REVIEW ARTICLE

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TWO RECENT HABSBURG STUDIES*

The year 2016 witnessed the publication of two new contributions to what is generally called 'Habsburg studies'. The first is authored by Pieter Judson, professor of Central and Eastern European History at the Department of History and Civilization of EUI, Florence. The second is written by Ulrich Bach, associated with the German Studies Centre of Wesleyan University, USA.

In both cases we are dealing with revisionary scholarship on the Habsburg Empire. Many innovative publications in the last twenty years or so have been produced, touching upon issues as varied as commemorations, climate or language employment among the officer corps of the Habsburg Monarchy. These set a clear limit in reference to the studies and histories of the previous decades.[1] The distinction

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* This essay is reviewing the following titles: Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 2016), 567 pp., bibliog., ills., maps; Ulrich E. Bach, *Tropics of Vienna. Colonial Utopias of the Habsburg Empire* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2016), 152 pp., bibliog.

[1] We have in mind scholars and titles such as: Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield (eds.), *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (West Lafayette, 2001); Deborah Coen, 'Climate and Circulation in Imperial Austria', *Journal of Modern History*, lxxxii, 4 (2010), 839–75; Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford, 2014); Robert Nemes, *Another Hungary: The Nineteenth Century Provinces in Eight Lives* (Stanford, 2016); Gary B. Cohen, *Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848–1918* (West Lafayette, 1996), and John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State-making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford, 2015). Firstly, they advance new hypotheses and open up fresh perspectives if compared to the books of Zbyněk A.B. Zeman, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire: 1914–1918. A Study in National and Social Revolution* (Oxford, 1961); Carlile A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790–1918* (London, 1969), and Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley, 1974). Secondly, they

between the newer input of historical writing and the previous one lies in the shift from 'the big history' to the 'everyday'. Recent books tend not to focus in a top-down manner on the institutional features of the Empire, or on statesmen and international diplomacy. Rather, they concentrate on society, defined as a cluster of associative bodies, among which power and resources were negotiated with an approach more complex than the simple hierarchical way.

Furthermore, these scholarly efforts should be seen as a protest against the previously widespread idea that the Habsburg Monarchy collapsed because of the centrifugal forces of nationalism, explanations that were based on the assumption that nation, as a group identity, was trans-historical and the embodiment of a community's maximum potential. It is not just that the books mentioned in the footnotes question the unavoidability of the failure of the Monarchy at the end of the First World War, but they also hint to the fact that nationality represented an intricate construct that politicized previously 'unaware' people, and forced them to take sides as happened in the multi-lingual communities of Bohemia or elsewhere throughout the Monarchy.

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develop ideas brought out by historians like István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps* (Oxford, 1990), and Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy c. 1765–1918. From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (Basingstoke, 2000). The names above do not exhaust the contributors' list to 'Habsburg studies', they rather represent English language resources directly addressing the Empire throughout its existence. Yet, there are countless more contributions dealing indirectly with the entity – via one of its provinces, or investigating its legacy, or simply targeting a more restricted audience due to the language specificity (e.g. German, Polish). Without having the ambition to cover them all, we mention a handful of references: Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia. History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford, 2010); Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton, 2002); Alison Frank, *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambdrige, MA, 2005); Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, and Liana Grancea (eds.), *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, 2006); Markian Prokopovych, *Habsburg Lemberg: Architecture, Public Space, and Politics in the Galician Capital 1772–1914* (West Lafayette, 2009); Adam Kożuchowski, *Afterlife of Austria-Hungary. The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh, 2013); Kai Struve, *Bauern und Nation in Galizien. Über Zugehörigkeit und soziale Emanzipation im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2005); Börries Kuzmany, *Brody. Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2011); Michał Baczkowski, *Pod czarno-żółtymi sztandarami. Galicja i jej mieszkańcy wobec austro-węgierskich struktur militarnych 1868–1914* (Kraków, 2003); Danuta Sosnowska, *Inna Galicja* (Poznań, 2008).

At the same time, these studies interrogate the alternatives to nationalism in the epoch, such as cosmopolitism, and plea for a closer look to the social advantages that the educated elites had from the onset if compared to less privileged people.[2]

As rendered above, some works deal with Austro-Hungarian army and military circles. The latter represented labs that illustrated social and cultural interactions existing in the Monarchy, hence a good sample on which the current historian can test the national dynamics at work, particularly after the enactment of the universal military conscription. In addition, due to the fact that army is an institution that, by default, keeps its records in order, there still are plenty of resources to be tapped.

Ultimately, all these contributions manage to deconstruct both national and imperial myths. In the first case, they reveal what a clockwork-like machine nationalism can be via the fine-tuning of several parameters, most importantly, the linguistic factor and the downgrade of direct experience of events in favour of collective memory. In the second case, they demonstrate that Empire was based on more complicated dynamics than the classic centre–periphery view infers; not only that there were several centres, and as many peripheries, but the notions as such of centre and periphery were fluid, and they could even swap places.

