Political Economy in the Habsburg Monarchy 1750–1774

The Contribution of Ludwig Zinzendorf

Simon Adler
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Count Ludwig Zinzendorf, founder and first president of the Hofrechenkammer 1762–1773. (Source: Rechnungshof Vienna)
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The Contribution of Ludwig Zinzendorf
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Cover illustration: Ludwig Zinzendorf’s repayment plan of a bond issued by the Estates of Lower Austria, Sept. 1757, HHStA Nachlass Zinzendorf, vol.33, fol.259r © Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Vienna

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To Josef and Giselle
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London

Simon Adler
July 2019
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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AÖG Archiv für österreichische Geschichte
DOZA Deutschordenszentralarchiv, Vienna
fl. Austrian florins, or gulden
fr. French franc
HHStA Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
£ English pounds sterling
liv. French livres
m. million
MIÖG Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung
MÖStA Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs
NÖLA Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv, St. Pölten
ÖNB Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
ÖZV T. Fellner, H. Kretschmayer et al. (eds), Die österreichische Zentralverwaltung (1909–1971). Volumes are cited by their year of publication.

CONVENTIONS

Names of cities are given in standard English-language equivalents, so Vienna rather than Wien.

Ludwig Zinzendorf did not differentiate between ‘England’ and the post-1707 settlement in his writings, even when he was obviously referring to the new British state. His usage has been preserved to avoid introducing confusion.
Many currencies were in circulation in the eighteenth century. *Livres, francs, florins, écus* and *guilders* as well as other denominations mentioned by Ludwig Zinzendorf in his writings have been set out in full in the text, although abbreviated in the notes if they are mentioned.

Several of the source manuscripts exist as unpaginated folios. In the notes, notional page numbers are given in square brackets.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Scholars have used the concept of fiscal–military state to study the importance of finance in the development of the states in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The term was first used in the late 1980s by John Brewer in a study on eighteenth-century Britain.¹ It has since been employed widely, notably in a comparative context.² The term was apposite to describe the evolution of states and their fiscal systems to meet the demands of larger armies and more expensive equipment. A central question was the effectiveness with which economic resources could be mobilised. For Brewer, to cover the increasing costs of warfare, a fiscal–military state had to be able to raise funds through both credit and taxation. Further, a good administrative structure was necessary to support

its fiscal and military activities. This became particularly relevant in the eighteenth century when the costs of warfare in Europe increased significantly. Recently, the relevance of a fiscal–military state has also been examined for the Habsburg monarchy in the eighteenth century.

For the monarchy, funding was of utmost importance. It had fought several wars and at the beginning of the eighteenth century had dramatically extended its power. In addition to the Nine Years Wars (1689–1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the monarchy had fought two expensive military campaigns (1683–1699 and 1716–1718) against the Ottoman Empire. In the late 1730s, it had been involved in the War of the Polish Succession (1733–1738) and in renewed fighting with the Turks (1737–1739). To finance the rapidly rising military commitments, the government was dependent on tax revenues (contribution) paid by the Estates. In addition, with military expenditure well exceeding the income from taxes, the government needed to borrow heavily. Between 1700 and 1740, the monarchy’s debt had quadrupled. At the beginning of Maria Theresa’s reign, borrowings had surpassed 100 million florins. At the same time, however, the income side had deteriorated. Total state revenues had fallen to approximately 20 million florins, and the cash available had dwindled to 87,000 florins. At the time of her father’s sudden death on 20 October 1740, the empress had quickly recognised the desperate situation. In her memorial of 1750, Maria Theresa lamented that she had been left ‘without money, without credit and without [an] army’

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3 Brewer, Sinews of Power, p. xvii.
6 Ibid., pp. 31–8.
and had been lacking in political experience and competent advice. In her second memorial of 1755/1756, she complained anew about the poor financial state of the monarchy when she became empress. She deplored the difficulties of inheriting a country that had had only a few thousand gulden left as reserves and almost no domestic and foreign credit.\(^8\) Early in her reign, the combined pressures of keeping a standing army and servicing government debt, to which was added the armed hostility of Prussia, forced Maria Theresa to decide on significant reforms. The military expenditure of the Seven Years War (1756–1763) demanded financial commitments on a new scale.\(^9\)

