

Empress Elisabeth ('Sisi') of Austria and Patriotic Fashionism

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Abstract: In this article, Christopher VanDemark explores the intersections between nationalism, fashion, and the royal figure in Hungary between 1857 and the Compromise of 1867. Focusing on aesthetics as a vehicle for feminine power at a critical junction in Hungarian history, VanDemark contextualizes Empress Elisabeth's role in engendering a revised political schema in the Habsburg sphere. Foreseeing the power of emblematic politics, the young Empress adeptly situated herself between the Hungarians and the Austrians to recast the Hungarian martyrology narrative promulgated after the failed revolution of 1848. Eminent Hungarian newspapers such as the *Pesti Napló*, *Pester Lloyd*, and the *Vasárnapi Újság* form the backbone of this article, as publications such as these facilitated the dissemination of patriotic sentiment while simultaneously exulting the efficacy of symbolic fashions. The topic of study engages with contemporary works on nationalism, which emphasize gender and aesthetics, and contributes to the emerging body of scholarship on important women in Hungarian history. Seminal texts by Catherine Brice, Sara Maza, Abby Zanger, and Lynn Hunt compliment the wider objective of this brief analysis, namely, the notion that the Queen's body can both enhance and reform monarchical power within a nineteenth-century milieu.

Keywords: *Empress Elisabeth, Habsburg Monarchy, fashion and politics, fashion and nationalism, 1867 Compromise*

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Since the advent of the Hungarian Reform Era, sartorially minded Hungarian patriots envisaged the day when the national costume would finally make its debut on the international stage. Indeed, the relative anonymity of Hungary within the broader European sphere had frustrated Magyar statesmen for many years. As Ferenc Deák astutely articulated, "let not vanity deceive us; it is the fact that Europe is scarcely aware of our existence, and that many an African settlement is better known than our country, which foreigners regard as a productive but uncivilized colony of Austria" (quoted in Brabourne 1908). Yet it is ironic that, ultimately, it was an Austrian Empress who would become the catalyst for the recognition of the Hungarian costume by the West. Elisabeth of Austria's Hungarian coronation gown (Figure 1), designed by famed Parisian couturier Charles Frederick Worth, employed sartorial motifs reminiscent of the



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Hungarian costume with "thin edging of lace on the short sleeves and pearl-strings like braids of Hungarian Hussar uniforms" crisscrossing the bodice (Fischer and McEwan 1992: 64). Merging the popular French styles of the day with subtle Hungarian designs, the dress was a regal confection of lace, fine fabrics, and jewels. The intricate velvet bodice was complemented by satin puffed sleeves secured with oversized bows, and the skirt and train were composed of duchesse satin, a heavy, durable, and easily draped textile used by Worth in many of his evening gowns. The entire ensemble was complimented by a magnificent lace apron, a design motif characteristic of the traditional Hungarian costume (Cone 1980: 140). It is said that when the Emperor saw his wife in the costume, he was so taken aback by her "transcendental" beauty that he spontaneously embraced her in the presence of her ladies-in-waiting (Cone 1980: 144). The garment, laden with political and cultural symbolism, explicated the Empress's role in championing Hungarian liberation within the Empire. Indeed, her dedication to Magyar culture and her unwavering support of Hungarian self-determination rendered the Empress a vital ally in the fight for political autonomy.

In this article I will analyze political fashionism in Hungary, a term developed and promulgated by Alexander Maxwell, within the context of Empress Elisabeth's ascension and reign, focusing on her first Hungarian tour in 1857 and her coronation in 1867. While Maxwell's interpretation is oriented toward fashion industries, I use the term to describe the ideology of patriots who use traditional fashions to galvanize nationalist protest. This somewhat revised definition emphasizes the cultural-political character of this piece. After the Compromise, the national costume was still worn in Hungary; however, it began to lose its political edge as the Austrian Empire became the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and as the civic objectives of the Hungarian moderates were achieved.