The Habsburg Empire, by Judson, is a 'new' history because it identifies the ways in which the Habsburg Monarchy continued to exist after its official demise in November 1918, at the level of everyday institutional practices and peoples' psychological makeup. In addition, it is part of the trend sketched above, namely it questions the widespread view according to which it was politically necessary that pre-existing ethnic groups of the Monarchy develop into national groups. It does so by focusing on the interactions between state and society, seen in their attempt to build an imperial administration, and, more importantly, an imperial identity. One of the core messages of the book is that we should

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[2] Although it is not noted in our list, the anthropological study of Pamela Ballinger about the role of memory in preserving community identity, based on field research in Triest and Istria area, takes into discussion the issue of cosmopolitism seen as a form of imperial loyalty that favoured some social categories to the detriment of the others; *eadem, History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton, 2003), 32–3. For a more comprehensive talk about this book, considered among those histories of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy that problematize nationalism, see Larry Wolff, 'Revising Eastern Europe: Memory and the Nation in Recent Historiography', *The Journal of Modern History*, lxxviii, 1 (2006), 93–118.

not perceive nationalism and imperial loyalty as opposing phenomena, but rather as a set of practices and attitudes that supported each other in the age of mass society:

> The two made use of similar language and similar ideas. Propagandists for empire increasingly deployed national concepts in their publications and exhibitions, and this should also signal to us the extent to which nationalist discourse had already become a … vessel capable of accommodating a broad range of ideas … which served imperial projects as well. (pp. 331–2)

This is by no means the first time the author exploits these theses. Previous books and articles[3] show how circumstantial national identity can be, and how instrumental the language in defining ethnicity can become. Yet, it is in *The Habsburg Empire* that a comprehensive picture of the Habsburg Monarchy is achieved from this vantage point. In addition to offering a panorama of the Habsburg lands, from their first matrimonial unions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to their split four hundred years later, the author, with this engaging and interactive book, enters into dialogue with that part of the scholarship which, in a logic of the Cold War era, defined the Empire as a symbol of political authoritarianism. Indeed, many times, Judson alludes to those opinions according to which the authoritarian episodes of the nineteenth century were held responsible for instituting the economic gap between the Western and Central Europe, which, in turn, led to long-term political failures in the region: "in an effort to shore up their own whiggish version of history, they [liberal historians, R.G.] tended to portray the 1830s and 1840s as a tragic period of lost opportunities" (p. 105).

The same can be remarked about Bach, the author of *Tropics of Vienna. Colonial Utopias of the Habsburg Empire*. He stresses from the very first pages that the work will deal with colonial utopias as deployed by several Viennese journalists and writers, between 1870 and 1900. Given that the Habsburg Monarchy never detained colonies like the other European empires of the time (e.g. overseas), the reader might find it surprising that Bach integrates his endeavour into the theme of "colonialism without colonies", developed by Susanne Zantop in her seminal study

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[3] Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire 1848–1914* (Ann Arbour, 1996); *idem*, 'Beyond Nations: Rethinking How We Write the History of Habsburg Central Europe', *The Berlin Journal*, 21 (2011), 29–33.

of 1997 (p. 3).[4] Accordingly, *Tropics of Vienna* takes into discussion the fictional contributions of five writers – Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Lazar von Hellenbach, Theodor Hertzka, Theodor Herzl, and Robert Müller – who provide accounts of journeys and projects of societies located in remote lands, on the African continent or in the Far East. Yet, Bach argues, these attempts should be connected to the fact that all writers have in common, more or less, their contested place within the Austrian intellectual establishment, which instilled in them increased sensitivity for underprivileged ethnic and gender groups: "through their experiences as marginalized intellectuals within Austrian society, the utopian writers claimed to have a more empathetic and more humane policy toward other fringe groups" (p. 2). This leads to the assumption that their contributions were not genuine preoccupations for the manners in which to construct better communities on other continents, but rather projections in the distance of the issues that Vienna was dealing with at the time, of which sectarian nationalism was perhaps the most conspicuous: "we can interpret the fundamental notion of the otherness of space … as unconsciously compensating for anti-Semitism in Vienna by projecting a positive wish-concept at an exotic distance" (p. 5).

In other words, we identify here a typical phenomenon that one can meet in travelogues as well, namely the tendency to perceive in other societies the social and political challenges encountered at home. In an environment in which the *fin-de-siècle* mainstream intellectual discourse focused on nationalism as an axiom of history, or, at least primordial for the identity of a community, the actors of *Tropics of Vienna* had a 'transnational' view of the world around them. This amounts to saying that they questioned the centrality of nationality at both the individual and social level, at the same time emphasizing how complex the dynamics of the centre–periphery was. The type of colonialism exhibited by their writings was multifaceted. It expressed the writer's status as outside the establishment, hence it suggested a colonization of the thinker's mind in the context of the growing colonization of society as purported by the *en vogue* racial theories. At the time, it was an external or perhaps more properly described, 'cultural-colonialism' in the sense that much of their pre-determined ideas about culture and

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[4] Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham, 1997).

civilization came into play when describing/constructing the far-away places in their books.

