



HABSBURG'S ONLY COLONY? BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND AUSTRIA- HUNGARY, 1878-1918

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ABSTRACT

It has always been a mantra of Habsburg history that Austria-Hungary never had colonies. This article investigates why Bosnia-Herzegovina can be regarded as such indeed, developing a check list of factors from critical colonial history, showing that it is a Eurocentric view actually that prevents us from recognizing colonialism on European soil.

These regions ... had remained completely unknown to the wide public; the Bosnian Sleeping Beauty still slept her age-old magical slumber and was only reawakened when the Imperial troops crossed the border and ushered in the new era. The thicket that had sprawled around Sleeping Beauty's castle was then cleared and, after less than two decades of restless and arduous work, Bosnia is now known and respected by the world. What has been achieved in this land is practically unparalleled in the colonial history of all peoples and epochs ... (Renner 1896: v; translation mine)

In the fairy-tale rhetoric of Heinrich Renner's fin-de-siècle travelogue, the success story of the Austro-Hungarian "civilizing mission" (cf. Okey 2007; Telesko 2015; Feichtinger 2016) after the military occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878 is told. The occupied territory becomes an oriental Sleeping Beauty of sorts that was cursed or even poisoned by the Ottoman Empire and later awakened by the kiss of Europe, so to say – or, in particular, Prince Charming of Habsburg, the identity of the colonizer unnamed in the quote.

However, the metaphorical phrase of "clearing ... the thicket" contains the ambiguity of the undertaking, since Western colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries had two faces: on the one hand, it stood for military conquest and foreign domination, for economic exploitation, for inequality and patronizing identity politics for the sake of "civilisation", based on more or less racist discourses that evoke a "lazy native" that needs be tamed or even killed. On the other hand, colonialism triggered modernization as it introduced infrastructure,

new goods, unknown lifestyles, and particularly educational and legal systems which ironically were the first steps towards a civil society that enabled the colonized to overthrow foreign rule eventually. Both faces were shown to Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, 1878-1918. In the following, I will try to provide answers to the question of to what extent the colonial paradigm is applicable to this particular historical case, synthesizing the research work of other scholars and my own in the last decades (e.g. Csáky et al. 2003; Müller-Funk et al. 2004; Gammerl 2010; Ruthner 2008; Ruthner et al. 2015; Ruthner 2018; Ruthner and Scheer 2018).

HISTORY

Why precisely Austria-Hungary intended to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, and which agenda its “Balkan peace mission” actually concealed: these are questions not easily answered even 140 years later. However, one would do well to accept the “Age of Empire” (Eric Hobsbawm) as a significant backdrop, as e.g. Arnold Suppan (1978) and Evelyn Kolm (2001) do. In the canonized historiography of our present, the sequence of events does not deviate substantially from the narrative advocated by the renowned Balkan historian Barbara Jelavich (1969: 115ff.; cf. among others Dedijer et al. 1974: 393ff.; Donia 1981; Bridge 1989; Bérenger 1994: 129ff.; Hösch 2002; Imamović 2006: 171-87; Detrez 2015).

In 1875, a revolt broke out in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, pitting dissatisfied Herzegovinian farmers against their Muslim landlords. It produced a large number of casualties and refugees, for Serbia and Montenegro soon supported the uprising against Turkish rule, which by 1876 spread into Bulgaria. While Ottoman troops remained victorious in the ensuing battles, the war was nevertheless accompanied by a political crisis in the power centre Istanbul, which led to changes in leadership even in form of a coup d’état (Jelavich 1969: 115-20).

Faced with both the instability of the “Sick Man of Europe” and ambitious Russian plans, Austria-Hungary clearly no longer saw itself in the position of sticking to the double maxim of its traditional Balkan policy, in place since Kaunitz and Metternich: “(1) to keep Russian presence and influence to a minimum and (2) to maintain the status quo with the Ottoman administration” (Pinson 1994: 86). Furthermore, there is some indication that the new expansionist reorientation of Austria-Hungary’s *Orientpolitik* was not only the ambition of Austrian court and military circles, but also connected with one of its major actors, Count Gyula (Julius) Andrassy, Joint Minister of the Exterior (Haselsteiner 1996: 9-30; Wertheimer 1913; Kolm 2001: 105-6).

