

# What Burgenland's Landscapes Remember: Populist Ecologies in the Austria-Hungary Borderlands

**FRANZ GRAF**

**Abstract:** This lecture draws on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in Burgenland, the former borderland of Austria-Hungary. It focuses on the Hanság/Waasen, a historical peat bog drained by noble landowners for agriculture and forestry. Along with the expulsion of water, the region's multilingual diversity was erased under Austrofascism and Nazism. The lecture explores how ecological issues have become defining features in the populist dynamics of rural change, and how memory politics are entangled with concomitant violent transformations. Narratives of progress and poverty relief continue to shape the region, while memory activists and wetland restoration projects challenge prevailing notions of Heimat and "the other." Although not offering final conclusions, the talk highlights how these contestations unsettle questions of implication and responsibility – across human and more-than-human pasts – yet leave stark differences in land ownership largely unaddressed (based on the ERC project Memory and Populism from Below, StG #101076092).

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PONDĚLÍ / MONDAY  
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