

Call for Papers

What was the Habsburg Monarchy? 16th–20th centuries

Was war die Habsburgermonarchie? 16.–20. Jahrhundert

Conference of the Research Area “Habsburg Monarchy” of the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Vienna, 8th–9th October 2020

What was the Habsburg Monarchy? How do scholars engage with its history? A conference of the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research (Research Area Habsburg Monarchy) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences on October 8th–9th, 2020 in Vienna will take up these fundamental questions. It will offer a forum for discussing the latest findings on the Habsburg Monarchy in its totality across temporal and disciplinary boundaries.

In spite of the many innovative studies that have appeared in recent years, there is no consensus about the type of political entity associated with the name “Habsburg Monarchy.” In order to test the various narratives in light of the current historical discourse, especially in regard of large sovereign political units embracing many parts, we propose a critical appraisal of the various methods of interpretation, terms, and research concepts that have defined approaches to the Habsburg Monarchy as a political-social order between the 16th and 20th centuries.

Historians have applied a wide range of labels to the Habsburg Monarchy in the various stages of its existence: dynastic agglomerate of the House of Austria; monarchical union of Estates-dominated states; composite monarchy; fiscal-military state; great power in the European concert; empire; federal order; unitary state; dual monarchy; failed state, among others. These labels have in turn influenced the types of questions asked and entailed varying emphasis on factors such as domestic structure, foreign policy, center-periphery relations, and the issue of continuities/discontinuities.

- To what extent does it make sense to speak of the **existence** of the Habsburg Monarchy before the union of the Austrian, Bohemian, and Hungarian lands in the 1520s? What consequences does an answer to this question have for approaches to and interpretations of its history?

- What contemporary **labels** were used for the Habsburg Monarchy through the centuries? What were the differences between self-perception and views from the outside?
- Which aspects of the body politic have the **concepts** applied by historians to the Habsburg Monarchy since 1918, particularly in recent decades, highlighted?
- To what extent did the **dynasty, court, and other social formations** contribute to the stability and durability of the Habsburg Monarchy?
- How might characteristic **features** of the Habsburg Monarchy including the dynastic unity of the House of Austria, the overlap with the political systems of the Holy Roman Empire and the German Confederation, and the period of Dualism after 1867 be comparatively classified and conceptualized?
- Which **places of remembrance** were constitutive of self-understanding and perceptions of the Habsburg Monarchy for contemporaries and the generations after 1918, both from without and within?

As these questions indicate, the problems of the configuration and cohesive forces of the Habsburg Monarchy (and its subsystems), state formation, government, representation and participation, contemporary perceptions and perspectives in the focus of the planned conference.

Abstracts of max. 350 words in either German or English are welcomed until 30th November 2019. Please include a short CV and direct your proposals to:

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