



INTRODUCTION

Editor's Note

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I usually begin my comments with some suitable sets of superlatives describing certain features of our latest edition of the *Austrian History Yearbook*. This year I am hard-pressed as the *AHY* has surpassed in so many ways our previous benchmarks. Most obviously, we are twice our normal size. We are grateful for the support of Cambridge University Press in allowing us to produce this “double issue,” and I am deeply in debt of our staff, article editors Mo Healy and Rob Nemes, book review editors Bryan Kozik and Katya Motyl, and assistant editors James Gresock and Tim McDonald, who unflinchingly took on the challenge of producing what is by far the largest edition in the 55-issue run of the *AHY*. Geographically, we move across the Eurasian landscape with stops in Vienna, Istanbul, and Shanghai. Methodologically, we feature investigations of the environment, immigration, and gender while not neglecting the more traditional fields of political and diplomatic history. With a series of articles that move from the fifteenth to the early twenty-first century, this is the most complete issue of the *Yearbook* and one that may best highlight the continued vibrancy of our field across its entire chronological span.

The most distinctive feature of this year's *AHY* is its “special issue,” a series of nine essays examining Central Europe's complex fifteenth century. For most students of the Habsburg family, the dynasty's real story begins in the sixteenth century, either with the flamboyant Maximilian I or with his staid but ruthlessly effective grandson, Ferdinand, who acceded to multiple Central European thrones after the death of Hungary's last Jagiellonian king in 1526. It was, however, Maximilian's father Frederick who was the first Habsburg emperor (1452–93). Few historians, though, have ever tried to begin the Habsburg narrative with Frederick despite his reign of more than forty years. This is because fifteenth-century Central Europe stubbornly resists scholarly schemes of systematization and analysis. Here power was at its most decentralized as the Habsburgs themselves divided into multiple branches. They jostled with their rivals from the Luxembourg, Jagiellonian, Poděbrady, and Hunyadi families, while feuding nobilities jealously guarded their privileges. How Frederick, admittedly not one of the century's most energetic princes, managed to rule for nearly half a century has left many scholars scratching their heads in perplexity.

The story of Frederick and the Habsburgs is in some ways a microcosm of the larger challenges of understanding Central Europe in the fifteenth century. For several years now, a team of scholars led by Christina Lutter (University of Vienna) and Jonathan Lyon (University of Chicago) have held a series of workshops reconsidering what they have described as a forgotten era “lost somewhere between the supposed heights of medieval European civilization . . . and the great changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” As these scholars argue, the history of medieval Europe has all too often been reduced to the history of Western Europe, a narrative that does not account for the distinctive patterns and developments of the continent's middle. In this special issue, our contributors help us rethink this puzzling period of Central Europe's past. Their collective reflections on the nature of power, notions of community and social order, and the agents of change in this complex society shed new light on both a broader account of medieval Europe and the more specific context of the Habsburg world and the family's rise to power.

While our special issue helps set the tone of this edition with its attention to the late medieval, we also feature a series of articles that examine key aspects of the early modern. Christina Lutter, our annual Kann Lecturer, devotes her attention to arguably the most colorful of Habsburg princes,

Emperor Maximilian I (1508–19). Though Maximilian is perhaps best known to a wider audience through his grandiose cultural projects, which often did not make it beyond the artist's studio, Lutter takes a very different approach by examining the mercurial Max through the lens of gender and dynastic politics. With Mahmut Halef Cevrioğlu, we move from Vienna and gender in the sixteenth century to Istanbul and diplomacy in the seventeenth. Cevrioğlu argues that the longstanding Habsburg/Ottoman conflict facilitated the Turkish adaptation of elements of modern European diplomacy well before the Ottomans began establishing resident embassies at the turn of the nineteenth century. Georg Michels considers issues of rebellion and resistance by revisiting one of the most infamous moments in the Hungarian past, the mass expulsion of Protestant clergy after the 1674 Pozsony Tribunal. But whereas most have focused on the fate of those exiled pastors who ended up as galley slaves in the Mediterranean, Michels places this story in the broader framework of the Catholic Reformation and the often brutal methods employed to ensure religious uniformity. Through careful archival research, he demonstrates the remarkable resilience and resistance of the clergy to the Habsburg regime.

In addition to this splendid coverage of late medieval and early modern topics, this year's edition of the *AHY* also turns our attention to critical developments of the modern period. The coverage of the nineteenth century is particularly rich. From a reassessment of Metternich and his statecraft to an investigation of Jews and German politics in Moravia, from war and disease in Hungary to scientific societies and civil society in imperial Vienna, our authors explore a broad swathe of terrain. We also have a series of articles analyzing the paradoxical process of nation-building. In Slovenia, Karin Almasy demonstrates how Austrian educational reform contributed to the growth of a Slovene nation, while Tomasz Hen-Konarski illustrates how, in Ruthenia, the political innovations of Greek Catholic churchmen, who have long been championed as leaders of a national awakening, were enabled by state-building projects initiated by the Austrian Habsburgs in the eighteenth century.

Finally, the *Yearbook* includes the treatment of the end of Empire and the transition to the Habsburg successor states. Indeed, our consideration of the Habsburgs' final act is rather distinctive. We consider the perspective within Central Europe, as Igor Ivašković elucidates the complicated political discussions prompted in Slovenia at the end of World War I. We also travel to China. There in the lively ex-patriot community of Shanghai of the interwar period, Mátyás Mervay follows the career of the influential Hungarian Paul Komor whose business interests and diplomatic career reflected a complicated relationship with his homeland, while shedding light on a larger political transition that was occurring back in Central Europe.

For a deeper dive on topics that bridge the late Empire with its successor states, the *AHY* features two intriguing forums that probe at some depth issues of continuity and discontinuity. One scholarly team explores the problem of food shortages. Subsistence crises contributed to the collapse of the Habsburg conglomerate. They were also one of the most important challenges facing the newly formed states that followed in its wake. Our team focuses on the Bohemian Lands and Slovenia and the subsequent emergence of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Our second forum evaluates one of the most divisive issues in contemporary European politics, immigration. Here we present a comparative study between Austria and the Czech Republic, two neighbors sharing a long list of commonalities. Few, however, have noted that these two states have also been countries of immigration for more than half a century. Currently, migrants comprise nearly 20 percent of Austria's population. Neither country, though, embraces this aspect of its identity as the rise of populist parties in both attests. In a sober and reflective tone, this team of scholars provides background to the present situation by reviewing broader patterns of the longer twentieth century while calling into question some commonly held but misinformed assumptions concerning this dynamic that continues to transform Central European demography today.