This is the feature via which we may consider the revisionism of Bach's book along those attempts that question the simplicity of a centre–periphery theoretical model by paying a closer look at the intricacies of the concept of 'colony'. Concretely, Bach and the other's contributions show that the Western narrative of progress along the self-styled image of these societies as bearers of the 'Enlightenment' to the less developed, that is 'Eastern' lands, were subverted more than once: "although the authors … frequently deploy orientalist [sic] motives, [they] engage in self-critique rather than advance imperial hegemony" (p. 4). Judson himself refers to this issue in his book when discussing the influence that Austria-Hungary started to exercise over Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1870s: via its humanitarian universalist claims, the Monarchy envisioned a "crusade under the form of the culture war to the East" (although, geographically, the province was located in the South; p. 330), only to find itself stuck afterwards in "an unacknowledged legal limbo, technically part of neither Austria nor Hungary", which further led to the known consequences (p. 379).

Bach's ideas related to the subversive nature of colony were exposed in an article in 2007[5] in which the relations between the so-called colonizers (e.g. the German speaking Austrian elite located in the remote provinces of the Empire) and the colonized (e.g. the local populations) were described with reference to the short-stories of the popular writer, and son of a Galician official, Leopold Sacher-Masoch.[6] Bach depicted the case of Sacher-Masoch commenting that he was a double renegade among his Viennese peers, first on account of his stories being imbued with sympathy for the humble Slavic people who were inhabitants of the imperial periphery, and second, among the local Slavic population who saw him, a writer of the German language, as a symbol of imperial hegemony over the small nationalities. Yet, it was this *in-between-ness* that made Sacher-Masoch ascribe new meanings to the periphery by empowering it in relation to the centre (e.g. his destitute characters gain power over the lords by the consent of the latter). In this way,

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[5] Ulrich Bach, 'Sacher-Masoch's Utopian Peripheries', *The German Quarterly*, lxxx, 2 (2007), 201–19.

[6] The book's chapter, dedicated to this author, is based on the article mentioned above.

the periphery becomes a site where revolutionary social experiments may take place – a *paracolonial* space where "change is fermented, the distillate of which alters the intellectual metropolitan culture" (pp. 202, 206, 208, 214).

We consider *The Habsburg Empire* and *Tropics of Vienna* to be theoretical contributions that question the centre–periphery dichotomy. Judson tries to remove from its central place the category of nation seen in its ethnic understanding, whereas Bach presents thinkers who were concerned with designing alternative social projects that overlook the widespread principle of *fin-de-siècle,* namely nation as the single expression of the social unit. At the same time, both emphasize how feeble and contested the Empire was, in both institutional and human terms; the numerous constitutional agreements and compromises, worked and re-worked incessantly since the reign of Maria Theresa were doubled by the constant need to secure the loyalty of the citizens.

Both works infer that the interactions of the Empire with the society at large were far more frequent than previously imagined. As Judson depicts, the Empire often sought to gain supporters for the dynasty from the underprivileged strata, and doing so by going over the will of the aristocracy. Also, he shows how the national allegiances shaped their own map of what was central and what was peripheral in such a way that some local initiatives undermined the initiatives of Vienna, making it look provincial in reference to the new national centres. Bach, in turn, suggests how dependent the imperial centre was on its colonial settings, in both geographical and philosophical terms. In the first instance, the Viennese intellectuals conceived space as a tool by which they could assert their notions of a good polity at home ("an idealized image of Vienna projected onto a vacant colonial space" [p. 5]); in the second instance, they sought to test their innate desire for a better society on the outskirts of the Empire, presenting themselves as the bearers of Western cultural values to the East, and at the same time empowering the latter in accordance with the democratic aspirations of the time.

The perfect visual representation of the things discussed above is an image employed by both writers, that of the Exhibition Palace that hosted the World's Fair, which took place in Vienna in 1873. Boasting a daring construction that hinted at the technical mastery of the hosts ("a towering steel rotunda some 262 feet high and 354 feet in diameter"), the Palace was considered the expression of the Monarchy's status at both the internal and external level. As Judson

