INTRODUCTION

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In the Austrian writer Joseph Roth's short story *The Bust of the Emperor* (1935), a fictional Count Morstin returns home to Galicia after the First World War, only to question the very meaning of home itself after the disappearance of Austria-Hungary:

> Seeing as this village . . . now belongs to Poland and not Austria: can it still be said to be my home? What is home, anyway? Are not the particular uniforms of the customs men and the gendarmes that we were used to seeing in our childhood, are they not just as much home as the pines and firs, the swamp and the meadow, the cloud and the stream.[1]

The void left by the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy produced a rich literature, with Roth as one of its prime exemplars. Yet while Morstin lamented the loss of old uniforms, the reality in Central Europe's new nation-states was that many officials remained in place after 1918. In Roth's Galicia, for example, old Austrians willingly integrated into the interwar Polish State Police.[2] The dislocations emphasized by authors bereft of *Heimat* (homeland) often obscured more latent continuities in everyday life. Maintaining general law and order had been a priority for many of the new states. In Czechoslovakia, the first general law published on 28 October 1918 stated that all the current laws were to remain in effect, "as if there had been no revolution at all," in the words of one of the coup organizers, Alois Rašín.[3]

When the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated at the end of World War I, it was far more than a political phenomenon—it directly affected the lives of millions of ordinary people across the whole of East Central Europe. Despite the nationalist agitations understood by some contemporaries and, until recently, most scholars as foreshadowing the Empire's collapse, the regime not only lasted longer than expected, but as the British military historian B. H. Liddell Hart pointed out, "the loosely knit conglomeration of races withstood the shock and strain of war for four years in a way that surprised and dismayed her opponents."[4] How Austria-Hungary did so, and what this can tell us about the effectiveness of the Monarchy's institutions and our assumptions about their viability, is crucial to understanding the complex history of East Central Europe during the disruptive transformation from Empire to nation-states.[5]

The historian Pieter Judson has argued recently that nation and empire were not binary opposites in the context of the Habsburg Monarchy, and that the regime's collapse in 1918 was due to the state's transformation under the pressures of war conditions rather than any internal nationalist tensions.[6] Numerous studies of national movements in the late Habsburg era have revealed them to be more variegated and less imperially antagonistic than previously assumed. Instead of targeting the regime itself, these movements sought to mobilize their own nationalistically indifferent populations.[7] National activists (be they German, Czech, or Slovene) had to fight against the ambivalence of people without clearly defined national allegiances.[8] In this respect, they sometimes competed with each other to "demonstrate their loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty."[9] In parallel, scholars have reevaluated the role of loyalty in Habsburg political culture, arguing that the focus on national mobilization has impeded our appreciation of the forces for imperial loyalty, some of which sprung from the national movements themselves.[10] Such questions have shifted late Habsburg historiography away from searching for weaknesses to explain the Monarchy's fall toward understanding the regime's longevity and the elements that sustained it. Once we consider the relative successes of the Empire's institutions even in its final years, the obvious ensuing question becomes: Did these structures and the *habitus* linked to them last even beyond the collapse of the *ancien régime* in 1918? This issue is the central theme of this collection.

As long as scholars generally viewed the Habsburg Monarchy as a surviving anachronism, the continuities with its successor states were downplayed or ignored altogether.[11] Of course, to varying degrees, these states sought to break free from their Habsburg legacies and present a modern new image.[12] Yet in addition to the aforementioned research on prewar nationalisms,[13] recent local studies on both sides of the 1918 divide have highlighted the permanence of some political, social, and even cultural elements alongside the obvious ruptures engendered by the transition.[14] Furthermore, several historians have pointed to the similarities between the Habsburg monarchy and the successor states

(as mini-Empires). It thus makes sense to interrogate the manifestations of the Habsburg regime's post-1918 legacies in East Central Europe.[15]

National historiographies, especially in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, have traditionally been so focused on the break with the past that the novelty of the postwar states has largely occluded scholars from seeing relevant instances of imperial continuity. This was reflected in the language used to describe the monarchy's demise: "disintegration" or even "catastrophe" for Austria and Hungary; "liberation" and "beginning" in the Czech and Slovak cases.[16] While the continuity issue for Germany's transformation from Empire to Republic has been well examined, virtually nothing comparable has been done for post-Habsburg East Central Europe despite its crucial place in the interwar jockeying for power.[17] As long as the predominant lens for viewing the region was that of national groups, its only stable feature was the nations themselves: states varied, but the nations remained the same.