In 1877, during the Russo-Turkish War, which followed on the heels of the clashes in 1875-76, the Habsburg monarchy declared its readiness to adopt a benevolent neutrality toward the Tsarist Empire. The Russians countered this move by offering up Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Austrians as an inducement (Donia 1981: 8ff.; Jelavich 1983: 59; Dedijer 1974: 396; Hösch 2002: 132ff.; Haselsteiner 1996: 15ff.). However, on 3 March 1878, this arrangement went by the boards with the Treaty of San Stefano, but the resulting territorial reorganization of the Balkans (e.g. the emergence of a large new Bulgarian state) did not satisfy the great European powers either. In response, the Congress of Berlin was convened on 13 June of the same year to discuss the drawing of borders anew. One important outcome of the negotiations was the ceding of the administration of the old Ottoman *Vilayet Bosna* to Austria-Hungary at the request of the British representative, Lord Salisbury. For the future, article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin formulated that

[t]he Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. The Government of Austria-Hungary, not desiring to undertake the

administration of the Sandjak of Novi-Pazar,¹ which extends between Serbia [sic] and Montenegro in a south-easterly direction to the other side of Mitrovitza, accepts the Ottoman Administration will continue to exercise its functions there. Nevertheless, in order to assure the maintenance of the new political state of affairs, as well as freedom and security of communications, Austria-Hungary reserves the right of keeping garrisons and having military and commercial roads in the whole of this part of the ancient Vilayet of Bosnia. To this end the Governments of Austria-Hungary and Turkey reserve to themselves to come to an understanding on the details. (qtd. after Israel 1967: II: 985).

Scrutiny shows that this agreement was rather vague, particularly when it comes to the future consequences of the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The particular motivations for this last – and finally fatal – expansion of the Habsburg monarchy before the First World War are not very clear either; they fall into three categories of historical argument:

Strategic grounds. The assumption here is that Austria-Hungary needed to safeguard its territory against Russian Pan-Slavism and suspected Serbian expansion plans through the military and infrastructural occupation of the Dalmatian hinterland (Sugar 1963: 20ff.; Jelavich 1983: 59; Haselsteiner 1996: 16ff; Malcolm 2002: 136). Yet this motivation is weakened by a fact foreseeable already at the time, namely that the further acquisition of a significant South Slavic population (numbering over a million) in the process would also potentially exacerbate the existing ethnic tensions in the Habsburg monarchy (Sugar 1963: 26; Pinson 1994: 119; Malcolm 2002: 136).

Economic grounds. Bosnia-Herzegovina harbored large deposits of coal and various ores, a mining potential that was extensively exploited only in Tito's Yugoslavia. These vast natural resources lead some historians like Jean Bérenger (1994: 255) to impute certain economic interests to Austria-Hungary (also see Malcolm 2002: 136; Kolm 2001: 18-19, 105-6, 244-50; Okey 2007: 17). Given the available historical evidence, however, it is difficult to assess to what extent such possible gains – along with the prospect of a new market for Austrian goods – actually played a motivational role in the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.² On the other hand, the "Naturschätze" ("natural treasures") of the territory are explicitly mentioned in the concluding remarks to the official military report on the occupation campaign (K.k. Kriegsarchiv 1879: 908).

Territorial expansion. This line of argument maintains that, after the founding of the German Empire in 1871, the only remaining opportunity for imperial(ist) growth still open to Austria-Hungary lay in the South, i.e. in the fallback regions of the declining Ottoman Empire in the Balkans (Pinson 1994: 87; Sugar 1963: 20). Other European powers did the same to the "Sick Man of Europe", which is commonly seen under the label of colonialism by most historians: for instance the usurpation of Tunis by France in 1881 and of Egypt by Great Britain in 1882 (cf. Hösch 2002: 137).