Although the scholarship surrounding Elisabeth, nicknamed Sisi by her friends and admirers, is vast, cornerstone political histories on Habsburg Europe, including those by A.J.P Taylor and others, have glossed over her influence altogether, and biographical and cultural histories, until recently, have tended to focus on her marriage and physique, subordinating her political and intellectual legacy to her rigid beauty routine and her obsession with retaining a slender figure. While these texts hold an important place in the broader historiography of the ill-fated Empress, they are often driven by an acute sentimentalism, as exemplified by the aptly titled *Death by Fame: A Life of Elisabeth, Empress of Austria*. In contrast, this study seeks to both contribute to and amend contemporary histories written on the political contours of the royal form by analyzing largely neglected Hungarian language source materials. By bringing Elisabeth's political and aesthetic influence to the fore, the Hungarian sources reveal the Empress' determination to consolidate Habsburg power to achieve concrete political objectives. A disciple of Heinrich Heine, whose lyrical verses inspired her own poetry, the Habsburg Empress developed and refined her political sentiments by studying the great liberal thinkers of the nineteenth-century. Indeed, she did have a compulsive, quirky personality, but to fixate exclusively on her stately grace, haute couture garments, and coiffure only mitigate the impact she had within the political sphere.

Contemporary literature on queenship and political power was instrumental in framing this analysis. While Sarah Maza, Lynn Hunt, and Juliane Vogel interpret the Queen's physique as indicative of monarchical deterioration, the scope of primary materials on Elisabeth reveal a different story. Maza and Hunt, in their analysis of Marie Antoinette's body, consider the Queen's earthly frame as threatening to the maintenance of the body politic. Both conclude that

the bodily dimensions of the queen usurped the sanctity of the monarch and stymied the divine authority so essential to the preservation of absolutism. In the years preceding the Revolution of 1789, the inner workings of the French Court were completely shielded from the eyes of the masses, and this opaqueness bolstered the perception that the feminine body, with its proximity to the King, was a detrimental, and in some cases, profane force that was largely responsible for the ruin of the *ancien régime*. In contrast, I endeavor to examine the means through which the fashioned body of the queen can buttress monarchism within a nineteenth-century milieu, where clothing, with its subtle power to evoke and suggest, was a useful tool wielded by socially empowered women against the backdrop of a European continent consumed by Victorian sensibilities. Indeed, an obsession with symbolic self-representation gripped the bourgeois-dominated nineteenth century, which facilitated the propagation of oblique forms of political power emanating from unlikely points of origin. In the spirit of Abby Zanger's work on the marriage of Louis XIV, in which fashion and the figure of the queen "became the limb that carried the display of Bourbon power," I will explicate the positive role the feminine form can play in the consolidation of royal power (Zanger 1997: 38).

Elisabeth, whose political beliefs complemented the liberal landscape of late-nineteenth-century Europe, was not alone in exploiting her unique position to further her own political agenda. In Italy, for instance, Queen Margherita of Savoy also manipulated her public image to fortify her husband's regime. The queen was notorious for rejecting the chic couture radiating from the French capital, instead opting for nationally inspired garments designed and produced at home (Brice 2006: 209). A supporter of civic nationalism, members of the Italian political elite considered Margherita particularly adept at propagating a message that served to unify the previously divided Italian nation (Brice 2006: 198). Exploiting the extensive reach of the press, Margherita deliberately shaped her image to reinforce public perceptions of the fledgling Italian monarchy. In Austria, Elisabeth's task in creating a public image for herself was more delicate, as the young queen was forced to contend with the multiethnic and increasingly nationalist character of the Habsburg realms. However, by endorsing the campaign spearheaded by the moderate wing of the Hungarian resistance movement, Elisabeth managed to help ensure the continuity of the piecemeal Empire in the wake of revolution and territorial decline. If Elisabeth and Margherita represented the apex of substantive political self-representation in Austria and Italy, the French empress, Eugénie, whose husband ruled France until his overthrow in 1870, epitomized the dangers inherent in symbolic self-fashioning. Haunted by her husband's dubious claim to the throne, which he had achieved via a *coup d'état* in 1852, Eugénie sought to solidify her fragile position through fashion. Yet, her cult-like obsession with her predecessor, Marie Antoinette, and a preoccupation with labyrinthine etiquette was insufficient in authenticating her husband's precarious claim to the French throne. Consumed by her fascination with voluminous crinolines and tightly laced bodices, Eugénie's body was dehumanized, becoming a mannequin upon which French fashions were marketed. As Juliane Vogel asserts, the sartorial exaggeration characteristic of Napoleon III's court debased the body politic and diminished the imperial sanctity imperative to the proper functioning of the monarchical system (Vogel 2006: 218). As the Bonaparte case demonstrates, the effectiveness of vestimentary symbolism in bolstering monarchy during the latter portion of the nineteenth-century was contingent upon the political and cultural context of the territory in question.

