization reached the societies that aspired for it.

This positive picture of mutually enriching mobility between Bulgarian and Hungarian lands was very much challenged in the 20th century – during the interwar period, as part of the turbulence that Europe went through during and after the Great War. Bulgaria and Hungary were very much similar in the way they were treated in the war's aftermath, with severe consequences related to lost territories and population, refugee waves, economic difficulties, and political crises. Both during the war and in the post-war period, Bulgarians continued their activities and contributed to the social stability in Hungary by supplying vegetables and other agricultural products to the city markets. During the war, representatives of the gardeners' community in Budapest were spared mobilization so that not to disrupt the regular food supply and nutrition of citizens in the capital. In the Hungarian society, Bulgarian gardeners had already turned into examples for vegetable producers and as key agents in the food supply and nutrition of the population (Borosh 1980, Changova-Menyhart 1989). This was even more so after World War I when the search for vegetables increased, and during the global economic crisis, grain production was no longer profitable (Mód 2015: 62). This was the period when the Bulgarian model was steadily embraced by local citizens for whom – in conditions of financial instability and unemployment – gardening provided a solution to supply food from rented plots. Many of the practices used by Bulgarian gardeners for vegetable growing, irrigation, land cultivation, and

also social organization of agricultural work were taken up by the Hungarian population and received wide distribution during the first decades of the 20th century (see Bódi 2024). As L. Mód points it out, in the period between the two world wars, Hungarian gardeners started to prevail and the phrase "Bulgarian gardener" no longer meant ethnic affiliation but referred to all who worked their lands in this specific way (Mód 2015: 64).

A positive example with their economic and nutritional input, Bulgarian gardeners were respected also in terms of their community formation and the successful integration in Hungarian society. This reflected directly on the self-awareness of the community and its confidence as being a well-integrated group in the beginning of the 20th century. It was in this period when – one or two generations after the arrival of the first seasonal migrants from Bulgaria – members of this community had become sufficiently numerous to start organizing their immigrants' network and started building Bulgarian institutions in Hungary. On 20 July 1914, at the initiative of the Bulgarian General Consulate in Budapest, a meeting of Bulgarian gardeners took place, and the Association of Bulgarians in Hungary was established (see Gardev 2005: 67). It was soon followed by the Orthodox Church Community (1916), the Bulgarian School (1917), the Cultural House (1922), etc. (see Savova and Toldi 2016). In the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary gradually increased, varying between 5,000 and 12,000, with around 3,000 living in the two main centres – Budapest and Miskolc (Uzunova 1999: 203). In 1923, a school and a chapel were founded in Miskolc, and in 1932 the Bulgarian Orthodox Church St. Cyril and Methodius was built in Budapest with donations by members of the Bulgarian community. Whilst these institutions were a clear indication of the high level of adjustment of Bulgarian immigrants in the Hungarian society, of their acceptance and social visibility, they also testified to the community networks among the immigrants from Bulgaria. A prerequisite for their survival and successful work manifestation during the 19th century, these network links remained strong and compact for the second and third generations of Bulgarian gardeners despite the changes that the immigrant community and the society as a whole underwent in the first part of the 20th century.

The political changes in Bulgaria and Hungary after World War II had a critical and in many respects decisive impact on this community.[8] In the conditions of vehement communist propaganda, they were proclaimed "enemies of the people" and "kulaks", which led to their mass repatriation to Bulgaria (see Yankova 2015: 44, Gyurov 2001: 169–174), where many of them suffered persecutions from the communist regime for accusations of bringing capitalist or Western European ideological influence. Those of the gardeners who remained in Hungary were forced to enter agricultural cooperatives and had their lands confiscated, with the

8 For a detailed presentation of these processes, see Gardev (2013).

right to retain only small plots for family use (Gardev 2005: 79). Some of them were hired as garden specialists in the cooperatives. With private initiative decreased to a minimum in the 1950s and with the high taxes for all private producers, only a small number of garden owners retained gardening as their main economic activity (Peykovska 2015: 69). In 1951, the Gardeners' Union was officially dissolved, marking the beginning of the Bulgarian community's transformation into a minority (Donchev 1999: 37). In 1960, gardening migration was cancelled with a decree, and the previous pattern of seasonal trips and seasonal work was no longer possible. The gardeners were forced to choose in which of the two countries they would ultimately settle, which actually broke the previous pattern of travelling and acting as intermediaries between the two countries. It was only after the end of the communist period that the relationships with families and friends back in the two countries put on hold could be restored and when descendants of Bulgarian gardeners in Hungary gained renewed impetus to revive their activities as an immigrant community, additionally stimulated by the possibilities provided by the 1993 Law on National and Ethnic Minorities.

Conclusions

The purpose of the analysis so far has not been to trace the development of the Bulgarian gardeners' community in Hungary with some of its formative phases but rather to outline in a nutshell the specific way in which immigration and integration into the host society became possible in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. We could summarize this as the "garden as a workshop" – an image that portrays the coalescence of immigrant and labour experience with the type of modernity related to industrialization, enhanced modes of production, and economic exchange. As already noted, for Bulgarian immigrants the "garden" appeared as a password for entering the Hungarian society, a niche for work activity that they were ready to fill in and exploit, optimizing its mechanisms of work organization and production, and adjusting it to the new – industrial, urban, and "modern" – ways of life. By introducing new technologies and new forms of cooperation and work activities, the gardeners made a positive impact on the transition between tradition and modernity in the sphere of agriculture, acting as intermediaries in the great transformations that were taking place at the onset of the 20th century. In such a way, they took a path of modernization, which was different from the binary division that Peter Hanák proposed for the capital cities of the Dual Monarchy, i.e. the one between "the garden" and "the workshop". Instead, seasonal gardeners from Bulgaria took the path of turning the garden into a workshop and, through modernizing cultivation

practices and economic activities, of educating the agricultural sphere, securing also their own survival and integration in the host society.

As a final remark in my analysis, I would like to propose the notion of immigration as a "rhizomatic experience", by dwelling on the concept proposed by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari of the different types of rooting and extending them to a metaphor of the different forms of settling. In their work *A Thousand Plateaus*, the two authors drew a contrast between trees and plants that have different rooting systems such as strawberries. In such plants, it is not a single root that goes down but, on the contrary, different roots go in several directions and get attached to different locations, forming thus a rhizomatic system. In this system, rooting is not linear and uni-directional but rather a network. According to the two authors, the rhizome is always in the middle, does not have a centre but has many places. It is in-between things and survives because it is rooted in many places: "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo." (Deleuze–Guattari 1987: 25). In my view, this image helps explaining the experience of Bulgarian gardeners from the middle of the 19th century – going into different locations, to different places and searching for ways to get rooted, striking no deep roots though. Even if one is rooted somewhere, they can go to another location and transfer roots there, which actually represents a mobile pattern of settling. As the two authors specify, even if you cut one of these branches, it will not disappear but will go into a different direction because it works as a system – one that is in constant motion and with unconcealed power of rooting. In my understanding, it describes very well the experience of Bulgarian gardeners and similar types of immigration – as a rhizomatic experience, which spreads around and searches for roots, interacts with the environment, seeks to find an equilibrium with it, but ultimately influences it and changes it with its own presence.

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