

**The Last Empress: The Transitions, Images, and Functions of Zita of Bourbon-Parma, 1911-1922**



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**Cover image:** Zita as archduchess, 1914, Hermann Clemens Kosel. Austrian National Library.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this project is to explore the functions, transitions, and the constructed, projected, and perceived public personae of Zita of Bourbon-Parma, later Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary (1892-1989) as expressed through state produced propaganda. The last imperial couple were the first Austrian monarchs to set up a dedicated press office, and through the circulation of portraiture, authorised literature (such as poetry collections and biographies), videos, and constant public appearances, were able to construct and control their political imagery in an unprecedented way. By utilising picture postcards, press photography, and newspaper reports, this thesis shall argue that Zita constructed an image of herself as wife, mother, and *Landesmutter* (mother of the country). While remaining within these confines, her image would evolve through time and adapt to different events impacting her country and family.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Table of contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	4
INTRODUCTION .....	5
I. Introduction .....	5
II. Short biography of Zita.....	8
III. Literature review.....	9
IV. Sources.....	11
CHAPTER ONE: .....	12
THE <i>KRIEGSPRESSEQUARTIER</i> AND PHOTOGRAPHERS.....	12
I. Introduction .....	12
II. The Kriegspressoquartier.....	12
III. The <i>Kriegspressoquartier</i> and censorship of word and image.....	15
IV. The photographers .....	16
IVa. Hermann Clemens Kosel.....	18
IVb. Heinrich Schuhmann.....	21
IVc. Carl/Karl Seebald .....	25
V. Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER TWO:.....	27
EPHEMERAL IMAGES: ZITA AND PICTURE POSTCARDS .....	27
I. Introduction .....	27
II. Royal images from <i>Carte de Visite</i> to postcard .....	28
III. Visual representations of Zita on postcards: postcards of a wife.....	32
IV. Visual representations of Zita on postcards: Zita as mother (of the country).....	41
V. Conclusion.....	51
CHAPTER THREE:.....	53
<i>IM RAMPENLICHT: ZITA AND THE PRESS.</i> .....	53
I. Introduction .....	53
II. The development of press photography in Austria .....	54
III. The imperial house and press photography.....	57
IV. The importance of public appearances for Zita.....	58
V. Appearances as an archduchess.....	60
VI. Appearances as Empress.....	66
VII. Appearances in exile .....	72
VIII. Conclusion.....	81

CONCLUSION.....	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	88

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure one:** Empress Zita visits the burned-out village of Pöckau, 1917.
- Figure two:** Hermann Clemens Kosel and son, 1910.
- Figure three:** Zita, Empress of Austria, 1917.
- Figure four:** Karl I., Emperor of Austria, n.d.
- Figure five:** Wedding of Archduke Karl and Zita, 1911.
- Figure six:** Empress Zita of Austria with her newborn son, Archduke Karl Ludwig, 1918.
- Figure seven:** Empress Zita and Otto in the garden, 1928.
- Figure eight:** Franz Joseph I., Emperor of Austria and Emperor Wilhelm II., 1907.
- Figure nine:** Archduke Karl and Archduchess Zita, postcard.
- Figure ten:** Emperor Karl, postcard.
- Figure eleven:** “Emperor Karl, Empress Zita and Crown Prince Otto”, postcard.
- Figure twelve:** the Hungarian coronation, postcard.
- Figure thirteen:** “Archduchess Zita with her son”, postcard.
- Figure fourteen:** “Empress and Queen Zita with Archduke Felix”, postcard.
- Figure fifteen:** Otto, Karl, Adelheid, Robert, and Felix, postcard.
- Figure sixteen:** the imperial family in Hertenstein, postcard.
- Figure seventeen:** Mater Dolorosa, postcard.
- Figure eighteen:** Vienna reserve hospital nr. 11.
- Figure nineteen:** front cover of the *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*.
- Figure twenty:** front cover of the *Welt Blatt*.
- Figure twenty one:** journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, 1918.
- Figure twenty two:** journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, 1918.
- Figure twenty three:** journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, 1918.
- Figure twenty four:** Schuhmann’s photo in *Sport und Salon*.
- Figure twenty five:** Zita and Adelheid Habsburg with mourning guests in the park of the Villa Quinta do Monte, 1922.
- Figure twenty six:** Zita Habsburg with her children at the funeral of Ex-Emperor Karl I. of Austria, 1922.
- Figure twenty seven:** transfer of Emperor Karl I’s body in the Quinta do Monte on Madeira, 1922.
- Figure twenty eight:** Zita Habsburg with her children at the funeral of Ex-Emperor Karl I. of Austria, 1922.
- Figure twenty nine:** Emperor Karl, Empress Zita and Archduke Otto at Franz Joseph I.’s funeral.
- Figure thirty:** *Wiener Salonblatt*, 1922.
- Figure thirty one:** *Das interessante Blatt*, 1922.
- Figure thirty two:** two: from the marriage preparation book, featuring a photo of Karl as a child with doves.
- Figure thirty three:** members of the Habsburg family outside the church where Karl is buried, 100th anniversary of his death.

## INTRODUCTION

*[Master of Ceremonies knocks three times]*  
*Capuchin monk: who desires admission?*  
*Master of Ceremonies: Zita, her majesty the Empress and Queen.*  
*Capuchin monk: we do not know her!*  
*[Master of Ceremonies knocks three times]*  
*Capuchin monk: Who desires admission?*  
*Master of Ceremonies: Zita, a mortal sinner.*  
*Capuchin monk: you may enter!*  
Ritual before Zita's burial in the Capuchin Crypt, Vienna, 1989.

### I. Introduction

Zita of Bourbon-Parma, last Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary was the penultimate Habsburg to be buried in an elaborate funeral ceremony in the Capuchin church, Vienna. Her funeral took place on April 1, 1989 - the anniversary of her beloved husband's death. Many gathered to witness this farewell to a woman who had once ruled over Austria, and the old imperial *Kaiserhymne* (Emperor hymn) was sung during the Requiem Mass at St Stephen's Cathedral. It was as if Vienna had been flung back in time, and the political implications were clear. It was not just any funeral, nor a mere case of Habsburg nostalgia, but a 'monarchist spectacle', as the newspaper *Der Spiegel* reported shortly before it took place.<sup>1</sup>

It was perhaps the closing of a long line of monarchist exhibitions, and Zita's began shortly before the First World War, which saw a rapid development of propaganda. A large part of this propaganda was naturally dedicated to those at the very top: the imperial family. As Mark Cornwall has written, 'Habsburg authorities tried to manage civilian morale

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<sup>1</sup> "Liebe der Völker," *Der Spiegel*, March 26, 1989, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/liebe-der-voelker-a-b1e9358d-0002-0001-0000-000013495570?context=issue>.

through a largely uncoordinated series of patriotic initiatives, always combined with censorship to restrict the flow of information'.<sup>2</sup> The material produced by these authorities included films, art, literature, journalism, photography, and ephemera such as postcards. Zita and her husband, Karl, were the subject of more propaganda than any Habsburg monarchs before them thanks to technological developments, but also their own initiatives.

The aim of this project is to explore the functions, transitions, and the constructed, projected, and perceived public personae of Zita of Bourbon-Parma, later Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary (1892-1989) as expressed through state produced propaganda. It shall be argued that Zita constructed three different personae which lasted a lifetime, but that the presentation changed depending on her stage in life. The last imperial couple were the first Austrian monarchs to set up a dedicated press office, and through the circulation of portraiture, authorised literature (such as poetry collections and biographies), videos, and constant public appearances, were able to construct and control their political imagery in an unprecedented way. The time frame chosen for this project is from Zita's marriage in 1911 until her husband, Emperor Karl's (1887-1922), death in exile in 1922. This period covers a pivotal moment when monarchy was challenged and defeated: between 1916 and 1918 Zita was the last empress of Austria before the fall of the Habsburg monarchy. It was also an exciting moment in the evolution of photography, particularly press photography, and the rapid development of an increasingly globalised world.

This project shall focus on three groups of sources: picture postcards, press photography and newspaper articles. It is my hope that the above will provide an exciting lens not just for examining propaganda in the twilight of empire, but also to discover how Zita was presented and perceived, on her own agency, and on the changes in role and status

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Cornwall, "Propaganda at Home (Austria-Hungary)," *1914-1918 Online*, April 25, 2019, [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/propaganda\\_at\\_home\\_austria-hungary](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/propaganda_at_home_austria-hungary).

which accompanied the six crucial transitions she experienced between 1911 and 1922: her entrance into the Imperial House through her marriage to Archduke Karl; the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which made her husband the heir-presumptive; the death of Emperor Franz Joseph (which brought Karl to the throne); Emperor Karl's deposition; the couple's exile; and her widowhood. An investigation of these transitions will provide insights into the evolving nature of female monarchical roles in the early twentieth century. These transitions provide insight into the change of status and functions and how this swayed self and public perception.

A study on the specific contribution made by women to the phenomenon of the late-modern Habsburg monarchy is long overdue. Women played an important part in the image and narrative presented by European monarchies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Zita specifically understood the power of images and representation, and as Empress, played a key role in the creation and circulation of propaganda before and after Karl's death.

Despite often being forced into this system, many of these women were able to construct successful public personae. Maria Theresia, for example, already shaped her image as *Landesmutter*. In some respects, Zita is perhaps at the end of a long line of Habsburg 'public relations', but she built upon what came before, while creating an image that suited the time that she lived in. My research will show that Zita's presentation and the perceptions of her personae were not static, and will help to understand her and her role from the perspectives of the dynamics of the period under investigation. By focusing on Zita, my research will investigate a formidable figure who has been overlooked in studies of royal women, and who had a significant impact on a critical moment in modern history - even if history books do not always recognise this.



## II. Short biography of Zita

Zita, Princess of Bourbon-Parma was born May 9, 1892 at the Villa Borbone in Lucca, Italy. Her parents were the deposed Roberto, Duke of Parma, and his second wife Infanta Maria Antonia of Portugal. She was one of twenty-four children, twelve from her father's first marriage, and twelve from the second. The family spent most of their time in Austria, though Zita had a rather international upbringing; her strict religious education took place not only in Bavaria, but also in England. As a former ruling family, they had many connections with the Habsburgs. She met her future husband, Karl, when they were children. Their marriage was a love match, and Karl had hurried to propose after he heard a rumour that Zita was to be engaged to someone else. On the eve of their wedding, Karl uttered the famous words "now, let us get each other to heaven," a foretaste of the Catholicism that was to be the centre of their family life (as well as being a well used quote in Catholic circles today - the pair are on their way to canonisation in the Catholic Church.)

Karl became heir to the throne through a series of accidents. Franz Joseph's line of succession seemed secure until disaster struck. His brother, Maximilian, was killed by firing squad in Mexico. Rudolf, Franz Joseph's only son, killed his seventeen-year-old mistress Baroness Mary Vetsera, before turning the gun on himself at Mayerling hunting lodge. Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo. When the old emperor died in 1916, the couple ascended to the throne in the midst of the First World War. Zita played an important role in decision making; Karl trusted his wife deeply, and even had a telephone wire installed between Baden and the Hofburg so that he could keep in touch when they were apart. Zita would also often accompany him to the front, and at times brought the children with her.

Karl waived his rights to be involved in government in 1918, and the family moved to Eckartsau, a former hunting lodge in private Habsburg possession just outside of Vienna. It

is important to note that this was not an abdication, which is what Zita first thought Karl was being asked to sign. A staunch believer in the Habsburg right to rule, she declared:

“Never! A ruler can be deposed... That is force, which precludes recognition. But abdicate — never! I would rather fall right here at your side. Then there would be Otto. And even if all of us here were killed, there would still be other Habsburgs!”<sup>3</sup>

During their time in Eckartsau, Karl caught the Spanish Flu, and never truly recovered from it. For fears that the family would be assassinated like the Romanovs, they were sent into exile in Switzerland. After Karl tried and failed to retake the Hungarian crown twice, they were expelled from Switzerland and moved to Madeira. It was here that Karl died after catching a cold at the age of thirty four in 1922. Zita was eight months pregnant with their eighth child at the time of her husband’s death. The young widow and her family were to move several times (including as war refugees during the Second World War), and it was not until 1982 that she was allowed to return to Austria. She died in 1989, and was the penultimate Habsburg to have an elaborate funeral ceremony and burial at the Capuchin crypt, Vienna.<sup>4</sup>

### III. Literature review

Zita has been significantly under-investigated by scholars, having been overshadowed in both historical studies and popular culture by her unconventional precursor, Empress Elisabeth (‘Sisi’). In contrast to Elisabeth, Zita was present and vocal in the running of the monarchy, and impacted its image in a completely different way. Despite the lack of research on Zita, there is a rich scholarly literature on female Austrian nobility (e.g. Martina Winkelhofer, 2011), femininity, and late-modern queenship (focused on women such as Queen Victoria, Queen Margherita of Italy, the German Empress Victoria, or Austria’s ‘Sisi’). What has been written about Zita belongs to the realm of popular history sanctioned by Zita

<sup>3</sup> “Zita’s reaction to the suggestion that Emperor Karl should abdicate on 11 November 1918,” *The World of the Habsburgs, Schloß Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H.*, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://ww1.habsburger.net/en/cites/zitas-reaction-suggestion-emperor-karl-should-abdicate-11-november-1918>.

<sup>4</sup> Her son Otto (Austria’s last Crown Prince) was the last in 2011.

herself (Gordon Brook-Shepherd, 1991; Erich Feigl, 1991). While it is not possible to always remain objective in writing, there is a clear bias behind these works, particularly Feigl's - he was a keen supporter of Habsburg restoration, and played a role in Karl's canonisation cause. Zita also appears in scholarly work on her husband (the continued work of Christopher Brennan, who provides a refreshing look at Austria's last Emperor). Nevertheless, work on Karl tends to remain within the constraints of Catholic devotional literature (Charles Coulombe, 2020), and provides audiences with a flattering portrait of both him and his wife, and continues the propaganda driven presentations that began in the early twentieth century.

Investigations of the monarchy's decline at the end of the long nineteenth century and during World War One treat Karl and Zita as a footnote in the history of Franz Joseph's rule. They can quite literally be mentioned once, and usually it is only Karl that is named. The wealth of recent work on Europe's late-modern monarchies, however, means that my thesis falls within a vibrant field of research. An investigation of Zita in her own right will not only result in a better understanding of the twilight of the Habsburgs' rule but will also illuminate the wider context of women's roles within modern monarchical systems.

While there is not a large amount of literature on Zita, and none whatsoever on her portraiture, there is a wide range of scholarly work on royal portraiture (such as Alison Rowley, 2013; Margaret Homans 1993). Such scholarship often utilises gender analysis, a methodology that I have also employed in this thesis to investigate Zita's goal of presenting herself as the ultimate Austrian mother. There is also a multitude of literature on the Austrian press before and during the First World War (Kurt Paupié 1960-66; Joachim Bürgschwentner, 2013; Anton Holzer, 2012, 2014). While these works usually mention Karl and the imperial family, this thesis is still the first time that visual presentations and propaganda featuring Zita have been analysed. Therefore, I will engage with existing methodologies and historiography, while creating my own approach to researching Zita's image construction.

#### IV. Sources

The first chapter shall cover three of the photographers who frequently took images of Zita and her family. Two of these photographers worked for the *k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier* (imperial war press office). This office was responsible for a great deal of Zita's images, and its role in the creation, control, and circulation of propaganda shall be discussed. The second chapter shall engage with picture postcards, using them to understand which personae of Zita were circulated to the public through these easily accessible public relations tools. Finally, the third chapter shall examine press photography and newspapers. The written word demonstrates how carefully Zita's image was disseminated to the public, and it reflected her portraits and also photographs taken by the press; there was a reciprocal relationship in the forming of her public personae. Through these sources, I will demonstrate that Zita had specific images she wished to present to the public (wife, mother, and *Landesmutter*), that these images changed depending on her status and were explicitly gendered (as were Karl's); how government bodies such as the *k.u.k. Kriegsfürsorgeamt* circulated such images; what these images meant for the First World War; the ways in which the public interacted with them; and how images were utilised in restoration attempts after the couple's exile.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### THE *KRIEGSPRESSEQUARTIER* AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

#### I. Introduction

Three photographers - Hermann Clemens Kosel, Heinrich Schuhmann, and Carl Seebald were key in producing and circulating some of the most famous and widely seen images of Zita between 1911 and 1922, with Schuhmann even travelling to the imperial family in exile to photograph them before and after Karl's death. The frequent contact these photographers had with the family suggests that they were trusted to produce the desired images and messages which Zita and Karl wished to put forward to the public.