Throughout Maria Theresa’s reign, public finances and administrative changes to central government in order to gain more fiscal and military control were key concerns. It was in these important areas in the 1750s, 1760s and early 1770s that, with the strong support of the influential Austrian state chancellor and creator of the Staatsrat Count Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, Count Ludwig Zinzendorf became the monarchy’s leading expert. Zinzendorf’s unusual ideas attracted attention and had a significant impact on the economic discussions in government. The only biography of Ludwig Zinzendorf was published in German in 1879.\(^10\) In two sections, the editor Eduard Gaston Pettenegg presented the biographies of Ludwig Zinzendorf and of his half-brother Karl Zinzendorf. Both sections were, in fact, written by Karl.\(^11\) Pettenegg was a local Austrian priest whose main interest in compiling the ‘autobiographies of Karl and Ludwig Zinzendorf’ was genealogy. His edition was not primarily intended as a historical account and may have omitted relevant biographical elements on the Zinzendorfs.

As part of their analyses of financial policies under Maria Theresa, scholars have primarily concentrated on Zinzendorf’s proposals on state credit. Adolf Beer, writing his monographs on financial administration and public finance at the end of the nineteenth century, gave significant room


\(^9\) On the significant influence and the strains of the Seven Years War on belligerents in Europe, see Hamish M. Scott, ‘The Seven Years War and Europe’s Ancien Régime’, War in History, 18:4 (2011), pp. 419–55.


\(^11\) For Karl’s authorship, see ibid., footnote, p. 8.
Fig. 1.1 The Habsburg monarchy from the 1740s to 1780
to Zinzendorf’s financial plans.12 Zinzendorf’s theoretical knowledge, Beer pointed out, was unrivalled in the monarchy.13 Karl Hock and Ignaz Bidermann’s study on the **Staatsrat** was based on documents which are now lost and showed Zinzendorf’s forceful presence during the discussions in central government in the 1760s, including his rivalry with Count Karl Friedrich Hatzfeld (1718–1793).14 The only study specifically dedicated to Ludwig Zinzendorf was published in German more than 60 years ago. The slim monograph **Staatsbildung und Finanzentwicklung** by Johann Schasching was based on primary material and gave a good exposition of Zinzendorf’s ideas on public finances.15 As the subtitle of the book indicated, Schasching’s focus was Austrian state credit in the 1760s and his starting point was Zinzendorf’s contribution to war finance. He also set out Zinzendorf’s proposals to unify state credit, to create new financial institutions for the monarchy, and gave an account of the resistance which Zinzendorf faced against his plans. In Schasching’s view, even though Zinzendorf eventually lost the power struggle against other ministers and could not translate some of his important proposals into policies, his new approach and his radical ideas were important for the development of the monarchy’s public finances.16 Similarly, P.G.M. Dickson’s monumental study on the monarchy threw considerable light on Zinzendorf’s financial proposals and his involvement in policy discussions.17 For the most part, Dickson was interested in those of Zinzendorf’s plans which impacted financial policy formulation and so he also explained the operations of the monarchy’s audit office (**Hofrechenkammer**) which was Zinzendorf’s political brainchild.18 Franz A.J. Szabo showed the decisive influence of Zinzendorf’s ideas on the financial policies of

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16 Ibid., p. 86.
18 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 82–113.
On the grounds that Zinzendorf’s plans entailed a significant development of the monarchy’s war efforts, Szabo reported them at some length in his monograph on the Seven Years War in Europe. By contrast, in the most recent major publication on the eighteenth-century monarchy, the biography of Maria Theresa by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Zinzendorf is only briefly mentioned in relation to financial reform.

This book, the first in English dedicated to Ludwig Zinzendorf’s writings, builds on these contributions and those of other scholars. However, it offers a different perspective and examines aspects of Zinzendorf’s work which have only partially been dealt with or have been neglected in the literature. A significant part of the study will be devoted to Zinzendorf’s earlier works, written before he was nominated to a senior government post. As such, Zinzendorf’s plans on state credit, which have been the clear emphasis for most scholars, represent only one part of the analysis. The book offers a more systematic examination of Zinzendorf’s thinking based on the most relevant primary sources. Also, rather than focussing on policies and their impact on policy-making in the monarchy, it is primarily concerned with ideas.

