

Power and Progress:

Imperial and Bourgeois Expression and the Vienna World Exposition of 1873

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The Rotunda that dominated the center of Vienna's Industry Hall for the World Exposition of 1873 was the largest dome in the world, made possible by the modern building materials of iron and steel. Twice the size of St. Peter's, and capped by a gigantic replica of the imperial crown, it spanned 108 meters and seated 27,000 people comfortably.¹ Two triumphal arches allowed visitors to enter from the south and the north, decorated with sculpture that represented the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under Franz Joseph's control.² To the east and west, the Industry Palace flanked the Rotunda, built in a neo-Renaissance style that would inform the later construction of the Burgtheater and the Hofburg Palace. Visitors could travel the world virtually, marveling at the advances in technology and industry as they moved from China in the East to the Americas in the West through the hall that was laid out according to the Mercator projection of the globe.

This structural accomplishment was at the core of the 1873 Vienna Exposition, located just outside of the city in the Prater, a park dedicated to the people of Vienna by

¹ Jutta Pemsel, *Die Wiener Weltausstellung 1873: Das gründerzeitliche Wien am Wendepunkt*. (Wien: Böhlau Verlag Gesellschaft, 1989), 36.

² John E. Findling, editor, *Historical Dictionary of the World's Fairs, 1851-1988* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990), 50 and John W Stamper, "The Industry Palace of the 1873 World's Fair: Karl von Hasenauer, John Scott Russell, and New Technology in Nineteenth-Century Vienna," *Architectural History* (no. 47, 2004), 238.

Joseph II, the “enlightened absolutist...and the emperor of the people,” in 1766.³ Its size, layout, and location represented the culmination of, and a break from, the history of Expositions up to 1873, as well as providing a model for subsequent expositions to follow. At 2,330.631 meters², it was the biggest exposition held up to that point. The Vienna Exposition was five times the size of the Paris Exposition grounds of 1867 and 12 times that of London’s Great Exhibition of 1851.⁴ While this was a part of the overall competition between nations to hold larger and larger expositions, it would not be until 1893 that the Chicago World’s Fair surpassed the size of the Vienna Exposition.⁵ It was the first to divide the exhibitions into five separate halls for raw materials, industry, machinery, art, and architecture, instead of using one large hall for all exhibits.⁶ Later expositions, starting with the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, would build upon this organizational system. Alfred T. Goshorn, the planner for the Philadelphia Exposition, traveled to Vienna in 1873 in order to “gain insights applicable to the Philadelphia celebration,” and separate, expanded exhibition halls appeared in the 1876 Exposition.⁷ Lastly, the Exposition’s location compelled visitors to travel through the city on the newly constructed public transportation system or on the steamships that took visitors along the re-engineered, clean Danube River.⁸ The Paris and London Expositions

³ Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 94.

⁴ Pemsel, 35 and Findling, 376-378.

⁵ Findling, 376-377.

⁶ Pemsel, 35 and Robert Rydell, *All the World’s A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Exhibitions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 17.

⁷ Rydell, 17.

⁸ Pemsel, 26. Planners and engineers submitted 23 plans for the rerouting of the Danube in 1872 in preparation for the Exposition.

were near the heart of their respective cities, but the Prater was approximately 30 minutes outside of the city by tram. As they traveled to the Exposition, visitors would see the new architectural projects in the Ringstrasse and witness the technical prowess with which the engineers diverted the Danube to make both renovation of the city and the World Exposition possible.

The Exposition represented an important cultural, political, and economic event for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but its planning expressed the underlying concerns and desires of both the Kaiser and the liberal bourgeoisie. The ideas of progress and a centralized empire were prominent in the Exposition. Both Franz Joseph and the liberals wanted to demonstrate the Vienna's modernization and locate it within the pantheon of world capitals through the display of industrial, cultural, and educational progress. Coupled with this need to compete with the Western European capitals of London and Paris was the assertion of centralized, imperial power, which both Franz Joseph and the bourgeois sought. Maintaining power in the face of national uprisings served the interests of the Kaiser, while the centralized state structure of the imperial parliament protected the position of the liberals in government. Although Franz Joseph and the bourgeois had similar aims in holding an international exposition, the occasional conflicts between the neo-absolutist monarch and the liberal middle class during the planning of the exposition spoke to the broader issues of political instability with which the Empire dealt. Growing out of the history of expositions up to 1873, as well as the history of the Austrian (and later Austro-Hungarian) Empire and the revolutions of 1848, the Vienna Exposition would express the tensions between the two parties and their common goals. Before

looking at the Exposition itself, I will place it both within the broader historical context of the previous expositions and within the political and social developments in the empire.

*From Great Exhibition to Exposition Universelle: A Brief History of Austria's
Participation in the World Expositions from 1851 to 1867*

The Vienna Exposition of 1873 was the fifth international exposition, the first held in German-speaking lands, and the only held in Vienna.⁹ In many ways, the 1873 Exposition represented both continuity and change in the history of expositions up to this point, as well as influencing the design and execution of the expositions that followed it. After the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, attempts to hold larger and more grandiose expositions led to international competition, marked by nationalism.¹⁰ The four major expositions between the 1851 Great Exhibition and the 1873 World Exposition were held in London and Paris, and each attempted to outdo the other in scope and scale, expanding exhibitions to include painting, sculpture, food, working conditions, and the national “way of life.”¹¹ While not always successful in this aim, each exposition strove to create larger exhibition buildings and extended the grounds to incorporate the growing number

⁹ One was planned for 1995, spurring the development of “Donau-City Vienna,” (or Vienna DC) a large industrial/commercial area, but it was cancelled. (<http://www.e-architect.co.uk/vienna/donau-city-towers.htm>)

¹⁰ Findling, xvii-xviii.

¹¹ Findling, xviii.

of exhibits and demonstrate the engineering and technical prowess of the architects.¹² The Vienna Exposition would outstrip all of the previous expositions in size, as well as employing an innovative new system of exhibition halls that broke with the traditional single hall approach and provided space for art, raw materials, architecture, industry, and machinery.

The Austrian Empire participated in all of the international expositions from 1851 onwards, and it was shortly after the 1851 Exhibition that the Kaiser began considering an exposition in Vienna.¹³ However, due to financial strain and political unrest, the government continued to push the plans for a Vienna Exposition further and further into the future. The Empire appeared in the other international expositions despite these hardships, sending samples of Bohemian glassware, examples of military technology, and agricultural produce to London and Paris.¹⁴ Austria's commitment to the international exhibitions intensified after 1860, when the Kaiser appointed Baron Wilhelm Schwarz-Senborn as the official ambassador and general councilor for Austrian participation in the London and Paris expositions. Originally the secretary for the Lower Austrian Industrial Union and later ambassador for the Kaiser, Schwarz-Senborn had experience with both industrial display and international relations. He oversaw the presentation of the Empire

¹² The 1862 London Exhibition was supposed to be larger than both the preceding Paris exposition and the Crystal Palace, and plans were submitted for a building that would be twice the size of both. Unfortunately, due to internal budgetary problems and external warfare, the commissions failed in getting these plans pushed through. Thomas Prasch, ed. John E. Findling "London 1862: International Exhibition of 1862" in *Historical Dictionary of the World's Fairs* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 23.

¹³ Pemsel, 17. Industrial exhibitions were held in Lower Austria since 1839, and publications after the Great Exhibition of 1851 hinted at the economic and international relations benefits that an exposition would provide. In 1857, these publications became more prevalent.

¹⁴ Victorian Prism and Pemsel, 15-17.

at all international expositions and coordinated national exhibits and those of private, Austrian industrialists.¹⁵ The Kaiser would later appoint Schwarz-Senborn as the general director of the 1873 Exposition.

The most significant international exposition, in terms of the impact that it would have on the planning and execution of the 1873 Vienna Exposition, was the one held in Paris in 1867. This exposition was important for several reasons. First, 1867 was the year in which the Austrian Empire split, becoming the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the Compromise of 1867. As a result, the empire would present as two separate national entities, although they were still unified under the Habsburg crown.¹⁶ From 1867 onwards, the expression of imperial identity would be Cisleithanian, or representative of the crown lands north of the river Leitha.¹⁷ Hungary would control the representation of itself, as well as the Transleithanian lands Croatia and Slavonia. Although they exhibited separately in the Industry Hall, the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian lands joined as one exhibit in the national villages.¹⁸ The Paris Exposition of 1867 was the first to include a proliferation of buildings outside the main exhibition hall to allow for greater national expression, building off of the tradition, since the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, of

¹⁵ Christian Stifter, "Staatsmann und Volksbildner. Freiherr Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn (1816-1903)," In: *Spurensuche. Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung und Wissenschaftspopularisierung* (1992), 18-19.