Two out of three of these photographers worked for the *k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier*. This office was the central point for the control of and circulation of the types of sources I shall discuss in the next two chapters. Therefore, the purpose of the *Kriegspressequartier* shall be examined here, as well as their role in the censorship of word and image during the First World War. It shall be seen that this is inextricably intertwined with how Zita's photographers (bar one, who was taking photographs of her before the war) worked, and continued to work even after the end of the war. This contextual introduction shall make the complex issues of censorship, circulation, and purpose easier to understand in the two source based chapters that follow.

#### II. The *Kriegspressequartier*

The *k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier* was founded by Colonel Maximilian von Hoen on July 28, 1914, on the day of partial mobilisation.<sup>5</sup> However, its conception and planning

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Reichel, „*Pressearbeit ist Propagandaarbeit*“ - *Medienverwaltung 1914-1918: Das Kriegspressequartier (KPQ)* (Vienna: Studienverlag, 2016), 18.

dates to 1909, long before the start of the First World War.<sup>6</sup> This office controlled press, photos and information, and was the central military propaganda institution during the war.<sup>7</sup> However, it initially only coordinated newspaper reporting, for which it brought in journalists and writers.<sup>8</sup> When visual propaganda began to be utilised by the office, civilian reporters and photo journalists were blocked from working.<sup>9</sup> No disturbing images were to make their way to the home front, and reporting was regulated extremely strictly by this office.<sup>10</sup>

We can easily say that the material produced by the *Kriegspressequartier* was propaganda. More than 500 artists and journalists worked for the office, and today, more than 33,000 photographs which were taken on its behalf can be found.<sup>11</sup> Walter Reichl estimates that at its peak in 1918, the *Kriegspressequartier* had around 900 employees.<sup>12</sup> As Martina Winkelhofer has argued, these numbers are clear evidence of the huge imperial propaganda machinery that was operating.<sup>13</sup>

The office's rules of service admit this purpose; written in 1917, this document uses the word 'propaganda' multiple times. These rules of service were written not under Franz Joseph, but under Karl, who we might even term the 'propaganda Kaiser'. It is made clear in the rules of service that 'press service is propaganda service', and here there is no shying away from or viewing propaganda negatively.<sup>14</sup> According to the rules of service, the *Kriegspressequartier*'s purpose was to produce positive propaganda in and outside the

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<sup>6</sup> Deborah Holmes, "Cultures at War: Austria-Hungary 1914–1918: Introduction," *Austrian Studies* 21 (2013), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Reichel, „*Pressearbeit ist Propagandaarbeit*“, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Samanta Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen. Eine Biografiensammlung von Pressefotografen, die zwischen 1918 und 1939 in Wien tätig waren." MA thesis, University of Vienna, 2009, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Martina Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita Menschen, Hintergründe, Geheimnisse: Österreichs letztes Kaiserpaar und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna: Krone Verlag, 2017), 46.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. These images can be found today in the Austrian National Library.

<sup>12</sup> Reichel, „*Pressearbeit ist Propagandaarbeit*“, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita*, 46.

<sup>14</sup> Reichel, „*Pressearbeit ist Propagandaarbeit*“, 27.

monarchy, and to fight against anti-monarchy propaganda.<sup>15</sup> Multiple mediums were to be utilised:

“At home, propaganda is often initiated by the work of the editors of the war press headquarters. However, the written word is joined by: the spoken word, photography, image and film”.<sup>16</sup>

We can discern that the written word was originally the primary medium, but it was soon overtaken by the visual. Zita and Karl were particularly modern in contrast to their predecessor, Emperor Franz Joseph, and utilised quickly developing photographic and printing technologies as a way to build rapport with, and transmit their image to the public. Through photographs and continual in person visits, they were able to remain in the public’s thoughts, and not necessarily only in the public imagination.

The *Kriegspressequartier* was an extremely well organised machine split into eleven departments: commander of the war press headquarters; the domestic office; the foreign office; the propaganda group; the editorial office; the art group; photography; film; the "J" position; the war correspondent group; and the administrative apparatus.<sup>17</sup> According to the *Dienstordnung*, the propaganda group

“must pay special attention to cooperation with the visual reporting entrusted to the press service of the War Ministry. The head of the propaganda group is in close contact with the head of photographic affairs of the press service of the War Department”.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Dienstordnung für das Kriegspressequartier*, k. k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, page 3, 1917, KA, FA AOK KPQ KT. 23, Kriegsarchiv, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Hereafter cited as *Dienstordnung*).

<sup>16</sup> “Im Inlande wird die Propaganda vielfach schon durch die Arbeiten der Redaktion des Kriegspressequartiers eingeleitet. Zum geschriebenen Worte gesellen jedoch: das Gesprochene, Photographie, Bild und Film.” *Dienstordnung*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> “Die Propagandagruppe hat ein besonderes Augenmerk auf das Zusammenarbeiten mit dem Pressedienst des Kriegsministeriums anvertrauten bildlichen Berichterstattung zu richten. Der Leiter der Propagandagruppe hält enge Fühlung mit dem Leiter der photographischen Angelegenheiten des Pressedienstes des Kriegsministeriums”. *Ibid*, 12.

In terms of press reporting, the editorial office was in charge. Among their activities was the contribution of material to the entire domestic press, particularly official reports reported from the *Kriegspressequartier* itself.<sup>19</sup>

In 1916, shortly before Karl came to the throne, instructions were set out for photographers working for the *Kriegspressequartier*, including how to send their photos:

“A protective paper cover should be placed around each sheet (film) on which the following should be noted: a) title of the image; b) consecutive number corresponding to the negative number; c) address of the place of residence of the photographer of the newspaper editorial office, to which the plates are to be directed after successful censorship.”<sup>20</sup>

If someone went around the censor, they would have to pay a fine of 40,000 Kronen, which would go to families left behind by those who fell in the war.<sup>21</sup>

Austria-Hungary was not the only place to utilise visual propaganda during the First World War. In 1916, the British began to understand the power of images, and appointed official photographers, as well as setting up a department which would distribute their photographs and films to other countries.<sup>22</sup> Martyn Jolly has written that ‘images became central to public understanding of the war, and photography and film supplanted the written word as the most powerful weapon in propaganda’.<sup>23</sup> This same statement could easily be applied to Austria-Hungary, and shall be seen in the later chapters.

### III. The *Kriegspressequartier* and censorship of word and image

Control of the press was provided during the war by the *Pressesubkommission des Kriegsüberwachungskomitees* (Press Sub-Commission of the War Oversight Committee).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Richard R. v. Damaschka, *Kriegsphotographie. Ein Leitfadens für Kriegsphotographen und Amateure im Felde* (Vienna: Christoph Reissers Söhne, 1916), 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Martyn Jolly, “Composite Propaganda Photographs during the First World War”, *History of Photography* 27, no. 2 (2003), 155.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ilona Balog Stemplerné, “Fotografien des Ersten Weltkriegs und der Revolutionen (1914-1919),” in *Kulturmanöver: das k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier und die Mobilisierung von Wort und Bild*, ed. Sema Colpan (Vienna: Lang, 2015), 257.



The *Kriegspressequartier* was responsible for setting the task, determining the destination and choosing the subject of the text or photo reports. After being censored by the *Kriegspressequartier* on site, the materials were brought to the respective papers by a military courier.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, newspapers were obliged to submit photos intended for publication to the press sub-commission so that they could decide whether the publication harmed military interests; thus photographs, not just text, were also censored.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, we can see that newspapers were primarily dealing with second hand material. This material was not to serve the purpose of informing the public, but was clearly propaganda.<sup>27</sup>

When Karl and Zita came to the throne, control of the imperial image was tightened further when Karl became the first Austrian monarch to set up his own press office.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the *Kriegspressequartier* was based in Galicia or Moravia until Franz Joseph's death. In November 1916, it then moved to Vienna - the imperial capital, and Karl and Zita's base when they were not at the front or travelling around the monarchy in their countless public appearances.<sup>29</sup>

#### **IV. The photographers**

Belonging to the *Kriegspressequartier* and reporting on the war was considered an attractive task for journalists, painters, newspaper illustrators and photographers (especially photojournalists), as such a job was accompanied by better care than was the case in other areas of war service.<sup>30</sup> As a result, gaining employment in the *Kriegspressequartier* was not easy. Additionally, Anton Holzer has found that all of the photographers employed by the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 260.

<sup>27</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 28.

<sup>28</sup> Anton Holzer, *Rasende Reporter: eine Kulturgeschichte des Fotojournalismus; Fotografie, Presse und Gesellschaft in Österreich 1890 - 1945* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2014), 111.

<sup>29</sup> Cornwall, "Propaganda at Home".

<sup>30</sup> Stemlerné, "Fotografien des Ersten Weltkriegs und der Revolutionen (1914-1919)," 257 - 258.

*Kriegspressequartier* were male.<sup>31</sup> This is not to say that no women worked for the office at all, as there are many examples of female writers.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps it was a case of feeling it was not appropriate for women to be going to the front and photographing military related activities.

However, photographers were not so important for the *Kriegspressequartier* right at the beginning. Until about 1916, artists were deemed to have a much more crucial role than any photographer, and at the beginning of the war, there were hardly any photographers working for the *Kriegspressequartier*. Before 1916, there were about one hundred and forty five artists working for the office with only seven of them photographers, but by March 1917, more photographers had been hired.<sup>33</sup> As visual propaganda was deemed more important, the need for, and prestige of photographers rose. It is interesting that this change came about as Karl took the throne, and that he and Zita seemed to understand the power of images shall become clear in the next two chapters.

In the chapters that follow, we shall see the same photographers repeatedly taking images of Zita and the imperial family, despite the rapid changes in the medium and settings. I do not wish to suggest that these are the only photographers who were taking photos of and working for the imperial family and *Kriegspressequartier*, however, they are the ones who appear most frequently in photographic archives. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace every single photographer who took photos of Zita (particularly in terms of public appearances), and many are simply listed in the photographic archive of the Austrian National Library as being taken by the *Kriegspressequartier* (see figure one for an example of such a photo).

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<sup>31</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 111.

<sup>32</sup> See Katalin Teller, “Die Kriegsberichterstatterin Margit Veszi zwischen ethischen Journalismus und Propaganda,” in *Kulturmanöver: das k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier und die Mobilisierung von Wort und Bild*, ed. Sema Colpan (Vienna: Lang, 2015), 95 – 110 for an example.

<sup>33</sup> Anton Holzer, “Mit der Kamera bewaffnet,” in *Fotografie in Österreich: Geschichte, Entwicklungen, Protagonisten 1890 - 1955*, ed. Anton Holzer (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2013), 169 - 173.



Figure 1: Empress Zita visits the burned-out village of Pöckau, 1917.<sup>34</sup>

#### IVa. Hermann Clemens Kosel



Figure 2: Hermann Clemens Kosel and son, 1910.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> K.u.k. Kriegspressequartier, Lichtbildstelle - Wien, *Kaiserin Zita besichtigt die abgebrannte Ortschaft Pöckau*, photograph, Austrian National Library, June 4, 1917, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa4813270>.

<sup>35</sup> Hermann Clemens Kosel, *Kosel, Hermann und Sohn*, photograph, Austrian National Library, 1910, <https://onb.digital/result/112B08A9>.

The most prominent of all of Zita's early portrait photographers was Hermann Clemens Kosel, who became *k.u.k. Hofphotograph* (court photographer) in 1911, under the rule of Emperor Franz Joseph. He did not later work for the *Kriegspressequartier*. According to his 1919 *Meldezettel* (residence registration form), he was born on November 22, 1867 in Dunkeltal im Riesengebirge, Bohemia, was married to 'Anna', with whom he had two sons, and he was Catholic.<sup>36</sup> In 1891, he began to work as an artistic assistant in the studio of amateur hobby photographer and aristocrat Albert von Rothschild, and during this time taught other photographers, including the later prominent press photographer Martin Gerlach junior.<sup>37</sup> He opened his own studio in 1905.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find where his studio was located. However, I think it is extremely likely that it would have been located in Vienna's first district. There are two reasons for this: firstly, this location would make it close to the Viennese court at the Hofburg. Secondly, other studio photographers who took photographs of court members and aristocracy (such as Adèle or Victor Angerer) were located in this district.<sup>39</sup> Not only this, but Viennese studio photographers tended to locate themselves in fashionable places such as on the top floor of luxury hotels.<sup>40</sup> Vienna's luxury nineteenth and early twentieth century hotels are still known to us, and are in Vienna's first district.

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<sup>36</sup> *Hermann Clemens Kosel Meldezettel*, 1919, Akt 2.5.1.4.K11, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

<sup>37</sup> "Hermann Clemens Kosel," Wien Geschichte Wiki, Stadt Wien, accessed May 25, 2022, [https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Hermann\\_Clemens\\_Kosel](https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Hermann_Clemens_Kosel) and Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 72.

<sup>38</sup> Eva Maria Mandl, "Albert von Rothschilds Atelierchef: Hermann Clemens Kosel, Böcklinstraße 45 und 47 (ca. 1913-1945)," Pratercottage, accessed May 25, 2022, <http://www.pratercottage.at/2015/01/14/albert-von-rothschilds-atelierchef-hermann-clemens-kosel-boecklinstrasse-45-47-1913-1945/>.

<sup>39</sup> Aristocrats were not automatically welcome at court, even if they would mix with members of the imperial household at other events and locations.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Baden Pritchard, *The Photographic Studios of Europe* (London: Piper & Carter, 1882), 250–252.

Kosel's 1940 *Meldezettel* lists him as an author; he wrote poems, biographies, and would illustrate his books himself under the pseudonym Armin Clementi.<sup>41</sup> It is likely he chose to list himself at this time as a writer, as in 1938 he was given a work ban by the Nazis, perhaps due to his close involvement with the Habsburgs.<sup>42</sup> Kosel was also an artist, and examples of posters of his from the early 1930s can still be found today.<sup>43</sup> It seems he was prominently known as a photographer, as the notification of death written when he passed away on September 14, 1945 describes his profession as such.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 3: Zita, Empress of Austria, Kosel, 1917.<sup>45</sup>

The huge collection of photos in the Austrian National Library show that Kosel was solely a studio portrait photographer, and he did not move into press photography like many

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<sup>41</sup> “Kosel, Hermann Clemens; Ps. Armin Clementi (1867-1945), Schriftsteller, Maler und Graphiker,” Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon, Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage, accessed May 25, 2022, [https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1\\_K/Kosel\\_Hermann-Clemens\\_1867\\_1945.xml](https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_K/Kosel_Hermann-Clemens_1867_1945.xml).

<sup>42</sup> “Kosel, Hermann Clemens (Pseudonym: A. Clementi),” Austria-Forum, TU Graz, accessed May 20, 2022, [https://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Kosel%2C\\_Hermann\\_Clemens\\_Pseudonym\\_A.\\_Clementi](https://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Kosel%2C_Hermann_Clemens_Pseudonym_A._Clementi).

<sup>43</sup> For example, this tourist poster for golf in Semmering: [https://austria-forum.org/af/Bilder\\_und\\_Videos/Historische\\_Bilder\\_IMAGNO/Kosel%2C\\_Hermann\\_Clemens/00179054](https://austria-forum.org/af/Bilder_und_Videos/Historische_Bilder_IMAGNO/Kosel%2C_Hermann_Clemens/00179054).

<sup>44</sup> *Mitteilung über Sterbefall*, 1919, Akt 2.5.1.4.K11, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

<sup>45</sup> Hermann Clemens Kosel, *Zita, Kaiserin von Österreich*, photograph, Austrian National Library, 1917, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa5599652>.

of his contemporaries.<sup>46</sup> And it was not just anyone that Kosel photographed - the collection shows that he captured images of the imperial family, members of other imperial families (such as King Boris III of Bulgaria, and members of the Bourbon-Parmas), and other influential figures in late nineteenth century Viennese society such as Anna Sacher and Sigmund Freud. As for Zita and Karl, he photographed them before and after they took to the throne, suggesting that he was a trusted and reliable photographer for the Habsburg family. Many of the now most famous portraits of Zita, and ones often used on postcards were taken by Kosel. He is therefore a key figure in the creation of Zita's early portraiture and public image.

