

A Brief History of the Line of Hapsburg

The first of the noble house was Rædbot of Klettgau in Swabia, descended of the Royal line of Clovis and the Imperial line of Charlemagne, who built the tower Hapsburg (Hawk's Tower), of which was said that it needed no walls for the loyalty of the vassals would ever form a living rampart about their lord, on the site of an old Roman beacon near a ford of the Aar in A.D. 1020. By his marriage of Ita daughter of Frederick, the noble houses of Hapsburg and Lorraine were united for the first time. Of him more is said in the *Rædbotsleich*.

Rædbot was the father of Werner I the Pious, receiver of the headship of the house, who in turn bestowed it on his son Otto II who was murdered after fighting Coloman the Usurper in Hungary, and in his turn to his son Werner II who died in battle against rebels in Rome, and thus to Albrecht III the Rich, and thus to Rudolf II, and thus to Albrecht IV the Wise who died on Crusade in the Holy Land, the father of Rudolf IV who became King of the Romans.

Rudolf IV was a just count and a holy man. Indeed it is recorded in the story of the Prophecy of the Six Crowns that he gave his horse to a priest carrying the Eucharist to a dying man, led the horse across a swollen river, and defended the priest from the brigands of the region. For this the priest blessed him and prophesied that the Count and his descendants would receive the Imperium and six crowns... Now about this time, Frederick II of the House of Hohenstaufen, the Holy Roman Emperor died a deposed heretic and his ruin befell his son Conrad and his house four years later. For nineteen years was the *Great Interregnum*, the empire was in chaos and there was neither justice nor order. Thus it was that in 1273 the seven electors chose Count Rudolf as the first of that name to wear the Roman Crown, and he took a cross as his scepter. Yet against him rose Ottokar II the Iron King of Bohemia, a seditious rebel who coveted the throne (he had rebelled against his own father to claim Bohemia).

Ottokar had conquered Austria on the death of Frederick Babenberg and lands of the Crown of Hungary, and refused the Imperial summons, causing dissention in the Holy Roman Empire. For this he was placed under the Imperial Ban, made an outlaw, and cast from the Church, but he heeded this not. In 1278, Ottokar raised an army in direct violation of the Ban, and against rode Rudolf and King Ladislaus IV of Hungary the emperor's ally. In force of arms at the Marchfield Rudolf who was almost killed fought and slew the rebel Ottokar and thus were the Lands of Babenberg reclaimed and came under the noble House of Hapsburg.

Rudolf I ruled for eighteen years, and upon his death at the age of 73 the headship of the house passed to his son Albrecht I, and the throne to Adolf of Nassau who was deposed by the prince-electors 1298, whereupon Albrecht was elected. He defeated and slew the former king who was rebelling against him. He ruled justly for ten years, until he was treacherously murdered by his nephew Johann the Parricide. It was about this time that the first unlawful rebellion in the region of the Aar had begun.

From Albrecht the house passed to his son Rudolf III who died in two years, and thence to his second son Frederick I the Fair, and the throne to Henry VII of the House of Luxemburg who died of illness after a year of rule. Then was Frederick validly elected, crowned, and betrayed. An illegal second election was held, and against the true king was set Louis IV of the House of Wittelsbach, the first of the Margraves of Brandenburg to oppose the Emperor. Though he had been excommunicated by the Pope, Louis nevertheless prevailed as Frederick could not achieve victory in arms.

Upon Frederick's death in 1330, the headship of the line passed to his brother Albrecht II the Lame who was a mediator for the Pope, and in his turn to his son Rudolf IV the Founder, under whose rule the Privilegium Maius (which some would hold a forgery) was repromulgated, and after his death the house was divided amongst his brothers Albrecht III who crusaded against the pagans in the North and Leopold III who died in battle against the Swiss rebels.

The line of Albrecht ran thus, firstly to the son of Albrecht, Albrecht IV the Patient, and thus to Albrecht II the Magnanimous, King of Hungary, Bohemia, and Croatia, and Emperor elected upon the death of Emperor Sigismund in 1438. Albrecht ruled but briefly for a year. The line of Albrecht ended with the son of Albrecht II, Ladislaus the Posthumous (so named because he was born after his father's death), who reigned for five years as Duke of Austria and King of Bohemia and died of the plague at the age of 17.

The line of Leopold ran thus, firstly to his son Wilhelm the Courteous who died without children at the age of 36, and thus to his second son Leopold IV who also died childless, and thus to his third son Ernest the Iron, and thus to Frederick III the Cautious, who was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1440, and crowned in 1452. It was he who first devised the cryptic acronym A.E.I.O.U.