¹⁶ Pemsel, 19-20.

¹⁷ These lands included Bohemia, Dalmatia, Galicia and Lodomeria, the Archduchy of Austria (Upper and Lower Austria), the Duchies of Bukovina, Carinthia, Carnolia, Salzburg, Upper and Lower Silesia, Styria, the Margraviate of Moravia, the Princely County of Tyrol (including Vorarlberg), the Coastal Land (including the Princely county of Gorizia and Gradisca), the state of Trieste, and the Margraviate of Istria. William R. Shepherd, "Distribution of Races in Austria-Hungary." *Historical Atlas*, (London: 1911) map.

¹⁸ Edward N. Kaufman "The Architectural Museum from World's Fair to Restoration Village," *Assemblage*, 9 (MIT Press: 1989) 23-26.

focusing on national representation through architecture, food, and the display of agricultural and industrial goods.¹⁹ The villages emphasized national identity and heritage, untouched by the process of industrialization on display in the Industrial hall.²⁰ They included traditional folk costume, food, and handicraft that were “unique” or “typical” of their respective lands. This was the first time that international exhibitions featured villages from around the world, and it was a model that appealed to Franz Joseph and would appear in the 1873 Exposition, as well as all of the expositions following. Further, the national pavilion, which was separate from the village, was an overt expression of imperial power, as the architect Karl von Hasenauer modeled it on an imperial palace. The 1867 Exposition thus gave the Austro-Hungarian Empire a chance to demonstrate its imperial power through architecture, as well as presenting a unified image of itself and the crown lands under its control, despite the recent Compromise. In 1873, the planners would also follow this process of self-identification, as they designed a stereotypical Austro-Hungarian village for the Vienna Exposition.²¹

Lastly, the Paris Exposition was important for international relations. Although it was customary for ambassadors and industrial representatives to appear at the fairs, the Paris Exposition was the first that brought heads of state together, who held diplomatic meetings.²² These meetings reinforced the idea of cooperation between nations, and encouraged the Kaiser to hold an international exposition in Vienna. Such an exposition

¹⁹ Kaufman, 20-22.

²⁰ Kaufman, 22.

²¹ Pemsel, 68-71 and Kaufmann, 21, 26.

²² Pemsel, 15-18.

would allow the Austro-Hungarian Empire to regain the great power position it had lost in international affairs, which it achieved through the so-called “Schönbrunner Conference.” During the summer months of the Exposition, the three emperors Franz Joseph, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Tsar Alexander II met at Schönbrunn Palace and agreed on a policy of mutual aid and protection.²³

The Modernizing Neo-Absolutist and the Incomplete Revolution of the Rising Bourgeoisie

The defeats of 1859 and 1866, to France and Prussia respectively, diminished the prestige and power of the Austrian Empire on the Continent and decreased its position within the great power system.²⁴ The loss of territory in Italy to France reduced the size of the Empire, and the loss to Prussia shifted hegemonic power in Central Europe from the Austria to Prussia.²⁵ After 1866, competition with Prussia’s expansionism drove foreign policy as the Empire looked to the Balkans and the east as territory that would allow them to regain a competitive edge in Central Europe. After the defeat of France in 1870-71 by Prussia, Franz Joseph realized that it would be better to ally with Germany rather than have a dangerous and powerful foe along the Austrian northern border.²⁶ Austria remained a great power in diplomatic protocol, but Europe regarded the Empire

²³ Pemsel, 81.

²⁴ Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918*. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1974), 268-272.

²⁵ Kann, 268.

²⁶ Kann, 276.

as a junior partner to the militarily powerful and highly industrialized Prussia.²⁷ By holding a World Exposition, Franz Joseph hoped to place Vienna within the pantheon of the other European great power capitals, including Paris and London, and thereby regain some of the Empire's lost standing. The financial success that the Paris and London Expositions brought, and the growth in prestige of the two capitals, encouraged Franz Joseph to hold an exposition. It was a chance for Austria-Hungary to demonstrate its economic recovery after the 1866 defeat.²⁸ Because of new farming techniques and favorable weather conditions, the agricultural powerhouse of the empire, Hungary, produced the "Wonder Crop" of 1867, which allowed for greater industrialization and increased exports to Western Europe.²⁹ The Vienna Exposition was also the first in the German-speaking lands, which satisfied the competitive desires of the Empire, but by sharing the center of the Industry Hall with Germany, Austria demonstrated a willingness to work together after the Prussian victory of 1870-71.

The nationalistic unrest and liberal reform that the Habsburg Empire faced leading up to the World Exposition also informed the expression of imperial identity. The widespread nationalistic revolts of the Polish, Croat, Slovene, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian-Serb citizens of the Austrian Empire in 1848-49 were defeated by the military force of the Empire, but only at great cost and with help from Russia. It was expected that this help would be later repaid during the Crimean War, but Austria's refusal to assist its

²⁷ Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 139.

²⁸ Findling, 50.

²⁹ Ernst Bruckmüller and Hannes Stekl, "Zur Geschichte des Bürgertums in Österreich," *Bürgertum im 19 Jahrhundert*. Ed. Jürgen Koska (München: 1988), 160-192.

former ally soured the relationship between the two powers.³⁰ The foreign relations problems, coupled with internal revolt, drained the Empire of economic resources. Over time, the financial burden forced the Kaiser to accept various reforms. For Hungary, the Compromise of 1867 gave it semi-autonomous control under the Dual Monarchy, and for the rest of the lands under Habsburg control, the reluctant adoption of a constitution in 1859 guaranteed the legal equality of all people under the law.³¹ The unrest and resulting reforms illustrated the difficulty that the house of Habsburg faced in ruling over a multi-ethnic and multi-national state. The reluctance with which Franz Joseph accepted the constitution, which he had previously overturned in 1851, highlighted the changing nature of the government, as the Kaiser allowed, hesitantly, the adoption of more liberal reforms. While Franz Joseph exerted far more control over the ministers and the government than did a constitutional monarch, the compromises struck between the Kaiser and the *Reichsrat* after the revolution of 1848 demonstrate the Kaiser's declining power. The strong involvement of the Kaiser and the imposition of his will in the Exposition were attempts by Franz Joseph to maintain power over the government and the crown lands in this period of transition, unrest, and instability.

The other sociopolitical aspect that affected the expression of Austrian identity at the Exposition was the rise of the bourgeois liberals in 1867, almost 20 years after the 1848 Revolution. Before 1848, a middle class, or *Bürgertum*, existed, but it was

³⁰ Beller, 123-125 and Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003), 114. Russia expected Austria to reciprocate this help during the Crimean War, but Austria remained neutral, and even seemed to lean towards fighting against Russia. Schwarzenburg famously announced that Austria would "amaze the world with our indifference," earning the hostility of Russia. Tim Chapman, *The Congress of Vienna: Origins, Processes, Results* (Routledge, 1998), chapter 4.

³¹ Beller, 123-142, Berend, 114, 264.

a cultural and legal concept, rather than a unified political entity.³² All members of the Bürgertum possessed a patent that granted them access to the city corporation's resources, such as military service and charity, but it had little political significance.³³ Generally, the Bürgertum consisted of artisans, merchants, and property owners that paid a direct tax to the corporation itself.³⁴ However, the Bürgertum also held a cultural connotation that broadened the class out to include academically trained professionals and other "bourgeois types" that lived in the city, were educated, maintained an air of social respectability, but did not necessarily own a house.³⁵ The 1848 Revolution provided the more conservative middle class and the upper bourgeoisie with the "rhetoric of Bürger unity," which unified the lower middle classes of artisans and schoolteachers together with the upper classes of wealthy banking families and property owners.³⁶ This unity was short-lived, however, as conflict arose between the interests of the wealthier and poorer members of the Bürgertum. Further, the franchise was strictly limited to taxpayers, keeping voting interests strictly upper bourgeois, effectively excluding the lower sectors of the middle class.³⁷

Because of the Revolution, Kaiser Franz I abdicated and Franz Joseph replaced him in formal recognition of the Revolution by the Habsburg monarchy.³⁸ However,

³² John Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 6.

³³ Boyer, 7.

³⁴ Boyer, 7.

³⁵ Boyer, 8.

³⁶ Boyer, 11.

³⁷ Boyer, 14-15.

³⁸ Beller, 130.