When historians did consider elements of continuity with the Habsburg Empire, it was usually in the context of the new Austrian Republic (or, less often, Hungary) rather than states like Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia.[18] This imbalance gave the false impression that only the two defeated states, Austria and Hungary, had to come to terms with the Habsburg past, while the newly created nation-states were unencumbered by their imperial legacies. A broader regional comparison is thus necessary to reveal the imprint of the Empire in all its former provinces.

That comparison, moreover, needs to go beyond the main fields through which the postwar survival of the Habsburg Empire has been envisaged: literature and intellectual history, with their singular focus on the nostalgic vision created by the monarchy's disappearance. The "Habsburg myth," identified by Claudio Magris, has long been central to scholarship on the persistence of post-1918 Austria-Hungary, sometimes blurring the line between analyzing the myth and actually sustaining it.[19] These studies tend to concentrate on prominent writers and other intellectuals who influenced public discourse on the monarchy.[20] More recent work that convincingly deconstructs the myth still largely focuses on intellectual circles and the idea that the monarchy's most lasting legacy was its nostalgic image.[21]

Yet other, more concrete forms of institutional, economic, political, and cultural continuity also deserve examination. Social scientists have pointed to the weight of historical legacies to explain the present in East Central Europe, but historians have not always followed suit (and even less so for the interwar period). Debates around the post-communist transition in the social sciences were long dominated by the notion of path dependency, which posits that institutional legacies shaped the transformation period.[22] Recent reflections on 1989 have also tended to downplay the paradigm of complete transformation and analyze how various political actors used the past in the transition of the early 1990s.[23] More

recently, a new project on "ghost borders" led by historians and geographers tackles regional continuities in the *longue durée* and highlights the permanence of old imperial divisions in political or infrastructural terms through the present day. For example, Dietmar Müller examines how legal cultures and expectations toward the institutions in interwar Romania show the impact of former borders on individual decisions and strategies.[24] New studies in economic history already indicate a permanence of structures and local elites after 1918 that could be extended to other fields.[25]

The present work also builds on the new trends in the historiography of World War I, which expand our conception of the war and increasingly question the relevance of the 1918 divide. Recent studies have shifted the focus from Western Europe toward those transformations taking place in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, thus transferring the conflict's center of gravity both in terms of chronology (with a focus on the postwar period) and experience (civilians and population movements, for example).[26] As both regions were affected by the war in similar ways, it would be interesting to expand on comparisons between empires that have been so fruitful for studies of these regions in the nineteenth century.[27] For example, thinking in terms of continuities can help us to compare both the new mandates system and their nationalizing policies with that of the successor states.[28] Scholars of the Ottoman Empire have already demonstrated the value of an approach that questions the narrative of rupture after 1918.[29] Our aim is to adopt such an approach in the case of the Habsburg Empire.

The present collection consists of twelve chapters on the issue of continuity and rupture with the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I. Together, these studies extend the ongoing scholarly debate over the efficacy and long-term viability of Habsburg political culture well into the twentieth century. By exploring the continuance of people, institutions, and ideas, we can better understand the Empire's legacy in the successor states' political, military, and intellectual cultures. These chapters track remnants of the imperial world through institutional hysteresis and other continuities that characterized the interwar years beyond elegiac nostalgia. They also offer a variety of approaches to tracing adaptations to the new order and the persistence of old habits and *mentalités* of, for example, a specific group, individual, or locality.

