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Historiography 1918-Today (Austria-Hungary)

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Apart from a few brief words regarding the relevant scientific work of international scholars, this article focuses primarily on Austrian World War I historiography from 1918 to the present. Hence, characteristics of historiography in the “German speaking rest of the Dual Monarchy” will be placed in the foreground. First, antagonistic cultures of recollection until 1934 will be mentioned; second, the prevailing nostalgia and “backward Habsburg reason of state” as an “Austrian ideology”; third a partial break with the traditional military history particularly since the 1960s; and eventually, the improvement of international cooperation, theoretical and methodological standards.

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Introduction

The following pages are devoted to the development of Austrian First World War studies since 1918. The text will begin with the culture of recollection, the social framework and scientific priorities as well as the specific historical analyses and research on the events from 1914 to 1918 during the “era of

catastrophes” up to 1945. The next section describes the situation from the early years of the second Austrian Republic up to the late 1980s, while the third part focuses on the deficiencies as well as the very promising, more internationalized, studies carried out by a younger generation of scholars.

The article does not provide coverage of the whole topic. Though selected publications and unpublished dissertations especially since 2000 will be mentioned, it is not meaningful, reasonable, nor even possible, to list the total number of publications relevant to the theme. However, what can be achieved is to give a general view of the topic presented in the form of outlines that lead to focal points, a better understanding of the items, and in-depth studies for further reading.

Commemoration and Historiography in the “era of catastrophes” from 1914 to 1945

It was not an Austrian peculiarity that the history of war was written since the beginning of the fighting in 1914. In this connection, the immediate starting of commemorative work was not so much initiated by private circles – on the contrary, it became the responsibility of officials, in particular the military administration. In these circumstances the war archives in Vienna and the “[War Press Office](#)” (as a sub-section of the army headquarters) became a stronghold of war depictions and war interpretations that influenced how the events of 1914 to 1918 were represented, long after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy.^[1]

The consequences for the following decades seem to be manifold. First, the final military campaigns of Austria-Hungary were expected to be exclusively within the scope of former officers and propagandists of the “spirit of 1914”. Deriving from this was the intention to stress the “brotherhood in arms” – the alliance with the Germans in a defensive war in which the Central Powers were seen to be attacked and encircled by enemies “all around the world”.^[2]

Beyond that, World War I military [historiography](#) leads to several additional characteristics of the interwar period in Austria. For example, and notwithstanding the restrictions concerning the accessibility of relevant sources in the archives, civilian experts such as the historian [Heinrich Ritter von Srbik \(1878-1951\)](#) tended – according to his “colleagues in uniform” – to offer no comment on the “era of the terrible breakdown” of the Dual Monarchy. Past elites of the “lost empire” created an atmosphere of “silence”, connected with a strong and uncritical feeling of nostalgia and continuous loyalty to the ex-emperor and once ruling dynasty. This kind of “backwarded reason of state” prevailed until the 1930s, after the Social Democrats were ousted from power and later on from legal existence.^[3]

Thus, it is not a surprise that endeavours to condemn “Habsburg’s warfare” and plans to replace monarchical traditions with republican ideals, did not survive the short period of unrest and leftist movements after 1918. Until the early 1920s a “Commission for Inquiries about Military Breaches of Duty” failed to change the ideological mainstream which was widely accepted after the “red years”

and was partly due to the lack of alternative statements even among the intellectual circles of oppositional milieus. The commission was openly rebuffed by generals of the “old army” and members of the Habsburg family, was frequently ignored by archives and official institutions, and moreover, was hampered by the lack of coordination between successor states primarily unwilling to support a supposed “leftist body”.^[4]

In lieu of critical discussions of the war a personality cult of the former chief of the general staff of the Habsburg army, [Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf \(1852-1925\)](#), emerged,^[5] together with the concentration on such classical topics as military history and battles and campaigns, especially in the form of a multi-volumed publication about “Austria-Hungary’s last war”. Initiated by the Viennese War Archives and edited from 1930 to 1938, this extensive work figured as a prominent example of military historiography stimulated by general staffs. At the same time “Austria-Hungary’s last war” turned out to be an influential model for the approach of officers to analyses and descriptions of the war.^[6]