remarks, behind the general philosophy of the age of Positivism (e.g. the focus on work, education, and progress), the Exhibition, better said, the location of the countries inside the Palace showed the Viennese view on geopolitics (pp. 317–9). The Austrian lands were placed in the centre, neighboured in the East by Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, etc. In the West, however, by Britain, France, and Italy, the wish of the Monarchy being ultimately to confer the idea of a bridge between East and West. This order was reiterated when it came to the regions within the country, in a true centre vs. periphery type of relation. It is more important however, as Judson comments, that we can locate this exhibition at a time when the regional or national peculiarities started to become politicized (the phenomenon coined by the author as a "culture war" [p. 269]). Indeed, the display of goods and artefacts of the various groups and nationalities inhabiting the Monarchy referred to something more than their neutral presentation as distinct parts of a syncretistic whole. It was inferred, also with the help of the press, that some groups were more refined than others, some more backward, some lived in less hygienic conditions, etc. This was inserted into the wide imperial story in which Vienna, the *West*, was supposed to civilize the peripheries, the *East*. Yet, as the following years would attest, in the age of mass politics, the *East* would react and, subsequently, contest this narrative. On the cover of Bach's book, the same image of the Rotunda is represented in detail: on its roof we see people inspecting the structure of the construction, enjoying the city panorama or even gazing into the distance via telescope. Bach's snapshot is some fifteen to twenty years after the moment described by Judson as the time of the start of the 'culture war'; those were the days of street protests, anti-Semitic outbreaks, and massive unemployment, in short, that was the Vienna of elected mayor, Karl Lueger. We may find similarities between the Viennese society described in Bach's book and that of the visitors to the Rotunda roof. Like the intellectuals of Bach's book, in their attempt "to compensate for the critical situation … by projecting blueprints for utopian societies elsewhere", those visitors gazing into the distance practice a dialectics of distance and closeness, which eventually merge (p. 128). Ultimately, distance is another type of proximity in the sense that, in order to avoid the unpleasant familiar objects, the actor projects the "positive wish-concept" out into the distance as a pretext for returning afterwards with renewed interest to what lies close to him (p. 51).

Next, we will take a brief look at the compounding parts of each book; this will be accompanied by a short discussion on the sources and methodologies employed. The concluding section of this review essay will have a closer look to one or two of these works' core assumptions.

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The Habsburg Empire is an informed, thought provocative, and comprehensive work that intends to signal to both specialized and wider audiences that empires were not anomalies of history, but rather solid forms of state-building based on innovative constitutional arrangements and tax systems. Moreover, Judson's *History* abounds in information that equally touches both the factual and the anecdotal, and it can be read for professional purposes but also as an engaging account of human and historical logic in the modern age. The book is a real page-turner providing that the author is a good storyteller who knows how to wrap his words in modern language.[7]

In addition, as one may infer from a book displaying a multifarious outlook on history such as this one, the author has an interdisciplinary approach based on various sources including statistical, psychological, and literary. Indeed, historiographical materials are masterfully blended with sources of political science or economy. The only downside that should be mentioned when it comes to historical sources *per se* is the disproportionate number of those in American and German in comparison to those in the local languages like Polish, Czech and Hungarian. Significantly, not even the English translations of some relevant books written by local historians are mentioned. Finally, although the book follows the classic periodization of the history of the Monarchy, the wider audience should be warned that the focus is not on events, hence the reading experience would be enhanced if a so-called companion to the Austrian history is previously consulted.

The book comprises eight chapters and an epilogue that guide the reader through the stages of existence of the Habsburg Monarchy, starting with the first efforts of consolidating control over dispersed

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[7] Sometimes, this goes to the verge of anachronism. For instance, words and constructions pertaining to the corporate domain (e.g. "micromanagement", "training", "Austrian business", „PR", pp. 65, 184, 219, 234), when used on large scale, do not always provide the intended effect, namely to convey the image of Austria-Hungary as a modern power.

territories of Central and Eastern Europe, before Maria Theresa came to power, and finishing with the description of those institutional and psychological remnants of the Monarchy, the subject of what we call today post-imperial legacy.

The first chapter, called 'The Accidental Empire', deals with the beginnings of the Habsburg dynasty and with their symbolic power over various territories inherited, and gradually expanded, since the thirteenth century: Lower and Upper Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola; from the medieval times and up to the modern age, these and other Central and Eastern European lands were loosely grouped into a confederation known as The Holy Roman Empire. Yet, the main point of focus of the chapter is the identification of those conditions that led to the birth of the modern Habsburg state at the end of the eighteenth century, under the reign of Maria Theresa. Special attention is given to her administration's efforts to transform the tax payers of the various Habsburg lands into contributors to a single state, simply put, into imperial citizens. This also meant the replacement of the feudal-regional loyalties towards the Church and the village nobility with modern loyalty towards the state, as represented by a new social class – the bureaucracy.