#### **IVb. Heinrich Schuhmann**

The most famous photographs of Zita, Karl, and their son Otto at the Hungarian coronation were taken by Heinrich Schuhmann, and many of his photographs, like Kosel's have been printed onto postcards.<sup>47</sup> He also played a vital role in the taking of and distribution of photos as postcards during the imperial family's exile. Schuhmann photographed them many times, but his work was much more focused on press photography than studio photography. However, he did have a studio on Kohlmarkt 1, extremely close to the Hofburg Palace.<sup>48</sup>

In the picture archive of the Austrian National Library alone, I have been able to find 559 photographs which Schuhmann took of Zita - more than any other I have found, and over half of the entire collection of Zita photos the library has. Schuhmann photographed a large amount of Karl and Zita's public appearances throughout the monarchy, and also in other places such as Constantinople and Sofia - we can safely presume that he was hired by the

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<sup>46</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>47</sup> "DIE FOTOGRAFIE DES MONATS | Nr. 03" Archiv und Fotografie, Steiermärkischen Landesarchivs, accessed April 17, 2022, [http://www.archivundfotografie.at/monat/foto\\_des\\_monats\\_august.html](http://www.archivundfotografie.at/monat/foto_des_monats_august.html).

<sup>48</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 130.

*Kriegspressequartier* for this. Of note is that he had also photographed their wedding (see figure five), and took a portrait photograph of them shortly after their marriage. He took many studio portraits of Karl and Zita together and separately (see figure four), some of these were intimate moments such as Zita with her newborn son Archduke Karl Ludwig in 1918 (see figure six). To photograph such a scene would have required a certain amount of trust from the family, especially Zita, towards the photographer. Schuhmann also photographed Karl's public appearances where Zita was not present, such as when inspecting troops. It is likely that the couple had come to know the photographer well.

That Schuhmann took multiple photos of the imperial family in exile not just in Madeira, but in Switzerland and also after Karl's death (see figure seven), suggests that he was a very much trusted photographer, and was likely loyal to the family even after they no longer sat on the throne.





Figure 4: Karl I, Emperor of Austria, Schuhmann, no date.<sup>49</sup>



Figure 5: Wedding of Archduke Karl and Zita, Schuhmann, 1911.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Karl I., Kaiser von Österreich*, photograph, Austrian National Library, no date (likely after November 1916), <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18398683>.

<sup>50</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Hochzeit von Erzherzog Karl und Zita*, photograph, Austrian National Library, October 21, 1911, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa9999862>.





Figure 6: Empress Zita of Austria with her newborn son, Archduke Karl Ludwig, Schuhmann, 1918.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 7: Empress Zita and Otto in the garden, Schuhmann, 1928.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Kaiserin Zita von Österreich mit dem neugeborenen Erzherzog Karl Ludwig*, photograph, Austrian National Library, 1918, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18277774>.

<sup>52</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Kaiserin Zita und Otto im Garten*, photograph, Austrian National Library, 1928, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa182775784>.

#### IVc. Carl/Karl Seebald

Carl (alternatively spelt as Karl) Seebald was an important figure in early Austrian press photography. Alongside Heinrich Schuhmann, he counts among the most prominent press photographers of the First World War.<sup>53</sup> He was born in 1878 in Silesia, had his first photograph printed in 1904, and gained his trade licence the following year.<sup>54</sup> Conversely to the other photographers discussed here, he did not have a background in studio photography.<sup>55</sup> He opened a photo agency under his name, where he sold his own photographs, as well as being a founding member of the *Organisation der Wiener Presse* (Organisation of the Viennese Press).<sup>56</sup>

From 1914 onwards, he became a working member of the *Kriegspressequartier*. As well as his work photographing Karl and Zita's public appearances, Samanta Benito-Sanchez has found that Seebald's work also took him to Serbia and Russia.<sup>57</sup> Just like Schuhmann, Seebald constantly expanded his area of work: disasters, politicians, artists, emperors and sporting events.<sup>58</sup> His photos appeared in all of the major newspapers of the time, from the *Interessanten Blatt* to *Wiener Bildern*.<sup>59</sup> It was after the war that he began to work as a studio photographer alongside his press photography work - a real reversal compared to the other photographers mentioned.<sup>60</sup> While he worked for the *Kriegspressequartier*, and in this role created images of Zita that are still being circulated today, he does not seem to have built the same rapport with the family that Kosel and Schuhmann did.

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<sup>53</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 45.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 116.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid; Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 46.

<sup>57</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 116.

<sup>58</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 46.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen," 116.



Figure 8: Franz Joseph I., Emperor of Austria and Emperor Wilhelm II., Seebald, 1907..<sup>61</sup>

## V. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that photographers were key in the creation of Zita's public image. Without them, this image would quite literally have not existed, at least not in such a tangible form. The censorship and circulation of photographs was controlled by the *Kriegspressequartier*, which as an imperial institution had the monarchy's interests at heart. In the next chapter, we shall look at the images which made it onto picture postcards. These seemingly ephemeral sources were significant in Zita and Karl's public relations attempts. Through postcards, Zita was able to transmit her desired public personae which had implications for the war, as well as restoration attempts.

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<sup>61</sup> Karl Seebald, *Franz Joseph I., Kaiser von Österreich und Kaiser Wilhelm II.*, photograph, Austrian National Library, October 1907, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa14606131>.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### EPHEMERAL IMAGES: ZITA AND PICTURE POSTCARDS

#### I. Introduction

While today postcards might seem like insignificant objects, their importance and usefulness as a historical source should not be underestimated. They were of particular consequence when they first came to be used in the 1800s. As Philip J. Hatfield writes, postcards were not only born of nineteenth-century technological modernity, but also represented it.<sup>62</sup> For some, they are the ‘object par excellence of the late Victorian era’, and illustrate an increasingly globalised world.<sup>63</sup> In Austria-Hungary, they became one of the most important forms of visual media, ‘allowing the population to ‘get a picture’ of events or locations’.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, the use of images and slogans in wide circulation made for an easy way to influence the masses (we shall see that royal families throughout Europe used picture postcards as public relation tools), as well as to raise money for the war effort.<sup>65</sup> This, combined with the fact that such a large amount of postcards still exist individually or as part of albums suggests that rather than being merely ephemeral, images that circulated through the medium of postcards are more significant than one might first think.<sup>66</sup>

While there were postcards produced by private companies, the majority were made by organisations related to the government and *Kriegspressequartier*; photographers would sometimes produce their own, but these would be photographers hired by the family and/or

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<sup>62</sup> Philip J. Hatfield, “Circulations: the photograph and the postcard,” in *Canada in the Frame: Copyright, Collections and the Image of Canada, 1895-1924*, ed. Philip J. Hatfield (London: UCL Press, 2018), 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Joachim Bürgschwentner, “War Relief, Patriotism and Art: The State-Run Production of Picture Postcards in Austria 1914–1918”, *Austrian Studies* 21 (2013): 101.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>66</sup> I found one such album in the Bildarchiv of the Nationalbibliothek (PK 3574/1-55), entitled ‘*Kaiser Karl im Bild*’ (Emperor Karl in images), and was part of the library of the aristocratic Kettenburg family. It is filled with postcards of Karl and Zita, and produced by the *Verlagsanstalt Tyrolia Innsbruck*. The date is uncertain, though its contents show that it was certainly after Karl and Zita’s exile.

the press office. Private businesses creating postcards would be left having to use photographs organised by the above, and so images of Zita were still controlled in this way.

Therefore, there is much to be gleaned from images of Zita and her family which were transmitted on postcards. We are able to ask which personae of Zita were projected specifically to the people? How was Zita's role as archduchess, and then Empress and Queen of Hungary understood by wider court society and the general public? Can we trace a line from early twentieth century royal portraiture to that of today? How did wartime perceptions of gender impact the portraits? What kind of organisations aside from the *Kriegspressequartier* were producing postcards of Zita, Karl, and their children?

In order to answer these questions, this chapter shall utilise postcards produced from Zita's marriage to Karl in 1911, up until shortly after his death in 1922. A large sample of postcards from various collections have been used in order to make this analysis. However, it is important to state that this chapter does not claim to be a comprehensive look at all of the images circulated via this medium. It is difficult to form a complete picture, as such items are highly sought after by private collectors all over the world.

## II. Royal images from *Carte de Visite* to postcard

Before looking directly at Zita's images, it is important to trace the history of the development of postcards, and their link to the popular *Carte de Visite*. Postcards did not appear out of the blue, but are the result of the development of writing habits and the increased circulation of photos.<sup>67</sup> It was the *Carte de Visite* that first brought royal likenesses into mainstream consumption.<sup>68</sup> These are photographic portraits mounted onto a piece of card, and the process for this was patented in 1854 by André Adolphe Eugène

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 4 and Alison Rowley, "Monarchy and the Mundane: Picture Postcards and Images of the Romanovs" in *Open Letters: Russian Popular Culture and the Picture Postcard 1880-1922*, ed. Alison Rowley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 136.

<sup>68</sup> Rowley, "Monarchy and the Mundane: Picture Postcards and Images of the Romanovs", 139.

Disdéri.<sup>69</sup> While Disdéri was not the first to make the *Carte de Visite*, he enabled production costs to be lessened by taking eight portraits on one plate.<sup>70</sup> Prior to this, photographers relied on daguerreotypes, where making multiple copies of the same photo was almost impossible. Helmut Gernsheim marks the beginning of the *Carte de Visite* ‘craze’ as May 1859, when Napoleon III was photographed by Disdéri in this format.<sup>71</sup> Henceforth, fashionable French society imitated Napoleon, and it was not long before the rest of Europe followed suit.

Queen Victoria, who was a passionate patron of photography, moved away from the daguerreotype, and began to have herself and her family photographed with the *Carte de Visite* technique. Just as self-named ‘royal watchers’ today collect images and cards of the British royal family, it was normal in the nineteenth century to accumulate and exchange not just photos of one’s own relations, but also of monarchs. It was not just the regular population that did this. Queen Victoria had a huge photographic collection. Empress Elisabeth of Austria too collected *Carte de Visite* photos, becoming famous for her *Schönheitsalben*. In 1862, she wrote to her brother-in-law Archduke Ludwig Viktor: “I am beginning a beauty album and am collecting photos of women. Any pretty faces you can find from Angerer and other photographers, I would ask you to send me”.<sup>72</sup> Images held a different meaning for Elisabeth than they did for Zita; Elisabeth was concerned with becoming the most beautiful woman in Europe, perhaps in an effort to gain more autonomy, but for Zita, this was not the case.

It was Ludwig Angerer (the photographer Elisabeth mentioned in the above quoted letter) who introduced the *Carte de Visite* to Vienna in 1857.<sup>73</sup> Angerer founded the first

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>70</sup> Helmut Gernsheim, *A Concise History of Photography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 55.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>72</sup> Gerda Mraz, “Sammeln aus historischen interesse?” in *Fotografie in Österreich: Geschichte, Entwicklungen, Protagonisten 1890 - 1955*, ed. Anton Holzer (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2013), 16.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 55.

Viennese photo studio, and was appointed as court photographer by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1860.<sup>74</sup> Angerer sold ‘enormous quantities of *cartes* of the imperial family’.<sup>75</sup> These pictures would be sold in the same way that picture postcards are today. Baroness Mary Vetsera famously collected photos of Crown Prince Rudolf prior to their affair and her murder at his hands at Mayerling hunting lodge in 1889.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, members of multiple European families - including the Habsburgs - would send copies of their portrait in photographic or postcard form in response to unsolicited correspondence.<sup>77</sup> This practice can still be seen today with the British royal family.<sup>78</sup> We can therefore see that prior to Zita’s joining Austria’s reigning family that there was a large appetite for photographic depictions of royals throughout late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe.

The first postcards (without images) were sent from Austria-Hungary in 1869.<sup>79</sup> These were known as *Grußkarten* (‘greeting cards’), where one side would be used for the address and stamp, and the other for the message.<sup>80</sup> It was around the turn of the century that pictures, such as landscapes, came to be used on postcards, though one side was still dedicated to the address and stamp. Therefore, small messages would be scribbled around whatever picture was on the front.<sup>81</sup> By the First World War, the back of the postcard held space for the address, stamp, and message together.

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<sup>74</sup> Josef Maria Eder, *Geschichte der Photographie* (Halle an der Saale: Verlag Wilhelm Knapp, 1932), 489; Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage, “Angerer, Ludwig (1827–1879), Photograph und Pharmazeut,” Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon ab 1815 (2. überarbeitete Auflage - online), last modified March 1, 2011 [https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1\\_A/Angerer\\_Ludwig\\_1827\\_1879.xml:internal&action=hilite.action&Parameter=angerer\\*](https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_A/Angerer_Ludwig_1827_1879.xml:internal&action=hilite.action&Parameter=angerer*).

<sup>75</sup> Gernsheim, *A Concise History of Photography*, 55.

<sup>76</sup> Lucy Coatman, “Love Is Dead: Newly discovered letters get us closer to understanding the tragic truth of royal murder-suicide at Mayerling,” *History Today* 72, no. 2 (February 2022): 16.

<sup>77</sup> Rowley, “Monarchy and the Mundane: Picture Postcards and Images of the Romanovs”, 141. Mraz, “Sammeln aus historischen Interesse?”, 15.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Royal watchers’ eagerly await the release of new portraits to mark birthdays, Christmas, and anniversaries. These are sent in card format to people who write to members of the British royal family.

<sup>79</sup> “Postcards,” Postal Museum, accessed April 13, 2022 <https://www.postalmuseum.org/collections/highlights/postcards/>.

<sup>80</sup> Lisa Schögler, “Das Symbol im Bild Propagierete Geschlechterbilder auf Postkarten im Ersten Weltkrieg in Österreich-Ungarn,” MA thesis, University of Graz, 2011, 34.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

It was at the turn of the century that picture postcards began to be used by European royal families to mark public activities of royalty. It could be argued then, that as postcards moved away from landscapes, the royals themselves began to represent the homeland. I think this is particularly the case in terms of Karl and Zita, and their images on postcards could perhaps remind the public of what they were fighting for during the war.

As Alexis Schwarzenbach has noted, the mass-produced and impersonal textual messages of royal postcards did not stop them from being effective public relations tools.<sup>82</sup> We can see that postcards were used in England to mark the death of Queen Victoria, or to commemorate Emperor Wilhelm II's visit to the Holy Land in 1890.<sup>83</sup> Such postcards and photographic releases would keep royal activities in the forefront of the public's mind in a way that painted portraits of the previous centuries would not.

Postcards were also utilised in order to create certain narratives. Alison Rowley has successfully shown how the Russian royal family used portraits on postcards in an attempt to counteract negative publicity which surrounded their reign.<sup>84</sup> As Rowley notes, the Russian royal family were not unique in this, even if their context varied greatly from other European dynasties.<sup>85</sup> Zita and Karl would use portraits on postcards to create certain narratives: images of Zita as wife and mother reflected not only how Zita saw herself, but perhaps also helped to tackle rumours and accusations that her influence extended beyond the realm of what was appropriate for her position and gender.

In 1885, privately produced illustrated postcards were legalised in Austria, allowing for a 'golden age' of the picture postcard.<sup>86</sup> Joachim Bürgschwentner estimates that just before the war, 1.7 million postcards were being sent every day in the Austrian half of the

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<sup>82</sup> Alexis Schwarzenbach, "Royal Photographs: Emotions for the People," *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 3 (August 2004): 260.

<sup>83</sup> Rowley, "Monarchy and the Mundane: Picture Postcards and Images of the Romanovs", 147.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Bürgschwentner, "War Relief," 101.



monarchy.<sup>87</sup> During the war itself, around 50,000 war-related picture postcards were created and circulated in Germany and Austria.<sup>88</sup> Many postcards still exist today in museums and private collections. We can therefore see that there were a lot of postcards being produced and in circulation, that they were not being thrown away, and that they could have been seen as an effective public relations tool by the imperial family.

### III. Visual representations of Zita on postcards: postcards of a wife

From Zita's remembrances, particularly her 1972 interview for the *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (ORF), we can see that she understood herself in terms of three roles: empress, wife and mother. It is in these three roles, separately and combined, that Zita is portrayed on postcards.<sup>89</sup> I argue that Zita effectively used her portraits on postcards to present herself in these roles, and that particularly in that of mother, she should be identifiable for the female members of the population. In order to understand how Zita presents herself as wife and mother, it is first necessary to briefly look at her Catholic education, which certainly had an impact on how she perceived herself and her role.

