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INTRODUCTION

Editor's Comments

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As I begin writing my final introductory note as Executive Editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook* (AHY), I am struck by how well our current contents address three important priorities I had for the *Yearbook* when I officially began this position in 2016. The editorial team has always stressed the importance of broad chronological coverage for the *AHY*. This year's edition, volume 56, reflects that priority particularly well with its balance and reach. We begin with the medieval and Pavel Soukup's investigation of the crusade sermons of Thomas Harder, an Augustinian canon in Klosterneuburg. Indeed, Soukup takes us back to the High Middle Ages as he considers how Harder's homilies against the Hussites echoed those of his twelfth- and thirteenth-century predecessors. At the other end of our chronological spectrum are a pair of essays examining critical moments of the twentieth century. Tess Megginson considers the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire at the end of World War I and the messy process of making new borders, in her case between the new state of Czechoslovakia and the First Austrian Republic. Martin Tschiggerl, Lea von der Hude, and Patricia Seifner take us further into the century and explore developments after World War II. Their target of inquiry is the myth of the Austrian *Trümmerfrauen*, the story attributing immediate repair of war-damaged Vienna to a volunteer corps of women lauded for their selfless service. In actuality, this work was not voluntary but conscripted, and those who undertook it were often former National Socialists. As this team of Austrian scholars demonstrates, however, the myth proved politically useful and became even more entrenched in the popular imagination with the rise of right-wing populism in the twenty-first century.

A second long-standing directive of the *Austrian History Yearbook* has been its interdisciplinarity. To understand the past and the complex matrix of society and culture in Central Europe, scholars need to use a variety of methodological and disciplinary tools. In our current volume, Mathias Moosbrugger, a theologian at the University of Innsbruck, turns to art history to reinterpret both an aesthetic and a historical question. He investigates a group of architects and craftsmen who designed a series of baroque churches and monasteries around Lake Constance. These *Barockbaumeister* have been celebrated somewhat ahistorically for their rustic genius of design. Moosbrugger, in contrast, argues that to truly understand these artists who emerged from the remote valley of the Bregenzerwald, we need to begin more prosaically by examining the socio-economic conditions in which they lived and worked. Žiga Oman turns to the law to help better understand dispute resolution and notions of neighborliness in the Inner Austrian lands of the early modern period. He looks closely at legal sources to see how emotions were inscribed on the archival record and affected interpersonal relationships. Hillel Kieval, our 2024 Kann Lecturer, takes us to the field of Jewish Studies and conjures a variety of images of Jewish life in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Central Europe. He frames his comments with a fundamental, though provocative question—was there a Habsburg Jewish experience? What did rural Jews of Galicia share with those of sophisticated Trieste or those in Pest with residents of Vienna? Though Kieval's answer may not satisfy everyone, it will certainly encourage further conversation and discussion on this important matter.

The final aspect of the *Yearbook* and what for me has been its most compelling feature is its geographic coverage. Ours has always been an expansive Central Europe, a crossroads of languages, peoples, and

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cultures. In this year's edition, Georg Michels may best represent these ideals. Michels employs his formidable language skills as he pieces together a fascinating story from German, French, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian sources. In careful detail, he describes the little-known 1677 Ottoman campaign against Ukraine and its impact on Hungary and the Habsburgs. Michels argues that this offensive bought the Habsburgs critical time to prepare for the subsequent invasion of Hungary. Bogged down on the Ukrainian steppe, a weakened Ottoman military was not at full strength when they worked their way up the Danube to lay siege to Vienna in 1683. While Michels is working on the edge of the Habsburg lands, Daša Ličen and Drew P. Burks highlight the diversity of the monarchy from within. Both analyze the evolution of the middle class from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. But while Burks focuses on urban Galicia and tracks social change within this group through the ownership of pianos, Ličen considers the treatment of animals along the Adriatic coast in Trieste. She contends that growing concern for the humane treatment of animals among the city's bourgeois elites not only reflected changing sensibilities but was also an effective tool to create and reinforce social distinctions. Matthew Rampley takes us one step further and points to currents of globalization that flowed through the Habsburg lands. Rampley draws attention to the Orientalist tradition that was so strong in the late empire. While the contributions of figures such as Ignác Goldziher, the learned scholar of Islam, or Ármin Vámbéry, the great linguist and avid traveler of India and Central Asia, are relatively well known, Rampley investigates the career of Alois Musil, a Moravian archaeologist who brought his considerable skills to the study of early Arabic culture and history. More broadly, Rampley uses Musil as a means to explore attitudes of colonialism within the Habsburg land and its successor states.

I sign off as Executive Editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook* with feelings of both confidence and gratitude. The *Yearbook* continues to push the study of Austria and Central Europe in exciting new directions. But for me, what is more important than the continued intellectual vitality of the *AHY* has been the opportunity to work alongside a dedicated and talented group of editors. During these ten years we have had a stable and effective leadership team that has made my job in many respects superfluous. My special thanks, then, go to all the wonderful colleagues with whom I have worked: our editors Pieter Judson, Dan Unowsky, Mo Healy, and Rob Nemes, our book review editors Britta McEwen, Don Wallace, Bryan Kozik, and Katya Motyl, and our assistant editors Elizabeth Dillenburg, Chris Flynn, Tim McDonald, and James Gresock.

As Howard Louthan steps down as executive editor, we wanted to take the opportunity to recognize all he has done for the *Yearbook* over the past decade. Three things in particular stand out. First, Howard has provided clear and steady guidance as the journal has navigated the shifting and unsettled current landscape of academic publishing. He has tirelessly handled our communications and negotiations with Cambridge University Press, expertly balancing our scholarly and business interests. Second, Howard has helped the *Yearbook* maintain its commitment to covering the entire sweep of Austrian and Habsburg history. In particular, he has been an unfailing resource on the early modern period and in 2024 single-handedly brought us the remarkable Special Issue dedicated to "Central Europe in the Fifteenth Century: Patterns of Conflict and Negotiation." Last, and perhaps most important, Howard has been a model of collegiality and cooperation. Under his leadership, the *Yearbook* has been a truly collaborative undertaking, and the consistently high quality of our articles and reviews has been the result. We are grateful to have worked with Howard and especially appreciate his kind, generous, and level-headed leadership.

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