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THE 1906 IMPERIAL-ROYAL AUSTRIAN EXHIBITION IN LONDON: REPRESENTING DALMATIA*

Abstract

The Imperial Exhibition, which took place at Earl's Court in 1906, offered insight into the industrial goods, ethnographic heritage, natural features and artistic production of the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was staged to display the economic prosperity and picturesque varieties of the kingdom. At that time, the region of Dalmatia was under the direct administration of Vienna, and the organization of the exhibition took place under the authority of the ministries of Vienna. Numerous obstacles appeared during the organisation of the Dalmatian section, and the final goals of the project, as well as the results presented to the Austrian authorities, Dalmatian exhibitors and the British audience, can be traced through the local press and artists' biographies. Commercial interests overshadowed animosities that would soon culminate in the Great War, but Dalmatian artists and producers nevertheless used this opportunity for self-presentation and economic development.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1906 Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition in London was opened on May 5 and lasted until October 6. It was organized at Earl's Court in London, an exhibition area that hosted seasonal expositions, sending "...visitors through on imaginary tours through time and space."¹ London saw the opening of several exhibitions at the beginning of the 20th century: the large Paris Exhibition in 1902; the Italian Exhibition (Venice by Night) in 1904; the Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition in 1905; the Palestine in London Exhibition in 1907; and, the Balkan States Exhibition in 1907. In 1906, Austrian industrial products and the country's natural attractions were presented to a British public, representing another in a long line of spectacles offered to London audiences.²

The coastal region of Dalmatia in Croatia was known as the Kingdom of Dalmatia during this period. As the southernmost crown land of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and part of Cisleithania, it extended from the Quarnero in the north to the hills near Lake Skadar in Montenegro in the south, between

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1 Alexander C.T. Geppert, "True Copies: Time and Space Travels at British Imperial Exhibitions, 1880–1930," in *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Christopher Harvie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 223.

2 Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 245.

the hinterlands and the Adriatic Sea. As part of the Habsburg Empire, it was therefore included in the Austrian Exhibition along with national displays in the Bohemian and Galician-Polish pavilions.

A typical feature of these kinds of exhibitions was the positioning of modernity and tradition side by side, with historical and contemporary elements interlaced at every turn. Earl's Court also became a large amusement park with music pavilions and fanciful attractions such as the Cavern of the Sirens, the Temple of a Thousand Eyes, the Helter Skelter Light House, a gigantic wheel and a reproduction of a salt mine. The official guide to this exhibition was equipped with all kinds of information about which railway lines visitors could take to reach it, and there was also an enormous amusement area containing a variety of different restaurants and buffets, which had been organised to attract and keep the attention of visitors of various ages and educational backgrounds.³

THE ORGANISATION AND STAGING OF THE EXHIBITION

This large-scale exposition was organised and staged by the Austrian government, with the cooperation of Austrian Chambers of Commerce and Industrial Societies, the Lower Austrian Trades Association, and the Austro-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in London. The entire exhibition was under the patronage of the Prince of Wales. This attempt to assemble and concentrate the production of the Austrian empire in one place had British royal support, a fact that was highlighted during the exhibition period with photographs and articles illustrating the king's interest in the exhibition's amusement areas, noting that he visited the "Tyrol village, Queen's Palace (...) art galleries and Picturesque Austria, and lunched in Vienna restaurants."⁴

The royal support of the Habsburgs was also emphasised from February 1906 onwards. While preparations for the exhibition were entering their final phase, the Austro-Hungarian Consul General in London stated that: "Emperor Francis Joseph takes a keen interest in all matters connected with this project. (...) His Majesty expressed the hope that the undertaking would prove a brilliant success, and displayed great anxiety that only articles which were typical of the highest quality of Austrian art should be sent to England."⁵ It is clear that the exposition's official title, the Imperial-Royal Exhibition, as well as the royal engagement on both sides, demonstrated mutual political respect and implied stronger future economic ties. Emperor Franz Joseph's 76th birthday was also celebrated at the exhibition: the buildings in Earl's Court were decorated with flags, mottoes and bunting during the day, and illuminated

³ All this information is taken from the *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue* (London: Gale & Polden, 1906), HathiTrust Digital Library, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=gri.ark:/13960/t6h16w15b&view=1up&seq=2>.