The first division of the House came to an end with ascension of the second son of Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, upon the death of his father and his own election in 1493. Under his reign began the Reform of the Empire, yet also at this time the Swiss Rebels separated themselves from the Empire. By his marriage to Mary the Rich, the ancient noble and heroic line of the Burgundians was united with the House of Hapsburg. Of him it was first said, "*Bella gerant alii, tū fēlix Austria nūbe*"

Maximilian was succeeded in 1521 by his grandson Karl V Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain married to Isabella of Portugal, son of Philip I the Fair King of León-Castile, and Joanna of Aragon, the daughter of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. In his reign the outlaw monk Martin Luther with the Electors of Saxony and the Palatinate began the Protestant Revolution and the *Fragmentation of Christendom*. Long and hard would be his fight against the rebels, the Turks, and the invading French, and at a time even the Pope was politically against him. Yet in even in this hopeless time he defended the Faith and the Empire, and defended them

well. He ended his life a simple monk doing penance for his worldliness and sins, dying of malaria in 1558 at the age of 58.

Upon the abdication of Emperor and King Karl V, the house was once more divided, the Spanish Crown going to Karl's son Philip II, and Austria to his brother Ferdinand, King of Bohemia and Hungary.

The line of Karl V and the Crown of Spain ran thus, firstly to his son Philip II the Prudent, the greatest of the line of Karl save his father, who waged war with the Turks, the heretics of England, and the Pagans of the New World, until his death in 1598 at the age of 71, and thus to Philip III the Pious the second son, a pious man who supported his cousin against the rebel Protestants but was a weak ruler who left his government in evil hands, and in his turn to his son Philip IV in 1605, a good ruler who continued to aid the Austrians, but one who sought escape from his duties too often and failed to reform the kingdom, and thus to Carlos II the Bewitched, so named for the shadow that lay on his mind, causing him seizures, and for his appearance, the last of the line of Karl, and of the Kings of Spain, he died in 1700 at the age of 38.

Ferdinand wore the Holy Crowns of Sts. Wenceslaus and Stephen, and defended them against the Turks and faithless rebels. His motto upon his election in 1558 was *Fiat iustitia, et pereat mundus*, and he ruled thus for six years, championing the Catholic Reformation, dying at the age of 61.

The line of Ferdinand ran thus, firstly to his son Maximilian II, who wavered in his faith and made concessions to the Protestant rebels, seeking to keep the peace, and thus to Rudolf II, upon whose mind lay a shadow, and though he was a student of science and alchemy and devoted much thought to clockworks, not even the wise can say if this hastened his madness, for he died in misery and illness stained in another's blood, and thus the Holy Crowns passed to his brother Matthias, who was elected upon his brother's death in 1612, and though he tried to reconcile the Protestant rebels in all his realms, it came to naught at his childless death seven years later, and thus in his turn to his cousin Ferdinand II, son of Archduke Karl, elected in 1619.

In the reign of Ferdinand II the Protestant rebels once again took arms, aided from the north, setting up against the Emperor one Frederick of the house of the Palatinate (descended of Wittelsbach) as false claimant to the throne of Bohemia and the Empire. The Rebels forced themselves and their claims upon the Emperor, yet in the hour of his need, the crucifix he wore spoke to him thus, "Ferdinande, non Te deseram" and immediately the loyal of the guards beset the Rebels and drove them forth (and ever afterwards in time of crises or need the Crucifix of Ferdinand was brought before the Emperor). Yet even as they were driven and defeated in the field of battle, they received aid from the Kingdom of Denmark and the King Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden, being convinced by a renegade of the Church, the French Cardinal Richelieu. Yet even the mighty King of Sweden was slain in the field when Richelieu sent

soldiers against the Spanish soldiers allied with the Emperor. Wearied by the war, he died in 1637 at the age 58.

Ferdinand III was elected upon his father's death, and though he fought bravely for eleven years he could not achieve victory against the combine forces of the Rebels and treacherous French, and thus made concessions to make peace. Yet even after the peace and the treaty he never wavered in his support of the Catholic Poles, and that would be well remembered when in 1658 his second son Leopold I (after his elder brother Ferdinand IV died of smallpox) was elected Holy Roman Emperor.

It was in this time that the Mohammedans made their fiercest attempt to destroy Christendom and after conquering Hungary, they besieged Vienna, the Imperial Capital. The siege was lifted with the aid of Jan III Sobieski, whose cavalry came unsuspected in the hour of direst need. Thus it was that the Turks were driven back and forced from Hungary and Croatia, and Christendom was saved. During his reign, Leopold reformed the Empire and reconquered lands from the Saracens with the aid of Eugene of Savoy, and ruled thus for 47 years, dying in 1705 at the age of 64.

Upon his death, his son Josef I was elected Emperor, whose motto was *Amore et Timore*, and he ruled thus for six years, during which he suppressed Protestant Rebels in Hungary, who had been provoked by Louis XIV of France. He died of smallpox without a son, in 1711, at the age of 32, in which year his brother Karl VI was elected, a weak ruler without sons for twenty-nine years, who spent the treasury to ensure the succession of his daughter to the Hapsburg lands, and the promulgation of the *Pragmatic Sanction*.