Franz Joseph did not accept the presence of the liberals in government, dismissed both the newly elected Parliament and their constitution, and replaced it with an absolutist, modernizing regime.³⁹ In 1851, the monarchy had restored rule, secured with military success and the ruthless diplomacy of Schwarzenburg.⁴⁰ In the period between 1851 and 1859, the Kaiser embarked on a program to modernize the army and the administration of the Empire to compete with the more “advanced” Western powers.⁴¹ The Kaiser also reformed the educational system in order to fill the gap between the secondary education standards between the German states and Austria. The Austrian Empire recruited teachers from non-Habsburg lands, most of which came from the German states and were Catholic, but held strong liberal and German-nationalist views.⁴² These teachers ensured the dominance of the liberal, Austro-German presence in higher education, which would influence the pan-Germanism of the later liberals.⁴³ The emphasis on German education was also a key component of the neo-absolutist program, which sought to re-legitimize its rule after 1848 through imperial unity and stress on the developmental role of the state. German, as opposed to the national languages such as Magyar, Polish, or Czech, was the official language of the Austrian Empire, reinforced by the standardization of language in

³⁹ Beller, 130-131.

⁴⁰ Beller, 131.

⁴¹ Beller, 131.

⁴² Beller, 132.

⁴³ Beller, 133, and Robin Okey. *The Habsburg Monarchy c. 1765-1918* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2001), 157.

education.⁴⁴ Ironically, it was the culturally conservative, neo-absolutist Kaiser that ensured Austro-German liberal dominance in higher education.

Economically, Franz Joseph also followed a liberal policy, as he deregulated the railroads and received support from prominent Jewish bankers and financiers for various reconstruction projects, including the renovation of the Ringstrasse in 1857.⁴⁵ Through regulation of the Danube, public transportation projects, and the reorganization and reclassification of roads, the imperial government attempted to stimulate increased modernization through infrastructural improvement.⁴⁶ The state also provided favorable terms to businessmen who sold off their businesses, and abolished guilds as a barrier to free trade in 1858-59.⁴⁷ Although the Kaiser rejected liberalism in the parliament, he implemented several liberal economic and educational reforms in an attempt to improve the economy and the financial base of the state. This modernizing neo-absolutism could not last, however, as the various wars carried out by the Austrian Empire, deflation, and loans resulted in severe financial hardship.⁴⁸ The economic burden forced the Kaiser to turn the strongest financial sector of Austrian society, the bourgeoisie, in order to keep the Empire afloat. The threat of financial collapse led to the reluctant acceptance of limited constitutionalism in 1859.

⁴⁴ Okey, 157.

⁴⁵ Beller, 133. The Ringstrasse initially began as an imperial project, but developed into an expression of liberal dominance because of the strong presence of bourgeois financial backing and interest.

⁴⁶ Okey, 166. Ivan Berend identifies the involvement of the state in these sorts of improvements, which do not carry any immediate financial gain for investors, as a key component to the development of a strong capitalist society. From notes: personal discussion, November 21, 2008.

⁴⁷ Okey, 169-170.

⁴⁸ Specifically, the mobilization for the Crimean War and the war in Italy were the two biggest financial burdens. In 1858, 40% of the state's income went towards paying off state debt. Okey, 172.

According to Carl Schorske, the liberals held political power for four decades, from 1860 to 1900, and transformed the government from a neo-absolutist monarchy into a constitutional one.⁴⁹ The liberal, modernizing reforms enacted by the Kaiser, as well as the continued work of *Vormärz* liberals within the government made the transition smoother.⁵⁰ Many of these individuals, such as the finance officer Ignaz von Plener, entered public service because of their sense of duty to a Josephinist state, which was dedicated to a progressive idealism.⁵¹ These bureaucrats came from the wealthier, upper reaches of the bourgeoisie. They quietly stayed within the government during and after the 1848 Revolution. Later, they joined with the rising bourgeoisie because of cultural affinities, more developed industrial and commercial interests, and the rhetoric of a common middle class.⁵² The economic disaster that plagued the Empire led Franz Joseph towards a policy of cooperation with the more powerful financial currents in the Empire, but he was still determined to maintain absolute power. Indeed, Franz Joseph held more control over the government than did a traditional constitutional monarch. He claimed the right of supervision over assemblies and associations, remained commander of the army, kept his own council in foreign affairs, and appointed aristocrats to over 40% of the positions in the highest levels of the interior ministries.⁵³ He could also appoint his own prime minister, dissolve the parliament at will, and veto legislation.⁵⁴ According to Paul

⁴⁹ Schorske, xxvi.

⁵⁰ *Vormärz* refers to the pre-1848 revolution era. Okey, 172.

⁵¹ Okey, 178.

⁵² Okey, 179.

⁵³ Berend, 259.

⁵⁴ Berend, 259.

Hayes, the Parliament was little more than an advisory body to the monarch.⁵⁵ In some ways, this suited the liberal bourgeois, as the position they held within government ensured the protection of their position, prestige, and honors as they strove to enter the upper echelons of the aristocracy.⁵⁶ Through their participation in government, many bourgeois hoped to join the upper classes.⁵⁷ John Boyer argues that the “chronic lack of an impressive legislative program in the 1870s” demonstrated the satisfaction of the liberals with the current structure of government.⁵⁸ Because the liberals in power did not try to enact any major reforms along liberal lines, it is possible that they were not interested in transforming the government to conform to their politics. Instead, the distractions of the bureaucracy and the promise of social advancement through governmental participation held more appeal to the bourgeoisie.

The relative inactivity may also be part of the shared interests of the imperial and bourgeois powers in government in the mid-nineteenth century. There were several points at which the interests of the imperial state and the liberals in Parliament coincided, and in many ways, the liberals in the Austrian Parliament were closer to the Kaiser than to liberals from the other crown lands. Both supported a strong, centralized government, asserted the primacy of German language and culture, and sought to modernize the economy. The liberals in power came from a very slim sector of society: they strongly

⁵⁵ Paul Hayes, *Themes in Modern European History, 1890-1945* (London: Routledge, 1992), 69.

⁵⁶ C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968), 561-67.

⁵⁷ John Toews, “Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time for Our Time,” *Journal of Modern History* (no. 63, September, 1991), 532.

⁵⁸ John Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 22.

identified with German culture and language and looked down upon the other ethnicities in the empire, which they saw as unfit to rule themselves competently.⁵⁹ Liberals therefore supported a strong, centralized government and rejected both federalist suggestions and the proposal, in 1870, of a “trialist,” Austro-Hungarian-Bohemian Empire.⁶⁰ The Kaiser abhorred this latter plan, as it further undermined the sense of unified control he asserted over the crown lands. The liberals also had their reasons for rejecting this suggestion. Part of the argument that the liberals made against a federalist (or further partitioned) structure for the Empire was based on a sense of superiority, which came from the close ties to German culture, perpetuated in education and the official language.⁶¹ The German dominance in secondary education and bureaucracy allowed the educated professionals, such as lawyers, professors, and doctors, to achieve the highest posts and therefore attempt to assimilate with the aristocracy through education and culture.⁶² For the bourgeois, domination came not through politics, but culture. The construction of the ornate, Baroque-style *Mietpalais* and *Wohnpalais*, which took as its formal model the noble palais, demonstrated this assertion of cultural affiliation and superiority.⁶³ Because the bourgeois believed themselves to be at the pinnacle of high culture within the empire, they felt they were the most qualified to rule. By maintaining power over those unfit to rule themselves, sophisticated taste and liberal

⁵⁹ Okey, 211.

⁶⁰ Berend, 105.

⁶¹ Okey, 206.

⁶² Okey, 203.

⁶³ Schorske, 47.

idealism would eventually trickle down from the bourgeois into the lower sectors of society, including the Slavs and the working classes.⁶⁴ Through this rhetoric of ethnic superiority, the liberals in power justified their position in government, which was provided by a strong, centralized, imperial bureaucracy. The Austro-German liberals held power in Parliament and jealously protected it against others, as they sought to exclude liberals from the other crown lands of the Empire, most of which supported nationalism and separation from the monarchy. Finally, the bulk of the liberal party, which came from the Bürgertum, was more concerned with protecting their commercial and industrial interests and their privileges than revolutionizing the government that protected their sociopolitical position.⁶⁵ They pursued a laissez-faire economic policy, but supported intervention by the state for infrastructural improvement.⁶⁶ In this way, they agreed with the reforms already enacted by Franz Joseph, and continued to support similar reforms and programs.

The Vienna Exposition expressed these shared interests of the imperial and bourgeois ruling elites. A modernized, capitalistic economy, a strong, centralized government, and an emphasis on German culture and education were the three main themes that resonated most loudly at the Exposition, expressed in the architecture and exhibitions of the Empire. However, the planning of the Exposition exposes the specific nature of the incomplete liberal revolution in the Austrian Empire, as the Kaiser

⁶⁴ Okey, 211.

⁶⁵ Okey, 203.

⁶⁶ Okey, 207.

continued to assert his control over the commissions and planning process in an attempt to continue his neo-absolutist reign.