Part I examines the transition in local contexts across the region. The chapters in this section explore the experiences of permanence and revolution through the lens of a city (Morelon), two regions (Egry), an individual (Vushko), and institutionalized events (Filipová). Their common premise is that in order to approach this chronological turning point, it is essential to go from the high-level diplomatic discussions down to the grassroots level. Local studies offer insights into institutional continuity that belie discourses of rupture. The transition from the Habsburg monarchy to the new national states has long been viewed through the prism of the new states' teleological narratives, whereby 1918 is presented as

the culmination of national liberation. Yet this has obscured the period's complex reality, which was marked by demobilization, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements, and an economic crisis.[30] The first two chapters, by Gábor Egry and Claire Morelon, grapple with these issues through case studies of Slovakia, Transylvania, and Prague, where realities on the ground sometimes diverged from the plans imagined by the new state leaders. Both studies show how local societies responded to the postwar transformations and adapted them for their own goals in negotiation with the central authorities. By comparing the Romanian and Czechoslovak cases, Egry shows that, in this period of uncertainty, definitions of national interest not only varied across regions and localities, but were often at odds with decisions taken in the new capital cities. He highlights the role played in the transition by remaining local officials, and the continuity of middle-class cultural practices in areas with strong regional identities.

Morelon's study of Prague explores the different interpretations of regime change within the Czechoslovak capital. In particular, she uncovers the sense of disappointment generated by the perception of continuity between the pre- and postwar governments. Iryna Vushko's chapter complements Egry and Morelon by focusing on an individual rather than local trajectory—that of the statesman Leon Biliński, who was shaped by the political culture of the Empire yet came to play a key role in the new Polish state. Through her study of Biliński, Vushko examines the fate of imperial networks in postwar Poland and shows how the continuity between the two regimes was also apparent in personal biographies. The last chapter in this section, by Marta Filipová, shows how regional and state-sponsored exhibitions before and after 1918 adopted similar political and cultural strategies in constructing national identities. Exhibitions served as vectors of state ideology for both the monarchy and the new Czechoslovak republic; although presented as very different, they had numerous official and ideological commonalities. This first part complicates our understanding of national politics in postwar states by highlighting the persistence of imperial dimensions in their political and cultural fabrics.

Parts II and III focus on the postwar predicament of institutions traditionally considered as mainstays of the Habsburg monarchy—the army, dynasty, church, and nobility. Studies of the Austro-Hungarian common army have, at least since István Deák's pathbreaking work, insisted on its key role for social cohesion and the development of a supranational Habsburg identity.[31] Given its even more prominent position during the world war, the army is the subject of several chapters in this book. Richard Bassett explores its general experience during the war, and then offers vivid reflections on the army's legacies in the successor states. Irina Marin and John Paul Newman chart the personal trajectories of Habsburg officers from Austria-Hungary to postwar Romania and Yugoslavia, respectively, emphasizing the links between the two eras for many prominent figures. Newman additionally shows how the "culture of defeat" of former Austro-Hungarian

officers nurtured the fascist Croatian Ustashe movement, while Marin traces the capacity of Romanian officers to adapt to the new regime back to the compatibility of their national and imperial loyalties.

The army was not the only "centripetal force"—to use the sociologist Oscar Jászi's famous phrase—holding the monarchy together, and the book's next section thus turns to the fate of other pillars of the former Empire: the Catholic Church, the dynasty, and the nobility. Michael Carter-Sinclair's chapter explores the Church's reaction to the demise of a regime with which it had long been closely aligned, as well as its attitudes toward the new Austrian Republic. This chapter challenges existing narratives of the Church's quick reconciliation to the Republic, showing that the upper ecclesiastical hierarchy never fully came to terms with the destruction of the old regime of orders. Although not named by Jászi, the nobility also saw its *raison d'être* as deeply linked to the Habsburg dynasty. The fate of these noble families after the war, which is the subject of Konstantinos Raptis's chapter, illustrates their efforts to maintain social status despite the establishment of republics in both Austria and Czechoslovakia. The most prominent members of these families were able to preserve their prewar lifestyles to a surprising degree, while poorer nobles were more directly affected by the social changes of the interwar years. Christopher Brennan's chapter centers on the reactions in Austria to Emperor Karl's death in 1922. The attitudes revealed by this intrusion of the old order into the new are, Brennan argues, indicative of the Austrian population's more general relationship to its recent imperial past.