Zita's mother, Maria Antónia, Duchess of Parma, ensured the religious education of the children at home; it was to have practical aspects rather than merely learning the Catechism.<sup>90</sup> Ten percent of pocket money was to be given to the poor, and the ducal children were also sent into poorer districts in order to care for them.<sup>91</sup> The ambassador

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>89</sup> Here, I am also putting her time as archduchess under the role of 'Empress' for sake of ease. At the time of the ORF interview, Zita was still in exile, as she always refused to renounce her rights to the throne. Only in 1982 (ten years after this interview), after six decades in exile, was she able to return to Austria. A pro-monarchy stance is clear throughout, and not only because it is the ex-Empress speaking. The documentary was directed by Erich Feigl, a staunch supporter of Habsburg restoration. He was closely connected to the family, particularly Zita and her first son Otto. Thanks to this connection, he wrote what he claimed to be the 'only authentic biography' of Zita. Additionally, he was part of the committee responsible for her burial, and an active member of the *Kaiser Karl Gebetsliga*, an organisation which has promoted the cause for the last emperor's canonisation since 1925.

<sup>90</sup> Tamara Griesser-Pečar, *Zita* (Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lübbe, 1988), 30.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

Heinrich von Tschirsky was aware of this, writing at the time of Zita's engagement that her home education was guided in a 'very strictly clerical sense'.<sup>92</sup> Zita was then sent to two convents to finish her education, firstly in Bavaria, and then on the Isle of Wight. Some of her own sisters were to remain in the latter convent and took the veil. This religious setting would have had a major impact on Zita's understanding of the roles available to women. In traditional understandings of Catholicism now as then, there are two options open to women: marriage and motherhood, or the consecrated life. Both of these are epitomised in the Virgin Mary, who remains the ultimate womanly paradigm in the Catholic Church.<sup>93</sup> Zita retained her Catholic faith throughout her life.

Her future husband, Archduke Karl, also had a deeply Catholic upbringing, which in turn would guide his understanding of his marriage, and the roles to be played within it. According to court rules, Karl's future bride must not only be of the correct social standing, but also a Catholic. The very laws of the Habsburg court required this confessional background from Zita. Additionally, they were not the only couple to share a profound understanding of their Catholic faith; Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were known for their religiosity. Unfortunately for them, Sophie did not have the required aristocratic background for her position, leaving their children out of the line of succession. It was this which would catapult Karl into the role of heir to the throne in 1914.

Not only was the marriage convenient, it was one of love. The night before their wedding, Karl uttered the words which have since become famous among Catholics: "now we must help each other get to heaven". It would be through their respective roles as husband and wife that they would help each other towards this goal with salvific implications within the Catholic Church. The pair had a deep love and respect for each

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>93</sup> See: Karl Rahner, *Mary: Mother of the Lord* (Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke, 1963). Michael E. Gaitley, MIC, *33 Days to Morning Glory* (Stockbridge: Marian Press, 2011). Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1981).

other, and can be seen not only in Karl's final words to his wife on his deathbed ("I love you so much"), but also in day to day documents. In a telegram sent from Karl to Zita in the first years of their marriage, he tells her that he is thinking about her often, and ends with 'hugging you and the children tightly'.<sup>94</sup> These are not mere empty words (like some of Crown Prince Rudolf's letters to his tormented wife Stéphanie), but reminiscent of new lovers whose every thought is of the other. Their devotion would continue throughout and beyond Karl's short life: Zita never remarried, and wore black for the rest of her days.

Pictures of Karl and Zita prior to their ascension to the thrones of Austria-Hungary were a well-loved postcard choice for people writing to family and friends. Soon after their wedding, postcards showing the festivities were sent. There is one such postcard sent in 1911 from Belgium.<sup>95</sup> It is unclear whether the card was bought in Belgium or somewhere in Austria, taken back, and sent from Belgium. Simply addressed 'Mama', a later writer (the handwriting suggests a later collector organising their collection) adds that the image is of the wedding celebration of the Emperor of Austria (though the image was taken and the postcard sent while Karl was still heir to the throne). What we can gather from this is that even those outside the monarchy were intrigued by this young new couple which were the future of Austria-Hungary. How then, were this young couple presented on postcards?

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<sup>94</sup> Kaiser Karl, *Eigenhändiger Entwurf. Telegramm mit Unterschrift*, 1916, Sammlung August Miller-Aichholz, ÖNB Sammlung von Handschriften und alten Drucken Autogr. 436/22-2.

<sup>95</sup> Delcampe, 'Hochzeitsfest - Erzherzog Karl Franz Josef, Erzherzogin Zita - Fête de mariage de Karl Franz Josef d'Autriche et Zita,' [https://www.delcampe.net/en\\_US/collectibles/postcards/royal-families/hochzeitsfest-erzherzog-karl-franz-josef-erzherzogin-zita-fete-de-mariage-de-karl-franz-josef-dautriche-et-zita-927718633.html](https://www.delcampe.net/en_US/collectibles/postcards/royal-families/hochzeitsfest-erzherzog-karl-franz-josef-erzherzogin-zita-fete-de-mariage-de-karl-franz-josef-dautriche-et-zita-927718633.html) (accessed March 2022).



Figure 9: Archduke Karl and Archduchess Zita, Schuhmann, postcard.<sup>96</sup>

It was the norm in nineteenth and early twentieth century marital portraits to have the wife seated and the husband standing.<sup>97</sup> Such gendered associations with height are particularly striking in the portraits of Victoria and Albert in England. It continues to this day, with Charles and Diana's engagement photo being a prime example.<sup>98</sup> While some portraits which featured on postcards have Karl standing and Zita sitting, there are more frequently photographed standing at a more or less equal height. Where they differ is Karl's

<sup>96</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Erzherzog Thronfolger Karl Franz Josef und Erzherzogin Zita*, postcard, Delcampe, [https://www.delcampe.net/en\\_US/collectibles/postcards/romania/erzherzog-thronfolger-karl-franz-josef-und-erzherzogin-zita-257966845.html](https://www.delcampe.net/en_US/collectibles/postcards/romania/erzherzog-thronfolger-karl-franz-josef-und-erzherzogin-zita-257966845.html).

<sup>97</sup> Margaret Homans, 'To the Queen's Private Apartments,': Royal Family Portraiture and the Construction of Victoria's Sovereign Obedience,' *Victorian Studies* 37, no. 1 (1993):15.

<sup>98</sup> It could potentially be argued that this is a continuation of the gendered associations with height seen in the photos of Victoria and Albert, and on Twitter has been decried as an example of fragile masculinity. However, it can be seen from other photographs from this set that the pair are frequently portrayed at the same height. Was there really a need as there was for Victoria and Albert to display this height difference in order to tread a delicate ideological line? (Williamson relates this portrait with those of the nineteenth-century rulers). There is certainly some element of masculinity at play, as there is no photo where Diana is shown as the taller of the two.

military uniform and Zita's overt femininity, as seen on figure nine, with a photo taken by Heinrich Schumann.

Conceptions of gender were particularly powerful during the First World War, and highly associated with an idea of returning to order. Masculinity would be propagated through the symbolism of the military, most highly idealised in the image of a soldier.<sup>99</sup> Women were imagined on the 'home front', and associated with ideals of motherhood and moral duty.<sup>100</sup> These principles were portrayed on many war time postcards, becoming cultural symbols for *Heimat* (homeland), order, harmony, and a reminder to soldiers of what they were fighting for.



Figure 10: a postcard of Karl from 1917.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Schögler, "Das Symbol...", 46.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. How this ideal of motherhood affected Zita's portrayal on postcards shall be discussed in the next section.

<sup>101</sup> From my own collection and produced by the *Kriegsfürsorgeamt*.

During the First World War, Karl was always portrayed on postcards in military uniforms as seen in figure ten; I am yet to find a single one which shows him otherwise. Only after the war, in exile, is he seen in civilian clothing.<sup>102</sup> There is thus a very clear differentiation in terms of gender expectations in portraits of Karl and Zita that were circulating on postcards. It was his predecessor, Emperor Franz Joseph, who really cemented this image of the Emperor as a soldier: not only was it rare to see him in civilian clothing instead of a military uniform, he slept in the same type of bed his soldiers would. Karl continued the tradition of his predecessor, allowing him to identify with the men fighting on the front, and portray himself as 'one of them'. Unfortunately, it is not possible to measure how much this created a sense of rapport between ruler and ruled, although we can be certain that people saw this image of their young emperor - both through the circulation of his portrait on postcards, but also through his constant visits to the front and to cities throughout the monarchy.

There are, however, some stereotypical gendered images of Karl and Zita which play on height, though these are not always easy to read when one thinks of the biographical background. Here, I would like to discuss two postcard images in particular: one of Zita, Karl and Otto, and one of Zita and Karl at their Hungarian coronation.

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<sup>102</sup> This is not to say that Karl only wore military uniform during the war. There are plenty of private photographs that were not circulated where Karl is wearing civilian clothing.



Figure 11: "Emperor Karl, Empress Zita and Crown Prince Otto", Kosel, postcard.<sup>103</sup>

Figure eleven was taken by court photographer Hermann Clemens Kosel when the pair were still Archduke and Archduchess, but continued to be circulated after Karl's accession to the throne. This image speaks to multiple tropes: the gendered height difference with the woman sitting, the male dressed in military uniform, and the woman holding her child. During the First World War, the ideal family was typified by father/soldier, mother/wife, and child(ren), and this was often used to construct an image of *Heimat* on picture postcards. The imperial family then, would be the ultimate expression of this: the father and mother of the country, as well as the future, in Crown Prince Otto. The photo on the postcard is thus multilayered, coming together to form an ideal whole of gender and the family in its quintessential form: the family of the Emperor and Empress. And yet, there

<sup>103</sup> Postcard from my own collection. The text on the image calls them Emperor, Empress, and Crown Prince, but this is a photo from by Kosel before Karl was even heir to the throne.

seems to be something else. Karl's posture seems unsure. He is leaning in towards his wife and child, but it does not come across as protective, but rather, insecure.



Figure 12: Figure twelve: the Hungarian coronation, Schuhmann, postcard.<sup>104</sup>

Figure twelve, a picture postcard from the Hungarian coronation featuring a photograph by Heinrich Schumann also conforms to the ideal of seated wife and standing husband, but again, Karl is the figure seemingly in the background. He is looking down to his wife, while she looks to the distance in a regal manner. Even in an accompanying image where both look into the same middle distance, it is she who looks like the ruler, and is reminiscent of some of Queen Victoria's early portraits with her consort Prince Albert. While it may not have been an explicit choice by the couple, the photo perhaps reflects what was happening behind the scenes.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Image from my own postcard collection. Photo by Heinrich Schumann.

<sup>105</sup> Unrelated to the current argument, but still important to note is that it was felt the Hungarian coronation must be done as quickly as possible in order to provide a symbol of stability, particularly for the Hungarian aristocracy, but also for the entire country during a time of war. (Gergely Prohle in "Kaiser Karl I. – Mythos und Wirklichkeit", Servus TV, April 2022, 22:39 - 22:58, <https://www.servustv.com/allgemein/v/aaj9htb5ddd5a3dpvcw7/>) Karl and Zita did not feel it was right to hold the coronation during war, but were ultimately persuaded when learning that there were certain laws which



Sources from those around Karl and Zita speak of the influence which she had on her husband. The Emperor's cabinet head, Count Arthur Polzer recalled that when discussions were taking place, the Empress was usually present. Here, she would have a passive influence over her husband, and would be 'reading' in the corner of the room.<sup>106</sup> Wilhelm Möller, who Katrin Unterreiner relies heavily on to construct the image of weak emperor and powerful empress, wrote that Zita 'undoubtedly had an outstanding influence on him [Karl]. She was intellectually higher and more energetic.'<sup>107</sup> In her later 1982 interview, Zita is insistent that she played no role in politics, and that all ideas came from and decisions were made by Karl.<sup>108</sup> One may rightly question if this was the true extent of her involvement as Empress.

When confronted with this idea, Zita's grandson (also named Karl) skirts around it, repeating that the Emperor had of course made note of the intelligence and energy of his wife.<sup>109</sup> It appears to be a source of discomfort, and yet Zita would not be the first Habsburg consort to play a political role; Elisabeth played a key part in the *Ausgleich* of 1867, and Archduchess Sophie (mother of Emperor Franz Joseph) was known as the 'only man in the Hofburg' due to her political influence which eventually brought her son to the throne.<sup>110</sup>

Unterreiner's other main source is an anonymous one. It is this which claims that Zita would remove Karl from meetings when she did not like the direction that they were taking. They would often be gone for half an hour, and when they returned, Karl would have

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could only be signed by a king (as told to me by Emperor Karl expert and curator of Eckartsau Palace, Kerry Tattersall). These images circulating on postcards could therefore help contribute to this idea of stability.

<sup>106</sup> Graf Artur Polzer Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl aus der Geheimmappe seines Kabinettchefs* (Vienna: Amalthea, 1929), 289.

<sup>107</sup> Katrin Unterreiner, *Meinetwegen kann er gehen': Kaiser Karl und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna: Molden, 2017), 49.

<sup>108</sup> This interview was given when the ex-Empress was allowed to return to Austria for the first time since her exile.

<sup>109</sup> Karl Habsburg-Lothringen in "Zita - Österreichs letzte Kaiserin", *Zeitgeschichte*, ORF, 17:11-17:20.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 6:00-6:25.

taken the view of his wife.<sup>111</sup> The anonymous nature of this source makes it problematic, as it is impossible to assess the credibility of the author and what is written.

With all of the above in mind, it seems next to impossible to reach a middle ground between saint and sinner. Perhaps we should not continue to underestimate Karl, while also recognising the influence that his intelligent wife surely yielded. According to Emperor Karl expert and curator at Schloss Eckartsau (the last Austrian residence of Karl and Zita before they went into exile), primary sources that Unterreiner has not been able to access show that Karl made the decisions, and that he would also decide differently to how his wife might want.<sup>112</sup> Here the middle ground seems to be found; in a loving marriage like Karl and Zita's, what husband does not listen to his wife, and vice versa? That she was the real power behind the throne seems to be a result of anti-Austrian and anti-Zita feeling which arose during and especially after the war.

#### **IV. Visual representations of Zita on postcards: Zita as mother (of the country)**

Images of Zita were circulated even before she became Empress, both in the form of images on postcards, but also through public appearances (to be discussed in the next chapter). Zita's visits throughout the monarchy combined with beginning to circulate her image meant that she would already become more visible than the previous empress, Elisabeth, had been. Empress Elisabeth had been almost fourteen years dead at this point, as well as having made infrequent appearances during her lifetime. The shy and seemingly narcissistic Elisabeth (known as 'Sisi') stopped being photographed and painted at the age of thirty one. If she was seen in public, her face was covered with a fan.<sup>113</sup> Despite her refusal, there was a huge demand for pictures of the woman who was meant to be the most

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<sup>111</sup> Unterreiner, *Kaiser Karl* 50.

<sup>112</sup> This was said during a special tour of the palace on May 8, 2022.

<sup>113</sup> See: Brigitte Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2016). Joan Haslip, *The Lonely Empress* (London: Phoenix, 2004).

beautiful in Europe. Photographers were therefore forced to retouch earlier images of Elisabeth to make her appear older, or create montages out of photos of other women and the reluctant Empress.<sup>114</sup>

Unterreiner believes that Zita ‘knew the power of images’.<sup>115</sup> This power was probably even more pertinent knowing that the monarchy had been without a female figurehead for quite some time. While other European courts, particularly London and Berlin, had women with fixed positions in the public eye, the Viennese court had come to be associated with the aged and seemingly eternal Emperor Franz Joseph.<sup>116</sup>

The example of Victoria signals how the construction of personae, particularly that of mother, spread through portraiture and photographs can have a noteworthy impact on popular feeling. Victoria then set a standard which the other European royal families wished to follow. If Zita was aware of her unpopularity (which she seems to have been at least retrospectively, when thinking of being branded ‘the Italian’), the circulation of certain portraits could have been a way to bolster her reputation.