The first objective is to show the development of Zinzendorf’s ideas on political economy and his role as a sophisticated and well-informed expert in introducing advanced economic ideas to the monarchy. As in other European countries, the 1750s were a key period for the debates of such ideas among the ruling elite in Vienna, and the discussion continued into the 1760s. The second objective is the identification of the intellectual influences on Zinzendorf’s thinking. Zinzendorf, I contend, drew inspiration from thinkers in Europe and from financial institutions abroad and attempted to provide a different kind of economic advice. The third objective is to show how Zinzendorf operated in government as a sophisticated promoter of political economy. He sought to emulate on a more moderate scale the model of the French writers and administrators around Vincent de Gournay. Thus, I wish to argue, Zinzendorf was very firmly rooted in the European Enlightenment discourse on political economy.
Grete Klingenstein first recognised the significant influence of European ideas in general, and non-German ideas in particular, on the monarchy’s governing elite. In her perceptive review of Harm Klueting’s study of relative power in eighteenth-century Central Europe, she criticised the author for failing to show the intellectual presence of Montesquieu’s *De L’Esprit des Lois* in the cameralist works of Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1717–1771) and Jakob Friedrich Bielfeld (1717–1770). These writers, Klueting argued, influenced the viewpoints of leading figures and practitioners of political arithmetic at that time, including Kaunitz, to whom he devoted his longest treatment. But as Klingenstein made clear in her review, Kaunitz was not bound by cameralist thinking. He was clearly drawing on the practices in other European countries in order to appraise the monarchy’s strength relative to its allies and competitors. She developed this argument in her excellent overview of the dissemination of economic theory in the monarchy in the second half of the eighteenth century. A group of administrators around Kaunitz, which included Ludwig and Karl Zinzendorf, were actively involved in the reception of ideas from Europe. The Zinzendorf brothers were part of the inner circle of government and could shape economic debates. Klingenstein’s article provides a useful context for this study of Ludwig Zinzendorf.

In general, Zinzendorf scholarship has been mostly driven by an interest in Karl Zinzendorf and his 63 volumes of daily diaries. Christine Lebeau’s monograph on Karl and Ludwig Zinzendorf, which was based on her two-volume doctoral thesis, gave greater weight to Karl. Analysing

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Karl’s readings, Lebeau attempted to show the presence of European ideas in Karl’s thought. The strongest influence, she thought, came from France, and she reflected this in the subtitle ‘le modèle français’. In the final section of the book, Lebeau offered some discussion of Ludwig Zinzendorf’s ideas.\textsuperscript{25} Using the Zinzendorf brothers as a case study, Lebeau’s work is more a characterisation of the position and influence of the nobility in the monarchy than a study of ideas. Other contributions have likewise concentrated on Karl’s role as an economic and financial administrator.\textsuperscript{26}

However, the largest number of works by far have dealt with his diaries. Publications included an edition of the diaries covering Karl Zinzendorf’s early years as well as his travel notes on Tuscany, the Austrian Netherlands, Spain and England.\textsuperscript{27} The most ambitious and extensive work to date on the diaries was the four-volume edition by Grete Klingenstein, Eva Faber and Antonio Trampus on Zinzendorf’s

\textsuperscript{25} Lebeau, \textit{Aristocrates}, pp. 163–92.


time in Trieste as the city’s governor.\textsuperscript{28} As part of the comprehensive introduction in the first volume, Klingenstein included an overview of the scholarship on Karl Zinzendorf, together with an extensive bibliography and a history of the Zinzendorf estate from Karl’s death in early 1813 to today.\textsuperscript{29}

