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Austria–Hungary and the Origins of the First World War

Samuel R. Williamson, Jr

Macmillan Education

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**For Joan
and
George, Treeby, and Thaddeus**

Acknowledgements

I first visited Vienna at Christmas 1958; immediately, the faded splendour of the Habsburg empire captured my imagination. Subsequently, a graduate course at Harvard on the Habsburgs with William Slottman furthered my interest. Then in the late 1960s Ernest May urged that I consider a short study on Austria–Hungary and the July crisis; both of us thought a quick trip to the Habsburg archives would be enough. We were wrong. I soon found that much of the basic monographic research had not been done and that the archives were a treasure chest. Over the next years I planned a larger, longer, two-volume study on the operation of the Habsburg monarchy from 1910 to 1914. Much of that study is now complete, but significant service first as dean, then provost, and now as a college president have delayed its completion. I have, however, during the years published a series of articles on various aspects of Habsburg decision-making before 1914. This shorter work, first suggested by Zara Steiner, seeks to take advantage of the underlying research from the earlier effort while conforming to the format of the series, ‘The Making of the Twentieth Century’.

Many individuals have helped in this lengthy research effort. I now wish to thank them. First to Ernest May for having prompted the investigation; to Zara Steiner for insisting that I finish; to Geoffrey Warner who solicited my participation in the Macmillan series; to Richard E. Neustadt for unflagging interest in Habsburg history; Josef Anderle, Christopher Andrew, Volker Berghahn, Geoffrey Best, John Boyer, Lamar Cecil, Ronald E. Coons, Gordon Craig, Richard Crampton, István Deák, Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Sir Michael Howard, Konrad Jarausch, Robert A. Kann, Paul Kennedy, Béla K. Király, Enno Kraehe, John Leslie, David MacKenzie, Eduard März, Paul Schroeder, Jonathan Steinberg, Norman Stone, Solomon Wank and Gerhard Weinberg.

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At every stage my wife Joan has sustained the Habsburg enterprise, including a trip to Vienna with three children under the age of five; George, Treeby and Thad have grown up thinking that Franz Joseph was a friendly uncle and daddy's constant companion. I dedicate this book to them, with thanksgiving and joy.

The maps on the Habsburg monarchy (Maps 1 and 2) are reproduced with the gracious permission of Professor and Mrs A. J. P. Taylor from his study, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809–1918* (London, 1950). The map of the Balkans from 1912–13 (Map 3) is reprinted from *Europe's Crucial Years: The Diplomatic Background of World War I*, by Dwight E. Lee, by permission of the University Press of New England, copyright 1974 by the Trustees of Dartmouth College. The map on the location of the Habsburg armies in the July crisis (Map 4) is from *West Point Military History Series: Atlas for the Great War* (Wayne, New Jersey, 1986) by permission of the Department of History, The United States Military Academy and General Thomas E. Griess.

The place names on the maps are left as drawn. In the text, I have followed the convention of using the geographical names familiar to the decision-makers in July 1914, followed by the more recent versions of the place names.

Sewanee: The University of the South
July 1989

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Chronology

1848		Franz Joseph becomes emperor/king of Austria and Hungary
1866		Prussia defeats Austria at Sadowa (Königgrätz)
1867		<i>Ausgleich</i> settlement between Franz Joseph and the Magyar leadership
1878		Congress of Berlin after the Russo-Turkish war Austria–Hungary assumes administrative supervision of Bosnia–Herzegovina
1879		Andrássy and Bismarck sign the Dual Alliance
1882		Italy joins the Dual Alliance which becomes the Triple Alliance
1883		King Carol of Rumania becomes silent partner of the Triple Alliance
1894		Franco-Russian alliance created
1898		Archduke Franz Ferdinand recognized as heir-apparent
1903		Obrenović dynasty overthrown in Serbia; replaced by King Peter of the Karadjordjević dynasty
1904		Signature of the Anglo-French entente
1904–05		Russo-Japanese War and Russian defeat
1905		First Moroccan Crisis
1906		Aehrenthal appointed foreign minister; Conrad von Hötzendorf appointed chief of the General Staff; Schönaich appointed war minister
1907		Anglo-Russian entente signed; creation of Triple Entente
1908–09		Habsburg monarchy annexes Bosnia–Herzegovina; ensuing crisis with Serbia and Russia
1911	July–October	Second Moroccan Crisis
	September	Start of the Italo-Turkish war in Tripoli (Libya)
	November–December	Auffenberg becomes war minister; Schemua becomes chief of the General Staff
1912	February	Berchtold succeeds Aehrenthal; Biliński becomes common foreign minister
	March–May	Signature of Balkan League between Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria; Montenegro joins later
	September	Delegations meet in Vienna
	October	First Balkan War begins