Neglecting nearly completely for example a social or economical interpretation of the developments between 1914 and 1918, after the end of the Dual Monarchy the Austrian elaborations differed in one respect from the contemporary standard of World War I Historiography and Memory abroad: with the exception of some references in several editions of diplomatic sources, the debate of war guilt was not given the same importance in Austria as in other countries, especially in the long run.^[7]

Instead of this and backed up by conservative veterans and their associations the “Austrofascist” regime promoted a kind of “Austrian ideology”, a “historical engineering” that favoured pro-Habsburg commemorations, exhibitions, consecrations of memorials, celebrations of the “glorious armed forces” and their military operations from 1914 to 1918, as well as the “reconciliation” with the emperor’s family being exiled and deprived of economical privileges and political rights in 1919.^[8]

Then, in 1938, when Austria was annexed by the Third Reich and thus ceased to exist as a sovereign state, the situation changed in two ways. First, the institutions that were focussed on military history and the war of 1914 to 1918 (especially the war museum and the war archives), were subordinated to central offices in Berlin. Second, the pro-Habsburg interpretations often turned into the opposite, above all with respect to First World War. Significantly the characterization of the last emperor, [Charles I, Emperor of Austria \(1887-1922\)](#), was converted from hero-worship and canonization to condemnation as a coward and traitor to “Prussian” interests.^[9]

At the same time this point of view referred to a twofold continuation of historical perspectives in Austria. On the one hand and in spite of the prevalent “Habsburg myth”, secular movements, German nationalists or Pan-German groups even before the end of the Dual Monarchy and specifically after 1918, kept the catholic Habsburg dynasty at a distance. On the other hand the military aspect of World War I remained the crucial point of expert studies before and after 1938.^[10]

Post-war Society between Taboo and Backwardness, Deficiencies and Reorientations

A more fundamental caesura marked the end of World War II and Nazi tyranny. The following Allied occupation and the establishment of the second Austrian Republic resulted in a break with pro-German and martial feelings. The moment when the idea of an “own” small nation became attractive to the Austrians, was therefore a turning away from military history. This was underpinned by the simple fact that no Austrian army with affiliated research institutions existed while at the same time the war archives and the war museum suffered from the consequences of war, the destruction by air raids and the evacuation of sources (especially collections), to different locations.^[11]

Parallel to that, the “era of catastrophe” was wiped out of collective memories on different levels. The population averted its eyes from the terrors of the Second World War as well as from their own responsibility for war crimes and the holocaust. Yet, shaken by the trauma of recent experiences on the frontlines, the home front, and in prisoner and concentration camps, the discussion about the earlier cataclysm of 1914-18 came almost completely to a halt. Only a few sources or memoirs were published (or republished) until the mid-1950s.^[12]

The omission of the First World War corresponded with a “sphere of silence” after 1918, but also with Habsburg nostalgia, especially in the 1930s. Film historians stressed the connection between movies and a social approach to the past in general. Though many novels described the “great struggle” until 1918, and in spite of the fact that Austria’s national identity relies disproportionately on its history and particularly on the Habsburgian Myth, World War I hardly existed for instance in the cinema of the country until the second half of the 20th century.^[13]

Only with television and changing attitudes since the 1960s, did the events from 1914 to 1918 re-enter the picture together with the debates of other sublimated historical eras. Austria’s self-portrait became torn and cracked, a development which was in a way anticipated by new impulses in the historiography after the state treaty and the end of Allied occupation in 1955. First of all it has to be mentioned that the relevant records were accessible from 1956 onwards, and a recently founded army of the republic legitimized a return to the realms of military history.^[14]

Nevertheless, it was not a simple revival of older scientific traditions. Quite the contrary, Austrian historians outside the sphere of military competence applied new methods. Experts like Fritz Fellner, [Ludwig Jedlicka \(1916-1977\)](#) and [Richard Georg Plaschka \(1925-2001\)](#) started with critical analyses and got over a “historiography of officers” that was seldom closely linked to universities. A younger civilian generation of academics worked on groundbreaking studies in the realm of the established, reorientated or nascent exploration of modern, contemporary and Eastern European history. Debate about German war guilt (the “Fischer controversy”) was prompted by [Fritz Fischer’s \(1908-1999\)](#) work, published in 1961.^[15] In Austria, historians like Plaschka, Karlheinz Mack, Arnold Suppan and Horst Haselsteiner began to deal with some obscure chapters of “Habsburg’s last war” such as the responsibility of the imperial government and court for the outbreak of World War I; social discontent

and unrest at the home front; and deserters and mutineers in the army, above all in 1917 and 1918.^[16] Moreover, the scientific focus on the elites and the urban centers of the Dual Monarchy was supplemented by a growing interest in peripheries, expressed for instance in a concentration on regional studies since the mid-1950s and on the activities of local veteran groups.^[17]

