Chancellor Metternich and His Time. Albertina icome S.R.O.,

Reviewed by Jim Niessen

Published on HABSBURG (September, 1996)

Electronic formats offer new opportunities for the presentation of historical documents. The linkage of bibliographic information and digitized images can provide a convenient and palatable surrogate for travel to the archives that hold the documents. On the other hand, the scanning of documents for free access over the Internet has its drawbacks. Providing high-resolution images is expensive and places high demands on the computer memory of the host machine. In a time of budget cutbacks, why should archives and museums make copyrighted material freely available on the Net and forfeit potential income from the sale of images to customers? Furthermore, unless fast connections and computing capability are available on both the sending and receiving end, the results are likely to be disappointing. For these reasons, repositories often prefer to place only lower-resolution images on the Web, while educators may find CD-ROM products more accessible to their students. <p> The product under review is one of the first ventures into the field of Habsburg history for CD-ROM technology. The family archives of the Austrian statesman, Prince Metternich, preserved since 1956 at the Central State Archives in Prague, presented the opportunity. The editors have prepared bibliographic records in German that describe 1697 documents. For 729 of these, the original documents have been scanned in, so that images of 4,681 pages of text can be accessed and viewed via the records. A team of fifteen archivists, led by Jaroslava Hof-

mannova, created the records in German in seventeen searchable fields, including personal and geographical names, subjects, date, place of issue, language, presence of a facsimile, a page reference if previously published, and abstracts that are usually several sentences in length. <p> The database presents in its entirety the portion of Metternich's papers known as the Memoranda, consisting primarily of memoranda but also much related official and personal correspondence and even contemporary printed matter. Diplomatic topics are most frequent, but there are also memoranda and correspondence on the internal affairs of the Monarchy. The Memoranda are a component of "Acta Clementina 8." Most of "AC8" appeared in a documentary publication edited by Alfons von Klinkowstroem that appeared in Vienna between 1880-1884, and later in French and somewhat abridged English editions.[1] However, very few of the Memoranda (110 out of 1,697) appeared in the original edition of this publication. Even in the case of those previously published, the editors note cases of incompleteness or errors in the published version. <p> The previously unpublished nature of most of the documents is a the principal attraction of <cite>Chancellor Metternich and His Time</cite>. Clemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich-Winneburg (1773-1859) was Austrian ambassador in Dresden 1801-1803, in Berlin 1803-1805, and Paris 1806-1809 before becoming Foreign Minister in 1809 and assuming the additional title of Chancellor from 1821 to his

dismissal in 1848. Styled the "coachman of Europe" for his role as architect of the European balance of powers and champion (villified by liberals and nationalists) of conservatism from 1815 to 1848, he also played an important role in Austrian domestic affairs. Hofmannova notes in an introductory study, also available on the disk, that "the section Acta Clementina bears visible traces of arrangement or at least identification work by the chancellor himself, and this applies most markedly to what are known as the Memoranda. Metternich himself laid the foundations for this section of documents." To the extent that Metternich can be seen as having sought to fashion his own documentary legacy, the coachman's own hand in this collection may raise a warning signal. But the importance of the material is obvious. <p> The disk includes a 35-page study by Miroslav Hroch, "Europe in Metternich's Time," which provides a good survey of his life and his role in domestic and foreign affairs. There are striking characterizations: "He learnt, as he later recalled himself, to assure politicians whom he regarded as hi[s] main enemies of his friendship with the sincerest of smiles, and he learnt to make use of mistresses as a source of political information [...]." Despite his conservatism, he was a realist: "It was, perhaps, thanks to his being an eclectic that he never became one of those blinded fanatics who refuse to recognize reality if it contrasts with their principles." Hroch's Marxism is evident in his thesis that "Metternich saw quite realistically that revolution has its objective conditions in the new social processes, but he saw it as the mission of the state to maintain a balance between the 'egoism' of individuals and groups, and if necessary to neutralize the 'dangerous forces' not only through partial reforms, but also preventive persecution and armed force." Not surprisingly, his overall assessment of Meternich is negative. <p> Hroch's article includes no footnotes; there is no indication whether it has been published elsewhere. There is reference in the text to the classic biography of Metternich by Heinrich Ritter von Srbik[2] and a characteriza-