⁴ "The King at the Austrian Exhibition in Earl's Court," *The Graphic*, May 26, 1906, 666.

⁵ "Austrian Exhibition," *The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser*, February 10, 1906, 2.

with fairy lights and Chinese lanterns in the evening. Fireworks and music performed by three bands also amused visitors, many of whom were Austrians, according to the newspapers.⁶

Austrian industrial products, manufactures, fine and decorative arts, food and pleasure parks, rural regions and history were combined to demonstrate the social, civil and industrial progress of the Empire, but the title of the exhibition, which stressed the royal-imperial element, had an anachronistic echo that overshadowed the concept of proclaimed modernisation. In his introduction to the *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue* (1906), Dr. Rudolf Kobatsch explained the origins and concept of the Austrian Exhibition in London as arising from the desire to present unknown industrial products to world markets:

In order, therefore, to bring before the most important and largest public in the world – the inhabitants of Great Britain and the British Colonies – an imposing representation of Austria’s natural and acquired advantages, as well as its industrial and artistic activity, the idea has occurred to some patriotic Austrians to organize an Austrian Exhibition in London, this being, doubtless, the finest market in the universe.⁷

Commercial relations between the two countries were the main goal of this complex event, but presenting Austria as “the old country of education and industry,”⁸ where united nations lived in prosperity, was also underlined and visible in the concept. However, just a quick look at the organising committee, the displays and the representation concept is enough to reveal the marginal position of the provinces – the kingdoms of Bohemia, Galicia and Dalmatia.

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THE EXHIBITION AREA

The central parts of Earl’s Court were reserved for presenting Austrian industry and mining goods, crafts and potential tourist destinations. The Queen’s Palace sections displayed decorative and applied arts, scientific appliances, furniture and jewellery. The Royal Galleries section hosted fine arts and the “Trip through Austria”, as well as exhibits presenting the city of Vienna and a health resort to visitors. The Imperial Court sections contained machinery, metal goods, timber, graphic art and tobacco. The wing which led to the amusement area, meanwhile, was reserved for the Bohemian, Galician and Dalmatian sections.⁹

The organisation of the Dalmatian section was guided by the President of the Association for the Promotion of the Lace and Home Industries of the

6 “A Merry Evening at Earl’s Court,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 20, 1906, 5.

7 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 23.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 12.

Kingdom of Dalmatia, Count Johann Harrach, and Felix Stiassny, President of the Dalmatian Committee. It faced many obstacles from the very beginning. According to the *Official Guide & Catalogue*, which stressed the role of the official committee, Dalmatian producers were encouraged to participate by two Dalmatians – Juraj Biankini and Dr. Josip Luxardo – who repeatedly published articles in Dalmatian newspapers, while Nikola Nardelli, the Governor of Dalmatia (and of Dalmatian origin himself), also helped in its promotion.¹⁰

Dalmatian newspapers of the time displayed clear suspicions of a presentation concept that had been organised in Vienna. Zadar's *Narodni list*, the official newspaper of the Dalmatian capital, criticised Dalmatian indolence, noting that as of January 15, 1906, only a few potential exhibitors had submitted their products for inclusion in the project.¹¹ Potential exhibitors from Dalmatia were motivated by the news that separate pavilions were to be secured for their products, and that the Dalmatian government was also involved in the organisation of the exhibition, with Nikola Nardelli, the vice-president of the organisation board, also responsible for motivating producers to participate.¹² On a local level the situation is visible in Dubrovnik newspapers – Dubrovnik's Chamber of Crafts appealed to producers from the region to send products to Vienna for the London exhibition until January 20, emphasising that there was no fee, and that all costs would be met by the Dalmatian Board in Vienna.¹³ The Austrian authorities were extremely eager for a Dalmatian section to be present at the exhibition, because the absence of any one region of the Empire would suggest to English audiences the existence of internal tensions and the weakness of the government. Potential exhibitors were thus invited to participate several times, and any lack of faith in the organisation was done away with by the guarantee that the shipping costs of all items to Vienna, and from thence to London, would be paid for by the Viennese government.