Unfortunately, former soldiers after the First as well as after the Second World War participated in a more traditional, martial culture of commemoration in spite of their paradoxical claim for a lasting peace and pacifistic values. But not only the members of past armed forces with their attempts to rehabilitate ancient soldier-ship tended to a more conservative perspective on war and military. The academic world was reluctant in the long run to turn to innovative questions and international debates. While contemporary history was fully employed to overcome the taboo of Austria's guilt during the National Socialist terror, the role of the Habsburg Empire in the "European catastrophe" at the beginning of the 20th century was nearly doomed to disappear in an "antique shop's dim corner of the forgotten history".^[18]

Especially in Austria after 1945 the situation worsened because of a lack of (skilled) personnel in research institutions like the state archives and the museum of military history in Vienna. Some articles about the Austrian historiography also criticized the ignorance and indifference to new theoretical and methodological approaches of scientific communities abroad. Therefore it seems to be significant that [Manfried Rauchensteiner's](#) opus *Der Tod des Doppeladlers* [The death of the double eagle] was praised for its impressive description of Austria-Hungary's development from 1914 to 1918. Reviewers remarked that Rauchensteiner presented a symbiosis of a classical military, political and diplomatic history as well as hitherto unknown information about social and economic aspects. At the same time they felt bound to state that *Der Tod des Doppeladlers* was not an innovative study concerning new reflections on culture, mentality and everyday' life.^[19]

International trends

Another obvious deficiency was the neglect of international contacts in the fields of historical sciences, though it should be kept in mind that most of the (European) countries failed to integrate scholarly work in the context of a continental and global framework. This is particularly true of the "successor states" of the Habsburg monarchy and the adjacent countries of the Austrian Republic, which can be divided into three groups.

The first one – consisting of Austria and Hungary – regarded the proceedings of 1914 to 1918 from the perspective of the former dominant peoples of the empire. Taking also into consideration that both countries experienced a revolutionary rupture with communist bids for power; the loss of territories mainly inhabited by "compatriots"; increasing anti-Semitism; and strengthened conservative elites since the beginning 1920s, the situation in Vienna and Budapest seemed to be comparable at first glance. More detailed observations of course obtained different impressions: Admiral [Miklós Horthy \(1868-1957\)](#), the strong man in Hungary during the interwar period (and many

members of the upper class who supported him), appreciated the Habsburg state, albeit that they favoured not restoration but a “kingdom without a king” and particularly one without a descendant coming from the former ruling dynasty. Parallel to that, historical retrospective was also shaped by the remembrance of the 1848-revolution and therefore by separatist ideas and a critical distance from the Dual Monarchy. Beyond that liberal intellectuals did not contribute to a positive image of the perished empire either. The sociologist [Oszkár Jászi \(1875-1957\)](#) for instance could only describe the last decades and even centuries as a permanent process of decay. The collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian state, wrote Jászi in his 1929 book, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, was “not anything surprising but rather the long continuance of this amalgamation of peoples without a common state idea, based on the mutual hatred and distrust of the various nations”. Hence, the bloodshed between 1914 and 1918 was hardly a decisive factor in these reflections of long-term developments. For Oszkár Jászi, World War I “was not the cause, but only the final liquidation of the deep inner crisis of the monarchy”.^[20]

Historians like Jozsef Galántai, Péter Hanák and György Ranki in Hungary also presented a wide range of studies regarding Austria-Hungary and its decay in the more liberal atmosphere of communist rule since the 1960s and during the last decades of the Cold War.^[21] However, interpretations of this kind were not even secondary for another group of countries, which became national states during the 19th century, waged war against the [crumbling Habsburg Empire](#) and “inherited” some parts of it after 1918. [Italy](#) for example was more occupied by the discussion about its own national identity. World War I therefore represented a time of patriotic unity and a remarkable chapter of the making of a homogeneous state in contrast to the rise of the [Fascist regime](#) and its downfall brought about not least by the local resistance against [Benito Mussolini \(1883-1945\)](#).^[22] Although historians, especially since the 1960s, also concentrated on proofs to the contrary, such as the tense situation at the home front, strikes or riots among workers, and the suppression of discontent within the army, the idea of solidarity from 1914 to 1918 is still an important aspect of the national recollection. Against this background Austria-Hungary has never been the focal point of [Italian World War I historiography](#). Since the 1980s, the Habsburg Empire has been above all mentioned in regard to post-1918 debates about the responsibility for the “defeat of [Caporetto](#)” (the lost [Twelfth battle at the Isonzo River](#)) and the research into the fate of [prisoners of war](#) in the Dual Monarchy or on the borderlands of the [Trentino](#), Trieste and Gorizia.^[23]

