

Global Approaches to Habsburg History: Perspectives, Potentials, Payoffs, and Pathways

Location: Innsbruck, Austria

Dates: 2-3 June 2022

Rationale:

Global history and its offshoots have been usual lenses for reinvigorating the past in multiple contexts and spaces. Approaches accentuating aspects of circulation, mobility, transfer, and transnational trade have illuminated the interconnectedness of previous centuries. For the history of the Habsburg monarchy from sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, however, this historical lens has been used only sparingly. Works on Habsburg colonial ambitions, worldwide economic linkages, and transatlantic connections—to name only a few themes—have demonstrated many promising pathways. Yet global approaches to Habsburg history have tended to remain isolated from one another. No overarching or single systematic study of Habsburg history from a global vantage point has appeared to date.

Instead, viewing the Habsburg monarchy as a “landlocked” entity or a European “hinterland” still often prevails in today’s historical research. Grand narratives of the Habsburg dynasty and its lands in central Europe tend to obscure and overlook the rich connections between the Habsburg monarchy and the rest of the world. This obfuscation exists despite the variety of interrelation. For centuries, the exchange of goods and ideas flowed between Habsburg territories and foreign lands. Across the ages, Habsburg subjects participated in the colonisation of the Americas, the exploration of Asia, the subjugation of Africa, and the investigation of the natural world. The Habsburg monarchy habituated foreigners from across the world within central Europe and within the imperial nexus. Spanish courtiers abetted the emulation of western commercial powers, travellers with distant tales regaled rulers and ruled alike, and artists of all kinds brought the world to Habsburg subjects. In spite of a richly entwined global past, such facets of Habsburg history have remained generally siloed and distinct from one another and, as a result, sequestered away from the master narratives of the Habsburg monarchy. As another step towards remoulding the image of the Habsburg lands and revitalising its history, this workshop seeks to assemble scholars interested in deepening, broadening, and reimagining Habsburg history on a global scale.

By reconceptualising the history of the Habsburg lands from global perspectives, different dimensions can be explored and old standbys can be recast. Hence the goal of this event is to apply global methodologies to a region too often maligned and left out of the worldwide picture. We invite scholars to offer twenty-minute presentations on examples and means of globalising the history of the Habsburg lands. Such papers may seek to answer the following questions:

- To what extent was the Habsburg monarchy a global power over the centuries?
- In what ways were the Habsburg lands connected to the world?
- How have global events shaped the contours of Habsburg history and vice versa?
- What did European overseas expansion mean for the Habsburg lands?
- Which theoretical approaches are best for understanding the Habsburg monarchy on a global scale?
- How does the history of the Habsburg lands look through a global perspective? What benefits or pitfalls arise from doing so?
- How important were state and non-state actors in connecting the Habsburg lands with the wider world?
- Why has the Habsburg Monarchy traditionally been seen as a disconnected power and region?
- How do global perspectives redefine the way in which we can view Habsburg history?
- How do we proceed with insights gained from applying global approaches to Habsburg history?

The workshop will be held at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, between Thursday 2 and Friday 3 of June 2022. The conference language will be English. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the hosts. We plan on an in-person meeting despite the ongoing pandemic. We anticipate the need for proof of vaccination and recovery (2G) in order to attend. Advice on obtaining departure tests will be provided.

In order to be considered for the event, please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words along with a CV of no more than two pages to Dr Jonathan Singerton jonathan.singerton@uibk.ac.at by 28 February 2022. Successful applicants will be informed by mid-March and the final programme will be released in late March 2022.