Designing Identity: The Planning of the 1873 Vienna Exposition

The decision to have a World Exposition in Vienna was discussed in the 1850s, after the success of the Great Exhibition in London.⁶⁷ Trade publications and newspapers appeared in 1857 that argued for the benefits offered by expositions to trade and industry. A Vienna Exposition promised the opening of new markets, the development of trade contracts, and the promotion of international industrial development.⁶⁸ Although the Kaiser supported the idea of an exposition, the lack of a commission to regulate and coordinate the success of a world exposition and the poor economic conditions of the Empire delayed the Exposition for nearly 20 years.⁶⁹ The economic burden of maintaining a standing army to fight uprisings at home and foreign enemies abroad drained the Empire of the additional resources necessary for an impressive international exposition. There were also concerns about Vienna's physical condition.⁷⁰ Members of the parliament worried about the lack of railways, stations, hotels, and other accommodations for foreigners.⁷¹ Vienna was in no condition, many argued, to host an

⁶⁷ Pemsel, 13.

⁶⁸ Franz Migerka, *Über die Bedeutung der Industrie-Austellungen* (Wien: 1857).

⁶⁹ Pemsel, 17.

⁷⁰ Pemsel, 18.

⁷¹ Pemsel, 18.

international exposition in the 1850s and 1860s.⁷² The city, contemporary economist August Oncken argued, needed to be built up before it could hold an international Exposition.⁷³ Debate over Vienna's preparedness continued until 1870, when the Kaiser officially approved the planning commission set up informally in 1869, headed by the president of the Lower Austrian Industrial Association, Franz von Wertheim.⁷⁴ Von Wertheim was one of the initial supporters of the Vienna Exposition and had experience setting up the local trade expositions and industrial fairs. Tentatively arranged for 1873, the Exposition would demonstrate the Empire's economic strength after 1867.⁷⁵ It also coincided with the 25th jubilee of Franz Joseph's reign. The later date also gave architects and engineers a few more years to continue the Ringstrasse redevelopment that had begun in 1857, considered the seed of urban renewal and an expression of both imperial will, as the Kaiser had initially proposed it, and also the self-confidence and self-assurance of the upper middle class.⁷⁶ The government and planners both hoped that this extra time would be sufficient in preparing Vienna as an international, cosmopolitan city and an imperial capital. The Exposition represented an important cultural, political, and economic event for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but its planning also expressed the underlying concerns and desires of both the Kaiser and the liberal bourgeoisie.

⁷² August Oncken, *Die Wiener Weltausstellung 1873* (Berlin: 1873), 17-18.

⁷³ Oncken, 5.

⁷⁴ Pemsel, 18-19.

⁷⁵ Ernst Bruckmüller and Hannes Stekl, "Zur Geschichte des Bürgertums in Österreich," *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*. Ed. Jürgen Koska (München: 1988), 160-192.

⁷⁶ Pemsel, 15, Schorske, 24-29.

Franz Joseph exerted imperial control over Exposition planning through the commissions charged to oversee it. The first commission set up to plan the Exposition grew out of the informal commission set up by Franz von Wertheim in an effort to bolster support for an international exposition. Members of the Lower Austrian Industrial Association made up the bulk of the committee, along with other investors, industrialists, and entrepreneurs.⁷⁷ Because of the massive amount of work undertaken by von Wertheim, the Kaiser gave his commission the official seal of imperial approval to continue the planning.⁷⁸ This was a necessary measure, as the Kaiser reserved the right to oversee all assemblies and commissions as part of his neo-absolutist regime, as stipulated in the constitution.⁷⁹ However, the Kaiser later dissolved this commission and appointed members to a new Imperial Commission. By selecting the members of the new Imperial Commission, Franz Joseph took steps to ensure that the Exposition would be closer to the expression of imperial identity than if the president of the Lower Austrian Industry Association controlled it alone. The other expositions set up by von Wertheim were strictly industrial, and they demonstrated the new technological advances made in Lower Austria. It is possible that the Kaiser feared that regionalism or industrial advancement would dominate the Vienna Exposition, rather than emphasizing the improvements made throughout the Empire. A new commission under the aegis of the Kaiser ensured that the

⁷⁷ Pemsel, 18-19.

⁷⁸ Pemsel, 18-19.

⁷⁹ Berend, "The monarch and his government claimed the right of supervision of associations and assemblies," 259. This effectively took power away from all associations, as they needed to have official sanction by the Kaiser, and meant that he could exert more control than a constitutional monarch could. By selecting the imperial commission, as well as dissolving the previous commission, the Kaiser maintained imperial control over the association that had sprung up to direct the Exposition planning.

empire would be represented as a unified whole, and that development in the economic, agricultural, educational, industrial and cultural sectors of society progressed under the leadership of the imperial state. Although there is no evidence that there was any conflict between the Kaiser and von Wertheim, as von Wertheim remained a member of the imperial commission, the dissolution and recreation of a commission demonstrated the control Franz Joseph exerted over the planning process.⁸⁰

Franz Joseph controlled the planning of the Exposition directly in the choices and exclusions that he made for the members of the planning commissions, which demonstrated the desire for broader imperial control. The Kaiser set up separate District Commissions in order to organize and oversee the raw goods, industry, and cultural displays of the Austro-Hungarian crown lands. Because of the precedent set by the 1867 Paris Exposition, Hungary would present its industrial achievements separately from Austria as a whole, although it would be integrated into the traditional village display of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This outraged nobles in the Bohemian parliament who had fought for Bohemian nationalism and were already angry at the rejection of a proposed “trialist” empire. They demanded that they should also have a separate exhibition for their industrial and cultural achievements, and even threatened to withdraw from the Exposition completely and hold their own exposition in Prague.⁸¹ In response, the Kaiser dissolved their district commission and barred them from participating in the planning process.⁸² However, the Kaiser allowed the Bohemian sugar manufacturers, already part

⁸⁰ Pemsel, 19.

⁸¹ Thomas Capek, *Bohemia Under Habsburg Misrule* (Prague, 1915), 77-79.

⁸² Capek, 78.

of the planning committee, to remain in the Imperial Commission.⁸³ The state put up half of the funding for the Exposition, but the Kaiser depended upon private and industrial financing for the rest. It was therefore in his interest to keep the sugar manufacturers, some of the most prosperous individuals in the Empire, on the commission. The Exposition was also in the interests of the Bohemian industrialists, who backed down quickly when confronted with the economic possibilities the Exposition presented.⁸⁴ The Kaiser's prohibition of the Bohemian nobles' demands were part of the broader refusal of national rights and recognition to the lands under Habsburg control, as Franz Joseph refused to let them present as a separate entity, but the participation of the industrialists demonstrates the weakness of that control. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Habsburg Empire faced and suppressed national uprisings, refused to allow teachers to educate students in their native languages, and only allowed legal equality, regardless of ethnicity, in 1867.⁸⁵ The acceptance of the Basic Constitution, which secured these rights, came under severe financial duress because of economic problems at home and abroad. The financial necessity caused by the prolonged battles with nationalists at home and enemies abroad led to the cooperation of the Kaiser with the industrialists, despite their initial display of national interest.

The Kaiser chose as protector of the Exposition commission Archduke Karl Ludwig, his younger brother, and as president, Archduke Rainer, a member of the Tuscan

⁸³ Pemsel, 16.

⁸⁴ Pemsel, 16, 20.

⁸⁵ Beller, 144.

branch of the Habsburg-Lorraine family.⁸⁶ By selecting members of the monarchical family to oversee and guide the planning of the Exposition, Franz Joseph ensured that the imperial identity would dominate the Exposition. By selecting two family members, Franz Joseph maintained the traditional aristocratic and family privilege in controlling governmental commissions as well as imperial command through his family. Archduke Rainer was also useful to the Exposition as a diplomat. He secured the participation of several nations from the Far East and Asia through his extensive travels, which provided the Exposition with an unprecedented number of first-time exhibitors and expanded exhibits from previous participants, such as Japan.⁸⁷ The inclusion of so many exhibits from the East also highlighted the unique position of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as the mid-point between the East and West, with the hopes that this would bolster Vienna's status as an international capital and powerful intermediary.⁸⁸ By demonstrating the diplomatic relationships that the Empire enjoyed with the nations of the East, and its cultural and economic similarity to the West, the Exposition would help Vienna regain its lost prestige on the Continent and emphasize its unique position as a Western gateway to the East.

⁸⁶ Archduke Karl Ludwig was also the presumptive heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne; after the suicide of his nephew, Crown Prince Rudolph, he was next in line. He later renounced his succession rights in favor of his son, Franz Ferdinand. ("The Crown Prince's Successor," *New York Times*, 2/2/1889). Archduke Rainer, <http://thepeerage.com/p11175.htm>. Archduke Rainer also served as the deputy under the Kaiser, and his duties included overseeing the ministerial meetings to exert imperial will when Franz Joseph could not attend. (Okey, 161)

⁸⁷ Pemsel, 20-23.