Seeing images of Zita, even as Archduchess, would begin to fill this gap that Elisabeth had left behind. While postcards exist of other Habsburg archduchess (such as Elisabeth’s daughter, Marie Valerie), they would not perform the same function that Zita did. Additionally, while the odd drawn or painted portrait of Zita and her family found its way onto postcards, the photographic medium was overwhelmingly represented.<sup>117</sup>

Photographs were deemed as more authentic than portraits (we can see this also in Britain), though this was not always the case. They were viewed equally before 1900, and it was then

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<sup>114</sup> The Kaiservilla in Bad Ischl (the former summer residence of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth, still in possession of their descendants through their daughter Archduchess Marie Valerie) displays many such examples of early photo retouching and photo montages.

<sup>115</sup> Zeit Geschichte, “Zita”, 15:58.

<sup>116</sup> Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita*, 23.

<sup>117</sup> In my own collection, I have an example of a drawn picture of Zita and Karl (at this point heir to the throne) in a carriage. The postcard was produced by M. Munk, Vienna.

at the turn of the century that photographs took precedence in authenticity.<sup>118</sup> So, it is a very real and tangible image of Zita that was being circulated, unlike the doctored ones of the previous Empress.

Zita, filling this void left by Elisabeth, links into her future role as *Landesmutter* (literally ‘mother of the country’). In the aforementioned 1972 interview, Zita herself acknowledged this perceived role. It seems to have been reciprocated, as shall be seen in newspaper reports in the next chapter, but also contemporary poems such as ‘*Wir haben wieder eine Kaiserin!*’ (‘we have an empress again!’).<sup>119</sup>

The idea of a female ruler being the mother of a country was not unique to Austria; the most famous example is that of Queen Victoria who even became known as the ‘grandmother of Europe’. Victoria also utilised portraiture of herself as a mother to express this role to the public, and even in death she requested to be buried with photographs of her children and grandchildren.<sup>120</sup> It seems the public accepted this persona of mother of the country: when Victoria died, Henry James wrote that it was a ‘real, personal grief’, and that ‘we all felt, publicly, at first, quite motherless’.<sup>121</sup> While Zita was not able to have this effect in death due to her exile from Austria, the example of Victoria signals how the construction of a mother persona spread through portraiture and photographs can have a noteworthy impact on popular feeling.

Victoria then set a standard which the other European royal families wished to follow. This ideological line has been named ‘the spectacle of royal domestic privacy’ by Margaret Homans.<sup>122</sup> Zita also utilised this paradox in her portraiture. Important here is her symbolic role as *Landesmutter* expressed through pictures of her as a literal mother. Vital

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<sup>118</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 55.

<sup>119</sup> Fr Eichert, “Wir haben wieder eine Kaiserin” in *Kaiser Gedichte*, ed. Austriacus (Linz: Druck und Verlag des katholischen Preßvereins, 1918), 29 - 30).

<sup>120</sup> Julia Baird, *Victoria the Queen* (London: Blackfriars, 2016), 487.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, 485.

<sup>122</sup> Homans, ‘Queen’s Private Apartments,’ 4.

for her construction of this image would be portraits of her with her firstborn son, heir to the throne Archduke Otto.



Figure 13: “Archduchess Zita with her son”, Kosel, postcard.<sup>123</sup>

Already as an Archduchess, we see portraits of Zita with her children on postcards. This ties not only into the aforementioned preparation for her role as *Landesmutter*, but also to show the people their future Crown Prince, Otto. Figure thirteen, a postcard sent outside the monarchy, features Hermann Clemens Kosel’s 1914 photograph of Zita and Otto. The photograph of Zita as Archduchess with baby Otto clearly encapsulates the paradox of the domestication of majesty with the lavish background setting and the mother holding her child.<sup>124</sup> She is at once distant and familiar - mothers throughout the monarchy would be

<sup>123</sup> Hermann Clemens Kosel, *Österreich - Erzherzogin Zita mit ihrem Sohn*, postcard, Delcampe, [https://www.delcampe.net/en\\_US/collectibles/postcards/royal-families/oesterreich-erzherzogin-zita-mit-ihrem-sohn-320132792](https://www.delcampe.net/en_US/collectibles/postcards/royal-families/oesterreich-erzherzogin-zita-mit-ihrem-sohn-320132792).

<sup>124</sup> Hermann Clemens Kosel, *Zita, Kaiserin von Österreich, mit Sohn Otto*, 1914, photograph, ÖNB, Vienna, <https://onb.digital/result/1118EC1C>. Although the image is titled online as Zita being Empress, she was Archduchess at the time the photo was taken.

able to relate to the young woman with the child on her lap (as well as other intimate photographs with her children, see below), while at the same time be inspired to feel the amount of awe her position commanded. Judith Williamson has identified the heart of the current British royal family's popularity as their being 'at once like us, and not like us,' and the key to this is their representation as a middle class family in photography and the media.<sup>125</sup>

Ideals of the bourgeoisie family and mother were also very popular in Austria during the First World War.<sup>126</sup> This could then easily be said about Karl and Zita, particularly through photographs of the young family which were a popular postcard choice. While it is unclear if this did anything for Zita and Karl's popularity in wartime, it is unsurprising that such images were chosen for postcards; they have a clear ideological message.

There is an interesting development in the images of Zita as a mother. The photo on the postcard above almost screams 'royalty'. There is a significant contrast with figure fourteen, which was produced when Zita was Empress. In her images as an Archduchess, particularly those taken before the outbreak of the First World War, Zita's status is explicit through the posture, clothing and setting used. In the above postcard, Zita was not even the wife of the heir to the throne. But as Empress, we can see through figures fourteen and fifteen that she becomes more like every woman with no props, and a smile, and this must have been an important part of her self-expression through portraiture. In a time when the population were struggling, it may not have been deemed appropriate to have portraits filled with majestic trappings. It also diverges heavily from imagery of the previous Empress, who needed to be seen as the most beautiful, untouchable female in the monarchy. Additionally,

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<sup>125</sup> Judith Williamson, *Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture* (London: Marion Boyars, 1986), 75.

<sup>126</sup> Schögler, "Das Symbol...", 67.

the court itself became much more informal after Karl took the throne, and the Emperor and Empress much more approachable than during Franz Joseph's rule.<sup>127</sup> Perhaps this too had an influence on their iconography.



Figure 14: "Empress and Queen Zita with Archduke Felix", *Kriegsfürsorge*, postcard.<sup>128</sup>

The image of mother and child also had specific meaning for the war. We can see that mother and family related postcards were chosen for use by the governmentally organised *Kriegsfürsorge* (literally 'war welfare'), (such as the postcard in figure fourteen) or charities such as the *Zentralkomitee zur Errichtung von Soldatenheimen* (central committee for the establishment of homes for soldiers). Postcards by such organisations were sold by subscriptions, catalogues, at public events, and also through unsolicited mailing.<sup>129</sup> The imagery of Zita as mother was also a popular choice of image for postcards produced by private publishers (one example being the *Postkarten Verlag Brüder Kohn* in

<sup>127</sup> Griesser-Pečar, *Zita*, 112.

<sup>128</sup> Image from my own collection.

<sup>129</sup> Bürgschwentner, "War Relief," 108.

Vienna's first district).<sup>130</sup> We can then rightly ask, what other meanings did this symbolism have, away from the existing monarchical ones?

As mentioned in the previous section, there were specific ideals about the family and the role of men and women being propagated at the time. Women were specifically associated with motherhood, morality, and caring for the home so that there must be no worries about the homeland.<sup>131</sup> The natural destiny for women was seen as wife and mother, and this became endangered by the amount of women who became the sole breadwinner during the war.<sup>132</sup> Images of women as good, waiting mothers taking care of the home were therefore circulated on postcards to remind everyone where their proper place was. Additionally, the imagery was usually reminiscent of the Virgin Mary, making the ideal of motherhood elevated to even higher levels.<sup>133</sup> Lisa Schögler argues that this 'cult of motherhood' already existed prior to the war, but intensified during it as it transmitted the idea that everything was in harmony in the *Heimat*.<sup>134</sup>

As mother of the country, Zita was therefore the biggest example to all the other women. It was a role which she came to as soon as she married Karl, even when he was behind Franz Ferdinand in the line of succession; even before becoming Empress, she was the 'first lady in the empire', and was at the focal point from 1911 onwards.<sup>135</sup> Despite this, and the amount of postcards circulating of Zita and her children before Karl became heir to the throne, Tamara Griesser-Pečar argues that the pair remained relatively unknown to the public until Franz Ferdinand's assassination.<sup>136</sup> It would thus be interesting to see just how many of the postcards with images of Zita and her children produced prior to this time were

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<sup>130</sup> I have found multiple examples from this particular publisher for sale online, in the Marlene Eilers Koenig collection, in the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchive, in Thomas Köck's collection, and in my own collection.

<sup>131</sup> Schögler, "Das Symbol...", 66.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>135</sup> Griesser-Pečar, *Zita*, 82.

<sup>136</sup> Griesser-Pečar, *Zita*, 93.



actually bought and sent. Unfortunately, this task remains out of the scope of this current thesis, and due to limits with the sources, would be difficult to concretely examine.



Figure 15: Otto, Karl, Adelheid, Robert, and Felix, *Zentralkomitee zur Errichtung von Soldatenheimen*, postcard.<sup>137</sup>

Zita's role as mother of the country was to change drastically, and this can be seen through the portraits featured on postcards. In 1918, Karl was made to sign a manifesto which removed the Emperor from governmental decisions. The imperial family were sent into exile in 1919, for fears that the fate of the Romanovs might also befall them. Even in exile, the family had official photographers document their movements and take family photos.

A great number of postcards were produced during the exile, both before and after Karl's death.<sup>138</sup> Figure sixteen is from 1921, and shows the family in exile at Hertenstein castle. The image was taken by Heinrich Schuhmann, who came from Vienna to take the image. Karl is no longer in military uniform, but he stands, the patriarch of the family. Zita

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<sup>137</sup> Postcard from my own collection, produced by the *Zentralkomitee zur Errichtung von Soldatenheimen*. This photo was taken with the express purpose of being printed on postcards. (See Katrin Unterreiner, Werner Grand, *Kaiserlichen Alltag* (Erfurt: Sutton Verlag, 2010), 119.

<sup>138</sup> A large portion is to be found in the collection and shop of Thomas Köck, Plankengasse 7, Vienna.

is sitting and surrounded by her children. She becomes the mother of the country without a country.

It is clear that some in Austria still supported the monarchy; this postcard was produced by the *Staatswehr*, which was part of the *Kaisertreuen Volksverbandes* (Association of people loyal to the Emperor). It is likely that Schuhmann was among these, and not only because his image was used by this specific office. Photographers who had previously taken portraits of the family travelled to photograph them in exile, and would return to Vienna and produce postcards featuring these photos.<sup>139</sup> Schuhmann is a great example of this, and his photographer's stamp can be seen on exile postcards.

Why, then, would postcards of the imperial family be produced in the country from which they had been exiled? I believe it was important to keep the image of the former monarchs in the public imagination. Karl attempted to retake the throne in Hungary twice, and Zita always asserted her, Karl's, and then Otto's right to the throne. Purposely having portraits taken by their old photographers in Vienna to be produced on postcards was a way in which the family could hope to hold some sway over and gain sympathy from their former subjects. It shows a clear initiative and agency on the part of the family in a way that previous postcards may not.

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<sup>139</sup> This was confirmed to me by Thomas Köck.



Figure 16: the imperial family in Hertenstein, October 1921, Schuhmann, postcard.<sup>140</sup>

The images would quickly change. Karl died in Madeira in 1922, leaving Zita alone with seven children, and pregnant with their eighth. She was now the sole figurehead of the Habsburg dynasty. The next postcard, shown in figure seventeen, (also produced by the *Staatswehr*) is a vast contrast to previous ones of the content mother. Even on earlier postcards of Zita alone with a child or multiple children, she glows. Here, she is a *Mater Dolorosa* - sorrowing mother. While she does not mourn the death of a child like the Virgin Mary, she grieves the loss of a husband whom she loved dearly.

This adds another dimension to the images when one thinks that they were being used on postcards as a minor way of supporting a potential restoration attempt. Such images could evoke sympathy for the young, sorrowing mother and her children. Postcards continued to be produced for a long time, and there are plenty to be found which feature the adult Otto.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup> From my own collection, with photograph by Heinrich Schuhmann.

<sup>141</sup> This extends beyond the realm of the current thesis. Many examples are to be found in Thomas Köck's collection, including photographs taken and photographs produced by Clairson's, Vienna.



Figure 17: *Mater Dolorosa*, Schuhmann, postcard.<sup>142</sup>

## V. Conclusion

With postcards, we can trace the beginning of Zita's political imagery which was clearly used as propaganda during the war. It is an imagery that Zita continued to cultivate through interviews and photographs until her death in March 1989. Zita ultimately always saw herself as Karl's wife and the mother of his children, and after his early death, never remarried and wore black for the rest of her long life. In the Catholic Church, feast days of saints are generally on the day which they died. However, Karl and Zita are venerated on the day of their wedding.

This chapter has shown the different personae which Zita portrayed to the public through portrait photographs on postcards. It has been seen that the distribution of such photographs on postcards was a tool to influence people during a time of great upheaval; her images had the aim of contributing to a sense of stability, loyalty, and *Heimat*. There are also a great deal of postcards which feature images of Zita's public appearances. The next

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<sup>142</sup> Postcard from my own collection, with photograph by Heinrich Schuhmann.

chapter shall not cover this type of photograph on the medium of postcards, but their usage in newspapers.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### *IM RAMPENLICHT: ZITA AND THE PRESS.*

#### I. Introduction<sup>143</sup>

We shall now look at how changes in Zita's portrayals were reflected in another heavily controlled medium: press photography and newspapers. Newspaper journalism was the main medium at the beginning of the century and at the beginning of the war.<sup>144</sup> The development of press photography allowed the public to follow the movements of the imperial family more closely. Public appearances are an image in themselves for the people present, but during Franz Joseph's reign, they also started to become quite literal images: photographers would follow the Emperor and photograph him in less formal and posed settings. With Emperor Karl founding the monarchy's first press office, the taking and circulation of photos during public appearances reached new heights. Additionally, the press was the major tool for mass communication in the double monarchy, and newspapers were subject to intense censorship when emergency measures came into place right after the start of the First World War.<sup>145</sup>

This chapter shall examine how Zita was presented to the public in German language media within the monarchy, keeping in mind that the press was heavily controlled and censored by the *Kriegspressequartier*. We shall see a continuance with the themes touched upon in the previous chapter: that of Zita as wife, mother, and *Landesmutter*. She made very clear choices on how to present herself in public, and reports on these appearances further cement Zita's desired public persona.

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<sup>143</sup> *Im Rampenlicht* translates to 'in the spotlight'.

<sup>144</sup> Reichel, „*Pressearbeit ist Propagandaarbeit*“, 17.

<sup>145</sup> Cornwall, "Propaganda at Home".

While at first glance the amount of sources seem overwhelming, it must be remembered that only a small amount of newspapers have been preserved, as they were deemed as unworthy of archiving.<sup>146</sup> To add to this, the actual market for German language newspapers in the *k.u.k.* monarchy was relatively small, meaning that this chapter is unable to provide a full overview of how Zita's public appearances were reported on.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, this chapter will not provide a complete recapitulation of every single public appearance of Zita's, nor of every possible German language newspaper reporting on said appearance. Instead, photographs and reports that reflect the transitions in Zita's life and projected personae have been chosen. What we can clearly see is how censorship impacted reporting on Zita: it is after exile, that perceptions of her could now become more critical. There is a clear split between post-exile newspaper reports in terms of loyalty and sympathy, and Zita's self-image also became that of a widow perpetually in black after Karl's death.

Additionally, in contrast with the photographs discussed on postcards, the images in this chapter are not artistic, but rather, practical. While we must be wary of calling them spontaneous and natural, they are not so posed, and not necessarily laden with as many ideological and symbolic elements as a portrait might be. Therefore, analysis of such photos cannot begin in the realm of the art historical, but the multifaceted social and political uses of such a medium.<sup>148</sup> In order to better understand the press photos being taken of Karl and Zita, it is important to trace the development of such photography in Austria, as it is very much intertwined with the imperial family itself.

