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0521780349 - The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815, Second Edition  
Charles W. Ingrao  
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## The Habsburg Monarchy 1618–1815

Second edition

This is a revised and updated edition of a highly acclaimed history of the early modern Habsburg monarchy. Charles W. Ingrao challenges the conventional notion of Habsburg state and society as peculiarly backward by tracing its emergence as a military and cultural power of enormous influence. The Habsburg monarchy was undeniably different from other European polities: geography and linguistic diversity made this inevitable, but by 1789 it had laid the groundwork for a single polity capable of transcending its uniquely diverse cultural and historic heritage. Charles W. Ingrao unravels the web of social, political, economic, and cultural factors that shaped the Habsburg monarchy during the period, and presents this complex story in a manner that is both authoritative and accessible to non-specialists. This new edition includes a revised text and bibliographies, new genealogical tables, and an epilogue which looks forward to the impact of the Habsburg monarchy on twentieth-century events.

CHARLES W. INGRAO is Professor of History at Purdue University. He has held visiting appointments at Brown, Indiana, Washington and the University of Cambridge, and is currently Editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook*. He has published six books on central Europe and over forty articles both on the region's history and on present-day ethnic conflict.

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1906–1999

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Charles W. Ingrao

*Professor of History, Purdue University*



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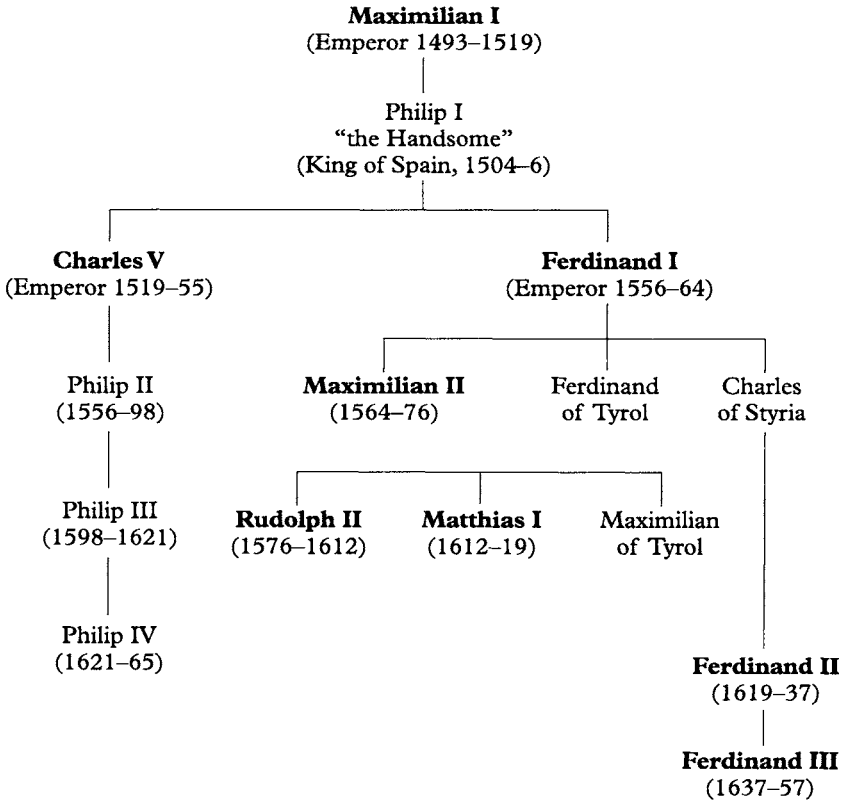
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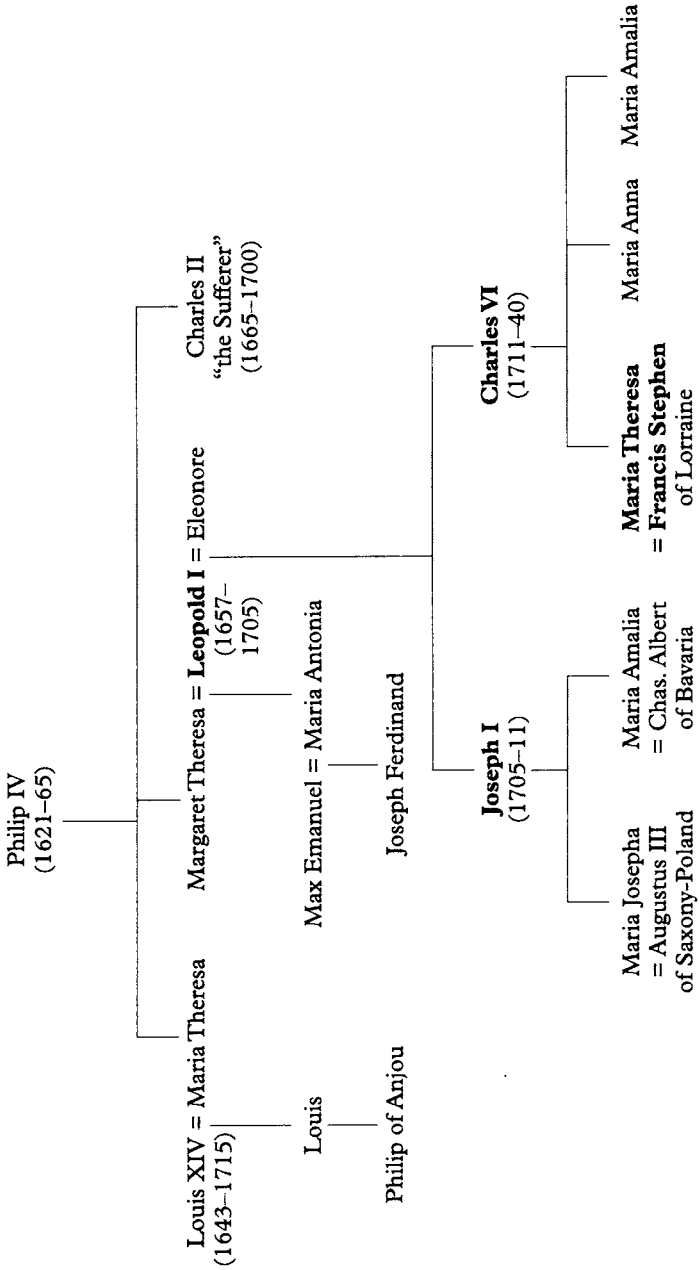
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## Preface

