

## The Museum Age in Austria-Hungary: Art and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century

By Matthew Rampley, Markian Prokopovych, and Nóra Veszprémi.  
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Several decades ago, Tony Bennett put forth a compelling, and now canonical, thesis that the nineteenth-century museum operated as an exhibitionary complex in which public museums disciplined both objects (into new fields of research) and visitors (into educated and civilized citizens of the newly formed nation-state). Inspired by Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, Bennett explains that the exhibitionary complex developed over the same time period as the carceral archipelago and inverted its mechanisms of surveillance to achieve these disciplinary functions. The authors of *The Museum Age in Austria-Hungary* force us to reconsider the applicability of Bennett's thesis in regions that were not politically defined by the nation-state model.

By surveying a dizzying array of art and city museums and galleries and engaging extensively with museum-studies literature in numerous European languages, the authors demonstrate that the accepted model for public art museums of the nineteenth century, the Louvre, does not apply to Austria-Hungary, a region in which the political context was vastly different. The basis of Austro-Hungarian identity was the cosmopolitan dynastic state, where no shared language, history, or religion existed. Instead, "numerous centers competed for cultural, social, and political authority" in an empire defined by a "patchwork" of territories with varying levels of autonomy (5). The art landscape changed and diversified as new centers emerged, others lost their cultural-political significance, and participants in the art world looked for inspiration in Paris, Berlin, or London, rather than Vienna. Strikingly, while national museums in Hungary and Austrian Poland were founded with the intention of enhancing national prestige and rivalling the imperial capital of Vienna, museums did not see these aspirations as oppositional to the empire. Instead, the authors argue, Austria-Hungary was a "shared cultural space" in which museums were "bound together by a common political and ideological arrangement" (7) where historical actors in the art museum world paid close attention to the activities of their counterparts across the empire.

The book is organized thematically across six chapters, and each author is responsible for two of these chapters. The authors incorporate material from a wealth of museum archives in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, and make generous use of black-and-white photographs to illustrate the diversity of the museum landscape. A map of the empire, with the location of key cities and their museums, would have been a helpful addition for the reader to better visualize the complexity of this landscape.

Chapter 1, "The Museological Landscape of Austria-Hungary" by Matthew Rampley, situates Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, a symbol of imperial governance, within the broader evolution of spaces for public art collections and exhibitions in Austria-Hungary. The chapter begins in the sixteenth century to demonstrate just how intertwined the collections were with the Habsburg monarchy's own history. The remainder of the chapter looks at the proliferation of museums which reflected and shaped political, cultural, and social contexts, particularly the continued contributions of the aristocracy. Chapter 2, "The Museum and the City: Art, Municipal Programs, and Urban Agendas" by Markian Prokopovych, explores how the urban context shaped the political and public identity of museums in cities throughout the region. Municipal government, local elites, art historians, and museum directors all played

significant roles. In spite of a diversity of political contexts, museum directors across the empire managed to achieve unity in their display of art collections. Chapter 3, “Visions in Stone, Museums and Their Architecture” (Rampley) focuses especially on modernism’s transformation of museum architecture. For readers interested in nineteenth-century German museum architecture, this chapter includes a helpful overview of different architectural styles, using the museums of Berlin, Munich, and Dresden as examples. This excursion to Germany demonstrates that Vienna was not the model that other cities of the empire sought to emulate. Chapter 4, “Curators, Conservators, Scholars: The Rise of the Museum Professions” by Nóra Veszprémi, looks at how museums became sites of knowledge production in the period. Members of the new professional middle class, educated in the new field of art history, took over directorship of museums and supported museum reforms in exhibition display and collections management as well as scholarly research and publication. This is the first chapter to consider the gendered history of museums and how the rise of museum professions diminished the space for women to shape the art world. Chapter 5, “Uniques’ and Stories, Principles and Practices of Display” (Veszprémi) examines exhibitionary practices and how these were informed by local agendas, spatial limitations, art historical scholarship, and uniqueness of the collection. Chapter 6, “Museums and Their Publics” (Prokopovych) provides an extensive exploration of the diverse and diversifying museum publics during this period of great change. The chapter draws on a wide range of sources, including paintings, newspapers, photographs, museum instructions for visitors, and policies of use, to provide a social history of museums and their support of local patriotism and nationalism. An epilogue brings us into the twenty-first century, providing a glimpse into the lives of the museums after the fall of the empire.

The book is a significant contribution to central European history and to the growing corpus of literature on the European history of collections and museums. The effort to correct scholarly approaches that rely on present-day state boundaries is ambitious and necessary. The authors’ recurrent attention to Tony Bennett’s thesis is a reminder that there is still research to be done on museums outside of Britain, France, and the U.S. The long nineteenth century was a period in which new disciplines emerged and boundaries between disciplines changed, while museum directors also grappled with the history behind their collections and with spatial constraints. This was also a period in which European museum directors debated what counted as art when considering new acquisitions from European colonies overseas, a topic surprisingly absent from this book. The authors’ attention to the coincidence of continuity and change, to local politics and the agency of museum visitors, provides new directions for future research into how directors of different types of museums negotiated these changing disciplinary boundaries through the content and display of their collections.

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## **Music and the New Global Culture: From the Great Exhibitions to the Jazz Age**

**By Harry Liebersohn. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019. Pp. 336. Paper \$30.00. ISBN 978-0226649276.**

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The early chapters of this elegantly written, surprising book depict armchair-traveler interactions set in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States. The book begins in 1818,