## II. The development of press photography in Austria

From the 1890s, weekly illustrated newspapers came onto the market in Austria, with the *Interessanten Blattes* (literally 'interesting pages') as the prototype for those that

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<sup>146</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 11-12.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

followed.<sup>149</sup> Illustrations which copied photos or imagined how events might have looked were utilised by newspapers. It was shortly before the turn of the century that actual photos began to be printed in newspapers.<sup>150</sup> A large reason behind this is that the twentieth century was, as Anton Holzer has argued, and was touched upon in the last chapter, an epoch of photographic mass reproduction and the global circulation of images.<sup>151</sup>

Despite this and the fact that Vienna was one of the most important centres of the picture press, Austria was slower than the rest of Europe, and drawn illustrations after photographs or from the imagination were still often used, as shall be seen in Zita's case.<sup>152</sup> There are multiple reasons for this: the actual apparatus required to take photographs;<sup>153</sup> the limited market for German language newspapers in the double monarchy; as well as the conservative nature of many newspaper publications, such as the *Wiener Salonblatt* (Viennese salon newspaper).<sup>154</sup>

Initially, photographers already working in Austrian ateliers moved to the new 'medium,' while continuing their studio work - Heinrich Schuhmann being a prime example.<sup>155</sup> Studio photographers did not disappear, but their status, roles, and goals changed during the First World War.<sup>156</sup> It is precisely such photographers that were capturing images of Zita and the rest of the imperial family; we can see in the first chapter that all of the photographers listed at some point worked in a studio, and Kosel was the only one who did not move into press photography.

It is important to note that the quick popularisation of photography, combined with the ability to mass reproduce images, diminished the need for conventional studio

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 10.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>153</sup> Benito-Sanchez, "Pressefotografen zwischen den Weltkriegen", 27.

<sup>154</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 30.

<sup>155</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 38.

<sup>156</sup> Stemlerné, "Fotografien des Ersten Weltkriegs und der Revolutionen (1914-1919)," 263.



photography, and later allowed for the new occupation of ‘press photographer’.<sup>157</sup> As achieving prestige and titles such as *k.u.k. Hofphotograph* had long been the goal of many photographers, the reputation of press photographers not coming from such a background was not positive in the beginning.<sup>158</sup> Yet on the whole, studio photographers were not able to keep up with what was required from them in the same way the new generation of press photographers were.<sup>159</sup>

As noted above, press photography was not used for artistic purposes, but practical ones. Here, we see the further development of the need for ‘authenticity’, which photographs would be able to provide more than illustrations. Zita’s public appearances were not only taking place in reality, they were to be recorded in visual form, continuing the trend begun by Franz Joseph at the end of his reign.<sup>160</sup> Authenticity may have been the ideal, but it was not necessarily the actuality, and such a claim would certainly be naive.<sup>161</sup> The beginnings of press photography in Austria reveal that many press photos - not just portraits, but also of movement and sports - were still taken in studios.<sup>162</sup>

The introduction of photography to newspapers also changed the importance of text, with its amount declining. Designs were altered, and therefore, the relationship between text and images also. However, in comparison to places such as North America and Germany, the designs of Austrian illustrated newspapers remained quite conventional.<sup>163</sup> Holzer has discovered that between the 1880s and 1920s, the cover design with a picture taking up around a quarter of the page remained the standard.<sup>164</sup> He believes this is due to the aforementioned small nature of the German language Austrian newspaper market, and that

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<sup>157</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 38.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>160</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 11.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

there was also little competition between Austrian publications (with many coming from the same publisher).<sup>165</sup> Additionally, it was forbidden to sell newspapers on the street until 1922, and it was only after this that designs began to change and develop.<sup>166</sup> Prior to this, there was no economic pressure for innovation.

It shall be seen that from the newspapers I have been able to examine, very little of the photographs taken of public appearances have been used. It could be simply that newspapers that used the photographs did not survive, but could also be related to the fact that photography did not completely replace illustration as the key visual medium, but instead changed its status.<sup>167</sup> However, I found examples of postcards which utilised photographs of public appearances, so we can deduce that these photographs would be seen by the public in some way or another.

### **III. The imperial house and press photography**

As mentioned in the first chapter, the government (and therefore imperial house) strictly regulated the press during the nineteenth century, with censorship and bans designed to keep unpopular newspapers and opinions at bay continuing until and during the First World War.<sup>168</sup> Photography, and its dissemination in newspapers and other mediums such as postcards, was another way in which the Habsburg dynasty could control their public image. Under Emperor Franz Joseph's rule, public appearances began to be photographed. Such photographs printed in newspapers turned the Emperor into a tangible figure for the first time. While he was not necessarily accessible in the way Karl and Zita were to fashion themselves in public appearances and changes to court protocol, the wider circulation of photographs made the myth of the old Emperor more 'real' to the public. This reshaping of

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 62-63.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 57

<sup>168</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 63.

Franz Joseph's image was a reciprocal one between the Emperor himself and new illustrated media.<sup>169</sup>

The first public appearance to be photographed by press photographers was the traditional Corpus Christi procession in 1895, with the photos appearing in the *Interessanten Blatt* a few days later.<sup>170</sup> It became a regular occurrence to see photos of Franz Joseph at public appearances, though due to his age, they became less frequent at the start of the First World War. He also stopped having formal studio portraits taken. The trend that had begun with Franz Joseph fell more and more into the shadows towards the end of the old monarch's reign. This was to change under Karl and Zita - as seen in the first chapter, just three months after Karl took the throne, he had an imperial press service set up on 20th February, 1917.<sup>171</sup> It was important for this press service that photos of Karl and Zita reach illustrated newspapers as quickly as possible, making their image omnipresent.<sup>172</sup>

#### **IV. The importance of public appearances for Zita**

From the moment of Zita's marriage, it was vital that the people see their future Empress in as many ways as possible. According to Habsburg historian Winkelhofer, Zita and Karl stood in the limelight from the moment of their engagement.<sup>173</sup> Firstly, it was necessary for Zita to travel in the first year of her marriage through the lands which she would rule over. She makes this point clear in later remembrances. In her 1972 interview for the *Österreichischer Rundfunk*, Zita says that Emperor Franz Joseph wished for Austria's newest Archduchess to know her home properly.<sup>174</sup> This is unsurprising. What is

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Holzer, *Rasende Reporter*, 89.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita*, 21.

<sup>174</sup> Ex-Empress Zita, Erich Feigl, ORF, "Die Kronzeugin," filmed 1972, video, 6:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbQcHxjpRxI>.

more interesting is that Zita asserted that she had already visited all of the lands within the Habsburg monarchy prior to her engagement; even decades later she was trying to express herself as Austrian rather than the ‘Italian woman’ that the people mistrusted during the First World War. This suspicion arose from the moment of marriage (Möller writes that Karl was popular, but the people reacted with reserve towards his new wife).<sup>175</sup> It is hard to ascertain real public opinion from newspapers and therefore assess Möller’s claim, as newspaper content was so heavily controlled by the *Kriegspressequartier*. When the pair ascended to the throne, both were popular due to the presence of an Empress after so long. Their popularity (and particularly Zita’s) sank once more after the Sixtus Affair.<sup>176</sup>

To what extent was Zita Italian? In her 1972 interview, she makes the following case:

“We are French princes who ruled in Italy. This consequently shows that we came from France, and not Italy. My family is French, I was born in Italy, my mother was Portuguese, my grandmother German. That made us into a real mixture, as is often the case with us in Austria”.<sup>177</sup>

After listing the different countries she was connected to through her family, she brings us back to the important point: Austria. To her later biographer, Tamara Griesser-Pečar, Zita claimed that she had always felt Austrian in her heart.<sup>178</sup>

While she might not have considered herself Italian, and understandably viewed herself as Austrian (royal brides were often required to shed loyalty to their home country), it is also comprehensible why the populace and perhaps even the court did not see her as such. She is not the only royal bride who has been treated this way by the public or even the court. Marie Antoinette was known as ‘the Austrian’, and Tsarina Alexandra as ‘the

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<sup>175</sup> Unterreiner, *Kaiser Karl*, 48-49.

<sup>176</sup> This was a failed attempt to conclude a separate peace with France during the First World War. As Zita’s brothers were used by Karl for communication with France, Zita has carried the blame for the failure of this affair. It is named the Sixtus Affair after her brother, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma.

<sup>177</sup> Ex-Empress Zita, “Die Kronzeugin,” 1:49- 2:13.

<sup>178</sup> Griesser-Pečar, *Zita*, 65.

German'. Here there is a very clear gendered dimension to imperial 'othering', and it could be and was weaponised by those in and outside the courts.

A look into her early life and education also makes clear that the young Zita was not comfortable speaking German; while the family usually spent the summer season at Schwarzau in Austria, Zita struggled with the language, and this was one of the reasons for her being sent to a convent school in Bavaria.<sup>179</sup>

## V. Appearances as an archduchess

Despite the above, there seems to be little photographic and newspaper records of Zita's public appearances prior to Karl becoming heir to the throne. I believe that there are two reasons for this outside of the potential loss of sources. Firstly, it is likely Karl and Zita expected that they would have quite a bit of time before Karl neared the throne, and wished to enjoy a private family life. Additionally, Zita was twice pregnant during this time. I do not wish to suggest that the pair did not take their duties seriously, as this was certainly not the case. However, still being behind Franz Ferdinand in the line of succession allowed Karl and Zita more privacy and less work. This relative anonymity on their part allowed for the creation of a new persona once Karl reached the throne, and gave them a 'clean slate'.<sup>180</sup> Therefore, we shall begin with one of Zita's public appearances from after the assassinations at Sarajevo, when Karl was heir to the throne.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 36-37.

<sup>180</sup> Christopher Brennan, "'Hesitant Heir and Reluctant Ruler': Karl I/IV of Austria-Hungary During the Great War", in *Monarchies and the Great War*, ed. Matthew Glencross and Judith Rowbotham (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 98.



Figure 18: Vienna reserve hospital nr. 11, Seebald.<sup>181</sup>

Figure eighteen shows Archduchess Zita's visit to Vienna's eleventh reserve hospital on May 8, 1915. She is interacting with war invalids, and is accompanied by Archduke Karl Stephan, chief medical officer Hans Spitzzy, her chief lady-in-waiting Countess Garielle Thun, and two unidentified women (one appears to be a nurse from the hospital). This is the only photograph I have been able to find of her visit, and it was taken by *Kriegspressequartier* photographer Carl/Karl Seebald.

I have been able to identify five newspapers which reported on this visit: the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* (9th May 1915), *Fremden Blatt* (9th May 1915), *Wiener Zeitung* (9th May 1915), *Sport und Salon* (15th May 1915), and the *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung* (12th May 1915).

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<sup>181</sup> Karl Seebald, *Wien, Reservespital Nr. 11*, photograph, Austrian National Library, May 8, 1915, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa1935612>.



Figure 19: front cover of the *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*.<sup>182</sup>

Figure nineteen shows the photograph from figure eighteen in illustrated form as the front cover for the *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*. The size of the image and its placement on the front cover might at first suggest that Zita's visit to the hospital was deemed an extremely important event. However, we must remember that this was the conventional layout for illustrated newspapers in Austria at the time. Despite the front cover design, the visit is only afforded two short paragraphs on the second page. Her visit is briefly described in terms of

<sup>182</sup> *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, front cover, May 12, 1915.



who accompanied her, and that she spent time speaking to Austro-Hungarian and German soldiers who were playing cards. Perhaps it is not that the event was not deemed as important, as the First World War saw a shift in emphasis from textual to visual propaganda.

This same text is repeated word for word in the *Fremden Blatt* and *Wiener Zeitung*. While I have not been able to find any evidence as to why this is, I think it is extremely possible that the *Kriegspressequartier* had provided a certain text to be used by newspapers. I discovered that on multiple occasions throughout the First World War, the same texts would appear in multiple newspapers when reporting on Zita's public appearances.

It is in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* that more context for the visit is given. It is reported that on the previous Monday, Zita had attended a lecture on welfare for war invalids by Professor Rauchberg with Archduke Franz Stephan, who is described as having worked tirelessly for the cause of war welfare. It was this lecture which is supposed to have motivated Zita to visit the hospital the next day. It is reported that she spent three hours there, was 'spellbound' by the patients, and that such a visit showed her seriousness in fulfilling her duties. This sense of duty, wrote the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, was the 'beautiful foil of her almost girlishly modest restraint that gives her character such a delicate grace'.<sup>183</sup> 'Almost girlish', she is the first lady of the monarchy, but had not yet reached the maturity and status which she would then be afforded in reports on her as Empress.

Another well recorded appearance of Zita is her time in Siebenbürgen, where she went to visit her husband who was at the front. Reports of her days there already give the impression of Zita as *Landesmutter*, even if she technically wasn't yet. The *Welt Blatt* writes that, much like a mother visiting a sick child

'Archduchess Zita arrived in Siebenbürgen to visit the wounded from the battles and struggles fought under the victorious supreme command of the Archduke heir to the throne, to bring them gifts of love from home, to comfort and lift them up'.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>183</sup> "Es ist die schöne Folie ihrer immer fast noch mädchenhaft bescheidenen Zurückhaltung, die ihrem Wesen eine so feine anmut gibt". "Der Geburtstag der Erzherzogin Zita", *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, May 9, 1915, 10.

<sup>184</sup> "Erzherzogin Zita in Siebenbürgen", *Welt Blatt*, November 7, 1916, 7.



The newspaper also writes that Zita visited every bed, had a gift for everyone, and that their cover image (see figure twenty) shows her as a ‘saving angel’.<sup>185</sup> In a similar vein, the November 10 issue of *Fremden-Blatt* titles the report on Zita’s visit to Siebenbürgen as the ‘Samaritan Journey of Archduchess Zita’.<sup>186</sup> Here, Zita is set apart from the rest of the women in the imperial house: while the merciful deeds of Habsburg women since the start of the war have been well known, the ‘noble consort of the heir to the throne does more’.<sup>187</sup> The newspaper then looks back to her charitable deeds as a child, and states that her motto ‘more for you than for me’ dominated the actions of the ‘illustrious Samaritan woman’.<sup>188</sup> It is this Samaritan woman who they report as going from hospital to hospital, to ease pain and wounds caused by the war, and that Zita’s visit will remain unforgettable.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid. “[...]rettender Engel[...]”.

<sup>186</sup> “Die Samariterfahrt der Frau Erzherzogin Zita”, *Fremden-Blatt*, November 10, 1916, 8.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. “Aber die edle Gemahlin des Thronfolgers tut mehr”.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. The overt religious imagery here is also to be found in other textual propaganda sources from the period. A biography of Karl, Zita, and Otto produced by the k.u.k. Hofbuchverlag in 1917 details the charitable deeds of this seemingly good Catholic woman, and has likely had an impact on today’s understandings of Zita in her canonisation cause.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.



Figure 20: front cover of the *Welt Blatt*.<sup>190</sup>

Photographs from Zita's time in Siebenbürgen were taken by unknown photographers working for the *Kriegspresssequartier*. While I have not found any newspapers containing these images, I have found a postcard of one of these press images.<sup>191</sup> It is one of many press photographs which made its way onto postcards.

<sup>190</sup> Front cover, *Welt Blatt*, November 7, 1916.

<sup>191</sup> The postcard is in my own collection, and shows Zita interacting with local women.

## VI. Appearances as Empress

Zita understood that she had completely different representational duties to her absent predecessor, Elisabeth. In later years, she said:

“The duties of an empress are different in the midst of a world war than they would be in peacetime. Large receptions and representations mostly disappear. For me, visits to hospitals, to the wounded, were in the foreground, which I sometimes made unannounced in order to see the real conditions”.<sup>192</sup>

Speaking retrospectively, Zita recognised that the flaunting of imperial wealth and splendour would not have been appropriate during the war, and would have alienated the public who suffered with war fatigue by the time Zita and Karl became emperor and empress.<sup>193</sup> Her role as *Landesmutter* now required a very hands on approach, quite literally caring for her children by visiting them in hospitals, bringing them gifts and kind words.

Overall, the new imperial couple’s visits differed in every way to the previous. In contrast to Franz Joseph, Karl was not shy to have contact with the public, and often broke the protocol which ruled such appearances.<sup>194</sup> Karl made substantial changes to the court ceremonial, which made the couple much more approachable than their predecessors. Zita and Karl seem to have been well received due to their unaffectedness and friendliness, which shines through on photos of such visits - though we must keep in mind that the propaganda machinery of the *Kriegspressequartier* stood behind such photographs.<sup>195</sup>

Winkelhofer believes that through their presence, Zita and Karl attempted to strengthen morale, and work against the war fatigue that had begun to develop within the populace.<sup>196</sup> Zita’s appearances were typically ‘feminine’ in nature: visiting children, bringing her own children along with her, visiting the wounded, and accompanying her

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<sup>192</sup> Quoted in Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita*, "Die Pflichten einer Kaiserin sind andere inmitten eines Weltkrieges, als sie in Friedenszeit wären. Die grossen Empfänge und Repräsentationen fallen grösstenteils weg. Bei mir standen die Besuche in den Lazaretten, bei den Verwundeten im Vordergrund, die ich manchmal auch unangesagt machte, um die wirklichen Verhältnisse zu sehen".