However, massive drawbacks were arrayed against the geopolitical assets of occupying Bosnia-Herzegovina. Robert Kann writes:

In financial sense the acquisition was considered not only no gain but a definite loss ... Occupation was considered the lesser of two evils. It would mean bad business economically but it might offer some relief against the threat of Balkan nationalism and Russian-inspired Pan-Slavism. (Kann 1977: 68)

Apart from increasing both the empire's expenditures and its Slavic population (out of the latter, plans for both Croatian hegemony and Trialism would arise alongside with Serbian nationalism, see Jelavich 1983: 60), it should not be underestimated that with the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, for the first time in history, a significant Muslim community became

part of Austro-Hungarian society and culture (Pinson 1994: 91; Hadžijahić 1994). This new population group was by no means a matter of a few historical converts since it contained the regional elites: landowners, Ottoman dignitaries, clergymen and quite a few merchants (cf. Donia 1981; Pinson 1994; Neweklowsky 1996). Through this setup, the later increasingly ethnicized religious divide in Bosnia-Herzegovina was interwoven with social hierarchy, especially since the majority of free peasants and dependent tenant farmers (*kmetovi*) were of the Christian faith, i.e. Orthodox or Roman Catholic (Pinson 1994: 117-8). Thus, all Austro-Hungarian administrative measures that would lead to an interference with the existing (and frankly problematic) late-feudal system of cultural, religious and social difference (Imamović 2006: 108-28) were delicate politically, in particular since they would hit mostly those elites on whose benevolence the Austro-Hungarian rule rested – even if reforms would be implemented with well-meaning intent vis-à-vis the majority of the population.

In addition, Austria-Hungary's occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the summer of 1878 was far from being the military "Parademarsch" (Wertheimer 1913: 15) the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Andrassy had envisaged for the imperial army, but rather a gory "conquest" which was fiercely battled by local militias and the remnants of Ottoman troops in the region (Pavlowitch 1999: 116). Thus, by the end of the campaign in November 1878, the Austro-Hungarian occupying forces were about as strong in number as the American contingent deployed in the second Iraq War of 2003, i.e. roughly a quarter of a million (for details of this campaign, see Bencze 2005).

In this military context, the colonialist undertones of the whole operation become perceptible for the first time, when, for example, a Czech veteran later recalls the heads of Austrian soldiers being skewered by the "Insurgenten" (the official term for the local resistance already used in 1878). Here, old Balkan clichés of barbaric 'bandits' and 'cutthroats' (cf. Todorova 1997 and Jezernik 2004) re-emerge along with anti-Turkish sentiments from long ago – instrumentalized, it appears, for almost a propagandistic outcry for a new and 'civilized' administration:

We stood in full battle dress against the ignoble cannibal enemy and it is no exaggeration to say that the Zulus, Bagurus, Niam-Niams, Bechuans, Hottentots and similar South African bands behaved more chivalrously towards European travellers than the Bosnian Turks did towards us. I always recollect with dismay the peoples of the Balkans, where the foot of the civilised European has not trod for decades, how the Turks, 'native lords', probably rule down there! (E. Chaura, *Obrazky z okupace bosenske* [Prague, 1893]: 38; qtd. after the transl. by Jezernik 2004: 139)

After three months of fighting, some thousands of dead, and many tens of thousands of refugees, the Austro-Hungarian *mission civilatrice* was to be accomplished next. In 1882, after a new uprising, a civil administration was put in place by the occupiers, and finally, in 1908, Bosnia and Herzegovina were annexated by the Habsburg Monarchy, which almost caused World War One to break out prematurely. Ironically, its opening shots would still be fired right here, in Sarajevo, on 28 June 1914; its finale in 1918 also meant the end of Habsburg rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina which became part of the first Yugoslav ("SHS") state. The question still remains, in many respects, of how those forty years should be assessed: in terms of the "civilizing mission" they were supposed to be, or within the paradigm of European colonialism around 1900?