Politically, Empress Elisabeth was specially equipped to serve as a conduit for the Hungarian moderates' agenda of reconciliation and compromise primarily because she held

significant sway over her husband, Franz Joseph. In his retrospective column, Max Falk, the editor of Hungary's leading German language periodical, *Pester Lloyd*, and famed Sisi-confidant, reflected on the Empress' political scheme, which stressed Austro-Hungarian rapprochement in lieu of increased hostility:

With her keen eye she soon recognized an element of strength for the Habsburg dynasty, an inexhaustible treasure-trove, which neither through brute force, nor through poison, but solely through sincere, heartfelt benevolence could be elevated (Falk 1893).¹

[*Mit ihrem scharfen Auge erkannte sie bald, dass hier ein Element der Stärke für die habsburgische Dynastie, ein unerschöpflicher Schatz moralischer Kraft liege, welcher aber weder durch brutale Gewalt, noch durch Gift, sondern einzig und allein durch aufrichtiges, herzliches Wohlwollen gehoben werden könne.*]

According to Falk, the Empress anticipated and acknowledged the strategic significance of the Hungarian Crownlands, electing to position herself between the Emperor and the Magyar moderates to safeguard the continuity of dynastic hegemony through compromise. Together with Gyula Andrassy, the renowned Hungarian politician who would later become the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, Elisabeth lobbied the Emperor in favor of national unification. In a letter penned to Franz Joseph on July 16, 1866, Elisabeth solicited the Emperor to meet with Andrassy:

I...gained the conviction that, if you trust him, but entirely, we, and not Hungary alone, but the monarchy, can still be saved. But you must at least speak with him yourself, and I mean at once for each day can shape events in such a way that in the end he would no longer assume it...For the last time I beg you in the name of Rudolf, do not let the last opportunity slip by (quoted in Hamann 1986).

Unlike the Hungarian radicals, who desired complete separation from Austria, Andrassy and his more moderate supporters advocated for Hungarian independence within the Habsburg Empire. They hoped to alleviate the national trauma associated with 1848 through political compromise between the two most populous ethnic groups in the monarchy. The catastrophes of 1859 and 1866, in which the Habsburgs were expelled from the Italian and German spheres, catalyzed the recognition, and eventual acceptance, of Austro-Hungarian reconciliation by the Emperor and his advisers in Vienna. However, the Czechs, who had been largely faithful to the monarchy, were notably excluded from the *Ausgleich* ['Compromise']. Although the Emperor and his ministers were undoubtedly conscious of the Bohemians' grievances, they were largely ignored until Dualism collapsed in the aftermath of the First World War. Indeed, political inclusion

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the translated quotations used throughout this text are my own.

engendered feelings of exclusion by many within the Empire. It was within this volatile atmosphere that Elisabeth became the face of the monarchy in Hungary.

Throughout the course of her reign, the Empress displayed her loyalty to the Hungarians both publicly and privately. As a monarch of the newspaper epoch, word of Elisabeth's beauty, grace, and intellect spread quickly across the Empire, reinforcing her celebrity persona. Her love of equestrianism made her popular with the plutocratic Hungarian upper class, as she spent much of her time at Gödöllő Palace, her country estate just outside of Pest. Moreover, she chose to surround herself with Hungarian ladies-in-waiting, who conversed with her in Hungarian, and employed a Magyar chamberlain as well (Cone 1980: 143). Indeed, as imperial sanctity was gradually delegitimized after 1789, the multitudes were increasingly privy to the private affairs of their sovereign. Under absolutism, this sort of identification had been both inconceivable and undesirable, but in the context of post-1848 Hungary, monarchical de-consecration proved beneficial to the Habsburg regime, which was perhaps best exemplified by the death of Elisabeth's infant daughter in Buda-Pest during the imperial tour of 1857 (Brice 2006: 206). The image of the child succumbing to illness in the arms of her bereaved mother touched the hearts of the Hungarian public, as the young couple's mourning became a public drama the masses followed with great fervor. Indeed, within such a charged atmosphere, the oft-forgotten efficacy of imperial aesthetics became a safe space upon which the fears and anxieties surrounding Austria's decline were projected.