<sup>193</sup> We saw in the previous chapter that this was reflected in her portraiture that was circulated on postcards.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

husband to provide support at the front. Such appearances would allow for the further cultivation of her image as *Landesmutter*; through these appearances, she was seen as a nurturing, empathetic mother of the country. This particular section will examine a slightly different visit to ones to hospitals or the front: Zita's appearance in Pressburg alongside Karl and their oldest children Otto and Adelheid on July 16, 1918. Here, we can see how she fashioned herself and was received as *Landesmutter* in a different setting.



Figure 21: journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, Schuhmann, 1918.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Reise des österreichischen Kaiserpaares Karl und Zita nach Pressburg*, photograph, Austrian National Library, June 16, 1918, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18394905>.



Figure 22: journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, Schuhmann, 1918.<sup>198</sup>

Photos from the Pressburg visit, taken by Schumann on behalf of the *Kriegspressequartier*, show the young pair glowing (see figures twenty one and twenty two). In this visit, the couple became moving images of the heavily gendered ones presented on postcards: the man in military uniform, and the feminine woman accompanied by her child. Zita taking Otto and Adelheid along with her for the journey was certainly an excellent public relations tool, showing her as a mother, and making her perhaps more sympathetic. This would surely have been a desired goal, as the Sixtus Affair had become known to the public at this point.

In newspapers of this time, we see a recognition of Zita as *Landesmutter*. The August 17 issue of *Cetinjer Zeitung* reports briefly on the visit (one month after it actually took place), and throughout the issue itself, Zita is praised as mother (of the country) and wife. *Sport und Salon* wrote that ‘girls stood before the queen, knelt down, handed her

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<sup>198</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Reise des österreichischen Kaiserpaars Karl und Zita nach Pressburg*, photograph, Austrian National Library, June 16, 1918, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18394835>.



harvest wreaths’, and that ‘wherever the queen appeared with her children, the Crown Prince and the little Archduchess were given gifts’.<sup>199</sup> This can be seen in one photo by Schumann, where Otto has been given a bouquet (see figure twenty three). It is reported that the childish joy which was awakened upon receiving gifts brought about jubilation from crowds.<sup>200</sup>

We can see that bringing Otto and Adelheid along for this and other visits was a clever way of nurturing positive reactions from the public. However, I do not wish to imply that Zita only brought the children along as a public relations tool. I believe that she brought them firstly because she loved them very much, but also to give Otto the preparation for his future role which Karl never received.<sup>201</sup>



Figure 23: journey of the Austrian imperial couple Karl and Zita to Pressburg, Schuhmann, 1918.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>199</sup> “Aus unserem Kaiserhause”, *Sport und Salon*, July 28, 1918, 3.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Franz Joseph blocked his only son Rudolf from governmental affairs, and his behaviour towards his son is generally seen as one of the contributing factors to Rudolf’s suicide in 1889. Due to political differences, Franz Joseph did the same to the new heir, Franz Ferdinand, who set up his own court at the Belvedere Palace. After Franz Ferdinand’s assassination, and all that came before, Franz Joseph did not seem to learn his lesson, and did not consult or prepare Karl - though he liked his heir very much. One pertinent example of Zita’s love for her children is during exile, when she was separated from her son Robert who had appendicitis. She did everything she could, and risked much, in order to be reunited with and care for this child. This anecdote was told to me by the curator of Eckartsau, who was told this by Zita’s children.

<sup>202</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Reise des österreichischen Kaiserpaares Karl und Zita nach Pressburg*, photograph, Austrian National Library, June 16, 1918, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18394772>.

However, I have only found one newspaper which utilises a press photo from the Pressburg visit: the 28th July 1918 issue of *Sport und Salon* (see figure twenty four). Page three of the newspaper shows Schuhmann's photo of the imperial couple with children under the tent of honour at the folk festival in der Au. Here, farmers brought homages to the pair, and one farmer is pictured kneeling while Zita has a warm smile on her face. It is an almost paradoxical image: the warmth and almost casualness of Karl and Zita despite his military uniform, and the recognition of their position through the farmer's kneeling before them. It was precisely this ease, friendliness, and approachability that helped boost the couple's popularity.<sup>203</sup>

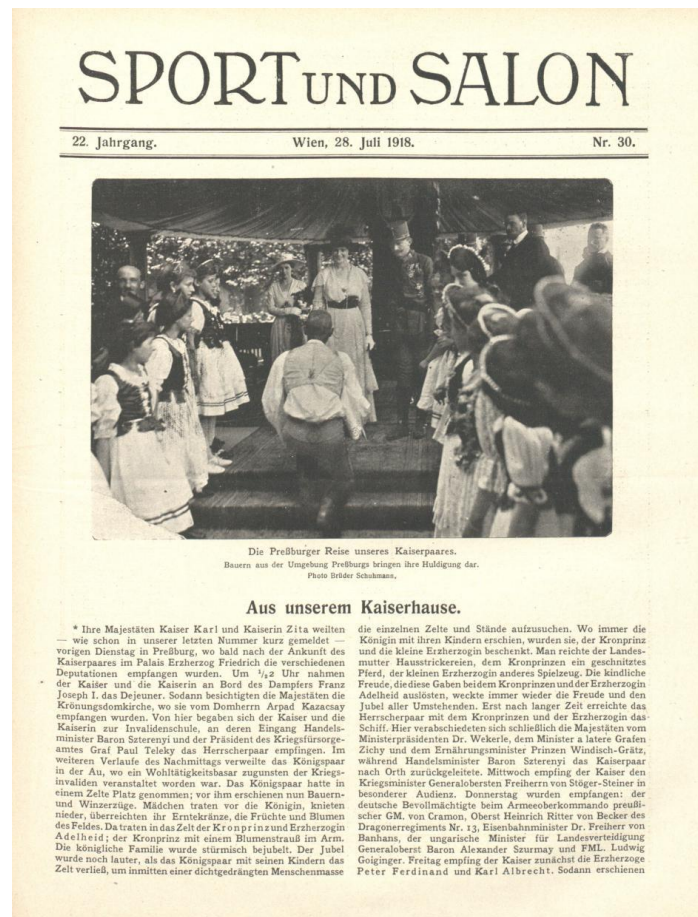


Figure 24: Schuhmann's photo in *Sport und Salon*, 1918.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Winkelhofer, *Karl & Zita*, 46.

<sup>204</sup> "Aus unserem Kaiserhause", *Sport und Salon*, July 28, 1918, 3.

The newspaper reports that they visited the old coronation cathedral church.<sup>205</sup> The *Reichspost* also remarks that when they arrived in Pressburg, Karl and Zita went to the coronation hill, where the mayor of Pressburg greeted them.<sup>206</sup> That this was their first (reported) stop in Pressburg must have a meaning. This visit, and perhaps the entire one to Pressburg could have been a statement on behalf of their couple. Their popularity within and outside the monarchy was waning thanks to the Sixtus Affair and Clemenceau publishing Karl's letter to Sixtus just a few months prior. As Pressburg was once the site where the King of Hungary was crowned, perhaps this visit served as a reminder to the public of the Habsburg's long connection to the country.

Again, with this visit, we see the same or largely similar text appearing in multiple newspapers: the *Reichspost*, *Neue Freie Presse*, *Die Zeit*, and the *Salzburger Volksblatt*. They write that the '*Ungarische Post* have reported', and then go on to repeat the same text that outlines the order of their visit.<sup>207</sup> The *Kriegspressequartier* clearly had specific information about the visit which they wished the public to know. If anything had gone awry during this appearance (or any of their appearances before exile), there is no longer any trace of it due to press censorship.

The visit to Pressburg is one of the few where we are able to discern Zita's own feelings towards the reception: this particular visit seems to have stood out in her memory as she recalled it in a 1972 interview. "The reception was simply fantastic," she stated.<sup>208</sup> This visit provided her and Karl with some hope that the situation in terms of their popularity after the Sixtus Affair was not completely ruined, and that there were still cities and regions

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> "Eine Donaufahrt des Kaiserpaares", *Reichspost*, July 16, 1918, 4.

<sup>207</sup> *Reichspost*, July 16, 1918; *Neue Freie Presse*, July 16, 1918; *Die Zeit*, July 16, 1918; *Salzburger Volksblatt*, July 17, 1918.

<sup>208</sup> Ex-Empress Zita, Erich Feigl, ORF, "Die Kronzeugin," filmed 1972, video, 37:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbQcHxjpRxI>. "Der empfang war einfach fantastisch".



that were true to them.<sup>209</sup> In this interview, video clips taken by the *Kriegspressequartier* are shown, and show the exact same views and moments that photographs did in 1918. Decades after the fact, propaganda created from this office was utilised in this interview that had a pro-monarchy and pro-Habsburg standpoint.

## VII. Appearances in exile

Zita's public appearances after she and Karl went into exile in 1918 and how they were recorded in the press up until her death in 1989 could make an entire dissertation in itself, particularly when Zita accompanied Karl on his second attempt to retake the throne in Hungary. This section shall focus only on Karl's funeral on April 5, 1922, as Karl's death brought about another transition for Zita, particularly in terms of her self-understanding: she was no longer a wife, but a widow.



Figure 25: Zita and Adelheid Habsburg with mourning guests in the park of the Villa Quinta do Monte, 1922.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 37:30-37:50.

<sup>210</sup> Unknown photographer, *Zita und Otto Habsburg mit Trauergästen im Park der Villa Quinta do Monte*, photograph, Austrian National Library, April 1922, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18114710>. The image is incorrectly labelled as Otto instead of Adelheid.

Karl suffered greatly before his death, and Zita stayed at his side throughout. His last words to his wife were “I love you so much”. As the pair’s relationship was so loving, the loss of her husband must have caused great suffering for Zita, particularly as he died at such a young age and while she was eight months pregnant with their eighth child, Elisabeth. The children’s nanny, Franziska Mold, later said that as Karl was dying, Zita asked him how she could continue alone.<sup>211</sup> Figure twenty five is particularly poignant in showing the young widow’s grief. Taken around the time of Karl’s funeral, Zita sits with Adelheid and Bourbon-Parma family members. Other than her child, she is the only subject not looking at the camera. Her misery is palpable, and one feels almost awkward viewing the photo, as if Zita did not wish for this to be taken, and we are intruding on her grief. I am uncertain of whether this photo was circulated, and have not yet found any evidence that it was.



Figure 26 Zita Habsburg with her children at the funeral of Ex-Emperor Karl I. of Austria, Schuhmann, 1922.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Erich Feigl, “Gott erhalte...”: *Kaiser Karl - Persönliche Aufzeichnungen und Dokumente* (Vienna: Amalthea, 2006), 506.

<sup>212</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Zita Habsburg mit ihren Kindern beim Begräbnis von Ex-Kaiser Karl I. von Österreich*, photograph, Austrian National Library, April 5, 1922, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18277830>.

Photos taken from the funeral procession and the transfer of Karl's body a few days before it show a deeply veiled Zita (see figures twenty six, twenty seven, and twenty eight). These photos were again taken by Schuhmann, who had now been there to photograph many moments in her life. Now he was photographing her most tragic, and perhaps had been invited as he was in a moment of what might feel like intrusion at least a familiar photographer.

It is impossible to see her face in these photos. One is instantly reminded of her first public appearance as Empress, at Franz Joseph's funeral. Again, photos taken by the *k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier* show Zita in deep mourning, a moving column of black (see figure twenty nine). She was so deeply veiled that postcards exist where a later artist has drawn on facial features - such was the need to see the face of the Empress after so many years without one.<sup>213</sup> Outside of this, the contrast between the two funerals could not be clearer. As we shall see, there are no newspapers that I have found that show photos of Karl's funeral. There was no need this time for the people to see the face of their mourning ex-Empress.

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<sup>213</sup> Seen in the collection of Thomas Köck, Vienna.

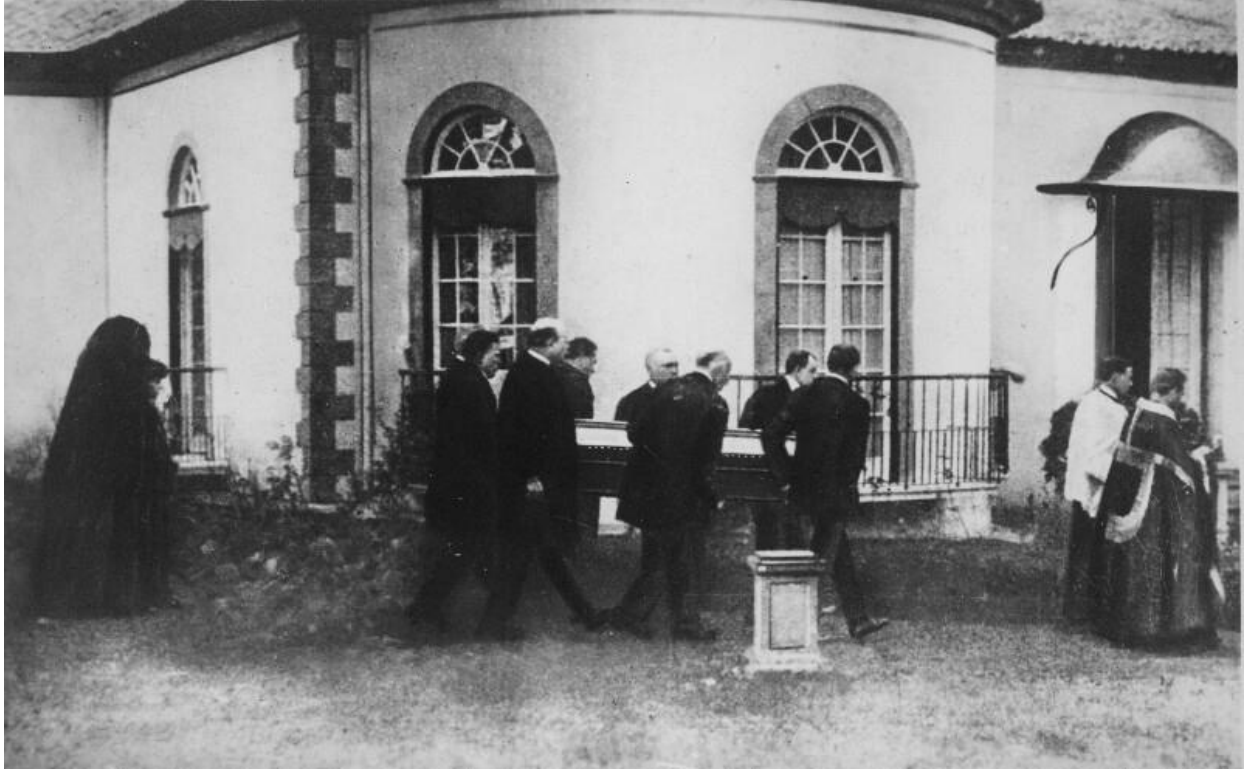


Figure 27transger of Emperor Karl I's body in the Quinta do Monte on Maderira, unknown photographer, 1922.

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<sup>214</sup> Unknown photographer, *Der Leichzug von Kaiser Karl I. in Quinta do Monte auf Madeira*, photograph, Austrian National Library, April 1, 1922, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa1137225>.



Figure 28 Zita Habsburg with her children at the funeral of Ex-Emperor Karl I. of Austria, Schihmann, 1922.<sup>215</sup>



Figure 29 Emperor Karl, Empress Zita and Archduke Otto at Franz Joseph I.'s funeral, Kriegspressequartier, 1916.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Heinrich Schuhmann, *Zita Habsburg samt ihren Kindern auf dem Begräbnis von Exkaiser Karl I. von Österreich*, photograph, Austrian National Library, April 5, 1922, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa18277816>.

<sup>216</sup> *Kriegspressequartier, Kaiser Karl, Kaiserin Zita und Erzherzog Otto beim Begräbnis von Franz Joseph I.*, photograph, Austrian National Library, November 30, 1916, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa1137255>.