⁸⁸ Oncken, chapter 1.

Archduke Rainer would also oversee the largest commission for an exposition to date, with 215 members.⁸⁹ Although he represented the controlling imperial presence and commanded the expression of the imperial identity at the Exposition, the high official members included 43 factory and industry owners, 17 professors, 12 liberal town councilors, 14 high ministers of the Trade, Inner, and Foreign Ministries, seven bankers, eight directors of private railway companies, and 10 landowners.⁹⁰ The Kaiser selected or approved all these individuals, but the wide range of bourgeois participants demonstrated both the changing structure of the government and the alliance formed between the Kaiser and the middle class, upon whom the Kaiser depended for financial support. Half of the financing for the Exposition would come from the government, but the other half came from industrial and private interests.⁹¹ This “participation in a commission dominated by the high aristocracy was an unheard of gain in prestige” for the liberal bourgeois members, and it meant that they would express their interests, as well as those they shared with the controlling imperial power.⁹²

The selection of Baron Wilhelm Schwarz-Senborn as General Director for the Exposition was both an interesting and logical choice for the Kaiser. Born in 1816 to a Saxon father and French mother in Vienna, Schwarz-Senborn earned a doctorate in chemistry and worked as a pharmacist until joining the Lower Austrian Industrial

⁸⁹ Paris had only 41 members for its 1867 Exposition commission, which was larger than the 15 London employed for the 1851 Great Exposition. Pemsel, 23.

⁹⁰ Pemsel, 24.

⁹¹ Pemsel, 20.

⁹² Pemsel, 24.

Association in 1840, becoming secretary in 1841.⁹³ After studying finance abroad in Italy and Germany in 1848, he assimilated with the aristocracy through a position as a civil servant, becoming first the secretary to the Ministry of Commerce and later the Consulate General and ambassador in Paris.⁹⁴ He worked closely with the Kaiser in expressing the imperial interests of the Habsburg Empire abroad, and the Kaiser bestowed upon him the title of Baron, officially signaling his entrance into the upper classes.⁹⁵ Schwarz-Senborn, as ambassador to Paris, directed the Austrian exhibitions from 1855 onward, and most notably guided the construction of the model of an Austrian imperial palace as its national pavilion at the 1867 Paris Exposition.⁹⁶ He supported the 1873 Exposition from both an economic and political standpoint, arguing that it would bring financial benefits from tourism and trade contracts, and bolster the stature of Austria as the host country.⁹⁷ The Kaiser allowed Schwarz-Senborn an unprecedented amount of control over the Exposition, giving him free reign to run the commission in the way he saw fit and select the architects and engineers that would design the buildings for the Exposition.⁹⁸ Because of his close work with Franz Joseph, as well as developing a favorable imperial identity for the Empire abroad, Schwarz-Senborn was a natural choice as General Director of the Vienna Exposition. However, Franz Joseph placed Schwartz-Senborn's commission

⁹³ Christian Stifter, Staatsmann und Volksbildner. Freiherr Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn (1816-1903) in: *Spurensuche. Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung und Wissenschaftspopularisierung*, (Wien: 1992), 18.

⁹⁴ Stifter, 18-19.

⁹⁵ Stifter, 18-19.

⁹⁶ Stiffler, 18 and Stamper, 233.

⁹⁷ Stamper, 231.

⁹⁸ Pemsel, 20-21.

under the control of the Kaiser-ordered Commission for the Assistance to the Administration of the Exposition.⁹⁹

Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn selected both the individuals that would work directly underneath him, as well as the architect and engineer that would construct the buildings of the World Exposition. The dominant themes that guided the construction and layout of the Exposition were the liberal ideals of improvement and progress, coupled with a systematic organizational strategy that would encourage visitors to move through the process of civilization. Schwarz-Senborn wanted the Exposition to tell a story of human progress, moving from raw goods, to production and industrialization, and finally high culture and art. By moving with the raw goods through their processing and manipulation into finished products, visitors would see the industrial process from start to finish. Beyond these consumer goods lay the art product, removed from the crude concept of “exchange value” and indicative of the higher realms of taste and culture to which the bourgeois aspired. Their industrial capability and resulting purchase power gave the middle class the ability to identify with the aristocracy on a cultural level. The heavy, Baroque ornamentation the bourgeois favored reflected identification with the past and the symbols of the ostentation of the aristocracy. Through modernization and industrialization, the bourgeois had the ability to define themselves as the cultural upper class. The physical separation of art and industry further reinforced this concept.

The Vienna Exposition of 1873 was the first to separate the different spheres of human endeavor into discrete buildings, with exhibition halls for Industry, Machinery,

⁹⁹ Pemsel, 24.

Architecture, Education, Art, and Raw Materials.¹⁰⁰ This thematic classification was an expression of progress, as it not only “told” the story of human civilization, but also mimicked a “scientific” approach in logically identifying the steps of evolution. Jakob Falke and Rudolph von Eitelburger, founders of the Museum of Art and Industry and the Museum of Applied Arts, respectively, supported this organizational strategy. The layout of the Exposition functioned as a pedagogic tool, guiding visitors through the stages of civilization and the work of man on raw goods to create industrial products and finally high culture, the pinnacle of human achievement. They hoped that the Exposition would bring in new collections and support the development of their museums, such as the Great Exhibition had done for the South Kensington (Victoria and Albert) Museum in London.¹⁰¹ The combination of progress, science, and pedagogy was an expression of a modern bourgeois identity, which sought advancement through education.

Schwarz-Senborn’s choices for the architect and engineer reflect sensitivity to both the expression of bourgeois and imperial identity. The initial designer of the Rotunda, John Scott Russell, was an English engineer whose experience drew from his work as a ship designer.¹⁰² He was one of the finalists in the competition for the design of the Crystal Palace, and worked in the modern materials of iron and steel. His connection with the Great Exhibition and his experience with modern materials appealed to Schwarz-Senborn, who hoped that his designs would “represent the condition of modern

¹⁰⁰ John and Margaret Gold, *Cities of Culture: Staging International Festivals and the Urban Agenda, 1851-2000*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 84.

¹⁰¹ Jakob von Falke, *Kunstindustrie und die Wiener Weltausstellung* (Wien: 1873), chapter 1.

¹⁰² Pemsel, 36.

civilization, its culture and industry...and show itself in comparison with other countries of Europe, especially England and France.”¹⁰³ The use of modern materials and an English engineer with previous exposition design experience ensured a continuity of design with the previous expositions and a display of cosmopolitan talent.

Unfortunately, Russell’s designs were riddled with imprecise measurements and inaccuracies that had to be corrected and redesigned by the architect Karl von Hasenauer.¹⁰⁴ Hasenauer was an appealing choice for both the Kaiser and the bourgeois. In 1867, he designed the replica of the imperial palace that functioned as the Austrian pavilion at the Paris Exposition, creating an expression of Austria-Hungary as an imperial entity.¹⁰⁵ Hasenauer was a student of Eduard van der Nüll and August Sicardsburg, two of the most productive architects of the Ringstrasse era and the original designers of the Industry Palace.¹⁰⁶ Hasenauer’s improvements on the designs for the Rotunda and the Industry Hall, developed with his partner Gottfried Semper, reflect his training in the decorative style and historicism that dominated the Ringstrasse, and as a result, the Industry Hall was the first completed neo-Renaissance building in Vienna.¹⁰⁷ Hasenauer is responsible for the design of the exterior, as well as the decision to use masonry on the outside and an iron-framed roof structure without glass skylights or vaults.¹⁰⁸ Theophil Hansen, architect of the Arsenal and Heeresgeschichtliches Museum in Vienna, and

¹⁰³ Stamper, 231.

¹⁰⁴ Pemsel, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Stamper, 233.

¹⁰⁶ Pemsel, 36-27, Stamper, 230.

¹⁰⁷ Stamper, 239.

¹⁰⁸ Stamper, 233.

Henrich Ferstel, architect of the Votive Church and the Museum of Art and Industry, guided Hasenauer in the use of these new building materials, which also influenced the design.¹⁰⁹ Also significant was Otto Wagner's participation, as he designed the interior of the Architecture Hall.¹¹⁰ This hall was the main vehicle at the World Exposition that showcased the development and direction of architecture in Vienna. The intention of the planners was that this hall would boost the development of city planning and redevelopment in a liberal and progressivist mold.¹¹¹ Some of the foremost architects of Vienna, including Theophil von Hansen, Henrich Ferstel, Gottfried Semper, and Karl von Hasenauer displayed plans, schematics, and models of the planned *Prachtbauten* and *Großbauten* intended for the Ringstrasse.¹¹² The joint development of the Ringstrasse and the use of World Exposition as a means to change the urban landscape led to similarities in their execution. The rest of the Exposition buildings were constructed in the neo-Renaissance style, which integrated well with the architectural program of the Ringstrasse and reinforced the expression of bourgeois identity.