Chapter 2, 'Servants and Citizens, Empire and Fatherland, 1780–1815', evokes the state-driven programme of social reforms introduced by the two sons of Maria Theresa, Joseph II and Leopold II, in their short periods of reign (1780–90; 1790–2). What is known as the age of Enlightened Absolutism was established on the previous measures of modernization introduced by the Empress. Under Joseph II, steps were made towards the abolition of serfdom (e.g. the village population represented an important percentage of the new state as it outnumbered the still feeble urban population), wider strata got access to education, the religious groups, including the Mosaic ones, enjoyed official recognition, yet, most importantly, bureaucracy became the main engine of change in the Empire. It is not only that the bureaucracy provided upward mobility to categories previously not socially recognized (e.g. the urban commoners for instance), leading thus to the appearance of a class of professionals, but it served particularly to build a new type of political legitimacy: the emperor-bureaucrat, the ruler who was the servant of the state and the mediator between the citizens and the state, he who oversaw that all citizens be equal in front of the law. The institution of the bureaucrat finalized what the previous age started, namely the transfer of people's loyalty towards authority,

from a feudal principle to a modern, centralist one. The best expression of this was the gradual change in the idea of nation, which, from a restricted understanding (e.g. nation defined politically as nobility, as elite, as those represented in the Diet), came to be associated with the *fatherland*, the community of all citizens.

Chapter 3, 'An Empire of Contradictions', is set in the context of the post-Napoleonic era, when the Conservative establishment of all great European powers tried to construct a pan-continental network to stop the equalitarian ideas brought to the fore of public life by the French ruler. Known as the 'Metternich years', this was the period when many of the previous reforms were officially revoked. In fact, the special contribution of *The Habsburg Empire* to this widely covered epoch lies in the shift from the emphasis on political leaders and the making of the police-state to society as such. The author describes the various grass-roots initiatives to construct a modern society in the period, and he illustrates how the beginnings of mass print and of forms of sociability were seminal to the creation of Austrian modern society. Furthermore, by describing civic initiatives like the lecture clubs, women associations, museum and library private organizations, it is not only that Judson questions the apolitical character of what is known as 'Biedermeier society', but he also alludes to the fact that the authoritarian state of the *Vormärz* era did not manage to suppress free thinking and free economic enterprises. Some paragraphs are dedicated to the ways censorship was functioning (e.g. not as a unitary system, as one would expect), and to the real steps taken towards economic modernization in the period (e.g. along the already existing cleavage between Western and Eastern lands).

By far the most innovative part of the book is Chapter 4, 'Whose Empire? The Revolutions of 1848–1849', as it interprets the political and social upheaval of 1848. This perspective, when compared to the prevailing one, is much broader, including that of the national emancipation of the inhabiting populations of the Habsburg lands. Concretely, the chapter singles out the transformation of peasantry into political activists, as well as the birth of a new urban elite. The last is considered by the author as illustrative of what happened in 1848: the participation of those urban categories seen as politically marginal (e.g. workers, women) signalled that the protest was not organized in the name of nationalism. At the time, nationalism was an "emerging language of politics", simply said, a rhetoric employed by "literate activists and

traditional elites" to inspire visions of belonging to the same ethnic and linguistic community among a wider population (p. 213).

Chapter 5, 'Mid-Century Modern: The Emergence of a Liberal Empire', deals with the post-1848 period, the time when the Austrian administration attempted accommodation with some of the laws passed by the revolutionary bodies like the Frankfurt Parliament. Although the constitutional arrangements guided by the new emperor, Francis Joseph, set high objectives on both internal and external arenas, such as more emphasis on administrative centralization expressed in a stronger bureaucracy, literate in German, as well as the counteraction of Prussia's international economic influence, the period between 1850s and 1860s showed that these were fragile constructions. Initially, the authoritarian regime, backed by the charismatic Emperor, who was seen as an auspicious, even paradoxical, blend of a bureaucrat and defender of the underprivileged, drew on imperial patriotism. Soon however, the process of centralization as state activism upset the Conservatives and Liberals alike. The first to be dissatisfied were, for example, the provincial nobility, as the efforts of centralization decreased their prerogatives at local level. Consequently, they even made a pact with the supporters of political activism (the 'ex-1848ers'), themselves disappointed with the incapacity of the state to stay true to the ambitious programme of industrialization announced at the beginning of the decade. As a result, a period of constitutional experiments followed (e.g. October Diploma, February Patent) in which federalist programmes inspired by the kindred ones of 1848 alternated with centralist solutions inspired by the Enlightenment Absolutism (e.g. of the 1780s). These culminated in the so-called Compromise of December 1867, which marked the birth of a constitutional monarchy that replaced the Austrian Empire of 1804 and existed only in "diplomatic, military, [and] finance" related issues, whereas in the other domains like juridical or administrative, it acted like two separated entities: the Kingdom of Hungary, and the Kingdoms and Territories Represented in the Parliament, simply called Austria. Until the demise of the Monarchy, this construction would experience subsequent adjustments (p. 265).