		Russia keeps third-year troops on duty
		Austria–Hungary mobilizes some troops
	November	Delegations meet in Budapest
		Intensification of crisis with Russia and Serbia
	December	Conrad returns as chief of the General Staff; Krobatin replaces Auffenberg as war minister
		First war–peace crisis with Serbia; Franz Joseph and Berchtold refuse to opt for war with Serbia
		Conferences of ambassadors and ministers in London to end Balkan fighting
		Triple Alliance renewed
1913	February	Germany cautions Austria–Hungary on crisis with Russia and Serbia
	March	Austria–Hungary and Russia reduce troop mobilizations
	April	Scutari falls to Montenegro; ensuing crisis
	May	Second war–peace crisis: Austria–Hungary demands and gets Montenegro to abandon Scutari
		Treaty of London ends First Balkan War
	May–June	Colonel Redl spy scandal and crisis
	June	Tisza becomes Hungarian prime minister Bulgaria attacks Serbia; Greece, Turkey, Rumania and Montenegro attack Bulgaria; Second Balkan War starts
	July	Bulgaria asks for peace
	August	Treaty of Bucharest signed
	October	Third war–peace crisis: Austria–Hungary demands and gets Serbian evacuation of Albanian towns
	November	Delegations meet in Vienna
		Ottokar Czernin sent to Rumania as minister
	November– December	Liman von Sandars crisis between Russia and Germany
1914	February	Russia revamps mobilization timetables
	April	Franz Joseph illness
	May	Delegations meet in Budapest
	Late May	Princip, Grabež, Čabrinović return to Bosnia for the assassination effort
	June	Visit of Czar Nicholas to Rumania Visit of Kaiser William with Franz Ferdinand at Konopischt
		Visit of Berchtold with Franz Ferdinand at Konopischt
		Matscheko prepares memorandum on Austro- Hungarian foreign policy
	28 June	Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and wife Sophie at Sarajevo

5 July	Hoyos mission to Berlin Austria–Hungary receives ‘blank cheque’ for action against Serbia
7 July	Habsburg Common Council favours war with Serbia; Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza opposes
14 July	Tisza agrees to war on stipulation of no additional territory to Habsburg monarchy
19 July	Habsburg Common Council approves terms of ultimatum
20–23 July	French President Poincaré and Premier Viviani in St Petersburg French reaffirm their diplomatic support of Russia
23 July	Austria–Hungary gives 48-hour ultimatum to Serbia
25 July	Serbian reply does not accept demand for an outside (Habsburg) investigation of conspiracy Serbia orders mobilization; Russia takes some preliminary mobilization steps
26 July	Grey proposes mediation; it is rejected by Vienna
28 July	Austria–Hungary partially mobilizes and declares war on Serbia Halt in Belgrade plan suggested; Vienna later rejects it
29 July	Scattered Austro-Hungarian shelling of Serbian territory Germany attempts to win British neutrality
30 July	Russia orders general mobilization Britain rebuffs German overtures on neutrality
31 July	Germany declares state of threatening danger of war; demands that Russia cease its mobilization
1 August	Austria–Hungary orders general mobilization France refuses to bow to German demands of neutrality in event of Russo-German war France and Germany mobilize Germany declares war on Russia
2 August	British cabinet gives limited assurance to France on defence of its northern coasts Germany invades Luxembourg
3 August	Germany invades Belgium Germany declares war on France
4 August	Britain declares war on Germany
6 August	Austria–Hungary declares war on Russia