tion of him from 1813 by Alexander von Humboldt. Possibly Hroch consulted the Memoranda in preparing this study, but he does not refer to them, and it is a shame that the opportunity is missed to offer hyperlinks to relevant documents in the collection. <p> Installation is simple; while the Czech-designed search engine called WinFret will probably be unfamiliar to Americans, it is effective. It is possible to search by keying in your terms, but it may be more effective (especially if German diacriticals are not loaded on your computer) to use the dictionary that is available for each field to select one's terms. I was able to retrieve records for "Szechenyi," for instance, only with the aid of the dictionary for the "Personenregister." The default Boolean operators are "or" among multiple terms within a field (e.g. "Ungarn Italien" in the geographic field produces 342 records), and "and" between fields, e.g. "Ungarn [and] 1848*"--where the truncation symbol "*" is necessary to retrieve all items dated 1848, produces 11 records. There is a way to alter the Boolean options within Windows (which I could not get to work!), but it is also possible to type "and" within a field ("Ungarn and Italien" in the geographic field retrieves 14 records) once you have used the dictionary to identify usable terms. A keyword search within the abstract field produces different results than the same search in the subject field. The search engine runs on Windows and has on-screen help in English. Images and search results can be printed, and sets of records for search results can also be downloaded to a diskette. <p> The abstracts, headings, and facsimiles are the most useful information provided. The editors have done a fairly good job of producing informative abstracts and attached a large number of proper and geographic names to aid in retrieval. Perhaps inevitably, the usage of subject terms is not completely consistent, but it is also possible to type truncated subject terms, e.g. "Kirch*" for all subjects having this root. The downloading of records to a file is simple, but it is not possible to download images. If the record in-

dicates the availability of a facsimile, clicking on the "Picture" icon begins the loading of the image. Thanks to a preview icon and a variety of magnification options, navigation and display of the images is good. The printing of images is relatively disappointing, however: printouts are negative images, in one size only, and of relatively poor resolution. <p> The fact that all the records are in German, and that most of the facsimiles are in German or French, will severely reduce this product's marketability in North America. It will be most useful in a graduate program dealing with nineteenth century Habsburg and diplomatic history. First, as earlier noted, most of these documents have not been previously published. Second, half of those previously published (50 of 110) are present here in facsimile: this provides an opportunity for the advanced student to learn the skill of reading manuscript documents in French or German by comparing the facsimiles to the printed text. In a high-tech classroom, teachers can project facsimiles on the screen and provide students with a rare glimpse of diplomatic analysis. Third, the search capabilities, as outlined above, are far superior to the printed collection of Metternich documents; in their English version, only one of the five volumes is even indexed. Finally, a total of seven facsimiles are actually in English and thus accessible to most North American students. <p> Albertina icome and Jaroslava Hofmannova's team are to be congratulated on a useful, but expensive and specialized, tool. The translation of the bibliographic records into English would substantially increase its attractiveness. <p> (distributed in the U.S. by Norman Ross Publishing, Inc. for $495) <p> Notes: <p> [1]. <cite>Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren</cite> (Wien: W. Braumuller, 1880-84), 8 vols.; <cite>Memoires, Documents et Ecrits Divers Laisses</cite> (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1880-84), 8 vols.; <cite>Memoirs of Prince Metternich</cite> (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1880-82), 5 vols. <p> [2]. Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, <cite>Metternich: der Staatsmann und der Mensch</cite> (Muenchen: F. Bruckmann, 1925). <p>

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Citation: Jim Niessen. Review of *Chancellor Metternich and His Time.* HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews.
September, 1996.

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