Through the Exposition: Architecture and Exhibits

The Vienna Exposition opened on 1 May 1873 in the Prater. This location was significant for the Kaiser, as Joseph II, the “people’s ruler,” had dedicated the park to the

¹⁰⁹ Pemsel, 39-40.

¹¹⁰ Pemsel, 38.

¹¹¹ Pemsel, 68.

¹¹² Pemsel, 68.

people of Austria in 1766. By holding the World Exposition here, Franz Joseph hoped to attach his reputation as a modernizing emperor to that of Joseph II, whom many regarded as an enlightened and progressive absolutist.¹¹³ Joseph II believed in a social contract between the ruler and the ruled, supported the development of Rococo architecture and music, instituted the abolition of serfdom in 1781, reformed the relationship of the church and the state, granted protection and religious freedom to the Jews, and attempted to reform the educational system.¹¹⁴ Although many of his reforms were later overturned or tempered, Franz Joseph saw himself as heir to this enlightened form of absolutism through his modernizing programs. The Kaiser hoped that the World Exposition, through both its historically significant location and its exhibitions and architecture, would demonstrate his progressive guidance of the Austrian state to Europe and the rest of the world.

The imperial presence was very strong at the Exposition. The landscaping mimicked the layout of the gardens at the entrance of the Schloss Belvedere, a Baroque imperial palace built by Prince Eugene of Savoy in the third district of Vienna. Dominique Girard, the Bavarian Electorate landscape architect, laid out the gardens in a symmetrical, formal French manner, with regular clipped hedges and straight, graveled paths.¹¹⁵ The main garden at the entrance of the World Exposition would follow a similar stereometric plan. A long, central path, the Kaiser Alle, led up to the main entrance of the Rotunda, flanked on either side by shrubbery, flowers, and shallow pools arranged in

¹¹³ Beller, 90-98.

¹¹⁴ Beller, 90-98.

¹¹⁵ Official Belvedere website: <http://www.belvedere.at/jart/prj3/belvedere/main>

neat, geometric patterns that mirrored each other on each side. As visitors walked up the Kaiser Alle, they were confronted with the massive Rotunda, the center of the Exposition, and the center of a strong, imperial expression of Austria.

The Rotunda was the largest dome in the world and marked the pinnacle of architectural competition in the history of the world's expositions up to this point. The modern building materials, many imported from Germany, made its immense size possible. Gigantic radial iron girders, sheathed with iron plates (similar to those used on ships' hulls), framed the colossal Rotunda.¹¹⁶ It was a large conical shape that rose from the center of the Industry Hall, topped by two lanterns that gave visitors a chance to survey the Exposition and the city. The smaller of the two was 25 feet in diameter, which was in turn capped by a massive replica of the imperial crown.¹¹⁷ The Austrian Crown was made from "wrought iron plate, gilded and decorated with glass imitations of the crown jewels," an imperial symbol made out of thoroughly modern material.¹¹⁸ The use of iron and glass in this gigantic imperial reconstruction demonstrated the link between the ancient absolutist state and its modernizing program, as it joined the ancient symbol of the Kaiser with contemporary industrial materials, the production of which was made possible through state sponsorship and economic guidance. Visitors could marvel at this crown, as well as survey Vienna and its development from the roof of the Rotunda, which

¹¹⁶ Stamper, 229.

¹¹⁷ Findling, 50.

¹¹⁸ Findling, 50.

was accessible by hydraulic lifts, created by the elevator firm of Johann Haag, installed on the outside of the building.¹¹⁹

Visitors would enter the Rotunda through a grand arch designed after the triumphal arch of Titus in Rome.¹²⁰ Hasenauer embellished the arch with the “most florid iconographic program,” which included statuary, sculptural reliefs, and coats of arms that all represented the Kaiser, the nation, and the Empire.¹²¹ Two statues, representing Austria and Hungary, the lands under the Kaiser’s control, stood within the recessed main opening in a three-bay arcade framed with delicate columns. In the two side bays, niches contained the seated figures of Peace and Prosperity, which were the cornerstones of the Habsburg monarchy and the goals of Franz Joseph.¹²² Above the niches were cast friezes of a youthful Kaiser Franz Joseph on the left, flanked with attendants, with a similar scene of the Kaiserin Elisabeth on the right.¹²³ These sculptures, designed by Hasenauer, reflect his love of Greek decoration.¹²⁴ The depiction of Kaiser Franz Joseph as young and leonine may be a reference to the sculptures of Alexander the Great created by Lysippus, who sought to present Alexander in an idealized form, a depiction of model leadership qualities, rather than realistic representation.¹²⁵ These references to classical

¹¹⁹ Karlheinz Roschitz, *Wiener Weltausstellung 1873* (Wien: Jugend und Volk Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), 77.

¹²⁰ Roschitz, 78 and Stamper, 236.

¹²¹ Stamper, 236.

¹²² Stamper, 236.

¹²³ Stamper, 236.

¹²⁴ Roschitz, 62.

¹²⁵ Ernest Arthur Gardner, *A Handbook of Greek Sculpture*, (New York: Macmillan, 1897), 409.

antiquity furthered the representation of Franz Joseph as a strong leader and emperor, and were overseen and approved by the Kaiser himself.¹²⁶

When visitors walked around the Rotunda and Industry Palace, all of the iron and steel that made its massive size possible was obscured from view. Hasenauer determined that decoration would cover all of the iron framing elements of the Rotunda and the Industry Palace on both the exterior and the interior in order to make it more consistent with the civic architecture under construction on the Ringstrasse.¹²⁷ Inside the Rotunda, and extending into the long Industry Palace, the iron supports were molded into traditional forms, encased in wooden piers, or wrapped in painted canvas to mimic the frescos and murals of the ceilings in both the new public buildings and the private dwellings of the urban bourgeois.¹²⁸ The interior of the Rotunda was a blend of the Kaiser's personal rooms and those of the bourgeois *Wohnpalais*, with their aristocratic, Baroque-style décor.¹²⁹ A large central fountain sat in the middle of the Rotunda, and the industrial exhibitions of Austria and Germany shared the central space around the edges of the Rotunda itself.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire presented 53,300 exhibits total, with 9,000 exhibits from Cisleithania.¹³⁰ The most active participants from the industrial sector included the Lower Austrian Industrial Association.¹³¹ Hungary presented separately, with 3,500

¹²⁶ Stamper, 239.

¹²⁷ Stamper, 239.

¹²⁸ Stamper, 239.

¹²⁹ Roschitz, 62.

¹³⁰ Pemsel, 47.

¹³¹ Pemsel, 47.

exhibits, and did not share the central exhibition space around the Rotunda.¹³² The German Reich, which understood the Vienna Exposition as a “German undertaking” (*das deutsche Unternehmen*), presented 8,000 exhibits, second only to the Empire.¹³³ As the first international exposition in German-speaking lands, it was of utmost importance to Germany to demonstrate its industrial and cultural advancement in solidarity with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹³⁴ Pan-German liberals in Vienna touted this joint exhibition of Austrian and German industrial efforts as part of the broader movement towards a *Großdeutschland*, based on shared cultural, linguistic, and intellectual characteristics.¹³⁵ Although the defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866 quashed this hope for many, the World Exhibition reignited the hope, in many Austro-German liberals, that unification was possible.

The Rotunda was also the starting point of all imperial processions through the World Exposition, given for the 33 rulers, 13 heirs to the throne, and 20 princes that came to visit during the summer months.¹³⁶ Not only were these heads of state treated to a grand tour through the Exposition, but grand balls, dances, parties, an evening at the theater or opera, and a military parade filled the three to six days that each individual stayed.¹³⁷ Most of these royal visitors lodged in one of the imperial palaces, with a few

¹³² Pemsel, 47.

¹³³ Pemsel, 47.

¹³⁴ Pemsel, 47.

¹³⁵ Pemsel, 16-17.

¹³⁶ Pemsel, 43. These heads of state included the Shah of Persia, King Victor Immanuel of Italy, Tsar Alexander II, King Wilhelm I, King Leopold II of Belgium, the Empress Augusta, Otto von Bismarck, and Nicolas I of Montenegro.