In the meantime the third group of states, which were formed during the First World War partly or completely out of Austrian-Hungarian territories, developed their own specific cultures of memory. According to the importance of the period up to 1918, these countries focused above all on the events since 1914, on the respective regions and most influential “liberation movements” fighting for independence.^[24] This applied in particular to the studies and representations of “legionaries” among the Poles, Czechs and Slovaks in spite of the fact that the latter normally preferred to identify themselves with the antiheroic figure of Svejek, the central figure in [Jaroslav Hašek's \(1883-1923\)](#) famous book “[The Good Soldier](#)”.^[25] At the same time the [Czechoslovak](#) debates centered on the

question of whether the initiatives of legions and committees-in-exile counted for more than the anti-Habsburg resistance at the home front.^[26] Notwithstanding these public discussions the majority of the historians did not react to this “policy of recollection” in the first place, and some even pleaded very distinctly for “empirical work” instead of any “teleological interpretation”. Certainly the Second World War and its aftermath – the oppression and murder of slavish intellectuals during the Nazi terror and the establishment of pro-soviet regimes in the second half of the 1940s – marked an important turning point in the historiography of East-Central Europe.^[27] New paradigmatic figures, such as the anti-Fascist fighter and the partisan, increasingly conflicted with the leading model of the legionnaire, while bilateral commissions of historians in the states of the Warsaw Pact stressed the role of labour movements and uprisings of the “working class”. Corresponding to the “Russian example”, the history of World War I was often superseded by the ideological staging of the “[October Revolution](#)”. Yet the interwar interpretations did not disappear completely. Czechoslovak or Polish identities were still orientated by the formation of sovereign countries between 1914 and 1918. Hence, national peculiarities were maintained and mixed with stereotypes of communist or Stalinist principles.^[28]

Thus the entire Austrian-Hungarian state was left out of the account for the benefit of regions and actors convenient to the national saga. This gap was only filled by historiographical endeavours overseas. Oszkár Jászi for instance did not publish his book *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* in Chicago, by chance.^[29] Former members of Central European elites figured prominently among the authors of the so-called “Carnegie series”, which tried to represent the development of several belligerents from 1914 to 1918 not only from a military or political point of view. Thus, “Austrian-Hungarian studies” about the administration, the earnings, the nourishing and the state of health of the population, the labour conditions, the industrial production and the economic situation in general were issued between 1925 and 1932 by [Joseph Redlich \(1869-1936\)](#), [Hans Loewenfeld-Russ \(1873-1945\)](#), [Clemens von Pirquet \(1874-1929\)](#), [Ferdinand Hanusch \(1866-1923\)](#), [Wilhelm Winkler \(1884-1984\)](#), [Richard Riedl \(1865-1944\)](#), [Gusztáv Gratz \(1875-1946\)](#) and [Richard Schüller \(1870-1972\)](#).^[30] Some of these experts like Josef Redlich took up themes which were pivotal for Jászi’s analyses and also influenced British specialists like [Henry Wickham Steed \(1871-1956\)](#) and [Robert William Seton-Watson \(1879-1951\)](#).^[31] The controversies centered round the attitude of Austria-Hungary’s inevitable downfall due to the internal contradictions and the problematical governance of the emperor and his advisors.^[32]

This negative judgement was at least modified, when totalitarian regimes devastated Europe. Some leading personalities of the Western powers, such as [Winston Churchill \(1874-1965\)](#), toyed with the idea of unity in the Danube basin and the balancing character of the old “Austrian order”. Some historians like Robert Kann in the USA and Alan J.P. Taylor in Great Britain also flirted with this imaginary cooperation in Central Europe, though particularly Taylor did not pin his hopes on the “Habsburg card”.^[33] The discussion about the value of the Austrian-Hungarian example continued. But the view of Dual Monarchy to be found in the publications of Edward Crankshaw, David Good, [István Deák](#) and Alan Sked since the 1960s was far better than it was in the analyses of the

preceding periods.^[34]