Many people on the island of Madeira came to see the dead ex-Emperor, as well as his funeral. Countess Mensdorff wrote that the ‘participation of the people was indescribable’, and that ‘thousands restlessly visited the Emperor in the days that followed’.<sup>217</sup> Yet, in Austria, the death of their last Emperor seems to have been one of the least important news stories. In fact, the newspapers seemed more concerned with where he would eventually be buried, where Zita and the children would live, and the implicated political complications of this.<sup>218</sup>

There is a clear split in the existing newspapers in terms of how they refer to Zita and Karl. As there was no longer censorship and control by the *Kriegspressequartier* or the Habsburgs, there was more flexibility in terms of expression of opinion. As has been seen, prior to exile, Zita was referred to with her titles, given the respect expected for her position, and usually in reference to her role as *Landesmutter* and her charitable deeds. After exile, pro-monarchy publications such as the *Wiener Salonblatt* still refer to Zita as Empress and Queen, despite having been in exile for four years (see figure thirty). In others, such as the *Linzer Tagespost* and *Die Neue Zeitung*, she and Karl are referred to as the ex-Emperor and Empress.<sup>219</sup>

The newspapers also differ in terms of the sympathy offered to Zita. Although the *Neue Warte am Inn* no longer refers to her as their Empress, they describe that sympathy is offered to Zita everywhere, and report that businesses were closed, and mourning flags were put up in front of various buildings in Vienna.<sup>220</sup> Unsurprisingly, the *Wiener Salonblatt* wrote that Viennese (high) society was in mourning, and that there would be no events.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Quoted in Feigl, “*Gott erhalte...*”, 508.

<sup>218</sup> *Niederösterreichischer Grenzboten*, April 9, 1922; *Die Neue Zeitung*, April 4, 1922; *Linzer Tagespost*, April 4, 1922.

<sup>219</sup> “Das befinden der Kaiserin-Witwe”, *Linzer Tagespost*, April 4, 1922, 2; “Der Tod des Exkaisers”, *Die Neue Zeitung*, April 3, 1922, 1.

<sup>220</sup> “Kaiser Karl”, *Neue Warte am Inn*, April 7, 1922, 1-2.

<sup>221</sup> *Wiener Salonblatt*, April 15, 1922, 4.



The *Linzer Tagespost* is concerned with the ex-Empress' emotional state, and on the day following the funeral, the *St. Pöltner Bote* explicitly stated that sympathy would not fail to be given to those left behind - Zita and her seven children.<sup>222</sup>



Figure 30 Wiener Salonblatt, 1922.<sup>223</sup>

The sympathy was not universal, and some took the occasion of Karl's death to blame Zita for the fall of the monarchy. Ten days after the funeral, the *Tagblatt* write of the 'Catholic Press Association's stupid Karl and Zita cult, which has completely forgotten Zita's betrayals and brands Karl Habsburg as a hero'.<sup>224</sup> In a similar vein, the

<sup>222</sup> "Das befinden der Kaiserin-Witwe", *Linzer Tagespost*, April 4, 1922, 2; *St. Pöltner Bote*, April 6, 1922, 3.

<sup>223</sup> *Wiener Salonblatt*, April 15, 1922, 2.

<sup>224</sup> It seems as though a cult had already begun in their own lifetimes, and continues today with their canonisation causes. Literature produced shortly after Karl's death also reflects on this, for example: Karl Itzinger, *Vom Verräter zum Heiligen* (Munich: Ludendorff, 1938), "Eine große Herausforderung durch den katholischen Preßverein", *Tagblatt*, April 15, 1922, 3. "[...]den blödsinnigen Karl und Zita kultus des

*Niederösterreichischer Grenzboten* attacked Zita. Her influence over Karl is deemed as disastrous not only for the ruling house, but Germanness itself. Here, the portrayal of Zita as the ‘Italian woman’ comes through strongly, even if it is not explicitly stated. Karl and Zita’s marriage is presented as a loveless one of convenience (though we can easily see it was quite the opposite), and write that if Karl had married a German princess, he could have saved the House of Habsburg. Zita’s family, the Bourbon-Parmas, are treated as hungry for the throne, and with Karl’s death had lost their most important playing card for achieving this.<sup>225</sup> There is absolutely no sympathy for the young pregnant woman who had just lost her husband and the father of her children. Similarly, the *Villacher Zeitung* refers to Zita’s ‘unfortunate involvement’ in the Sixtus Affair which they say led to the breaking up of the monarchy, and that it was Zita who forced Karl to attempt to retake the Hungarian throne twice.<sup>226</sup>

Such writing was clearly criticised by the *Linzer Tagespost*, who on the day before the funeral wrote that:

“In all circles where political hatred has not killed every other human feeling, great sympathy is shown for the poor Dowager Empress Zita, who is approaching her difficult hour, which is usually sacred to every human being, in the greatest physical and psychological misery. Merciless fate has dealt this strong woman too much.”<sup>227</sup>

Overall, images in reports on Karl’s death are few and far between, and there are no newspapers using photographs of the funeral, despite being taken by Austrian photographers. The newspapers which do use images seem to be ones that are loyal to the monarchy, or at least can show sympathy towards Zita for her loss. However, the photos

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Katholischen Pressvereines, der die Verrätereien der Zita ganz vergessen hat und den Karl Habsburg zu einem Helden stempelt”.

<sup>225</sup> “Exkaiser Karl gestorben”, *Niederösterreichischer Grenzboten*, April 9, 1922, 1-2.

<sup>226</sup> “Tagesneuigkeiten”, *Villacher Zeitung*, April 4, 1922, 3.

<sup>227</sup> “Der Tod des letzten Habsburgers”, *Linzer Tagespress*, April 4, 1922, 2. “Grosses Mitgefühl wird in allen Kreisen, in denen der politische Hass nicht jedes andere menschliche Gefühl erötet hat, der armen Kaiserin-Witwe Zita entgegengebracht, die im größten physischen und psychischen Elend ihrer schweren Stunde, die jedem Menschen heilig zu sein pflegt, entgegengeht. Das erbarmungslose Schicksal hat der starken Frau wohl zu sehr mitgespielt”.



used are not from the funeral. Perhaps images were seen as creating sympathy, and images of the funeral itself would stir up too much of the emotion in the public. This may have perhaps been undesirable, and ensuring that no current photos were used was a way to make the situation less tangible. It may also be that it was hard to see and empathise with an individual tragedy after the thousands of deaths on the battlefield during the First World War, and feelings that the responsibility lay with the Emperor (even though it was Franz Joseph who began the war, and Karl made repeated attempts to restore peace).



Figure 31 Das interessante Blatt, 1922. 228

## VIII. Conclusion

Zita and Karl utilised public appearances to boost morale, ease war fatigue, and to become more tangible figures than their predecessor in the eyes of their subjects. I have argued that through her appearances, Zita reinforced her image as wife, mother, and *Landesmutter* that we saw in the previous chapter. The control of the press under the Habsburgs and then the *Kriegspressequartier* further cemented this image, at least in the

228 *Das interessante Blatt*, April 13, 1922, 5.

German language publications under investigation. Words sanctioned by the press office showed Zita's actions in a motherly and even angel-like way, and no negative reports would be allowed. The use of press photographs and illustrations brought the moments to life for people who could not be present, and would act as a public relations tool. If press photographs of public appearances did not make it into newspapers, then they would be published on postcards. Therefore, the general public would have access in some way.

The removal of heavy censorship after the family were sent into exile meant that negative opinions could finally be expressed. Zita was still very much seen as a wife and mother, but one who was potentially a threat to order and the Republic. Ensuring that photographs of the grief stricken Zita after Karl's death did not make it into newspaper publications ensured that sympathy for the former rulers among the public could be kept to a minimum. While Zita was always presented in the roles of wife and mother, the specifics of how she was presented changed depending on her stage in life, and the events happening in her (former) land.

## CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this work that through imagery, Zita presented herself in the roles of wife, mother, and *Landesmutter* between 1911 and 1922. Postcards, press photography, and journalism were key mediums for promulgating these intertwined personae of Zita's to the masses. The *Kriegspressequartier* was particularly crucial in the circulation of these identities, as were the photographers discussed. While remaining within these confines, her image would evolve through time and adapt to different events impacting her country and family. That Zita clearly wished to present herself in these roles becomes clear when one sees the exile photography, and that there is a continuous thread from 1911 until the exile, and even up until her death. To have photographers come from Vienna to photograph Zita and her family after Karl's death shows a clear initiative on her part.<sup>229</sup>

Even one hundred years after Karl's death, images of the pair are still in wide circulation, and their popularity continues to grow within certain circles: the pair are particularly popular with American Catholics, as well as with conservative and traditional leaning believers throughout Europe. It is Karl and Zita's marriage which draws significant attention in the pair's canonisation causes today. As mentioned in the introduction, Karl's words to his bride before their wedding have become synonymous with their cause. Their relationship, which held the Church at the centre, has become the ideal for many traditional, conservatives Catholics today who wish to set a strong statement against the secular world.<sup>230</sup> Current traditional Catholics espouse views of set roles for men and women and heterosexual marriage which bring forth as many children as possible - Karl and Zita had eight.

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<sup>229</sup> If correspondence between the photographers and Zita exist, it is to be found in the archives of Muri and Budapest. Unfortunately, time constraints meant that I was not yet able to visit them.

<sup>230</sup> One can look at Charles Coulombe's biography of 'Blessed' Emperor Karl for an example of this: Charles Coulombe, *Blessed Charles of Austria* (North Carolina: TAN Books, 2020).

As such, they have become the subject of a Catholic wedding preparation manual which utilises ‘vignettes from the life of the last-ruling imperial family of Austria-Hungary as a witness to the bond of marriage, helping to supplement the preparation a couple receives in their own diocese.’<sup>231</sup> According to the New Liturgical Movement, the manual invites couples to

‘spend half an hour each day, for six weeks leading up to their wedding, growing in prayer and openness to each other. The structure for each day is the same: a vignette from the life or marriage of Karl and Zita, a reflection on the sacramental bond, questions for conversation, and short Catholic prayers’.<sup>232</sup>

Throughout the book, old photographs of Karl and Zita have been given a modern, pop art flair by artist John Ritter, making the couple the ideal vision of traditional Catholic marriage in today’s world.<sup>233</sup>



Figure 32 : from the marriage preparation book, featuring a photo of Karl as a child with doves.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>231</sup> “Marriage Preparation Book”, Blessed Karl of Austria: Cause for Canonization USA/Canada, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.emperorcharles.org/store/marriage-preparation-book>.

<sup>232</sup> Gregory Dipippo, “A New Book on Bl. Karl of Austria for Marriage Preparation”, New Liturgical Movement, accessed June 10, 2022, <https://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2020/01/a-new-book-on-bl-karl-of-austria-for.html#.YqHY9nZBzIU>.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> “A New Book on Bl. Karl of Austria,” Dipippo.

The *Association pour la béatification de l'Impératrice Zita* (Association for the Beatification of Empress Zita) itself particularly focuses on Zita as wife; fidelity and conjugal love are the first of the values they list as practised by the ex-Empress. They also desire to 'improve the solidity and fecundity of couples and families in the modern world' through Zita's intercession.<sup>235</sup> They seek equal status for Karl and Zita ('Without anticipating the sovereign judgment of the Church, the Christian life of the couple formed by Charles and Zita of Austria is equally exemplary. It is quite logical to combine the two causes, but they will remain separate as long as the Church has not beatified Zita. '), though of course this must remain within the realms of proper place for man and woman.<sup>236</sup> It is possible to get prayer cards dedicated to Zita and carrying her image in Vienna's *Peterskirche*, and her tomb in the Capuchin Crypt is usually covered in flowers and cards.

The canonisation causes of both are extremely popular, but especially Karl's. A pilgrimage to his tomb on Madeira for the one hundredth anniversary of his death was organised by the *Kaiser Karl Gebetsliga* (Emperor Karl League of Prayers), and hundreds of people from around the world attended - including a significant number of Habsburg family members (see figure thirty three). The family itself supports the canonisation cause, a key example being Eduard Habsburg, who is Hungarian ambassador to the Holy See. In the lead up to the one hundredth anniversary, he posted a daily novena prayer to Blessed Karl on Twitter, as well as filming a YouTube video entitled 'Centenary of the death of Blessed Emperor Karl', where he stands and speaks in front of an image of the ex-Emperor on his

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<sup>235</sup> "HOME," *Les Amis de l'Impératrice Zita*, accessed May 1, 2022, <http://associationimperatricezita.com/2340-2/>.

<sup>236</sup> "CHARLES AND ZITA," *Les Amis de l'Impératrice Zita*, accessed May 1, 2022, <http://associationimperatricezita.com/charles-and-zita/>.



deathbed.<sup>237</sup>



Figure 33 members of the Habsburg family outside the church where Karl is buried, 100th anniversary of his death.<sup>238</sup>

The canonisation causes have been met with resistance, particularly by those outside of the Catholic Church. The main reason for this seems to be the couple's involvement in the First World War. An article written shortly after Karl's beatification ceremony in 2004 is ironically named 'Karl of poison gas, pray for us'.<sup>239</sup> The author, Ralf Leonard, chiefly uses the argument of Karl's approval of poison gas in 1917, his supposed political weakness, and his failed restoration attempts. These are set in contrast to the canonisation cause's presentation of Karl. It is mentioned at the end of the article that one of the next 'projects' was Zita's beatification, though this was not achieved until five years after this

<sup>237</sup> Eduard Habsburg, "Centenary of the death of Blessed Emperor Karl", 2:13, April 2022, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxx\\_W6butb4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxx_W6butb4).

<sup>238</sup> Eduard Habsburg, Twitter post, April 2, 2022, 7:45 am, <https://twitter.com/eduardhabsburg/status/1510131306063179777?s=21&t=KZnYnBiz5Be2zYXQ7KtTFQ>.

<sup>239</sup> Ralf Leonard, "Karl vom Giftgas, bitte für uns", *Taz*, September 30, 2004, <https://taz.de/Karl-vom-Giftgas-bitte-fuer-uns/!693186/>.

article was written, in December 2009. It is expected that her beatification will take place in the next few years.<sup>240</sup>

Zita ultimately always saw herself as Karl's wife and the mother of his children, and after his early death, never remarried and wore black for the rest of her long life. In the Catholic Church, feast days of saints are generally on the day which they died. However, Karl and Zita are venerated on the day of their wedding. While their bodies are buried in two different places (Madeira and Vienna), their hearts are buried together in Muri, Switzerland.<sup>241</sup> It at first seems simple that Zita's self perception was wrapped up in the roles of wife and mother as coloured by her Catholic faith. However, this thesis has shown that the picture is more complicated. Uncovering the amount of influence Zita had over her husband is difficult to untangle due to the layers added both by herself, but also later family members, and those around the throne. The canonisation causes of the imperial couple makes this even more convoluted. Perhaps easier to grasp is Zita's conception of being a mother for the people she ruled over, particularly when she knew she had to fill the vacuum left behind by Elisabeth. She cleverly used portraiture and public appearances in order to promote this ideological line, though it was not enough to tackle the hostile feelings towards the 'Italian woman'. And while historical 'what-ifs' can be dangerous, one has to ask if Zita and Karl had retained the throne, could she have become the next Victoria, the next 'grandmother of Europe?' Perhaps in being the mother of Otto, the 'last, great European', she has become so, even if her multitude of descendants are royalty without a throne.

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<sup>240</sup> "Österreich: Seligsprechungsprozess für Ex-Kaiserin Zita kommt voran," *Vatican News*, March 23, 2022, <https://www.vaticannews.va/de/kirche/news/2022-03/vatikan-oesterreich-kaiserin-zita-seligspredung-fortschritte.html>.

<sup>241</sup> Otto Habsburg did not have his father's body moved to the imperial crypt in Vienna, stating: "a transfer of my father[ 's body] is only possible with the consent of the people on Madeira. They stood by him in difficult times, one would have to get them to agree to it. Otherwise it would be a sign of ingratitude to have their emperor taken away from them." ("dass eine Überführung meines Vaters nur mit dem Einverständnis der Menschen auf Madeira möglich ist. Sie standen ihm in schweren Zeiten zur Seite, man müsste sie dazu bringen, dass sie zustimmen. Ansonsten wäre es ein Zeichen der Undankbarkeit, dass man ihnen ihren Kaiser wegnimmt.") See Georg Markus, "Habsburgs letzte Ruhestätte", *Kurier*, May 12, 2011, <https://kurier.at/stars/habsburgs-letzte-ruhestaette/715.812>.



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