Ludwig Zinzendorf pursued political economy as an independent and defining science which had its place alongside a country’s strategy for power and military conquest. He closely followed the expansion of new ideas on political economy in England and France. The aim of political economy was to generate sufficient revenue for the people and for the services of the state. A growing volume of scholarship has been dedicated to this rise of political economy to intellectual prominence in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{30} In seven essays and a book-length introduction of more than 150 pages, Istvan Hont offered a revision of political thought between Thomas Hobbes and the French Revolution and drew out the intellectual foundations of political economy and international market rivalry.\textsuperscript{31} Following Hont’s death in 2013, two recently published collections of essays evaluate the influence of his ideas and methods.\textsuperscript{32} John Robertson used political economy as a central element of the Enlightenment to show the shared aspirations of thinkers in the kingdoms of Naples and Scotland for people to have better lives.\textsuperscript{33} A number of monographs have examined the ideas about commerce and state finances in France and England. Michael Sonenscher analysed the relationship between political economy and political life in France in the eighteenth century and the


\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 22–61. For the bibliography, see ibid., pp. 219–300.


\textsuperscript{31}Istvan Hont, \textit{Jealousy of Trade. International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective} (Cambridge, MA, 2005).


arguments over the effects of state borrowing on the monarchy.\textsuperscript{34} John Shovlin presented a different viewpoint, that of writers in the eighteenth century preoccupied with the social issues of wealth, including the corrupting effects of money, and with the restoration of French economic leadership through economic development.\textsuperscript{35} Henry Clark offered a broader perspective. He gave a synthetic analysis of French economic thought covering the time from Louis XIII to the French Revolution during which intellectuals struggled to establish commerce as a model of civil society.\textsuperscript{36} Paul Cheney’s approach emphasised the challenges which the rise of commerce presented to eighteenth-century France and the struggle of contemporary philosophers and economic thinkers to find a harmonious relationship between commerce, politics and society.\textsuperscript{37} A recently published collection of essays has examined the connection between commerce and the political order in Enlightenment Europe through the writings of a variety of thinkers, including Montesquieu, David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith and Johann Gottlieb Fichte.\textsuperscript{38} Others have studied the development of concepts of credit in England and the early use of credit instruments by the rural nobility in Austria.\textsuperscript{39}

In the eighteenth century, as growing international market rivalry became a major concern for European states, intellectuals began to examine more thoroughly the connection between politics and the economy. The theories of economic competition recognised emulation to be a vehicle for economic growth.\textsuperscript{40} Unlike envy, which flatly resented the achievement of others, emulation was a positive disposition. It was based on the


\textsuperscript{38} Olaf Asbach (ed.), \textit{Der moderne Staat und ’le doux commerce’: Politik, Ökonomie und internationale Beziehungen im politischen Denken der Aufklärung} (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2014).


\textsuperscript{40} See Hont, \textit{Jealousy of Trade}, pp. 115–23.
admiration of other nations and hence offered a very different perspective to envy. Emulation was a worthwhile attitude which could trigger progress for a nation and the adoption of new economic methods.\textsuperscript{41} Its impact also went beyond economic factors. It embodied a drive to further the interests of countries and to increase national dominance. Like fighting in wars, emulation should be perceived as a patriotic duty, and writers, including Adam Smith, supported government and private initiatives which encouraged it.\textsuperscript{42} The translation of foreign economic texts was a medium of emulation and also the subject of Sophus Reinert’s study of the adaptations of John Cary’s \textit{Essay on the State of England in Relation to Its Trade, Its Poor and Its Taxes, for Carrying Out the Present War Against France} (1695).\textsuperscript{43} Translations played an important role in the dissemination of economic argument, and Reinert showed how in the eighteenth century, the cumulative French, Italian and German translations of Cary’s book shared the same aspirations for economic development, but did not follow the same paths. The translations both altered the original text and added to it as each one was shaped by and assimilated into the different political and economic environments for which it was written. In the 1750s in France, the writers associated with Gournay played a decisive role in promoting interest in emulation. Their initiative involved the publication in French of a wide range of foreign economic writings which were intended for government ministers and for the wider public. Their important enterprise has been the subject of much scholarly interest.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 118.
\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 120.
Finally, Zinzendorf’s ideas should be considered in relation to the tradition of economic thought known as cameralism. The latter was largely confined to the German language and derived from the term *Kammer* which denoted the place of administration of the prince’s territorial state.\(^{45}\)