The last section of this book deals with the memory of the Empire after its passing and its role in different legitimization strategies. Christoph Mick assesses attempts to give meaning to the world war in interwar Austria through public remembrance of the dead soldiers. His analysis of war monuments highlights the use of memory to legitimize the new political order. Shifting the focus away from Franz Joseph, Empress Elisabeth, and other well-studied figures of the Habsburg legacy, Paul Miller's chapter on Franz Ferdinand reveals the ambivalence about the imperial past that characterized postwar Austrian society. Miller shows how, even in the present day, the Archduke's memory has engaged little with his activity as heir to the throne, but rather focused on his assassination and the world war.

Collectively, these chapters show how the Habsburg Empire continued to shape the region it had long ruled. This continuity, moreover, was not so much manifested in a nostalgic desire to return to the past, but rather in concrete aspects of society and political culture. Indeed, the (often literary) nostalgic discourse on the Habsburg Empire, which stresses feelings of loss and confines debate to subjective assessments of the monarchy, has obscured its actual, if often more mundane legacy in the successor states. Yet nostalgic intellectuals were not the only ones who kept the Empire as a frame of reference: parts of the former military, social, and political elite continued to play key roles in public life

throughout the interwar period, and not just in Austria and Hungary. Despite the forceful discourse of rupture, these biographical connections to the past were well marked in all the successor states and had an important impact on their development. These chapters thus also help us to rethink the chronologies of the turbulent twentieth century in East Central Europe, where dramatic regime changes have long hid important continuities on the individual, local, and even state levels.

Notes

 1. Joseph Roth, "The Bust of the Emperor," in *Collected Shorter Fiction of Joseph Roth*, transl. Michael Hofmann (London: Granta Books, 2002), 244.
 2. Andrzej Misiuk, "Police and Policing under the Second Polish Republic, 1918–39," in *Policing Interwar Europe: Continuity, Change, and Crisis, 1918–1940*, ed. Gerald Blaney (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 162.
 3. Quoted in Ladislav Rašín, *Paměti Dra Aloise Rašína* (Praha: Nákladem vlastním, 1929), 216. Cited in: Gary Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 278.
 4. Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Real War: 1914–1918* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1930), 39.
 5. For a recent reappraisal of the Habsburg monarchy, see Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). For earlier studies against the still commonplace narratives of decline, see Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918* (London: Longman, 1989); Gary Cohen, "Neither Absolutism nor Anarchy: New Narratives on Society and Government in Late Habsburg Austria," *Austrian History Yearbook* 29 (1998) part 1: 37–61.
 6. Pieter Judson, "'Where Our Commonality Is Necessary . . .': Rethinking the End of the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook* 48 (2017): 1–21.
 7. See *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (April 2012) on "Sites of Indifference to Nationhood"; Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers in Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).
 8. Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69 (2010): 93–119.
 9. Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12.
10. Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, eds., *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).
11. See, for example, Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1929), 7.
12. The most extreme example of this self-presentation is Czechoslovakia, while Hungary, for example, had a more ambivalent relationship to the Habsburg past. On the Czechoslovak

interwar myth, see Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

13. On this so-called "quiet revolution" in Habsburg historiography, see Pieter M. Judson's review of Cole/Unowsky, "The Limits of Loyalty," in *Central European History* 42 (2009): 152–54; and Jonathan Kwan, "Nationalism and All That: Reassessing the Habsburg Monarchy and Its Legacy," *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 88–108. Before this "revolution," there were, of course, important arguments in favor of the Monarchy's resilience. In particular, see Joachim Remak, "The Healthy Invalid: How Doomed the Habsburg Empire?" *The Journal of Modern History* 41, no. 2 (June 1969): 127–43.

14. See Peter Švorc and Harald Heppner, eds., *Veľká doba v malom priestore. Zlomové zmeny v mestách stredoeurópskeh priestoru a ich dôsledky (1918–1929)/Große Zeit im kleinen Raum. Umbrüche in den Städten des mitteleuropäischen Raumes 1918–1929* (Prešov/Graz: Universum, 2012). On Trieste, see Marco Bresciani, "Lost in Transition? The Habsburg Legacy, State- and Nation-Building, and the New Fascist Order in the Upper Adriatic," in *Ignoring the Nation's Call: National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

15. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 442–52. On Czechoslovakia's ambitions for overseas colonies, see Sarah Lemmen, "The 'Return to Europe': Intellectual Debates on the Global Place of Czechoslovakia in the Interwar Period," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 23, no. 4 (2016): 610–22.

