

## Final Report

**Name of Event:** Global Approaches to Habsburg History: Perspectives, Potentials, Payoffs, and Pathways

**Name of Organiser:** Jonathan Singerton

**Home Department:** Institute for Historical Research    **Home University:** University of Innsbruck

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### Report:

Austrian Habsburg history tends to be conceived within a European framework with events, peoples, and places of particular importance centred on the dynasty's longstanding influence within central Europe. As historians have become increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of the past and more attuned to the indirect ways in which the global affected the local, certain viewpoints such as this narrowed view of Austrian Habsburg history have become outdated. Austrian Habsburg history remains ripe for further studies along global lines as a result. Across the ages, Habsburg subjects participated in the colonization of the Americas, the exploration of Asia, the subjugation of Africa, and the investigation of the natural world from the mountains of Tibet to the depths of the Mediterranean, from the polar reaches to the Amazon rainforest. The Austrian Habsburg dynasty—at one point or another—occupied much of central Europe, the Low Countries, the Italian peninsula, and the Adriatic with overseas territories in present-day Bengal, China, Gujarat, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan.

For this reason, a two-day conference occurred in Innsbruck to discuss the global potential for Habsburg history among a community of leading expert scholars. In total, eighteen papers were presented on themes ranging from transimperial encounters such as Austrian Jesuit imaginaries of Japan to Austria's role in the definition of the Australian continent to orientalism in the Austrian expeditions to Turkestan or the materiality of museum collecting and royal gift exchanges to the emergence of economic ties from Ostend—once a part of the Austrian Netherlands—and the Atlantic slave trade. Two keynote speakers, Dr. Alison Frank Johnson from Harvard and Prof. Walter Sauer from the University of Vienna, provided exemplary talks on the Austria's role in Indian cocaine epidemics and in European colonials respectively. A former host partner of BritInn, Dr. William O'Reilly from the University of Cambridge was invited to present a paper on political economic ideas between Spain and Austria during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. During the conference, a consensus emerged among participants that new paradigms for thinking about Habsburg history are needed and for these shifts to include wider perspectives on how we understand not only Habsburg history but also global history itself. The aim as we go forward is to continue the dialogue on Habsburg

Global history as we fashion a new, wider appreciation for the worldwide impact from and on the Habsburg lands in central Europe.

The organizer, Dr. Jonathan Singerton, is indebted to the BritInn Academic Network Britain-Innsbruck for supporting this event and making this important dialogue among scholars possible.



**Picture Credits:** Jonathan Singerton