¹³⁷ Pemsel, 43.

staying at the newly built hotels in the heart of Vienna. The 1873 Exposition had more than 35 sovereign states in attendance, breaking all previous records in World Exposition history, which spoke to the broad personal and diplomatic network developed by Archduke Rainer and Karl Ludwig. The high number of heads of state invited, as well as the treatment that they received, bolstered the Empire's diplomatic standing, and gave the government a chance to show a new, developing Vienna to the world.

The imperial processions that began in the Rotunda proceeded along the Industry Palace and then out to the grounds of the Exposition. It was the longest exhibition hall to date, 1,000 feet longer than the Crystal Palace and 1,200 feet longer than the 1867 Paris Exposition Hall.¹³⁸ The exterior of the Industry Palace was built up with brick and covered with stucco, which was scored to mimic stone, and employed terra cotta and entablature in order to remain consistent with Hasenauer's vision of a neo-Renaissance-style building and with the completed and unfinished buildings of the Ringstrasse. At the time, only the Opera House, the Museum of Art and Industry, and the Epstein Palais, a bourgeois, neo-Renaissance *Wohnpalais* constructed by Theophil von Hansen for the industrialist Gustav Ritter von Epstein, were complete. However, the 1873 Exposition also gave architects the chance to show off the new developments in the city, and they held grand ceremonies for the laying of the Rathaus and Treasury foundations. Other buildings in various stages of construction that visitors could tour, or see the models and plans for, included the Hoftheater, the University, the Parliament, and the Art and Natural

¹³⁸ Stamper, 235.

History Museums.¹³⁹ These buildings expressed the liberal ideals of a German-based education, both in the University and through museums, and a modernized economy, upon which the liberal, parliamentary government did not interfere. All of these buildings borrowed their styles from the past, taking from “historical associations [that] were most appropriate to the representational purpose of a given building.”¹⁴⁰ The use of neo-Renaissance linked the function of the building to that of higher education and bourgeois liberal values.¹⁴¹ The Industry Hall, which housed the final products of an educated, bourgeois elite whose industrial enterprises flourished under a system of laissez-faire economics, represented the achievements of the bourgeois under the reforms of the Kaiser. It is fitting, therefore, that it (and the other halls of the Exposition) would employ a neo-Renaissance style in keeping with the building program of the Ringstrasse and the appropriate use of historicism.

The original designers of the Industry Hall, August Sicardsburg and Eduard van der Nüll, came up with an innovative organizational system for the space within the hall. Later refined by Hasenauer and Russell into its final form, the “fish bone” or “fish scale” system (*Fischgrätensystem*) divided the long central galleries into a series of intersecting galleries for the exhibits of individual countries.¹⁴² The combination of this highly organized layout, planned along the east-west Mercator projection that slotted each nation into its respective, relative geographical location, as well as the exhaustive, encyclopedic

¹³⁹ Pemsel, 15-16.

¹⁴⁰ Schorske, 36.

¹⁴¹ Schorske, 36, 37 and Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 283-286.

¹⁴² Stamper, 235.

nature of the other exhibits outside of the Industry Hall caused one contemporary observer to remark that Vienna's Exposition was the first "true" World Exposition.¹⁴³ Twenty-six different exhibition categories ranged from everyday objects to highly-developed technological advances. Coal mining, chemical engineering, processed food, dry goods, graphic arts, crafts, musical instruments, commoner's fully furnished dwellings, transportation, church art and artifacts, objects and art from primitive or past societies, and educational systems were all on display.¹⁴⁴ The systematic classification of different materials and products marked the beginning of a trend in World Expositions to attempt to apply a sort of scientific thinking to the design of exhibits and fairs. By classifying the different elements of the human endeavor, such as technological development and artistic expression, planners could group different exhibits together based on type, inviting visitors to compare and contrast among different nations and ethnic groups.¹⁴⁵ These sorts of comparisons often had strong nationalistic or racial undertones, and in the later fairs, starting with the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, science was used to further support the assertion of racial superiority implied by the exhibitions.¹⁴⁶ Although the Vienna Exposition did not use comparative exhibits or science to create a racial argument, the construction of a "traditional" Austrian

¹⁴³ Georg Lehnert, *Illustrierte Geschichte des Kunstgewerbes* (Berlin: 1902-1909), 476. "...die Wiener Schau als die erste eigentliche Weltausstellung"

¹⁴⁴ Robert H. Thurston, ed. *Reports of the Commissioners of the United States to the International Exhibition held at Vienna, 1873* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), 59-60.

¹⁴⁵ See Robert Rydell, Introduction, *The Books of the Fairs* (Washington D.C: Smithsonian, 1983), 5-7.

¹⁴⁶ Rydell, *All the World's A Fair*. This is the main argument of his book.

village, illustrative of the various “types” of cottages found in the crown lands of the Empire can be seen as a part of this comparative and classificatory display.

The inspiration for a “traditional” Austrian village came from the villages constructed at the 1867 Paris Exposition, of which one was representative of the Austrian Empire. Schwarz-Senborn put forth the idea to construct an imperial village for the 1873 Exposition, and the Kaiser and committee both supported this suggestion.¹⁴⁷ Moving east from the Rotunda, and past the Fine Arts Hall, visitors would pass various national villages from Russia, Sweden, France, Turkey, and Persia before coming upon the Austrian village. It would follow the same plan as that used in the 1867 village; each of the crown lands would be represented by a “commoner’s dwelling” typical to that region, but they would all be placed together in one central area. Cisleithania and Transleithania would come together in this area, as a typical northern Hungarian peasant hut represented Hungary, creating a sense of false cohesion in an increasingly fragile empire.¹⁴⁸ Through consultation with the district committees for the different imperial lands, Schwarz-Senborn generated a series of plans for the various typical agrarian huts that would be used. He employed Martin Kien, a Viennese artist and craftsman who designed entryways, to execute his agrarian hut designs.¹⁴⁹ This choice has particularly interesting implications, as it was not the individual crown lands that maintained ultimate control over the expression of their “typical” hut. Instead, a committee and Viennese artisan would construct their identity. Although each part of the village was constructed

¹⁴⁷ Pemsel, 69.

¹⁴⁸ Pemsel, 69.

¹⁴⁹ Pemsel, 69.

according to local tradition, one craftsman and central planning committee produced it all.

Peasants were present in the village, serving food, and performing traditional dances, songs, and plays. Part of the purpose of this display was to show the good care that the peasants received as citizens of the Empire under the watchful and benevolent eye of the “father-protector,” Franz Joseph.¹⁵⁰ By presenting all of the crown lands together in this idyllic setting of peasant harmony, Austria-Hungary put forth an image of a strong, traditional empire that lacked ethnic and national differences.¹⁵¹ This perfect village, coupled with the emphasis on the modernization and industrialization of the Empire seen in the Industry and Machinery Halls, presented a dual identity that was at once modern but also traditional.

A smaller Transleithanian village, also designed by Kien, furthered this emphasis on tradition. It was located next to the agricultural and forestry exhibits on the eastern end of the Exposition, near the main village. It linked customary farming practices, some of which were unchanged from the medieval period, with their output, which formed the backbone of the empire. In this exhibit, Hungarians had “abdicated any role” of self-representation, meaning that it was “mainly a vehicle for Austrian propaganda.”¹⁵²

Schwarz-Senborn and Kien had a free hand in designing what type of Transleithanian

¹⁵⁰ Pemsel, 69.

¹⁵¹ Bjarne Stoklund, “International Exhibitions and the New Museum Concept in the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Ethnologica Scandinavica* vol 23 (1993), 112.

¹⁵² In the 1896 Budapest International Exposition, villages would again be on display, but designed by native Hungarians in the service of nationalism. Bonnie Effros, “Selling archeology and anthropology: early medieval artifacts at the *Expositions universelles* and the *Wiener Weltausstellung 1867-1900*,” *Early Medieval Europe* 16 (2008), 34.

identity would be expressed at the Exposition. Although the agricultural surplus produced by the Transleithanian lands was crucial for industrialization both within the Empire and in Western Europe, other developments, including the renovation in the newly united cities of Buda and Pest, were ignored.¹⁵³ This combination of agricultural output and traditional village reinforced the image of an older empire based on a feudal economic system. One contemporary observer, commenting on the traditional wooden timber dwellings of the Transleithanian village, wrote “the contemporary inhabitants...take no part in the great progress owing from the conquests of modern civilization.”¹⁵⁴ This was similar to an observation made by Alfred Normand, a visitor to the 1867 Paris Exposition, who drew a parallel between the “oriental and northern [Austrian]” lands, saying that what they “had in common was that both maintained traditional cultures untouched by modern Europe’s inexorable march of progress.”¹⁵⁵ While the planners did not explicitly invite this comparison, they did intend to highlight the long history of the empire and the traditions of the people unfit to rule themselves effectively.