Some of these negotiations are described in Chapter 6, 'Culture Wars and Wars for Culture'. A pivotal part in the argumentation of the whole book, it represents a study on nationalism seen as a specific form of political identification, and it examines the ways in which institutional politics helped in the creation of ethnic nationalism, in other words,

what the author calls "the evolution from institutional to political nationalism" (p. 272). The author contends that, after 1867, the newly established constitutional monarchy sought to demonstrate its liberal credentials by granting autonomy at regional level, a fact that in turn emancipated the local citizens and gave them the ability to ask for linguistic parity in relation to the official language of administration. The same impulse in external politics made the Monarchy attempt to export its Enlightened philosophy to other countries under the pretext of a 'civilizational crusade'. These trends were paralleled by heated debates between secular and religious views within society (e.g. liberals vs. Catholic revival under the form of 'ultramontanism'). In the context of the 1873 stock market crash, which set a period of prolonged economic distress, all of these elements resulted in the sort of combination that led to the failure of liberalism by 1900.

Chapter 7, 'Everyday Empire, Our Empire', describes the massive changes experienced by the Monarchy in the fin-de-siècle period. These were mainly related to social and professional mobility, gender emancipation, the birth of new sexual and professional categories accompanied by new ways to popularize them, city planning and architectural innovation. Although equally attentive to the regions and their dynamics, this chapter highlights the urban area with its boom in travelling and technology, and shows how radical movements and worldviews were born at the very heart of the establishment, an otherwise classic theory in the field. The special contribution of this part however, is the assumption that there was an already crystallized Austrian society by that time, hence many examples are brought forth in support of identifying what made each individual a citizen of Austria-Hungary: "practice ranging from school attendance to voting in local elections to participation in rituals of military conscription and in annual empire-wide celebrations of the ruler's birthday made Muslim peasants in rural Bosnia, Czech-speaking businessmen in Bohemia, and Hungarian intellectuals in Budapest into increasingly engaged citizens of an empire that more than ever met their needs" (p. 333).

Consistent with the idea that, by the turn of the century, the Monarchy managed to construct a direct relation with its citizens, above the latter's national identifications, Chapter 8, 'War and Radical State-Building, 1914–1925', analyses the causes that led to the demise of the Monarchy. Contrary to the previous accounts of the events that focus on the external factors, military strategies, and the national radicalism

of the compounding ethnic groups, Judson's contribution tries to single out the manners in which the Monarchy lost the confidence of its population during the hard times of the First World War. Consequently, the chapter elaborates on how a series of uninspired governmental measures like dictatorship, mismanagement of resources that resulted in famine, and dynamics of conflict like internal migration succeeded to cultivate insecurity to the point of paranoia among the Austrian population, which ultimately rapidly undermined the state construction.

The Epilogue rounds-up the main point of the book by sharply commenting on the situation existing after the extinction of the Monarchy, and hinting at the traditional views that hail the new national states born after 1918 on the territory of the ex-Monarchy as symbols of democracy, whereas the Monarchy itself was a symbol of autocracy. Judson argues that it was due to this rhetoric that the national states persecuted the numerous minority communities that they inherited from the Monarchy. In addition, the new national states developed policies and attitudes (e.g. centralization, forced assimilation) that were strikingly similar to those of the Empire. Finally, the interactions between the new 'national' centres and the provinces of the ex-Monarchy were illustrative of the way in which Austria-Hungary survived in the minds of its population: "when … the leaders of the German-speaking community of Czernowitz … faced the end of the Habsburg Empire, they telegraphed a statement of loyalty to the new imperial metropole, Bucharest, in terms that replicated its longstanding relationship to Vienna" (p. 450).

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The merit of *Tropics of Vienna* consists in illustrating the peculiarities and dependencies of the fin-de-siècle (e.g. the disappearance of traditional lifestyles, the clash between industrialization and the agrarian remnants, the massive migration from rural to urban areas) by highlighting the marginal groups of Viennese society and, consequently, by ascribing them a pivotal role in the politics of the time. As we shall see next, the book brings into attention writers of German expression, virtually unknown to the English speaking world. On this account, and, given that the book presents authors whose ideas represent timeless reflections on power and its exercise, on utopian socialism, and on the mutual influences existing between the host society and the immigrant, *Tropics of Vienna* is a 'must-read' for the contemporary audience.

Apart from the generously employed post-colonial theory, the author makes ample usage of sources borrowed from psychoanalysis in the attempt to show the complex network of "inversions, hybridizations, and transgressions" (p. 5) at work in the context of the centre–periphery interactions.

Tropics of Vienna consists of five chapters, each dedicated to an author and his work relevant to the thesis of the book: the projection of Viennese fin-de-siècle tensions on distant territories and populations, accompanied by permanent negotiations between Western and Eastern identities.