The Dalmatian section was staged in Elysia, a depiction of a “provincial town in Upper Austria”¹⁴ within the idea of an exterior frame of the exhibition, where the Austrian character was stressed by recurring emblems and the colour scheme. The Austrian exhibition had carefully designed visual characteristics, with continuously repeated emblems and national colours. The existing buildings were also subordinated to this concept in terms of decoration.¹⁵ The display was situated in two pavilions over an area of 100 square metres. The larger pavilion was devoted to “Art and Industry”, where products from

10 Ibid., 123.

11 “Londonska izložba i dalmatinska indolencija” [The London Exhibition and Dalmatian Indolence], *Narodni list*, January 25, 1906, 1.

12 “Dalmacija na londonskoj izložbi” [Dalmatia at the London Exhibition], *Crvena Hrvatska*, December 14, 1905, 3.

13 “Za londonsku izložbu iz Dalmacije” [For the London Exhibition, from Dalmatia], *Prava Crvena Hrvatska*, January 6, 1906, 3.

14 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 127.

15 Ibid., 126–127.

Fig. 1. Argent Archer, Dalmatian pavilion, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.



mostly traditional industries and mineral goods were displayed, along with pictures and sculptures by Dalmatian artists.¹⁶ The carefully stage-managed picture of Dalmatia corresponds to the official policy – Dalmatia, as the most backward province in that period, but also a highly important strategic region, has become a tourist destination whose products are intended for this promising industry. The ubiquitous encouragement of the craft of lacemaking was supposed to provide employment for the female population, and offer tourists local souvenirs. The rural character of the country was articulated by the display of numerous ethnographic products, and was supposed to suggest an image of a country without history or science which possessed only the occasional modern artist (**fig. 1**).

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The imperial view of Dalmatia is best reflected in the compendium *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild*, the eleventh volume of which was published in 1892 and dedicated to Dalmatia.¹⁷ It offered an overview of the history of the region, the most significant cities, notable natural features and contemporary economic conditions. An imbalance between this historical depiction and the bleak reality is particularly noticeable here. The disparity between the rich history of this country as the ancient meeting-point between East and West, and the underdeveloped contemporary economic situation, remained outside the exhibition space, because the Dalmatia presented was reduced to a mere magnet for a fast-growing industry – tourism. Dalmatia's rich

¹⁶ Ibid., 123–124.

¹⁷ *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild: Dalmatien* [The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Pictures: Dalmatia], vol. 11 (Vienna: k.k. Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, Alfred von Hölder, 1892), accessed July 25, 2021, <https://austria-forum.org/web-books/kpwde11de1892onb>.



Fig. 2. Argent Archer, Exhibition hall with Dalmatian exhibits and portrait of Archduchess Maria Josepha, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

heritage was presented to the London public by the Archaeological Museum of Split, which was also the only Dalmatian cultural institution represented at the exhibition. The museum's curator, Frane Bulić, offered a collection of books and ancient artefacts kept in the museum building in Split. The Archaeological Museum's collection suggested that the region possessed an ancient history and was home to numerous ancient monuments, thus emphasising Dalmatia's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

Inherent to this conception were the private collectors who likewise responded to the call for exhibitors and offered ancient weapons and ethnographic treasures from their private collections for display. The invitation to visit this land of beautiful nature and interesting local products was further emphasised by the display of the Duke of Coburg-Gotha's hunting trophy – a small stuffed jackal – because hunting was also frequently advertised as entertainment for potential visitors in this era (fig. 2).

The scenography was complemented by portraits of Archduchess Maria Josefa and Count Johann Harrach zu Rohrau in fashionable urban clothes, which presented a stark contrast to the rural scenography of the Dalmatian products. The Archduchess' portrait demonstrated her patronage and dedication to the development of lacemaking and the preservation of traditional folk textiles in Dalmatia. She travelled to the eastern coast of the Adriatic multiple times, in 1902, 1907 and 1909, and visited most of Dalmatia over the course of these visits, focused on the educational institutions, archaeological sites and natural

18 Stanko Piplović, "Marija Jozefa zaštitnica narodne umjetnosti Dalmacije" [Maria Josepha, Protector of the Home Industry of Dalmatia], *Ethnologica Dalmatica*, no. 9 (2000): 139–147.