Both the main Austro-Hungarian and the smaller Transleithanian villages, combined with the other modern exhibitions, presented the dual identity of a hereditary, ancient empire striving to modernize and compete with the Western world. However, the other planners of the Exposition, Rudolph von Eitelburger and Jakob Falke, saw the villages as a chance to preserve the fast-disappearing traditions of the various peoples of

¹⁵³ Buda and Pest were united in 1873, and reconstruction of the city, similar to the Ringstrasse development, began shortly thereafter. John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900* (New York: Grove City Press, 1994), 70.

¹⁵⁴ Edoardo Sonzognno, ed. *L’esposizione universale di Vienna del 1873 illustrata*, (Milan:1873), 182. Translation by Edward Kaufman.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Kaufman, 21.

the crown lands and a way to stimulate the budding arts and crafts movement.¹⁵⁶

Eitelburger and Falke hoped that the presentations of peasant handiworks, including pottery, weaving, and textiles would provoke interest in their museum, as they purchased the majority of products for the Museum of Art and Industry, as well as the traditional handicrafts of many of the other participating nations, such as Japan.¹⁵⁷ The acquisition of cultural products by Eitelburger and Falke, as well as groups such as the *Cercle Oriental* (Oriental Circle), marked the beginning of the growth of museums and their collections in Vienna.¹⁵⁸

Mixed Results: The Success and Failure of the Vienna Exposition

Despite being one of the best-attended Expositions to date, with over 7 million visitors, the 1873 Vienna Exposition was a colossal financial disaster. It cost the government and private financiers 19 million gulden to host, but only brought in 4.5 million at the close of the Exposition, 1 November 1873.¹⁵⁹ The two main obstacles that prevented the Exposition's economic success were the 1873 Depression, which occurred nine days after the opening of the Exposition, and the outbreak of cholera in the summer months, which killed over 2,000 residents in the city alone.¹⁶⁰ The economic crisis

¹⁵⁶ Falke, 76-77.

¹⁵⁷ Pemsel, 88-90.

¹⁵⁸ Pemsel, 89-90.

¹⁵⁹ The attendance of the Paris Exposition is estimated at around 9 million. Findling, 376. Financial information from Pemsel, 92-94.

¹⁶⁰ Findling, 53. August was the high point of the epidemic: 2,983 people died in Vienna, 106,441 in Cisleithania, and 182, 599 in Transleithania. The outbreak lasted 141 days total. Pemsel, 79-80.

precluded many visitors from coming, due to the high cost of travel, while the cholera epidemic scared away even more potential visitors. The rampant speculation that attended the period leading up to the Exposition, as well as the general positive atmosphere of the *Gründerzeit* (a period of economic expansion in Vienna), was partially to blame for the decline of the economic situation in Vienna.¹⁶¹ However, the period between 1871 and 1872 witnessed a flattening out of industrial production and railway production and a decline in the growth of money supply.¹⁶² The combination of speculation related to building and the promise of payment of war indemnity from France (as a result of the Franco-Prussian War), industrial slowdown, and declining money reserves culminated in the stock market crash of May 1873 and subsequent protracted depression.¹⁶³

While the catastrophe of the Exposition was part of the broader economic decline of the Empire, the rising anti-liberal parties, such as the Christian Social Party, argued that it was the World Exposition, and its attendant wasteful expenditure, which led to the crisis.¹⁶⁴ Combining anti-Liberal and anti-Semitic rhetoric, newspapers such as the *Neue Freie Presse* and the *Wiener Tageblatt* held the economic policies of the liberal government and the Jewish financial support of the World Exposition accountable for the economic decline of the Empire.¹⁶⁵ Illustrations ran that lampooned the industrialists and the “Prater Dictator,” Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn, viciously assailing the planners

¹⁶¹ David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 164.

¹⁶² Good, 164.

¹⁶³ Good, 164-165.

¹⁶⁴ Roschitz, 174.

¹⁶⁵ Roschitz, 174.

and their profits while the rest of Austria suffered.¹⁶⁶ The attacks on the liberal party possibly hastened its decline, but the criticisms were definitely part of the broader mobilization of the interests and fears of the traditional bourgeoisie used by Karl Lueger to bolster support for his Christian Social Party.¹⁶⁷

Despite the major failure of the Exposition in its financial goals, it did achieve some of the other aims hoped for by Franz Joseph and the liberals. In terms of foreign relations, the Kaiser met with Czar Nicolas I and Kaiser Wilhelm II at Schönbrunn Palace in what became known as the “Schönnbrunner Conference,” in which the three leaders promised to deal with problems peacefully and provide mutual aid and support.¹⁶⁸ This meeting marked the beginning of closer diplomatic relations with Germany, and the pan-German supporters in Parliament celebrated it as a step towards possible unification.¹⁶⁹ Franz Joseph also met with delegations from Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia and discussed the problem of Ottoman control and Austro-Hungarian imperial interest in these areas.¹⁷⁰ These foreign delegations hoped for the aid of Franz Joseph in overthrowing the Ottoman Empire, even at the cost of coming under rule of the Kaiser, who was seen as more moderate than the Ottomans.¹⁷¹ The World Exposition was a chance for the Kaiser to develop friendly relations with the young Italian state, as well as begin an economic and political relationship with Persia, which had been previously

¹⁶⁶ Pemsel, 94.

¹⁶⁷ Boyer, 390-396.

¹⁶⁸ Pemsel, 81.

¹⁶⁹ Pemsel, 81.

¹⁷⁰ Pemsel, 81.

¹⁷¹ Pemsel, 81.

closed to the West. Finally, the Vienna Exposition also marked the beginning of diplomatic and trade relations with Japan, which strengthened cultural ties and influenced new styles of art.¹⁷²

Culturally, the World Exposition had a significant impact on the development of museums and artistic styles. Apart from the Museum of Art and Industry, other museums that focused on craft education and the display of handiworks were constructed.¹⁷³

Wilhelm Exner, the planner and architect of the Art and Industry Museum, as well as others in Vienna, hoped that the museum would encourage the preservation of traditional handicraft, as well as promote its further development. Other educational museums, such as the Technical Museum (also designed by Exner), the Museum of Transportation, and the Post and Telegraph Museum grew from the exhibitions at the World Exposition and were free to the public.¹⁷⁴ The founders of these institutions hoped that the museums would attract a large number of visitors from all classes of society, and that the exhibits would have an edifying and inspiring impact upon them.

In 1874, the collections of Japanese and Chinese art and artifacts purchased at the Exposition were taken from the Museum of Art and Industry and placed in their own museum, the Oriental Museum.¹⁷⁵ The *Cercle Oriental* (Oriental Circle), formed by professors and industrialists during the planning of the Exposition in order to encourage Asian participation, continued to acquire new materials in order to put all aspects of

¹⁷² Pemsel, 81.

¹⁷³ Pemsel, 88.

¹⁷⁴ Pemsel, 88.

¹⁷⁵ Pemsel, 89-90.

“Oriental life” on display, including diplomacy, national economy, engineering, art, culture, and daily life.¹⁷⁶ In particular, the cultural products from Japan, including lacquer and gold work and floral prints, would influence the development of a new artistic style, *japonisme*, seen in the work of the Vienna Secession and the paintings of Gustav Klimt.¹⁷⁷ The importance of Japanese art in the Secession can be seen in the sixth Secession Exhibition, which was devoted solely to Japanese art.¹⁷⁸ The collections began at the Vienna Exposition by both museum curators and private art dealers marked the beginning of the growth of museum acquisitions and new artistic expression.

The 1873 Vienna Exposition developed out of the history of the Expositions that preceded it and the unique historical context of an Empire riddled with ethnic, national, economic, and political problems. While it marked a brief moment of cohesion between the interests of a modernizing neo-absolutist and the rising liberal class, it masked the underlying problems of national uprisings and economic instability. The diplomatic and cultural gains made at the Exposition did not counterbalance the deeper economic crisis or political disunity the Empire faced. The financial failure of the Exposition was used by the rising Christian Social Party as part of the broader critique of the economic policies of the Parliament to further its own political ascendancy and eclipse of the short-lived liberal government in Vienna. While the Kaiser and the planners constructed an image of

¹⁷⁶ Pemsel, 89-90.

¹⁷⁷ Toshio Watanabe, “Vienna, Osterreichisches Museum fur angewandte Kunst: Hidden Impressions: Japonisme in Vienna 1870-1930,” Review article, *The Burlington Magazine* Vol. 132 No. 1048 (June 1990), 510-511. Klimt owned several pieces of Japanese art on display at the show.

¹⁷⁸ Watanabe, 511.

an Empire that was a coherent, modernizing entity in Europe, it was one that did not express the full truth of Austria-Hungary's political or economic situation.