Notwithstanding these attempts to give a general view, international scholars looked out for new thematical approaches to the situation and development of the Dual Monarchy during World War I. Detailed studies were made by Gary W. Shanafelt, [Samuel R. Williamson](#), [Holger Afflerbach](#), [Günther Kronenbitter](#) and Eric A. Leuer about the German-Austrian alliance, the Eastern Policy of the Habsburg Empire, and the plannings of the Austro-Hungarian general staff as well as the responsibility of the Dual Monarchy for the outbreak of World War One.^[35] Additionally, some historians like Mark Cornwall, Alison Flaig Frank, [Jonathan E. Gumz](#), Mark von Hagen, [Maureen Healy](#), [Patrick Joseph Houlihan](#), Jovana Lazic Knezevic, [Reinhard Nachtigal](#), Alon Rachamimov, David Rechter, Marsha L. Rozenblit, [Matthew Stibbe](#) and Georg Wurzer concentrated on other “Austro-Hungarian” topics: propaganda measures; [international law](#) and [atrocities](#); mentalities; loyalties towards the government and the ruling dynasty; different regions and occupied territories; ethnic and religious minorities; pastoral care; political suspects; prisoners of war; the home front; and everyday life. These studies therefore mirrored the changing interests of international scholarship as well as new theoretical and methodological questions.^[36]

On the whole it can be stated that a “new military history” concerning particularly civilian aspects of the war was established within the last decades, while at the same time a considerable number of new publications still focus on “familiar items” such as campaigns, [weapons](#), units or different branches of the service. Publications in English about the “Destruction of Serbia”, “The Carpathian Winter War”, “The Gorlice-Tarnów campaign”, “The Czech and Slovak Legion in Siberia”, “Austro-Hungarian Albatros aces” and battleships, by Charles E. J. Fryer, [Graydon A Tunstall](#), Richard L. Di Nardo, Joan McGuire Mohr, Paolo Varriale and Ryan Noppen represent a more “classic” approach to the theme,^[37] which can also be stated in respect of recent Hungarian studies for example. Notwithstanding analyses of neutral powers and their meaning for the Viennese diplomacy, war posters, soldiers’ songs, the situation of the local press or responses of feminism to the hostilities.^[38] many books in Hungary are occupied with the events along the front lines, with special military units and particularly with the history of the Austro-Hungarian naval forces.^[39]

Promising Trends in Austria

In the meantime Manfred Rauchensteiner’s book *Der Tod des Doppeladlers* referred to another turning point in Austria’s World War I historiography due to the attention paid to the topic since the 1990s.^[40] Apart from outline histories of the First World War written by Austrian scholars^[41] specific studies about the Dual Monarchy and some of its regions as well as the combat zones of the Habsburg army, have been published especially since 2000. For example the “Innsbruck School” has done some outstanding scholarly work on the fighting in the Alps.^[42] Beside the traditional researches on weapons or single regiments supported by the museum of military history in Vienna,^[43] the regional scientific centers have also stressed theoretical and thematic innovations.

Hence, members of a special research group dealing with aspects of modernity (*Sonderforschungsbereich Moderne* in Graz) have carried out important work on discourses on the war before and after 1918.^[44]

Together with Viennese historians these pressure groups turned to many different items such as experiences of [Austrian-Hungarian POWs](#) in Russia; the problem of captivity within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire;^[45] studies on causes and consequences of the refugee problem;^[46] [military justice](#) and deserters; mass executions in Galicia in 1914/1915; and the [internment of enemy aliens](#) as well as Austrian-Hungarian citizens.^[47] Other focal points were studies about the domestic policy; the decisions of elites; the government; the court and the ruling Habsburg dynasty;^[48] war economy;^[49] works on gender aspects;^[50] biographical approaches;^[51] and analyses of social, religious and ethnic groups.^[52]