attractions, and encouraged the development of local crafts.¹⁸ The portrait of Count Johann Harrach, the President of the Association for the Promotion of the Lace and Home Industries of the Kingdom of Dalmatia, hinted at his role in the organisation of the exhibition and his contributions to the preparation of the Dalmatian products for the London exhibition. The portraits of these patrons, displayed in the centre of the exhibition space in a raised position, further enhanced the impression of an undeveloped and backward region, over which the government and the imperial family ruled, stimulating and directing the region's development. This binary code was also evident in the disposition of the pavilion toward the city of Vienna, with paintings of prominent buildings, portraits of great composers and their houses, the amusements of Viennese citizens and much evidence of its rich history and civilizational achievements; a contrast between the cosmopolitan and the provincial was therefore visible in many parts of Earl's Court.

In this picture of the united nations of the Habsburg Empire, Dalmatia was presented as a country without history, lacking its own intellectual forces, possessing only splendid natural beauty waiting to be discovered by tourists. The artworks of the six artists invited to participate in the exhibition had to reflect this visually. These artworks included two landscapes by Emanuel Vidović, ten landscapes by Marko Rašica, and five landscapes by Leontine von Littrow. Vlaho Bukovac, a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at that time, sent ten figural paintings and portraits depicting religious themes. Antonietta Bogdanović Cettineo sent a portrait and Ivan Meštrović sent a few plaster figural models, dubbed "Sculptures" in the official Fine Arts catalogue of the Imperial-Royal Austrian exhibition.¹⁹ These artworks feature apolitical themes, and there are no historical compositions depicting, for instance, events from Croatian history. The selection of artworks thus served as an illustration of the exhibition's narrative of unity and satisfaction under the Habsburg crown (**fig. 3**).

The selection of artists was organized by the Committee for the Exhibition of Fine Arts, and the members of this committee were representatives of art associations – the Society of Austrian Artists Secession; the Artists League Hagen, Vienna; the Society of Artists Manes, Prague; the Society of Polish Artists Sztuka, Cracow; the Society of Lovers of Fine Arts, Lemberg; the Artists Association, Vienna; the Art Gallery Künstlerhaus and Art-Union, Salzburg; and the Artists League Sava, Ljubljana.²⁰ The other members were August Denk, the President of the Lower Austrian Industrial Association, and Dr. Max Graf Wickenburg, from the Ministry of Public Instruction, while the

19 Joseph Urban, *Imp. Royal Austrian Exhibition: London, Earl's Court, 1906: Fine Arts* (Vienna: Christoph Reisser Söhne), 129–133, Internet Archive, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/improyalaustrian-00urba/page/128/mode/2up>.

20 Urban, *Imp. Royal Austrian Exhibition: Fine Arts*, 3–4.

21 *Ibid.*, 3–5.



Fig. 3. Argent Archer, Part of Dalmatian pavilion with paintings and folk costumes, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

director was Adolf Schwarz, Imperial Councillor.²¹ The delegate representing the eight women artists of the Vienna group was John Quincy Adams, while the Dalmatian selection, which appeared last in the catalogue, had no delegates.²²

136 The selection of the artists and artworks for the Secession section did not include Gustav Klimt and the other founding members of the society.

The Dalmatian artists were united in a single space within the exhibition – Elysia – as they did not form a group and were heterogeneous in terms of their artistic biographies. Vlaho Bukovac was a professor at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts and a state employee, and Emanuel Vidović and Ivan Meštrović were already established artists who had previously exhibited at Hagenbund and Secession exhibitions in Vienna. Marko Rašica, meanwhile, was a student of the Fine Art Academy in Vienna, and the two female painters were also unknown to the audience. Although they did not appear in the exhibition, Dalmatia did in fact have more educated and established artists in that period than this selection would suggest, including Mato Celestin Medović and Josip Lalić, among others (fig. 4).