So at the outset, cameralism was characterised as a practical science of administrative and economic management.\(^{46}\) In 1988, Keith Tribe shifted the emphasis towards academia and underlined the didactic character of cameralism.\(^{47}\) It was, he has argued, ‘a form of academic pedagogy aimed at future administrators of the eighteenth-century German territorial states’.\(^{48}\) In 2017, scholars sought not only to reconcile the two approaches—practical and academic—but also to extend the geographic impact of cameralism beyond the German states and the Habsburg monarchy. Marten Seppel and Keith Tribe shifted the pendulum back to the practical relevance of cameralism in managing the economy and presented the influence of cameralist teaching in Northern Europe, including Sweden, Denmark, the Baltics.\(^{49}\) The chapter by Alexandre Mendes Cunha

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\(^{47}\) Tribe, *Governing Economy*.


on dissemination of cameralist ideas from Austria to Portugal is notable for covering a geographic outlier.\textsuperscript{50}

Cameralist thought began to develop in the sixteenth century and reached its heyday in the mid-eighteenth century. Justi and Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733–1817) were among the most sophisticated cameralist writers and produced comprehensive textbooks which set out the conceptual framework of cameralism. Both taught in Vienna and were contemporaries of Zinzendorf. Cameralism was the orthodoxy in certain parts of the Austrian administration. Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz, who planned and, in 1749, implemented a new central administrative structure for the monarchy, recruited Justi to develop the study of the economy. Justi travelled to Vienna in 1750. He became the tutor of Haugwitz’s son and a professor at the Theresianum, a new school created to educate nobility for careers in government administration. Haugwitz assigned Justi to teach German eloquence and to develop lectures on cameralism, commerce and mining.\textsuperscript{51} In 1752, he approved Justi’s curriculum.\textsuperscript{52} While Haugwitz and Justi sought to develop cameralist thinking, Zinzendorf, supported by Kaunitz, adopted French and, to a lesser extent, English economic thought. As I will argue in this book, his ideas on political economy were more developed than those of Justi and Sonnenfels. For Zinzendorf, it seems, cameralism offered little that was useful in addressing the economic and financial challenges of a large economy such as the Habsburg monarchy.

Cunha’s contribution in \textit{Cameralism in Practice} highlights the similarities between the administrative reforms initiated by the Marquis of Pombal in mid-eighteenth-century Portugal to consolidate power, and those of the \textit{Directorium in publicis et camerabilus} in the monarchy. From 1745 to 1749, Pombal was living in Vienna as a Portuguese diplomat and witnessed first-hand the reforms of Haugwitz. Through his marriage in 1745 to Countess Eleonore Ernestine Daun, who came from a respected noble family of Austrian military leaders, Pombal gained good access to officials and to the court in Vienna.\textsuperscript{53} Subsequently, Cunha argues, after becoming


\textsuperscript{52} Adam, \textit{Justi}, p. 34.

State Secretary in Portugal, Pombal used cameralist ideas for his policies. Notably, Pombal’s decrees and new regulations which he issued between 1755 and 1757 to alleviate the situation of the indigenous population of Brazil display the intellectual influence of the cameralists, in particular the ideas of the mid-seventeenth-century writer Johann Joachim Becher and of Justi. According to Culha’s narrative, Pombal followed Haugwitz’s reformist agenda and also assimilated cameralist ideas, which were then taught to administrators in the monarchy. Pombal seems, however, to have overlooked the existence of a very different type of economic discourse. This new debate, more international, sophisticated and bolder than the ideas Pombal adopted, was led by Zinzendorf and only conducted among Vienna’s ruling elite.