Thus, the events from 1914 to 1918 were increasingly examined as a civilian topic in Austria too. While some representatives of a traditional military history fear that “classical themes” of battles, strategies and so forth could be thrust aside completely, other scholars welcome the recent trend. Correctly, the latter realize that the new approaches are closely linked to the actual interests and debates of the international scientific community. Older deficiencies are therefore surmounted by approaches not only to the topics mentioned above but also to other fields of research like the roles of media, [literature](#) and theatre, [science](#), and above all [medical services and medicine](#) during the “Great War”, as well as cultures of recollection after 1918.^[53]

Conclusion

Parallel to these developments Austrian historians have become part of the international community of experts since the 1990s. This applies to, among others, vital groups of transdisciplinary working scholars established by some historians of the University of Vienna, to the already mentioned “Innsbruck School” and Graz group within the “Sonderforschungsbereich Moderne”, to the International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna and to the “Forum: Österreich-Ungarn im Ersten Weltkrieg”.^[54]

These initiatives, associations and institutions have organized international conferences or published monographs as well as omnibus volumes in recent years and have helped to explore fields of hitherto unexplored research areas. Hence, it can be stated that Austria is now connected with international developments in the realm of international World War I studies, though the importance of the Habsburg monarchy for the early 20th century is scarcely appreciated by other countries and unfortunately also by most of their historians.

On the other hand Austrian experts know that a lot of work must be done in the future. Therefore they point to many desiderata, for example, social, cultural, gender and religious questions. Together with

their international colleagues they are beginning to focus on “forgotten theatres of war”, such as the Eastern front experience of Austro-Hungarian soldiers. In this context, conferences about “other fronts” and especially the situation on the Balkan Peninsula have been held in Innsbruck and Vienna.^[55]

It was no surprise that the contributing papers in this context could not provide anything more than first insights, sketches and general views. Nevertheless some results have already been edited: analyses of the Austro-Hungarian [occupation](#) in [Ukraine](#), in [Poland](#) (“*Kongresspolen*”), [Serbia](#), [Montenegro](#), [Albania](#) and Northern Italy.^[56]

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Section Editors: [Gunda Barth-Scalmani](#); [Oswald Überegger](#)

Notes

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3. ↑ Leidinger, Hannes/Moritz, Verena: Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung, Vienna 2008, p. 45; Überegger, Vom militärischen Paradigma 2004, pp. 70-71.
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9. ↑ Ibid., pp. 233-234.
10. ↑ Überegger, Vom militärischen Paradigma 2004, pp. 73-74, 83, 94.
11. ↑ Ibid., pp. 92-97.
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18. ↑ Rauchensteiner, Manfred: Der Tod des Doppeladlers. Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg, Graz et al. 1993, pp. 12f.
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Austria-Hungary, the Hapsburg empire from 1867 until its collapse in 1918. The result of a constitutional compromise (Ausgleich) between Emperor Franz Joseph and Hungary (then part of the empire), it consisted of diverse dynastic possessions and an internally autonomous kingdom of Hungary.Â Austria-Hungary, 1914Map showing the extent of Austria-Hungary, 1914. EncyclopÃ|dia Britannica, Inc. Read More on This Topic. Austria: Austria-Hungary, 1867â€“1918. The economic consequences of the defeat in the war of 1866 made it imperative that the constitutional reorganization of the Habsburg monarchy,â€| A brief treatment of the history of Austria-Hungary follows. For full treatment, see Austria: Austria-Hungary, 1867â€“1918. Contents Pr eface vii Introduction 1 Chapter one Austria-Hungary in Historiography 23 Chapter two Austria-Hungary in Essayism and Political Theory 66 Chapter thr ee Austria-Hungary in Literary Fiction 108 Chapter four The Empire Epitomized: Franz Joseph 149 Conclusion 166 Notes 191 Bibliogr aphy 205 Index 215. Related documents. studyres.com Â© 2019. DMCA / GDPR. Report. Austria-Hungary ceased to exist almost a hundred years ago. The oldest generation of Central Europeans can remember it from their parentsâ€™ and grandparentsâ€™ stories. The majority of them learned about it in high school and associates the monarchy with its few royals, particularly the late Franz Joseph and his eccentric wife Elisabeth.Â The frontiers of historiography as a genre have always been leaky. Interwar historians wrote multivolume books, just as their novelist contemporaries did, but their language had not yet been as professionalized as it is today, and they addressed a broad public of nonspecialists as well. They used standard vocabulary and phraseology and rarely tortured their readers with methodological problems and sophisticated terminology.