The opening chapter investigates the case of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and his novellas. Sacher-Masoch (1836–95), the scion of a family of mixed social and ethnic lineage, had a keen eye for modest inhabitants like Jewish peddlers, shoemakers, and Ruthenian peasants, communities that made up the majority in the Eastern parts of the province. Under the guise of sexual encounters in dark or tormented undertones, Sacher-Masoch depicted the means by which institutional power worked on people such as those who were economically destitute and the minorities. In other words, the world of Sacher-Masoch represented *in nuce* the Habsburg Monarchy; territories like Galicia were colonies and the centre, 'the colonizers', were the Austro-German elite. Under his position as editor of the literary journal *Gartenlaube für Österreich*, his views supported a Germanic Pan-Slavism by considering that the German language was "a cosmopolitan vehicle for communication among people of different ethnicities" (p. 19). In works like *Paradies am Dniester* (Paradise on Dniester, 1877) or *Der Kapitulant* (The Reenlistee, 1870) the province was seen as a property-less, work-based community populated by feeble male characters who eagerly accepted forms of official external submission like military conscription. To the upper-class Viennese audience, these were transparent allusions to the centre–periphery interactions within the Monarchy as epitomized by the state administration in its relation to the uneducated populations.

The second chapter is dedicated to Lazar von Hellenbach, landowner and writer of Hungarian, Slavic, and German descent who showed interest in political issues of the Monarchy (e.g. he was a staunch criticizer of the 1867 Compromise), but mostly in spiritual topics (e.g. as promoter of para-psychology he was an enemy of scientific positivism). Von Hellenbach himself was an outsider of the literary circles, but enjoyed influence among the upper bourgeoisie of the time and

he was involved in philanthropic work, which he used as the basis for his ideals of a better society. In the many books he wrote, he exposed his welfare theories, where he rejected the liberal view that considered poverty as a natural outcome of mass society, focusing instead on ways of establishing "collective wealth" (p. 43). His book of 1883, *Insel Mellonta,* described the community of a pre-industrial economy located, as the title read, on an island somewhere in the Pacific. To ensure the story had authenticity, his account was inspired by the travelogues of the time which represented the state of various remote islands. What was new about this specific island was that its population came out of all major racial groups, and managed wealth and resources on equalitarian principles. By inventing Mellonta, von Hellenbach wished to redress the ethnic tensions that came to the forefront of Viennese public life starting from the 1880s.

The actor of the next part, Theodor Hertzka, economic theorist associated with the liberal newspaper *Neue Freie Presse,* was a promoter of economic individualism and personal freedom. In works like *Die Gesetze der Handelspolitik* (Rules of the Trade Policy, 1880) he focused on issues of social justice, and addressed facts like the perceived failure of liberalism to construct a society based on free trade and the corresponding values. According to Hertzka, good society was only that which positioned the individual at its centre, and which consequently supported mutual understanding between different religions and ethnicities. The individual would attain his potential in free associations and cooperatives backed by the state. Consistent with these ideas, in 1890 Hertzka designed a programme in the form of a book called *Freiland,* which preached the settlement of "Enlightened European colonists" somewhere in East Africa, where Kenya is today. This programme, which imagined an alternative community to the idea of the nation-state, was a success at the beginning (e.g. committees in Germany and Austria were established to raise money and encourage people to go and colonize the vacant lands of the Eastern Africa). Yet, as Bach and other commentators noticed, setting aside the humanitarian intentions, the 'wonderland' described in the book was preponderantly masculine, and the interracial contacts between the settlers and the natives were not encouraged. In other words, *Freiland* was a protest against the Viennese society of the time, but, at the same time, a reproduction in the distance of the power relations imbedded in the European society. "Hertzka portrays colonization … as a pedagogical necessity to achieve advancement for

all … the Europeans are so superior … that they see it as their task to educate the Africans" (p. 78).

Chapter 4 is dedicated to Theodor Herzl. It was his experience as a journalist in Paris that crystallized his opinions about contemporary society, particularly the idea that anti-Semitism was "an enduring and immutable factor, irrespective of its French or Austrian forms" (pp. 88–9). This principle was further exploited in his well-known work of 1896, *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), which succeeded in making the so-called 'Jewish issue' a matter of international politics. The image of a new home for the Jews, in which they would be protected from anti-Semitism was constructed in his book of 1902, *Altneuland* (Old-New Land). The heroes of the book, a Viennese lawyer, together with a wealthy Prussian-American aristocrat left the old decaying continent, and, on their way to the South, encountered Palestine, an arid and destitute land. On their way back, 22 years later, they found a completely transformed country, a modern place where the settled Jewish population managed to build amazing cities, to create up-to-date industry and thriving agriculture. In short, the "new Jewish society … enjoys the re-creation of Vienna's charm without the cloud of anti-Semitic Jew baiters … the heroes' journey to Jerusalem becomes a spiritual homecoming …" (p. 93). Still, the author of *Tropics of Vienna* contends, in Herzl's view, the settlement of the Jews in Palestine was nothing but beneficial for the local Arab population, and these communities' cohabitation was associated with the theme of the 'idyllic Oriental' world. Herzl's "strategy rests on the assumption of the indigenous Arab population being absent" (p. 100). In this way, the Jewish community, a marginalized group in Europe, ended up exerting colonial power on other marginal groups: "Jews, afflicted by persecution, poverty and existential homelessness … claim for themselves an empathetic and humane colonial policy toward other marginalized groups" (p. 101).