The selected artists were mentioned in the list of artworks displayed in the Royal Galleries section, under the title “Dalmatian Artists Exhibition in Elysia”, but their works were displayed along with Dalmatian wines, ethnographic materials, food products and other commercial goods, far from the main galleries. Another Croatian artist, the young and talented Antonija Krasnik, exhibited her works in London, but in the hall of the Association of the Eight Viennese Lady-Artists: two works entitled *St. George* and *A Horse’s Head*, both

22 Ibid., 3.

23 Ibid., 117.

Fig. 4. Argent Archer, Interior of Dalmatian pavilion, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.



in plaster.²³

According to the memoirs of Marko Rašica, a student of the Viennese Fine Arts Academy at that time, members of the Organisation Board came to the Academy and invited him to present his *plein air* paintings of Dubrovnik landscapes, which he had created during his summer visits to Dubrovnik and painting sessions on Dubrovnik's islands and the surrounding region.²⁴ His student works were displayed in the Elysia pavilion and in the "Trip through Austria" section, the central exhibition area intended for promoting the natural beauty of different parts of the Monarchy.

The Organisation Board was aware of its own backwards position compared to regions that were well-known to tourists, namely Italy and France, so the narrative of the Monarchy's propaganda relied on natural diversity, stressing a contrast between the "mighty glaciers of Tyrol and subtropical coasts of Dalmatia, the ancient forests of Bohemia and Bukowina, and the fairy-like magnificence of the Karst's caves, the fabulous height of the Dolomites, and the Danube, the most beautiful river in central Europe" and a "landscape (that) never changed," Italy.²⁵ Driven by the desire for a place alongside France and Italy among countries that were attractive to tourists, they emphasised both the unique features of the regions under the Austrian crown, as well as the similarities to famous French locations: the Opatija (Italian: Abbazia; German: Sankt Jakobi) health resort was dubbed "The Austrian Nice", for instance.²⁶ The

24 Sanja Žaja Vrbica, *Marko Rašica* (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2014), 47.

25 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 117.

26 *Ibid.*, 33.



Fig. 5. Argent Archer, Degustation of exhibited Dalmatian vines, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

natural beauties of Habsburg Austria were displayed in 250 large-scale photos arranged in a line that was occasionally interrupted by larger pictures, and above this a painted frieze of mountains and the Adriatic coast was displayed.²⁷

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After five months each side could be satisfied with the exhibition's achievements; Earl's Court had hosted visitors in large numbers, sometimes 50,000 in a single day, spread all over the huge Earl's Court business and entertainment area, drawn to the exhibition by the advertisements that reappeared regularly in newspapers until the exhibition's final days.²⁸ The Dalmatian artists were noticed by the British press, despite being almost overlooked by visitors, as they were out of the main building. One journalist who discussed the works of all the Dalmatian artists at the exhibition concluded that "They are well worth visiting in Elysia."²⁹ It seems that the separate display, albeit one that combined art with liqueurs, honey, olive oil and oysters, didn't exclude artists, but rather prompted writers to highlight their location, in order to encourage more visitors to experience the artworks for themselves.³⁰ Croatian papers also triumphantly cited the comments made in London articles by the art connoisseurs.³¹ Their success was also material, as Marko Rašica stated in his *Memoires* (1959) (fig. 5).³²

27 Ibid., 118.

28 During the whole period in which the exhibition was open to visitors, advertisements appeared constantly in many newspapers, stressing in particular the last two weeks and last days. "Last Weeks, Austrian Exhibition, Earl's Court," *The Globe*, September 10, 1906, 10; "This Day," *The Morning Post*, October 4, 1906, 1; "Last 2 Days," *The Daily News*, October 5, 1906, 1.

29 "Art and Artists," *The Morning Post*, June 1, 1906, 9.

30 "Austrian Art at Earl's Court," *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, June 9, 1906, 584.

31 "Laskav engleški sud o našim umjetnicima" [The Flattering English Opinion on Our Artists], *Narodni list*, June 25, 1906, 1.