16. Gernot Heiss et al., "Habsburg's Difficult Legacy: Comparing and Relating Austrian, Czech, Magyar, and Slovak National Historical Master Narratives," in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (London: Palgrave, 2008), 374.

17. For example, Conan Fischer, "Continuity and Change in Post-Wilhelmine Germany: From the 1918 Revolution to the Ruhr Crisis," in *Wilhelminism and Its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism and the Meanings of Reform, 1890–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley and James Retallack (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 185–201. For a detailed study of the Prussian administration, see Marie-Bénédicte Vincent, *Serviteurs de l'Etat: les élites administratives en Prusse de 1871 à 1933* (Paris: Belin, 2006). For estimates in the Czechoslovak case, see Ivan Šedivý, "K otázce kontinuity nositelů státní moci: jmenování vedoucích úředníků v kompetenci ministerstva vnitra v letech 1918–1921," in *Moc, vliv a autorita v procesu vzniku a utváření meziválečné ČSR (1918–1921)*, ed. Jan Hájek, Dagmar Hájková et al. (Prague: Masarykův ústav, 2008), 184–97.

18. On the Austrian Republic, see several essays in Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, Peter Berger, eds., *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2010); Douglas P. Campbell, "The Shadow of the Habsburgs: Memory and National Identity in Austrian Politics and Education, 1918–1955" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2006).

19. Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur* (Salzburg: O. Müller, 1966).

20. Ritchie Robertson, Edward Timms, eds., *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994). On the role of the Habsburg myth in Austrian political discourse, see: Laurence Cole, "Der Habsburger-Mythos," in *Memoria Austriae I: Menschen Mythen Zeiten*, ed. Emil Brix,

Ernst Bruckmüller, and Hannes Stekl (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 473–504.

21. For example, Gergely Romsics's study of the political elite's memoirs: *Myth and Remembrance: The Dissolution of the Habsburg Empire in the Memoir Literature of the Austro-Hungarian Political Elite* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Adam Kożuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2013).

22. For an overview of the debate on path dependency in post-socialist contexts, see Jürgen Beyer and Jan Wielgohs, "On the Limits of Path Dependency Approaches for Explaining Postsocialist Institution Building: In Critical Response to David Stark," *East European Politics and Societies* 15, no. 2 (2001): 356–88.

23. Adéla Gjuričová et al., *Rozděleni minulostí: vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* (Praha: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2011).

24. Béatrice von Hirschhausen, Hannes Grandits, Claudia Kraft et al. *Phantomgrenzen: Räume und Akteure in der Zeit neu denken* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2015), 57–83.

25. See Máté Rigó's work on the survival of business elites in Transylvania: "The Long First World War and the Survival of Business Elites in East-Central Europe: Transylvania's Industrial Boom and the Enrichment of Economic Elites," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 24, no. 2 (2017): 250–72. See also Nikolaus Wolf, "1918 als Zäsur? Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Periodisierung der neueren Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas," *Comparativ* 20, no. 1/2 (2010): 30–52.

26. See Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, "Aftershocks: Violence in Dissolving Empires after the First World War," *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 3 (August 2010): 183–94. For studies on the war's impact in former Habsburg lands, see Mark Cornwall, John-Paul Newman, eds., *Sacrifice and Rebirth: The Legacy of the Last Habsburg War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).

27. Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, eds., *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); For a more precise example linked to some of the chapters in this volume, see Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, eds. *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich: Imperiale Biographien in Russland und Österreich-Ungarn (1850–1918)* (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2015).

28. See Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

29. Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Sener Akturk, "Persistence of the Islamic Millet as an Ottoman Legacy: Mono-religious and Anti-ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009): 893–909.

30. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe After the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

31. István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

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