Glossary of Names

- Aehrenthal, Alois, Baron (later Count) Lexa: Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, 1906–12
- Andrássy, Count Julius: Hungarian prime minister, 1867–71; Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, 1871–9
- Auffenberg von Komarów, General Moritz: Austro-Hungarian war minister, 1911–12; inspector general of the army, 1912–14
- Apis: nickname of Dragutin Dimitrijević: head of Serbian military intelligence; central figure in the Black Hand
- Baernreither, Joseph Maria: Austrian writer and political figure
- Bardolff, Colonel Karl (later General): head of Franz Ferdinand's military chancellorcy, 1911–14
- Beck-Rzikowski, General Friedrich: Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, 1881–1906
- Berchtold, Count Leopold: Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, 1912–15
- Bethmann Hollweg, Theobald von: German chancellor, 1909–17
- Biliński, Leon von: Austro-Hungarian common finance minister, 1912–17
- Bolfras, General Arthur: head of Franz Joseph's military chancellorcy, 1889–1916
- Brosch von Aarenau, Colonel Alexander: head of Franz Ferdinand's military chancellorcy, 1906–11
- Burián István: Austro-Hungarian common finance minister, 1903–12; Hungarian emissary to the Austro-Hungarian government, 1913–15
- Carol I: Prince, later King of Rumania, 1866–1914
- Cartwright, Sir Fairfax: British ambassador to Vienna, 1908–13
- Conrad von Hötzendorf, General Franz: Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, 1906–11, 1912–17
- Czernin, Count Ottokar: friend of Franz Ferdinand; Habsburg minister to Bucharest, 1913–16
- Ferdinand: Prince, later King of Bulgaria, 1887–1918

- Forgách, Count Johann: Section chief of the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry, 1913–17
- Franz Ferdinand: Archduke, heir to Habsburg monarchy, 1898–1914
- Franz Joseph: Emperor/King, ruler of Austria and Hungary and Austria–Hungary, 1848–1916
- Friedjung, Heinrich: professor and publicist in Vienna
- Grey, Sir Edward: British foreign secretary, 1905–16
- Hartwig, Nicholas: Russian minister to Serbia, 1909–14
- Haus, Vice-Admiral Anton: Chief of the Austro-Hungarian navy, 1913–17
- Hoyos, Count Alexander: Chief of the Cabinet of the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry, 1912–15
- Izvol'sky, Alexander: Russian foreign minister, 1906–1910, Russian ambassador to France, 1910–17
- Jagow, Gottlieb von: German secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1913–16
- Kállay, Benjamin: Austro-Hungarian common finance minister, 1882–1903
- Kiderlen-Wächter, Alfred von: German secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1910–12
- Kokovtsov, Vladimir: Russian prime minister, 1911–14
- Krobatin, General Alexander: Austro-Hungarian war minister, 1912–17
- Matscheko, Franz von: Section chief in the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry, 1913–15
- Mérey von Kapos-Mére, Kajetan: Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Italy, 1910–15
- Moltke, Count Helmut von (the younger): Chief of the German (Prussian) General Staff, 1906–14
- Montecuccoli, Admiral Rudolf: chief of the Austro-Hungarian navy, 1904–13
- Nikita: Prince, later King of Montenegro, 1860–1918
- Nicholas II: Czar of Russia, 1894–1917
- Pašić, Nikola: Serbian prime minister, 1906–08, 1909–11; Serbian prime minister and foreign minister, 1912–18
- Peter Karadjordjević: King of Serbia, 1903–18
- Poincaré, Raymond: French premier, 1912–13; President of France, 1913–20
- Potiorek, General Oskar: Governor-General of Bosnia–Herzegovina, 1911–14

- Princip, Gavriilo: Bosnian student who shot Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie at Sarajevo
- Redl, Colonel Alfred: senior Austro-Hungarian intelligence officer and spy for Russia
- Redlich, Josef: Austrian professor, jurist, member of the Austrian House of Deputies, 1907–18
- Reininghaus, Gina von: wife of Hermann von Reininghaus; second wife of General Conrad von Hötzendorf
- San Giuliano, Antonio di: Italian foreign minister, 1910–14
- Sazonov, Serge: Russian foreign minister, 1910–16
- Schemua, General Blasius: Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, 1911–12
- Schönaich, General Franz von: Austro-Hungarian war minister, 1906–11
- Sophie Chotek: Countess, later Princess, later Duchess of Hohenberg, wife of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- Stürgkh, Karl: Austrian prime minister, 1911–16
- Szápáry, Count Friedrich: Section chief in the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry, 1912–13; ambassador to Russia, 1913–14
- Szögyény-Marich, Count Ladislaus: Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Germany, 1892–1914
- Tisza, István: President, Lower House of the Hungarian parliament, 1912–13; prime minister, 1913–17
- Tschirschky, Heinrich von: German ambassador to Vienna, 1907–16
- William II: German emperor and king of Prussia, 1888–1918