VOICES

In recent decades, various scholars have discussed the applicability of “post/colonial” approaches to Habsburg Central Europe, as a third way as it were, avoiding the fallacies of Habsburg nostalgia (“Viribus unitis”) and the nationalist discourse of self-victimization (“Völkerkerker”). As I have stated in earlier lectures and writings (see e.g. Ruthner 2018), Bosnia and Herzegovina, among all parts of the Empire, might be the only territory which fully qualifies for a case study of *k.u.k.*³ colonialism in a non-figurative sense of the term. However, such a claim was ardently contested by the prominent Austro-American historian Kann already:

The thesis put before us, namely that the administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina represented trends of colonialism, is highly problematical. We must first ask whether the concept of colonialism, commonly understood as the rule of European powers over native colored people on other continents, can be transferred to a master-subject relation within Europe, pointing to a system of colonial administration and exploitation of whites by whites (Kann 1977: 164).

It was thus in the capacity of an apologist that Kann joined the debate of *internal* European colonization which had started in the years after the publication of Michael Hechter’s book on the “Celtic Fringe” of Great Britain in 1975 (also see Verdery 1979; Nolte and Bähre 2001). For Kann, however, colonialism constitutes “the unholy trinity of imperialism, capitalist exploitation, and oppression on racial grounds, all of them imposed by force” (Kann 1977: 164); on this basis, he rejects the application of the concept to Bosnia-Herzegovina, albeit with arguments that are barely convincing.

In a more recent formulation by key postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak based on the protean nature of colonialism, the term becomes plausible again, particularly in Russian, Slavonic and Soviet studies:

‘Colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ can be fairly elastic if you define scrupulously. When an alien nation-state establishes itself as a ruler, impressing its own laws and system of education, and re-arranging the mode of production for its own economic benefit, one can use these terms, I think. (*Ulbandus* 2003: 15, also see Müller-Funk and Wagner 2005)

Unfortunately, due to space constraints, other important definitions of colonialism in historiography and the social sciences, such as Jürgen Osterhammel’s (2001), for instance, cannot be discussed as much in depth here as in an earlier publication (cf. Ruthner 2018: chpt. A.1). Also the fact can only be noted that the propagandistic undertones of how the term colonialism was used in communist Yugoslavia⁴ for the country’s past seems to have left a bad taste in many scholars’ mouths.

On the other hand, Austro-Hungarian sources from the *k.u.k.* period itself love to repeat the mantra of Habsburg mythology, i.e. the selfless “cultural” and/or “peace mission” that must inevitably follow the decline of the Ottoman empire and the bloody chaos of war.⁵ A statement made by the Austro-Hungarian Joint Finance Minister Benjamin von Kállay, who from 1882-1903 was responsible for the civil administration of the “Okkupationsgebiete”, is one of many symptomatic examples. In an interview with the *Daily Chronicle* in London he commented: “Austria is a great Occidental Empire ... charged with the mission of carrying civilization to Oriental peoples”; in this respect, “rational bureaucracy” would be “the key to Bosnia’s future ... to retain the ancient traditions of the land vilified and purified by modern ideas” (qtd. after Donia 1981: 14).

It was exactly this talk of Austria-Hungary's "civilizing mission" that has led not only Yugoslav, but quite a few Western historians (such as Detrez 2002, Donia 2007, or Judson 2016: 378 et passim) to extend the critical paradigm of colonialism to the Habsburg monarchy. This was already the case with A.J.P Taylor who seventy years ago handed down the following polemical verdict on Habsburg rule:

The two provinces were the "white man's burden" (!) of Austria-Hungary. While other European Powers sought colonies in Africa for the purpose, the Habsburg Monarchy exported to Bosnia and Hercegovina its surplus intellectual production – administrators, road builders, archeologists, ethnographers, and even remittance-men. The two provinces received all benefits of Imperial rule: ponderous public buildings; model barracks for the army of occupation; banks, hotels, and cafés; a good water supply for the centres of administration and for the country resorts where the administrators and army officers recovered from the burden of Empire. The real achievement of Austria-Hungary was not on show: when the Empire fell in 1918, 88 per cent of the population was still illiterate. (Taylor 1990 [1948]: 166)