For the remainder of this article, I will chart the ascension of Empress Elisabeth through the lens of sartorial symbolism, beginning with her tour of Hungary in 1857 and culminating in the royal couples' Hungarian coronation a decade later. The 1857 Imperial Tour was a labor of reconciliation between the politically subdued Magyars and the Habsburg imperial family. Undertaken to enhance the tarnished image of the monarchy, the tour was a stage upon which the then still largely unknown Empress flaunted her politically saturated garments to an unsuspecting Hungarian public. Indeed, the Empress became the shop window for the Habsburg monarchy, exhibiting the charisma and approachability necessary to resuscitate the Emperor's image in Hungary.

In May 1857, Franz Joseph and Elisabeth arrived in Buda-Pest to a flood of reds and whites as a large crowd received the young couple. While the emperor wore his stiff Austrian military regalia, his wife stunned the crowd in a "brilliant diadem and dress adorned in Hungarian red, white, and green colors" (Freifeld 2007: 143). The sight of the Austrian consort decked in the national tricolors excited the throng assembled to pay their respects to the Austrian royals. Later that evening, the couple attended an opera, at which the Emperor wore a Hungarian Hussar uniform, while Elisabeth wore a modest gown reminiscent of those worn by patriotic ladies in the 1840s (Maxwell 2014: 202), a period in which, according to the *Pest Fashion Paper* [*A Pesti Divatlap*], upper class Hungarian women sported "simple, homemade" [*egyszerűbb honi kelmét*] garments manufactured and developed in Hungary (Vahot 1845). The enthusiasm generated by the royal tour was predicated on the couples' adherence to aesthetic nationalism, which began to repair the damaged relationship between the Empire and the Hungarian people. Furthermore, Empress Elisabeth was integral in humanizing the previously infallible Habsburg monarchy, laying the groundwork for political compromise between the diminishing Austrians and the martyred Hungarians.

The sartorial importance of the 1857 Hungarian tour undertaken by the new Emperor and Empress cannot be understated. Consistently dressed in nationalist garb, the Empress both

reflected and foresaw the significance of aesthetic patriotism to the Hungarian populace (Maxwell 2014: 202). Wielding her power as both an empress and a woman, Elisabeth melded modish couture and traditional Hungarian garments to effectuate political change and to bridge the divide between the Hungarians and their rulers in Vienna. Like Julia Szendrey and the Zichy sisters before her, Empress Elisabeth's political sentiments were etched into the folds of her intricate ensembles. However, as the consort of the Habsburg Emperor, Elisabeth possessed a greater degree of influence than the ladies of the Hungarian Revolution. Politically, the Empress' role was two-fold: first, she was instrumental in diffusing the martyrology narrative developed after 1848, and, second, she aided in the development of dualism (Freifeld 2007: 142). By mimicking the nationalist techniques employed by Hungarian women for decades, Elisabeth altered the central purpose of political fashionism from one of protest to one of national pride. In the political sphere, the Empress was able to exert her limited power as consort to impart a new political order, one in which the balance of power was equally apportioned between Buda-Pest and Vienna. From 1857 to 1867, Elisabeth immersed herself in Hungarian politics, consistently petitioning her husband to afford the Magyars a greater degree of civic incorporation within the Empire.

Prior to 1857, the upper echelons of Hungarian high society had been largely unacquainted with the Emperor's new consort. In the wake of the imperial tour, however, Empress Elisabeth's charisma and aesthetic adroitness captured the imaginations of the Hungarian populace. Her popularity was such that peasant families decorated their homes with images of the Empress and soldiers hung pictures of her above their beds (Freifeld 2007: 139). When Elisabeth visited Hungary, crowds would gather to catch a glimpse of her walking into a shop, or more sensationally, riding her horse in the city park. Predictably, *Pester Lloyd* described the Empress' equestrian garb as "simple" [*einfache*] and "refined" [*kultivierete*] (1867). Between 1857 and 1867, Elisabeth's appeal as a celebrity monarch reached a head. Trendy women clamored to have their hair done like Sisi's or to replicate her patriotic ensembles. Indeed, as monarchy was privatized and increasingly accessible to the masses, women across Europe sought to emulate their sovereigns. In Italy, the aptly named periodical, *Margherita*, "described the queen's costumes down to the minute detail, so that readers of more modest means could emulate them in somewhat less extravagant versions" (Brice 2006: 205-206). Like Margherita, Elisabeth used her popularity to further her own political program in her sphere of influence. Consequently, during this period, Hungarian national fashionism was reinvigorated by Elisabeth's celebrity persona and her dedication to liberal principles.

