

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2014

Journal of Austrian Studies

EDITORS

Hillary Hope Herzog, University of Kentucky

Todd Herzog, University of Cincinnati

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Joseph W. Moser, Randolph–Macon College

PUBLISHED BY

The University of Nebraska Press

Lennox), a comparison of Bachmann and Anselm Kiefer (Karina von Tipelskirch), and her translations of the works of Giuseppe Ungaretti (Stefano Giannini). For readers seeking fresh new interpretations of particular literary works we have Savine I. Gözl on the poem “Böhmen liegt am Meer,” Helga Schreckenberger on the radio play “Ein Geschäft mit Träumen,” Solibakke on the story “Ein Wildermuth,” and Lorenz on the story “Three Paths to the Lake.”

Pamela S. Saur
Lamar University

Hannes Androsch, ed., *Austria: Past, Present, and Future*. Trans. Douglas Deitemyer and John Winbigler. Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2010. 529 pp.

The English version of this formidable volume on the nature and essence of Austria, “past, present, and future,” was launched at the Austrian embassies in London and Washington and provides a welcome and necessary survey of this country in “the heart of Europe.” This weighty tome, which was long in the making, has its origin in Adrosch’s desire (perhaps rooted in his past as a former Austrian vice chancellor and finance minister and later as a banker and industrialist) for a representative “gift” volume for official visitors to his country. It has evolved into much more than that; it stands as one of the most comprehensive and richly illustrated modern resource volumes on Austria.

Scholars, journalists, and photographers unite to trace the evolution of modern Austria. In the section on history, internationally known historians such as Anton Pelinka, Günther Steinbach, Gerald Stourzh, Adam Wandruszka, and Manfred Matzka follow Austria’s fate from the first mention of the name *Ostarrichi* explaining the country’s historical importance. The country’s complicated transformations after World War I find an outlet in the article “The Catastrophic Years 1918–1945” by Steinbach, including the Nazi regime, and arrive finally at today’s “Second” Republic. Pelinka comments with deep insight about the last period and the state created anew by the famous state treaty of 1955 in “A Critical Assessment of a Success Story. Austria from 1945–2010.”

Austria, which has always been a meeting place at the crossroads of different cultures, ethnicities, and languages, comes to life through the multiple approaches of twenty-four specialized contributors. Michael Frank’s article “Oh, You Lovely Austria” acquaints readers with the Austrian way of life, the

relationship to Germany, the new consciousness of being its “own” state, and the influence of the Slavic neighbors while referencing the nostalgia and glorification of the monarchy and the function of bureaucracy.

Peter Rigaud’s photo essay delights with 28 pages of typical sights of the agrarian provinces and local traditions but also of its architecture, the Catholic culture, and Vienna with its emblematic *Lipizzaner* and the Vienna Boys’ Choir. But these are only a prelude to the over 700 illustrations that complement the texts.

“Austria’s Way: Economics and Economic Policy since the 18th Century” (178–207) by Christian Dirninger follows the economic transformation from the “Habsburg Universal Commerce Zone” to the recent “Europeanization” of Austrian commerce and the opening of the East.

Chapters concerning art, music, literature and architecture are informative both for English-speaking readers and likewise for students of the German or Austrian cultures. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler (“Heresy and Tradition: Austrian Literature,” a reprint article, 336–81) masterfully selects aspects that demonstrate the often-discussed “differences” between Austrian and German literature, culminating with turn-of-the century literature, the Prague writers, the postwar Vienna group, and the Graz Writers’ Association. An early awareness of the horrors of the Nazi regime can be detected in the novels of Hans Lebert, Gerhard Fritsch, and Thomas Bernhard. Ingeborg Bachmann, the Nobel Prize–winner Elfriede Jelinek and Gerhard Roth are prominent. Somewhat overlapping with this latter section, Wolfgang Straub engages in “The Autumn of the Century: Austrian Literature since 1986” with Austria’s revolution of rethinking and self-examination in the wake of the Waldheim affair (Josef Haslinger, Robert Menasse, Thomas Bernhard, Christoph Ransmayr). While Austrian writers have gained publicity and financial rewards through German publishers, who often “liberally” adopt them as “German,” Straub’s quotation from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 2008 of “the suspicion that today’s most exciting, original, and varied German-language literature comes from Austria” still rings true. It is generally felt that Austrian literature around the recent turn of the millenium, compared with the 1970s, has changed itself completely again.

There are sections about architecture, building, and sculpture: Wojciech Czaja’s “Everything Is Architecture: Building in Austria,” depicting the inventive genius of Vienna’s turn-of-the-century modernism contrasted with

the traditions of Fischer von Erlach or Jakob Prandtauer, and national architectural jewels, e. g. Vienna's Karlskirche and the Stephansdom. Karl W. Schwarz's objective article "Religion in Austria: From Unity of Faith to Religious Diversity" makes us realize that the Islamic religion is the second strongest in the country.

In his introductory essay "Conditio Austriae," Androsch holds that the Second Republic is a success story "with mass prosperity and a high degree of welfare service and social security" (23), with Vienna as an international meeting place, location of the world's third permanent UN headquarters. In his epilogue "Quo vadis Austria" he returns to the European context: At a time of dwindling importance of Europe, a sharp reduction in its economic relevance, and a drop in population numbers from the postwar "golden decades" through the mid-1990s (578–79), there is a need to upgrade Austrian education, research, and innovation. Austrian experiences might also be helpful to other countries, for example "in the area of cooperation between social partners" (207). While a review article of this length cannot do justice to the volume, it should alert the academic and student public anew to the riches of this country.

Maria Luise Caputo-Mayr
Temple University

Günther Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Eva Malschnig, eds., *Austrian Lives*. Contemporary Austrian Studies 21. New Orleans: U of New Orleans P, 2012. 483 pp.

Acknowledging the dearth in Austria of biographies of recent historical and cultural figures, volume 21 of *Contemporary Austrian Studies* offers what Günther Bischof describes as a "cross section of Austrian lives and biographical approaches to recent Austrian history" (xi). To that end, he assembled a wide spectrum of contributors in various academic disciplines from both Europe and America. The lack of Austrian biographies is explained as resulting from a peculiar lag in Austrian scholastic circles to accept the biography as a viable and worthy literary genre. A number of the contributors display a defensive posture concerning the biographical impulse, reflecting on the genre *per se* prior to getting down to the task at hand. Bischof traces the book's origins to a May 2011 discussion with Bernhard Fetz, director of the Austrian Literature