Many more examples could be given how the semantics of colonialism was used for Bosnia-Herzegovina in contemporary sources as well, critically or affirmatively (for details, see Kolm 2001: 237ff.). A striking example of the latter is Ferdinand Schmid, former head of the official Statistics Department in Sarajevo, who later, as a university professor in Leipzig, would write an academic monograph on Bosnia. Here, he also discusses the applicability of the colony concept:

The concept of 'colonies' has been widely debated in German and Western literature on the topic; often, it only meant overseas territories which were ruled by the motherland economically and legally. In this sense, Austria-Hungary does not have colonies and it has never done colonial politics, at least not recently. However, if you define the notion of 'colonies' in a broader sense, then there can be no doubt that Bosnia and Herzegovina were obtained as colonial territories by Austria-Hungary and that they have remained so until today. (Schmid 1914: 1; transl. mine).

COLONIALITY

If the case is to be made for an Austro-Hungarian colonialism of sorts as a critical term beyond the contemporary rhetoric, the following points should be taken into consideration (along the theoretical and historical lines laid out by Balandier 1966 [1951], Fieldhouse 1981, Stoler and Cooper 1997, Osterhammel 2001, Cooper 2005, Young 2015, and many others):

1. *Military conquest after a mandate provided by an international summit* is exactly the mode how many colonies were taken over by the great powers of Europe, e.g. as a consequence of the so-called Congo Conference in Berlin (!), 1884-85 (cf. Fieldhouse 1981: 16ff.).
2. *The legal status of the territory.* Throughout its forty Austro-Hungarian years, Bosnia-Herzegovina never became a *Kronland* (crownland, i.e. an imperial province), but remained a sort of appendix to the empire, a *Reichsland* (comparable to the status of Alsace-Lorraine in imperial Germany), which in essence belonged to none of the two constitutive entity of the empire, neither Austria (*Cisleithanien*) nor Hungary, but to both (Sugar 1963: 26). As a consequence of this special statute, the territory was the only one under Habsburg rule which had no legal representation in either of the two parliaments in Vienna and Budapest;⁶ it "existed in a kind of unacknowledged legal limbo" (Judson

2016: 379). A regional assembly, the so-called *Sabor / Landtag* (Diet), was introduced in 1910 only, but it soon became dysfunctional and was closed down by emergency laws in the First World War soon thereafter (cf. Imamović 2006: 244-250; Juzbašić 2002);