The final chapter focuses on Robert Müller, nowadays considered a writer of controversial opinions. Born half-Bohemian and half-Swedish, Müller was one of the most respected journalists in pre-war Vienna. In his writings, Müller fervently promoted the idea of the Habsburg Empire as a colonial power, thus going further than the other authors presented here, since he was referring foremost to concrete plans to colonize overseas lands. He envisaged this undertaking in cooperation with the German Empire. This unabashed imperialism was claimed in the name of common cultural values, and performed by the hand of ruthless 'new

men' – a sort of a 'master race' set to colonize the tropics by "building railway systems, drying up malaria infested swamps, harvesting prairies, exploiting metal mines, and hanging a couple of black and yellow folks [sic]" (pp. 112, 114). Ideas as such were investigated in *Tropen: Der Mythos der Reise* (Tropics: Myth of the Journey), published in 1915. It is with such stories of taking into possession the Amazonian jungle, that Müller put a stop to previous attempts to romanticize the colonies. However, the plan to engineer the jungle questioned the very applicability of Western technological and cultural standards. Furthermore, instead of legitimizing the export of progress, it showed the intricacy of the centre–periphery as expressed in the Vienna–jungle relation.

The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the prolific Jewish writer and journalist Joseph Roth, the author of a popular series of novels dedicated to the life and death of the Habsburg Monarchy. A son of Galicia, Roth portrayed in his short stories the misery of the destitute population of the province, "drifters and refugees who have lost their social moorings" (p. 121). They all seemed to struggle with the ruthless mechanism of capitalism, which was yet another form of imperial hegemony. It can be stated that the periphery became a site where metropolis and modernity were reconsidered. Ultimately, in a way similar to Sacher-Masoch, Roth might be considered an author of the periphery in the sense that he envisaged the latter as a place where the contestation of the centre was born.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In the first part of this essay, we identified the theme that brings together the two books, namely the exploration of the complexities posed by the centre–periphery relations. Both books revealed in broad strokes the context of the dilemma in which the Empire as a state construction found itself, particularly at the turn of the century: the state administration was in minority in the provinces, while the provincial representatives were in minority at the central level.

We should discuss the things that separate these books as well. While Judson's endeavour tends to underplay nationality in the Empire's equation, and instead brings to the forefront the *society* seen as an articulated body of citizens and strong organizations, Bach's investigation addresses foremost the cleavages existent in Austrian society in the given epoch. In this sense, aside from the jargon of the post-colonial theory, Bach's book seems to be part of the prevalent interpretations,

according to which the ethnic conflicts had a say in the Monarchy when it came to the latter's attempts to enforce a supra-national state. At the same time, it is important to argue that the book seeks to place ethnicity in a global context, and to subsequently show that these sorts of corrupted relations were exported and reproduced elsewhere in the name of a supposedly superior European culture.

All things considered, we should notice that Judson's concept of society is problematic at times. Not only because the reader retains the impression that nowhere in the book is there a straightforward definition of society, but also that he/she is confronted with various understandings of civil society as identified throughout different stages of the Habsburg Monarchy's history, even at times when civil society did not exist as a concept of modern politics. After all, it is difficult to conceive the existence of a united society throughout the existence of the Monarchy, namely a coherent body made up of social categories, exhibiting definite group identifications, when one thinks that the social conflicts between peasantry, on the one hand, and upper classes, on the other hand, impeded more than once the idea of social consensus. The Jacquerie of 1846 in Galicia, the incompatibility between the nobility's worldview and the values of modern administration and the fragile status of the middle class, all signal that society existed, at best, as a good intention but not as a unity, thus having a crystallized identity that went beyond individual, regional and national allegiances. The important economic and cultural discrepancies of the regions within the Monarchy shed the basis for social conflict and disparity, from the inception of the Habsburg lands as a state until the eve of its collapse. Ultimately, the constitutional Compromise of 1867 that allowed the two compounding parts to operate with different notions of citizenship, or, at least, that stipulated distinct criteria to be fulfilled in order to be defined as Austrian, and, respectively, Hungarian citizens, represented another blow given to the concept of a united imperial society. Therefore, as thrilling as it might be to entertain the idea that, in the fin-de-siècle, the Monarchy was held in-check by society as union of its citizens, and not by radicalized and militant nations, there is still need of further illustrations focusing on the metamorphosis of the linguistic groups into 'imagined communities' of common roots and aspirations.

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