The chapters of this book follow a chronological approach. Chapter 2 explores the important relationship between Kaunitz and Zinzendorf. It then examines Zinzendorf’s output during his formative years in France with Kaunitz. Chapter 3 shifts to a comparative approach and sets out the important intellectual influences on Zinzendorf. Jean-François Melon and Gournay in particular, it will be argued, provided intellectual inspiration. The subject of Chap. 4 is Zinzendorf’s German translation of John Law’s Money and Trade (1705). It showed Zinzendorf’s interpretation of Law’s ideas and why he thought that they were still important and relevant to German readers. Heavily footnoted with textual additions, Zinzendorf’s book throws light on the nature of translation in the eighteenth century. Chapter 5 is devoted to Zinzendorf’s thinking on state credit and the reference points he took from other European countries. Chapter 6 is an analysis of his work as a sophisticated promoter of political economy and draws on the arguments developed in the previous chapters. It shows how Zinzendorf operated as a sophisticated financial expert and examines his role in government from a variety of perspectives. The discussion centres on the type of economic thinker Zinzendorf became, on Zinzendorf’s circle of like-minded individuals, his contribution to debates within government, his engagement with the public sphere in the monarchy and the distinctiveness of his ideas.

54 Ibid., pp. 167–71. Becher (1635–1682) was from the Rhineland. His main work was Politischer Diskurs von den eigentlichen Ursachen des Auf- und Abnehmens der Städte, Länder und Republiken (Frankfurt, 1688). For Justi, see Chap. 6.

55 For the two levels of economic discourse in the mid-eighteenth-century monarchy, see also Klingenstein, ‘Between Mercantilism and Physiocracy’.
Most of the relevant primary sources are in manuscript form, and four archives in Austria contain many of the papers. The main archival source is the Zinzendorf Nachlaß located at the Austrian State Archives in Vienna.\(^{56}\) It is an extensive collection which also includes the documents and writings of both Ludwig and his brother Karl. Karl left an enormous and rich collection of diaries, travel accounts, maps and letters. However, it has suffered significant losses. During World War II, the Nachlaß was moved for ‘safekeeping’ from Vienna to Schloß Guntersdorf in Lower Austria. There, 72 out of 204 volumes of manuscripts were thrown away, partially destroyed or looted. Loose collections of mixed papers from volumes which had disintegrated were collected in haste and returned to Vienna in October 1945. Important manuscripts from Ludwig Zinzendorf were also lost.\(^{57}\) Two other important archives are the National Library and the Teutonic Order, both in Vienna. The latter has the correspondence between Ludwig Zinzendorf and Karl Zinzendorf which is a collection of 11 volumes of letters from the late 1750s to the 1770s. The fourth significant source for primary material is the Zinzendorf Nachlaß in the archives of Lower Austria. It encompasses 40 boxes with a variety of papers and 2 boxes with official documents. This is the first book to systematically consult the archive of the Nachlaß in relation to Ludwig Zinzendorf.\(^{58}\)

At the outset, it will help the reader to set out short biographies of the Zinzendorf brothers. Ludwig (1721–1780) and Karl (1739–1813) were half-brothers, and both were remarkable figures in Austrian political life for over half a century from the early 1750s until the early 1800s. The Zinzendorf family had a long aristocratic history reaching back to twelfth-century Lower Austria. In the seventeenth century, because of their Lutheran beliefs, they were exiles, emigrating to Nürnberg. Their common father, Count Friedrich Christian (1697–1756), was in Saxon service, and their uncle, Count Nikolaus Ludwig (1700–1760), their father’s half-brother, was the founder of the Moravian Brethren.\(^{59}\) The family was relatively poor. It had very limited financial means and was in debt.

\(^{56}\) Nachlaß refers to Karl Zinzendorf’s collection of papers.

\(^{57}\) Klingenstein et al. (eds.), *Europäische Aufklärung*, vol. 1, pp. 34–6. For lists of missing volumes and the content of the Nachlaß in the Austrian State Archives, see footnotes 87, 89, 92 and 93 in ibid. For the general deficiencies in archival sources for the eighteenth-century monarchy, see Dickson, *Finance and Government*, vol. 1, pp. 11–12.

\(^{58}\) I am very grateful to Grete Klingenstein for having brought the archive to my attention.

\(^{59}\) For the Zinzendorf family history, and in particular for biographical details on Karl, see Breunlich and Mader (eds.) *Karl Graf von Zinzendorf*, pp. 3–44 and Klingenstein et al.