The years immediately preceding the unification were politically and territorially disastrous for the Austrians, and in early February 1866, at the advent of the Austro-Prussian War, Franz Joseph and Elisabeth visited Buda-Pest to rally support for the national cause. The *Vasárnapi Újság* detailed the royal visit, praising the Empress' "angelic goodness and grace" [*angyali jószág es báj*]. On February 1, Elisabeth recited a moving speech in front of the Hungarian Parliament, in which she asked "... the Almighty to bless the representatives of the Nation" [*... áldást kívánt a Mindenhatótól a nemzet képviselőinek*] (1866). Spectators observed that, while she held a document in her hand, she addressed the crowd in flawless Hungarian without peering down at the paper once (1866). With many in the audience weeping for joy, Elisabeth then prayed for Hungary's continued prosperity. The *Pesti Napló* praised the address, claiming the young empress was gifted with marked intelligence, tempered by her beauty and charm (1866). For the occasion, Elisabeth was dressed in a Bavarian folk gown decorated with

pastoral motifs, concentrated in the bodice. While the costume was not explicitly Hungarian, the Empress was tapping into the nationalist sentiments of the Magyar people by symbolically sanctioning the peasantry. The parliamentary address was not only sartorially significant, but also politically groundbreaking, given that in the nineteenth-century, it was rare for a woman, with the exception of Queen Victoria, to speak in an official capacity. The praise that the 1866 speech garnered in Hungary underscored the Empress's vital role within the monarchy, a role that surpassed a mastery of symbolic expression. Later that evening, a ball was given to celebrate the royal couples' visit, at which Elisabeth privately expressed doubts concerning her understanding of politics, to which novelist Mór Jókai replied, "the highest politics is to win a country's heart, and you certainly understand that" (quoted in Freifeld: 2007). Indeed, this touching visit by the imperial couple left an indelible mark on the Hungarian psyche, filling the hearts and minds of the Magyar people with hope for a brighter future. "The ice is breaking. We are full of hope," wrote Nándor Zichy in 1866 (quoted in Freifeld 2007: 148).

As consort to the Emperor, a position in which she had absolutely no power to enact legislation or pass decrees, Elisabeth managed to mollify the political and cultural turbulence that had long hung over the Hungarian territories, inspiring a new sense of nationalism in a subdued people. Inspired by Elisabeth's proficiency with the mother tongue, aristocratic Hungarian women, consistently under pressure to speak German, were emboldened to speak Hungarian in all facets of public and private life. Without fail, the Empress was brutal in her insistence that she be addressed in Hungarian when she was in Hungary. For instance, while visiting a convent school, the Mother Superior, who was Italian and could not understand Hungarian, dared to address Elisabeth in her mother tongue. In response, the Empress, in her frostiest voice, demanded that next time she visited she be spoken to in Hungarian. Ironically, when she returned, the Mother Superior had come down with a sudden illness and was unable to meet with her. Shortly thereafter, the abbess resigned from her post (Haslip 1965: 188-189). Perhaps unknowingly, the Empress had begun to dredge up feelings that the legacy of 1848 had been squandered as elite Hungarians once again felt empowered to speak their native tongue on the streets and not exclusively in their homes. Through her patriotic displays and her unwavering dedication to Hungary's political elevation within the monarchy, the Empress' role was double pronged: she was the voguish member of the nobility, attending the Protection Association Ball dressed in garments infused with folk motifs, and she was the Hungarian woman who spoke Magyar to her children to ensure the continued endurance of the language. Her gender, combined with her indirect political influence as an imperial consort, was influential in achieving the great political concessions of 1867, in which Hungary was recognized as an equal partner in the administration of the Habsburg Empire.

