

Introduction

The 11th volume in the Historical Seminar series, just like the previous ones, brings a diversity of views on history and people who found themselves in it. However, the science of history is by no means a sharply delimited framework, let alone fetters. Rather, this treasury of knowledge generously welcomes complements that emphasize other perspectives. Diversity and interdisciplinary character are incorporated into the very essence of the Historical Seminar, a cycle of invited lectures which have been hosted by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts since 1992. About once a month, the Historical Seminar makes the Baroque Mala dvorana hall become alive through more or less lively debates between scientists and other curious participants. Lecturers from Slovenia and abroad present their original findings and in doing so they write the story of the Historical Seminar which is sometimes unpredictable and astonishing, but almost never boring.

The monograph *Historical Seminar 11* combines 7 discussions which were based on the Historical Seminar lectures and edited for publication by 3 lecturers from Slovenia and 4 lecturers from abroad (Hungary, Austria, Poland and the USA).

The first two articles are related to music. In her discussion, **Aneta Markuszewska** presents two operas containing the motif of Iphigenia (*Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*) composed in 1713 for the theatre of Maria Casimira Sobieska, Queen Dowager of Poland, in Rome. There, music also enabled to comment on and to criticise the politics and politicians of the time. In the second article, **Mojca Kovačič** addresses the question of limits and freedom in creating folk music. Institutionalisation and organisation of musical practice can promote or prevent changes in the field of musical creativity. Taking the example of bell chiming, the author shows what happens if musical practice is left to its bearers alone.

The third and the fourth articles deal with the history of the defence against the Turks in the 16th century and with Habsburg and Ottoman diplomacy. **Géza Pálffy** discusses the expansion of the Ottoman Empire between the Adriatic Sea and the Danube which triggered the development of fortress construction, military cartography and the entire organization of the army in

the Habsburg Monarchy in Hungary and Slavonia in the 16th century. **Arno Strohmeyer**'s article counterbalances the previous one: it discusses the peace mission to the High Porte (1719) headed by a nobleman from the Lower Rhine region Damian Hugo von Virmont as the leader of the emperor's embassy. The author focuses on three main stations of Virmont's mission: crossing the border near Paraćin, the arrival to Constantinople and the inaugural audience with the sultan Ahmed III.

The fifth article written by **Raymond Miller** focuses on the position Jernej Kopitar occupied in Central Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. The author situates him in the group of "restrained Romantics" who claimed that "life begins with action". The sixth article focuses on a personality as well, namely on Joseph Stalin. **Andrej Stopar** discusses the attitude of the Russians towards recent history, mainly the attitude towards Stalin, and finds out that in spite of three attempts at destalinization the majority of Russian citizens are not ready to critically evaluate the Stalin's role in the history of the Soviet state. The monograph ends with **Jure Zupan**'s article on the network of verbs' meanings composed of about 15,500 Slovenian verbs forming 1,011 groups of meanings which are hierarchically ordered into six clusters: to exist, to have, to move, to do, to think, and to communicate.

The monograph *Historical Seminar II* thus combines 7 diverse stories which open new horizons to a curious reader. It is precisely for this reason that the Historical Seminar still persists. And remains.

Editor