3. *Indirect rule* (cf. Fieldhouse 1981: 29-40). Similar to British reign in India (Gammerl 2010: 73-216), the Austro-Hungarian occupiers established their rule over a majority of the native population through *the participation and gradual 'reformation' of existing elites* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the Muslim landowners.⁷ (This prevented e.g. a major land reform from happening, which added to the frustrations among the mostly Christian tenant farmers who initially, hoping for change, had been partly welcoming of the Austro-Hungarian takeover of the territory; cf. Sugar 1963: 33ff.; Katus 1961: 210-11; Imamović 2006: 210-11).
4. An ever-growing,⁸ *patronizing civil administration* was put in place shortly after the occupation, which rested to a large extent in the hands of foreigners, even in its lower ranks. It discriminated against local applicants, particularly Bosnian Muslims and Serbs.⁹ On the other hand, those eager administrators would try to micro-manage almost every aspect of civic life (cf. Donia 2007: 4). However, their achievements are also diminished by corruption allegations in foreign diplomatic reports which paint a picture very different to the alleged "civilizing mission" (Sugar 1963: 26, 30-31).
5. *Establishment of an epistemic regime*. As it was also typical for colonial powers all over the world during the 19th century (cf. Stoler and Cooper 1997: 15ff.), the *k.u.k.* regime in Bosnia-Herzegovina rested on knowledge generation, especially through the new Austrian discipline of *Volkskunde* [ethnology] (Johler 2018). For this purpose, the Kállay administration built the *Landesmuseum / Zemaljski muzej* as central institution for research, documentation and publication. With the help of his friend Lajos von Thallóczy, Governor Kállay also tried to (re)write a specific Bosnian version of regional history, based on the medieval kingdom, to oppose the national historiographies of Serbia and Croatia, and to legitimize Austro-Hungarian rule (cf. Donia 2007: 5-6).
6. *Identity* *Politics.*
 - a) In the two decades during which Joint Finance Minister Kállay headed the occupied territories, he tried to create a unifying Bosnian identity (*Bošnjastvo*) top-down in order to combat the particularist movements of the three major population groups, the Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics – a modern tool of government also known from colonial contexts outside of Europe. This *paternalistic policy*, however, paradoxically worked into the hands of the nationalists and further deepened and ethnicized the religious divisions between the three groups (cf. Donia 1981: 12ff.; Kraljačić 1987; Pinson 1994: 113; Vrankić 1998; Sethre 2004; Röss 2006; Imamović 2006: 213-31; Babuna 2015; Ruthner et al. 2015, 2018).
 - b) *The othering of the Other*. Austria-Hungary's "civilizing mission" was used as a discursive tool to justify structures of governance that were less democratic than in the motherland, and the status of Bosnians and Herzegovinans as second-rate *k.u.k.* citizens. In order to legitimize this inequality, Bosnians were (re)presented and formatted as the Other through popular Orientalist discourses (Heiss and Feichtinger 2013) in the hegemonic culture, and even becoming a commodity¹⁰ as such, instead of being seen simply as an extension to the already existing South Slavic populace of the Empire (cf. Stachel 2003; Sirubalo 2012; Ruthner 2018: chpt. C). Thus, othering also became an important pretext for the necessary 'education' of the Other, a project which not surprisingly "failed".

7. *Economic aspects.* The self-imposed official restriction through Austro-Hungarian legislation that Bosnia-Herzegovina was on the one hand controlled by an almost almighty bureaucracy, but on the other hand had to finance itself from its own provincial incomes, prevented to a large extent the development and exploitation of the territories through private capital – until the late days of Habsburg rule when especially Hungarian banks increasingly moved in. Habsburg nostalgics try to use this point as a counter-argument against the colonialism hypothesis – along with the fact that ‘the Austrians’ built hundreds of kilometres of roads and railway tracks, school buildings etc. However, this phenomenon of *creating modern infrastructure* is characteristic of most Western colonial regimes overseas as well (cf. Fischer-Tiné and Mann 2004: 17), as is more or less the economic situation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in general (cf. Sugar 1963; Lampe and Jackson 1982; Wessely 1989): „a mercantilist concept of trade, through which the metropole assures privileged access to markets and raw materials by restricting the colony’s ability to trade freely with all partners, and a conception of the colony as a domain in which a state can act in particular ways“ (Stoler and Cooper 1997: 19; also see the introduction of Alatas 1977).
8. „*Lab of Modernity*“ vs. *administrative conservatism.* On the one hand, Bosnia-Herzegovina, like other imperial peripheries, but also the colonies of the great powers¹¹, served as testing ground for social and technological experimentation, e.g. for the first electrical tramway system of the monarchy. On the other hand, the inherent traditionalism of the Austro-Hungarian administration is striking, which tries to conserve and improve existing structures rather than radically replacing them. According to Donia (2007), the resulting contradictions and aporias would become the most central and damaging for the occupied territories (also see Judson 2016: 330).
9. *Military exploitation.* Similar to the Gurkha units within the British army, the *k.u.k.* military very soon (in 1881) started drafting the male population of Bosnia-Herzegovina into special infantry regiments which were never fully incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian army, but run by its officers (cf. Neumayer and Schmidl 2008). These *Bosniaken* were designed as elite units of sorts that terrified their enemies with their cruelty and combat efficiency, particularly on the Italian front during the First World War. Thus, the alien Other from the periphery, whose barbarism was to be tamed by the *mission civilatrice*, was also put on hold as a ‘natural’ military resource, as it were, to be unleashed whenever the imperial centre wanted it.
10. *Settlers.* Similar to other colonies, the provincial government and other organisations encouraged farmers from other regions of the Empire and abroad (e.g. from Germany) to move in and create role-model villages. This initiative was fiercely opposed by local activists and the newly established Diet in Sarajevo (cf. Bethke 2018; Ruthner 2018: 276).