Following crippling losses in the Austro-Prussian War, a beleaguered Franz Joseph, determined to safeguard Austrian preeminence on the European stage, recognized the necessity of Hungarian appeasement. Inspired by the schema outlined by the Andrassy and his allies, the Austrian Empire would be restyled and reorganized into the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a dual monarchy in which Hungary would enjoy a sizeable degree of independence. On June 8, 1867, Austro-Hungarian unification, or *kiegyezés* in Hungarian, was consummated, as the Emperor and Empress of Austria were officially styled the Apostolic King and Queen of Hungary. The coronation ceremony was a spectacle of monarchical pomp as the young couple paraded through Buda-Pest's grand boulevards to the Mátyás Cathedral, situated in the Buda portion of the capital. As Elisabeth entered the church with her husband by her side, dressed in a coronation

gown befitting a triumphant monarch, she was greeted by throngs of cheering Hungarians. The gown was a physical manifestation of her pivotal role in post-1848 Hungarian politics: aproned and bound at the sleeves with oversized bows and ornamented with strung pearls, the dress symbolically displayed the part she had played from her 1857 tour to her Hungarian ascension a decade later. The June 16, 1867 edition of the *Vasárnapi Újság* ecstatically chronicled her every move, describing the newly crowned Queen as "virtuous" [*erényes*] and "sublime" [*magasztos*]. The newspaper also reasserted the Empress' continued dedication to Hungarian culture:

... [Elisabeth] is keen to surround herself with Hungarian ladies, and she speaks with them conversationally in the mother tongue. Among the newly appointed ladies-in-waiting is the equally charming and enthusiastic Countess Gyula Andrassy and the respectable Baroness Eötvös. Both ladies are proud to be in the Empress' good graces (1867).

[... *magyar hölgyekkel szivesen veszi körül magát, s velök rendesen magyarul társalog. Ujabban kinevezett udvarhölgyei, köztök a szintoly bájos mint lelkes Andrassy Gyula grófné, a köztiszteletben álló Eötvös báróné stb., azok közé tartoznak, kik a fejedelmi asszonynak magas kegyével dicsekedhetnek.*]

The compromise and coronation of Franz Joseph and Elisabeth achieved a marked shift in Hungarian political loyalties, after which they were affectionately referred to as "King" and "Queen" in everyday discourse (Freifeld 2007: 151). At this point, with the Hungarian political climate significantly cooled, politicized fashionism was rendered unnecessary. While some men, women, and children still wore traditional garments to celebrate special occasions, the clothing began to carry a new meaning as the Hungarians secured political and economic control over the eastern portion of the newly-formed Dual Monarchy.

Empress Elisabeth was, by no means, the first female monarch to use some form of aesthetic symbolism to achieve a concrete political end. Elizabeth I of England had adeptly employed her royal form to fashion her role as queen through portraiture, and Maria Theresa had donned symbolic fashions to stitch together her far-flung kingdom. Catherine de' Medici, as regent to her teenage son, commissioned structures that underscored her natural right to rule, including a pleasure dairy laden with symbolically significant architectural motifs and artwork (Martin 2011: 41). With the ascension of the urban bourgeoisie and the destabilization of absolutism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sartorial self-fashioning also evolved as the nation state began to supplant the empire. Thus, it is no coincidence that the rise of the celebrity monarch coincided with the rapid commercialization of European society post-1789. Within the context of this shifting social landscape, Elisabeth and her nineteenth-century contemporaries were compelled to voice their political sentiments emblematically to ensure the continuity of their respective dynasties. Indeed, the political anxiety surrounding the 1848 revolutions and the subsequent constitutional crises that succeeded them in the Austrian Empire facilitated Elisabeth's political ascension. Elisabeth anticipated the power of symbolism in politics and donned nationalist garb to fuse her royal image with her political beliefs. Her lavish garments simultaneously embraced Hungarian folk dress while espousing Western high fashion and its sartorial experimentalism. For instance, the ensemble she wore for the coronation was groundbreaking in that Worth coopted a Hungarian militant motif and transformed it into an

aristocratic means of nationalist expression. Thus, I have endeavored to build upon the work of Zanger, whose seminal work underscored the significance of the body natural in the construction of monarchism. Elisabeth's physical form, with its propinquity to the Austrian sovereign, bolstered the power of the Habsburg monarchy at a time of rapid political transition. Through fashion, Elisabeth transformed her body into an immortal apparatus, an instrument through which the Habsburg regime ensured its continued preeminence as the monarchical system was increasingly secularized and decentralized.



Figure 1

Emil Rabending. *Elisabeth in her Hungarian Coronation Gown* (1867).
Photograph. Source: Schloß Schönbrunn, Vienna, Austria.

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