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*Oberleutnant Robert Musil als Redakteur der Tiroler
Soldaten-Zeitung* ed. by Mariaelisa Dimino, Elmar Locher, and
Massimo Salgaro (review)

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Journal of Austrian Studies, Volume 53, Number 3, Fall 2020, pp. 112-114
(Review)

Published by University of Nebraska Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2020.0050>



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Mariaelisa Dimino, Elmar Locher, and Massimo Salgaro, eds., *Oberleutnant Robert Musil als Redakteur der Tiroler Soldaten-Zeitung*. Musil-Studien 46. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2019. 342 pp.

This volume collects contributions to a 2015 conference at the University of Verona on Robert Musil's editorship of the *Tiroler Soldaten-Zeitung* (renamed *Soldaten-Zeitung* in August 1915). Musil became its editor in October 1916.

There has long been uncertainty about which SZ articles, all published anonymously, Musil wrote himself. Between 1960 and 2014, seven scholars ascribed between three and thirty-eight pieces to him, mostly on subjective stylistic grounds. In the central contribution to this collection, "Die Tiroler Soldaten-Zeitung und ihre Autoren. Eine computergestützte Suche nach Robert Musil," Massimo Salgaro, Simone Reborá, Gerhard Lauer, and J. Berenike Herrmann undertake a stylometric analysis of the twenty-eight SZ texts most often ascribed to Musil, using a digital comparison of their diction with known texts by Musil and others (including Zweig, Blei, Kafka, and Albert Ritter, another writer on the SZ staff). In a handy table on page 100, they ascribe thirteen of the twenty-eight to Musil with 100 percent reliability and the rest with lesser rates of reliability. They emphasize that their results should be treated as only the beginning of more detailed interpretive analysis.

It is curious that several other contributors to this volume—perhaps because they had not seen the results beforehand—ascribe SZ texts, either implicitly or explicitly, to Musil although they either do not appear in the table on page 100 at all or have low reliability ratings.

Of the fourteen other essays in this volume, nine focus on Musil's editorial work for the SZ or on the echoes of that work to be found in his postwar oeuvre. Christoph Hoffmann discusses Musil's 1922 report "Psychotechnik und ihre Anwendungsmöglichkeiten im Bundesheere," written during his service as *Fachbeirat* in the Bundesministerium für Heereswesen. Hoffmann distinguishes between Musil's "Schreibposition" as an "Autor" of literary works and as the "Verfasser" (121) of a technical report largely summarizing the results of other studies. Regina Schaunig is similarly interested in the question of "Kontinuitäten und Zäsuren" (133) in Musil's work as literary author and wartime journalist, beginning with the essay "Europäertum, Krieg, Deutschtum," his response to the outbreak of the war, which he welcomed with patriotic enthusiasm. Massimo Libardi and Fernando Orlandi assert that Italian Germanists have a more clear-eyed view of Musil's wartime journalism than

their Austrian colleagues since for the latter, it is a taboo subject that contradicts their image of the writer as antimilitaristic and progressive. They analyze texts from the *SZ* as “Übungsplatz” (157) for both the satire of the “Parallelaktion” and the quasi-religious “anderer Zustand.” Walter Fanta sees in the unfinished satirical drama “Der kleine Napoleon,” written shortly after the war, Musil’s “Wendung vom Saulus zu Paulus, vom Bellizisten zum Militärkritiker” (184), and argues against including the wartime journalism in his literary oeuvre. Ivana Z. Bogdanović focuses on the *SZ* Christmastime essay “Heilige Zeit” (100% reliability rating), striking a remarkably personal note in her analysis of Musil as “Ghostwriter der k. und k. Propaganda” (193). As a scholar primarily interested in the mystical aspects of the “anderer Zustand,” she feels “die Empörung, irgendwo hinters Licht geführt worden zu sein” (196) by the discovery of his wartime propaganda. This shock will be familiar to readers of Günter Grass’s *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel*; Musil, however, never tried to conceal his work on the *SZ*.

Salvatore Pappalardo and Karl Corino contribute analyses of the *SZ*’s treatment of irredentism, Italian in the case of the former and Czech in the case of the latter, and both connect this treatment to the way the topic appears in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Pappalardo too easily attributes to Musil many of the *SZ* texts he quotes. I wonder if the author of *Törless* would have described the Trieste irredentists as “meist junge Burschen, die noch in die Zucht der Schule gehörten” (222), although we do have to assume that this phrase passed his editorial eye. Corino declares that it was simply Musil’s duty as editor to awaken readers’ sympathy for the “Lebensfragen des Staates und der Armee” (225), and that of course meant opposing irredentist aspirations in both the Tyrol and Czechoslovakia. Micaela Latini discusses the “festhaltende Blick” (235) called for in the *SZ* editorial “Kameraden, arbeitet mit!” (almost certainly by Musil), urging frontline soldiers to contribute written or photographed material to the paper since their lived experience qualifies them as “true poets.” She goes on to argue that the impossibility of communicating the experience of the war then shaped Musil’s postwar view of European humanity, especially as expressed in his 1922 lecture “Das hilflose Europa oder Reise vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste.” Aldo Venturelli discusses Musil’s reaction to Walter Rathenau’s ideas for postwar cultural renewal in the article “Luxussteuern” (reliability rating 93.75%).

The five other contributors focus less on Musil than on the *Soldatenzeitung* itself. Mariaelisa Dimino discusses the shift in the paper’s layout,

content, and editorial direction once Musil became editor. Harald Gschwandtner gives an interesting account of how the *SZ* presented itself at the Vienna Kriegsausstellung in 1916, including setting up a mock frontline editorial office in the Prater and producing a souvenir “edition” that had little or nothing to do with the real *SZ*. Massimo Salgaro contributes a biographic profile of Albert Ritter, the other man of letters on the editorial team. Elmar Locher analyzes how the *SZ* reported on war bonds and the economy. And finally, Sigurd Paul Scheichl describes how patriotic poems by local Tyrolean writers largely disappeared from the paper under Musil’s editorship.

The volume includes thirty pages of plates reproducing documents related to the *SZ*’s history as well as pages from the paper itself, a list of sources, but no list of contributors’ institutional affiliations.

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Arnold Suppan, *Imperialist Peace Order: Saint-Germain and Trianon, 1919–1920*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2019. 250 pp.

We may be over one hundred years away from the cessation of hostilities in World War I, but it would be difficult to argue that the issues raised by that conflict are no longer relevant in modern society. The twentieth and now the twenty-first centuries have seen multiple military conflicts that essentially reexamine the national boundaries created by the post–World War I negotiations in Paris. The European Union, which was created in large part as a peace project to prevent future conflicts on the continent, is faced with challenges to its future existence. And multiple Central European nations have significant nationalist political movements. This situation leads to the obvious question, why has so little changed in a century? The answer may very well be in a close examination of the treaties that were negotiated after the War to End All Wars. In his book *Imperialist Peace Order: Saint-Germain and Trianon 1919–1920*, historian Arnold Suppan examines two of those treaties and the impact that they had on Central Europe. His overall conclusion is that these two treaties were far more punitive to Austria and Hungary, respectively, than was the Treaty of Versailles to Germany. Additionally, he shows that the treaties were negotiated by western powers, particularly the United States, with little or no knowledge of local conditions, and that the ideology behind them,

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