32 Vrbica, *Marko Rašica*, 48.

Austrian publications repeated the praises of the British press concerning the selection of artistic and industrial products available and the good organisation. They expressed optimism about future trade contracts. They also continually emphasised the involvement of the Austrian government, and the dedication to the organisation of the entire project, which presented the country's natural beauty and the diversity of its industrial production.³³ Alongside praise for the government's role in the organisation of the exhibition, emphasis was also placed on the interest that the Dalmatian pavilion excited in London visitors, and in particular the sale of ethnographic items.³⁴ Attention was drawn many times to the artists whose work was displayed at Earl's Court, along with notes on the Dalmatian section within Elysia. Emphasis was most often placed on the quality of the works by Vlaho Bukovac, along with the names of all the artists and titles of the artworks displayed.³⁵ Marko Rašica, who was a student at the time, likewise attracted the attention of critics, with his prominent depictions of "southern light and sea," but he was reduced to a contributor to the achievements of the collective group of "Austrian artists".³⁶

The London publication *The Studio* dedicated a special issue to the artists from those regions that were at that time a part of the Monarchy. It was entitled *The Art-Revival in Austria* and was published in the summer of 1906, while the exhibition was open, and included a text on modern art written by Ludwig Hevesi. In this overview of the genesis of modern artistic movements, the author emphasised the significance of Art Nouveau and Gustav Klimt, whose work had not appeared at the exhibition in London. Following a section on Hagenbund, he discussed artists from other parts of the Monarchy, beginning the chapter with the introductory sentence, "The contribution of the Slav races to the artistic assets of the Monarchy is very considerable,"³⁷ in a manner typical of the era. He listed Polish and Czech artists, and named Vlaho Bukovac among the professors of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, along with a short explanation about "the Parisian *pointillist*, a Dalmatian..."³⁸ This is unsurprising, as Vlaho Bukovac was the most prominent artist within the Dalmatian section, and his figural compositions were also singled out by English art critics as being worthy of notice.³⁹

33 "Die Eröffnung der Oesterreichischen Ausstellung in London" [Opening of the Austrian Exhibition in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, May 7, 1906, 8; "Neueste nachrichten. Telegramme des Telegraphen-Korrespondenz Bureau. Die Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [Latest news. Telegrams from the Telegraph Correspondence Bureau. The Austrian Exhibition in London], *Wiener Abendpost*, May 7, 1906, 1.

34 "Die Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [The Austrian Exhibition in London], *Das Abendblatt*, May 10, 1906, 1.

35 "Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [Austrian Exhibition in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, August 22, 1906, 6.

36 Paul Althof, "Die Österreichische Kunst in London" [Austrian Art in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, August 9, 1906, 7.

37 Ludwig Hevesi, "Modern Painting in Austria," *The Studio*, Special Summer number, (1906), A xi.

38 *Ibid.*, A xii.

39 "Art and Artists," *The Globe*, June 6, 1906, 3.

The goals relating to business and entertainment were for the most part achieved for all participants, as stated in the newspapers, which sang the praises of the exhibition with the usual enthusiasm reserved for such events. The Dalmatian organizers hoped to enter the large British market, but tourism was an unexpected benefit, as in the summer of 1906 a campaign for tourist visits to Dalmatia had already begun, entitled "Little Travelled Dalmatia".⁴⁰ British journalists highlighted lessons from small industries within the Austrian Empire, such as Dalmatian textile products, finding them "bright, and well-made, and artistic, and often beautiful textile products..." and opining that "England in (the) matter of real education, can sit at the foot of Austria..."⁴¹

CONCLUSION

The short-term, largely private commercial success and the moral uplift that the Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition provided could not, however, change the harsh reality – the poverty and the economic backwardness of Dalmatia. The repressive political system of the Habsburg Monarchy constantly restrained the unification of Croatian territories. This slowed down the modernization process, and integration thus remained an unfulfilled goal. Infrastructural problems prevented any progress, the construction of a railway connection between the provinces of Slavonia, Dalmatia and Continental Croatia was not realized during the rule of the Monarchy, and the economic stagnation of Dalmatia incited a constant attitude of indignation in Viennese political circles.

The image of united nations living in harmony under the Austrian Empire was an illusion, presented by the organisation committee in London as a show presented for the exhibition's audience. Behind this temporarily staged picture, however, rumours of political disagreements and dissatisfaction grew stronger. They would culminate, in the following decade, in the Great War.

40 "Little Travelled Dalmatia," *Evening Telegraph and post*, August 2, 1906, 6.

41 [E.E.W.], "Village Industry, The Practical Side of Earl's Court, Lessons from Austria," *The Standard*, June 30, 1906, 5.