Austrian History Yearbook (2021), **52**, vii–viii
doi:10.1017/S0067237821000163

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Editor's Notes

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> And many Families foreseeing the Approach of the Distemper, laid up Stores of Provisions, sufficient for their whole Families, and shut themselves up, and that so entirely, that they were neither seen or heard of, till the Infection was quite ceased.
>
> Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*

Though in this age of Zoom and Skype, the social isolation that Defoe highlights in his description of London's Great Plague of 1665 may have been more extreme than what we are experiencing today, it is hard to underestimate or even understand at this point what is surely the greatest biological disaster of our lifetimes. The pandemic has touched virtually every aspect of our lives and has transformed how we work, eat, play, and—perhaps most importantly—relate to one another. Though the challenges of scholarly publishing may seem trivial in this larger context, they are nonetheless very real and have compelled us at the *Austrian History Yearbook* to learn to work differently. Our publisher, Cambridge University Press, quite literally stopped the presses last year until midsummer, and our subscribers were only able to access our content online. With offices shut at the University of Minnesota our editorial team has had to recalibrate as well. I am very grateful for our assistant editor, Tim McDonald, and his flexibility, resourcefulness, and professionalism in this difficult time. Daniel Unowsky, who has edited the journal since 2015, has managed heroically despite the heavy responsibilities he shoulders as chair of the History Department at the University of Memphis, while our book review editor Donald Wallace has helped us think through new ways of not simply maintaining but expanding our review coverage.

Reviewing this fascinating set of articles in our new edition of the *AHY*, I am struck by two recurring themes that resonate with all of us in this time of COVID-19: crisis and adaptation. Indeed, one of our contributors examines a biological catastrophe of the nineteenth century, an ecological disaster that he compares to the Irish potato blight of the 1840s. We begin the *Yearbook*, however, in the sixteenth century at a moment of both crisis and transformation. With the accession of the Habsburgs to the thrones of St. Stephen and St. Wenceslas in the 1520s, we watch this new dynasty move to the frontlines in Hungary to confront the Ottomans while simultaneously seeking to leave a distinctive mark on Bohemia. James Tracy, whose most recent work has helped us better appreciate the *longue durée* of the Habsburg-Ottoman wars, investigates the early years of this conflict and the logic that animated both diplomatic and military activity as the two sides positioned themselves to best advantage in a struggle that lasted through the late eighteenth century. While the Habsburgs were managing crisis on the eastern frontier, their efforts to establish their dominion in the Czech lands was a very different endeavor. Instead of focusing on the increasingly acrimonious rivalry between the family and the Bohemian estates, James Palmitessa turns to a more subtle approach the Habsburgs adopted by exploring their artistic patronage, more specifically the mausoleum they commissioned in that holy of holies of the Bohemian Kingdom, the St. Vitus Cathedral. Though a relatively small and unpretentious monument, its iconography and positioning, Palmitessa argues, reoriented the dynastic symbolism of the entire building with the Habsburgs now definitively at its center. Our forum, which is also based geographically in Prague, considers a transformation of a different nature. The focus here is not the dynasty but the city. An interdisciplinary team of younger scholars leads us on an exploration of a "global Prague" as they explore the connections that developed between this city, Central Europe, and regions far beyond.

A second set of articles takes us forward to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and a moment of imperial transformation. In a wonderfully paired set of essays, we have two investigations of the

Hungarian situation. Bálint Varga begins with a broad reflection on the meaning of empire in the long nineteenth century. In a thought-provoking essay he maintains that those in Dualist Hungary conceptualized empire in a manner that was distinctive in the late Habsburg monarchy. Robert Nemes, in contrast, works on the microlevel and presents a fascinating picture of one small Hungarian town. Through an examination of wine production and the great blight that nearly destroyed it, Nemes wrestles with questions of national identity, agricultural change, and the impact of modernization.

A final grouping of essays moves us up to that greatest of crises for the Habsburg lands, World War I. While textbooks often tell us that Central Europeans enthusiastically cheered the outbreak of war, Laurence Cole, Marlene Horejs, and Jan Rybak present a far more nuanced view in their examination of the Salzburg Crownland and the reactions that both the announcement and the early stages of war elicited. Responses were not uniform but often varied according to gender and generation. Adam Kożuchowski takes us eastward to Lviv, the only major city of the empire occupied during the war. Here he analyzes the memories of its inhabitants during its Russian occupation and how its citizens deftly attempted to square their loyalty to Austria with their sentimental attachment to a reborn Poland. We move to the other side of the Habsburg conglomerate with Marco Bresciani as he evaluates the complicated postwar situation of Trieste. While most scholars here have focused on tensions between Slavs and Italians, Bresciani looks instead at relations between state and civil society as he teases out threads that help tie the city's imperial past with its Fascist future. In a broad reflection on the interwar period, Tara Zahra, our 2020 Kann Lecturer, offers a somewhat different perspective on the moment of crisis and adaptation facing the now dramatically smaller Austrian state. With the end of what had been the largest integrated economy on the continent, Zahra views the collapse of the Habsburg Empire not from the vantage point of war or nationalism but as part of a broader pattern of deglobalization of which Austria was an epicenter. Closing this section are the contributions of two art historians who consider the cultural impact of the war and the new identities that slowly emerged in its aftermath. Nóra Veszprémi turns to questions of memory and landscape in former Hungarian territory, while Julia Secklehner takes us back to Austria proper. Her specific focus is Tyrol and the painter Alfons Walde, who may be best known for his mass-produced posters promoting the province as a tourist destination. Walde, she demonstrates, was more complex than many have assumed. Influenced by Klimt and Schiele, he developed an aesthetic of regional modernism that helped shape a new cultural identity for the Austrian Republic.

A final essay provides a coda to this year's edition of the *Yearbook*. Christian Karner brings us up to the present with his close reading of the 2019 Ibiza Affair. In a meeting with Heinz-Christian Strache, then Austria's controversial vice chancellor, a woman posing as the niece of a wealthy Russian businessman purportedly offered favorable press coverage for the right-wing Freedom Party in return for government contracts. The scandal brought down the government and forced early elections. Karner carefully analyzes the sociological dimensions of this latest of Austrian crises.

As we look ahead to the future, then, and the light that is slowly growing at the end of the long COVID tunnel, perhaps we can take some solace from Robert Nemes. In his analysis of viticulture in nineteenth-century Hungary, he reminds us that the blight that had such a destructive impact on the wine industry ultimately led to new advances in science and more robust economic growth. May next year bring an equivalent measure of progress and resilience in our own moment of crisis.

Cite this article: Louthan H (2021). Editor's Notes. *Austrian History Yearbook* **52**, 7–8. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237821000163