Thus it was that the first line of Hapsburg ended, and the headship of the passed to the daughter of Karl VI, Maria Theresa, the Lioness of Hapsburg. Immediately upon her accession to the headship of the house, the countries that had promised to respect the succession and broke their promises. A certain Charles Albert of the House of Wittelsbach was put forth as Emperor in an illegal election and the Margrave Brandenburg and self-styled King of Prussia Frederick invaded the Austrian Land of Silesia. Undaunted, the devout Maria fought bravely with the aid of the Hungarians and though Frederick was not driven from Silesia, Charles was defeated and died of illness. Advised by the Pope, Maria Theresa took part in the partition of Poland, which she first opposed, and the Polish subjects under her rule were justly treated. Also, during her reign the Jesuits were removed from the Government, though pensioned. She ruled for thirty-five years with her husband and later her son, until her death of illness in 1780, at the age of 63. One of the greatest of the Hapsburgs, by her marriage with Franz I Stephen, the noble houses of Hapsburg and Lorraine were united for the second time, and the second line of the House was founded.

The first Emperor elected of the new line was Franz I Stephen, elected five years after the death of Karl VI, and though not always a faithful husband, he ruled with his wife for twenty

years, until his death at the age of 56. He was at first a Freemason, but left the society upon its condemnation by the Pope. Upon his death his son Josef II was elected Emperor though not crowned King of Hungary, whose rule was at first restrained by his mother, yet when she died he attempted to suppress Catholic practice and the Jesuits, though whether out of good intentions, or malice and the counsels of the enemy, or a shadow upon his mind, none can say, however, he did fight against the Jacobin revolutionaries who had first imprisoned and then murdered his sister Marie Antoinette and her husband King Louis XVI of France, before his sonless death in 1790 at the age of 48, upon which his brother Leopold II was elected, of like mind with his brother, and yet more open to the Faith, whose two year reign was threatened by war with the revolutionaries and internal revolt, and upon his sudden death at the age of 44, his son Franz II was the last elected Emperor.

During the reign of Franz II there arose among the revolutionaries an artillery captain from Corsica, Napoléon Bonaparte, who first made himself Consul and then unlawfully claimed the title of Emperor. Against the Empire the false emperor sent his troops, first in Italy, then in the Germanies, and he achieved great victories. Thus it was that Franz was forced to dissolve the Electorate, and rule as the first of the Emperors of Austria, while the Imperial throne lay vacant, even as the false emperor had been driven from Russia and defeated on the fields of Flanders and Walloon, dying in exile. Franz ruled the Empire well for eleven years, and Austria for thirty-one years, dying of fever in 1835 at the age of 67. Upon the death of Franz I his son Ferdinand I succeed him on the throne of Austria, while the Holy Roman Throne was vacant, and he ruled for thirteen years of turmoil, for a shadow lay upon his mind, though not severely, and in the year 1848 revolution broke out in the Empire, and he abdicated childless, in favor of his nephew Franz Josef.

Through the ascension to the throne of Franz Josef at the age of eighteen, order was restored and the revolutionaries exiled. A man greatly devoted to the Holy Eucharist, he reformed Austria and made the crown of Hungary coequal, encouraging the economy of both countries. He fought against France's incursions into Italy and Prussia's usurpation of the Empire, and against anarchism. He could not prevail, and his liberal son Rudolf was murdered (many thought at first that he committed suicide, but his body showed signs of assault) and his wife Empress Elizabeth was assassinated by an anarchist, and this greatly affected him. In the year 1914 his heir Franz Ferdinand and Franz's wife Sophie were murdered in Sarajevo by a member of the Black Hand, an anarchist society protected by Serbia. Yet he did not wage war with Serbia, until he was told that Serbians had invaded the Crown Lands of Austria. In the last two years of his sixty-seven year reign, the world was engulfed in the *Great War* of which much is written elsewhere. He died exhausted of pneumonia in 1916 at the age of 86, succeed by his grandnephew Karl I the Blessed.

Karl I the Blessed was a holy man and ruled thus for two years, reforming the Empire, making the Slavs coequal and ever seeking to end the war though a good soldier, yet it was of no avail and the Austrians and the Hungarians were overwhelmed and defeated, and their own

Emperor and King was exiled from them, first to Switzerland, and then to the Isle of Madeira when he attempted to regain the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen, which he relinquished not, nor did he relinquish the Crown of Austria or that of St. Wenceslaus, but these were unlawfully cast from him. As he lived, he died, in 1921 of severe pneumonia at the age of 34, succeeded by his son firstborn of eight children, Otto Uncrowned. Otto resisted Adolf the Usurper in the *Second World War*, of which much is written elsewhere, and he sought ever to restore the Holy Roman Empire, but of this he was unable, though many stood with him. He died peacefully in his sleep in 2011 at the age of 98, and the headship of the house passed to his son Karl, through whose descendants the line continues even to this day.