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

If one tries to put this data puzzle together in order to see the greater picture, a comparative perspective might prove helpful (see e.g. Gammerl 2010). Then, there would be a whole range of phenomena available to illustrate what colonialism can be(come). On top of the blacklist, there should be, for instance, the Congo colony as described by Adam Hochschild (1998), particularly when the territory was the private property of the Belgian king and run as a hybrid of capitalist corporation and violent labor camp, which cost the lives of hundreds of

thousands of native Africans. In comparison, Austria-Hungary's intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina was fairly soft(-spoken?) and perhaps – in parts – even well-intended.

Still, the arguments listed in the sketch above show that the *k.u.k.* intermezzo from 1878 to 1918 can be considered as a kind of Austrian *quasi*-colonialism (Detrez 2002; cf. Okey 2007: 220) – a substitute for the “Scramble for Africa” (and Asia) the Habsburg monarchy had been too late for (cf. Sauer 2002). The only reason why others hesitate to call Bosnia-Herzegovina a colony is that it is not separated from its ‘motherland’ by a large body of saltwater,¹² but lies at the peripheries of Europe. Here one can argue that it is the rather imaginary concept of what Europe is – and thus, Eurocentrism! – which paradoxically prevents us from recognizing colonialism on its own soil.

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¹ Cf. Scheer 2013.

² The central authorities of Austria-Hungary decreed that the new province had to finance itself with its own income; in this way there were no substantial subsidies from Vienna except for railway building (and even then only circuitously). Moreover, both the newly established Imperial and Royal Mining Authority and the *Bosna* mining corporation proved inefficient at developing new mineral resources; the flow of information to private investors either failed or was omitted completely; further planning errors also occurred. For details, see Sugar 1963: 105ff., 159ff.; Malcolm, 2002: 141; also Wessely 1989; and Jackson 1982).

³ "k.u.k" ("kaiserlich und königlich") is a term frequently used for the Dual ("imperial and royal") Habsburg Monarchy whose ruler was emperor of Austria and at the same time king of Hungary and other territories such as Bohemia, Croatia, etc.

⁴ E.g. in Dedijer et al. 1974: 448; also see the discussion in Vervaeet 2004.

⁵ This discourse has been uncritically adapted and repeated even by some historians up to our day, e.g. by Suppan 1978: 128.

⁶ This is why an American historian, borrowing from the example of the Soviet Union, speaks of a Bosnian "satrapy" (McCagg 1992: 50-51).

⁷ Okey 2007: 123 sees even more analogies: "Applied to territories taken over by European powers, it (= the regime of Austrian administrator Kállay, CR) presupposed a slow but steady advance in security and prosperity, accompanied by the contraction of militant resistance and growing understanding of the occupiers' goals and values. Such processes can be seen at work in British India and French Algeria between the end of physical resistance and the emergence of modern nationalist movements."

⁸ Compared with the Ottoman era, the total number of civil servants hired for the administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, had risen from 120 to around 9,500 by 1908 (cf. Pinson 1994: 119-120; Sugar 1963: 29).

⁹ In 1904 only 26.5% of all officials with placements in Bosnia-Herzegovina were natives, the majority of them being Catholic with a further 3% being Serbs and 5% Muslims (Pavlowitch 1999: 117; Dedijer et al. 1974: 449; Jelavich 1983: 60).

¹⁰ „Just as imperialists ‘administer’ the resources of the conquered country, colonialist discourse ‘commodifies’ the native into a stereotyped object and uses him as a ‘resource’ for colonialist fiction“ (JanMohamed 1985: 83).

¹¹ Vgl. Mann 2004, p. 8; Stoler & Cooper 1997, p. 5.

¹² See the discussion in Ruthner 2018: chpt. A1.