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Neville Chamberlain spoke for millions of his British contemporaries when, at the height of the Munich Crisis, he lamented the prospects of going to war over “a faraway country” inhabited by “people of whom we know nothing.” The prime minister was, of course, speaking of Czechoslovakia. But he could have just as easily used these same words to characterize his knowledge – or concern – about the other lands and peoples of the former Habsburg monarchy. A half century later even the educated public in western societies like Great Britain and the United States still know very little about the region, and even less about its history. Nor should this come as a surprise. Neither a bygone empire nor the small “successor states” that replaced it can inspire the same interest as great modern entities like France, Germany, or Russia. Yet, even before its dissolution in 1918, the monarchy’s diversity made it much more difficult to comprehend, thereby discouraging anyone from investigating it in the first place. Part of the reason is that the monarchy was really three different countries at the start of the seventeenth century, each nested with several smaller, but distinct sub-societies. In many respects they remained disparate throughout its history. Of course, the same can be said of other European societies. But whereas it is possible to write Soviet or Russian history from the Great Russian perspective, and British history from an English viewpoint, the component states of the Habsburg monarchy were much too numerous, populous, and wealthy to be ignored, either by the Habsburgs or by those who study it. Finally, the monarchy’s very diversity created a greater number of problems, many of which demanded solutions different from those applied in major nation states like France or Germany. Fascinating though they were, the monarchy’s unique conditions and eccentric development make it a poor choice for anyone searching for a conceptually clean, “typical” example of an evolving nation-state.

What is even more surprising and unfortunate is that the peoples of today’s central and east-central Europe – including the German-speaking populations of the *Bundesrepublik* and Austria itself – are themselves becoming less and less aware of their common heritage. The apparent

diffidence of many modern Austrians may be explained by the country's longtime status as a neutral between rival power blocs. But is also true that the governments of the various successor states – including Austria – have endeavored for eighty years to instill in their peoples a new political culture modeled after the nation-state model of World War I's victors. Unfortunately, the process of imbuing their citizens with national pride has invariably come at the expense of a meaningful understanding and appreciation of the more complex challenges and achievements of the great Danubian enterprise that preceded them.

Such is the fate of the “losers” of great wars, that history is often written by their enemies. Yet neither the monarchy's ultimate extinction, nor its complex problems, nor even the current political agendas of the various successor states should deter us from studying it. By the second half of the eighteenth century it not only had the continent's most innovative government and largest army, but was also a leader in public education and the world of music. If the ensuing revolutionary decades laid bare the rottenness of Old Regime France, they also demonstrated the Habsburg monarchy's considerable military, political, economic and cultural resources, together with a remarkable durability. In a struggle between two systems, it was those of the supposedly “backward” Habsburg monarchy that fought the most land campaigns, weathered the most defeats – and still triumphed in the end. It subsequently played a leading role in turning back the French Revolution and crafting an international system that remained in place until 1914. When it finally collapsed four years later, it had already outlasted every other major monarchy in both longevity and dynastic continuity, despite having more natural enemies and less wealth with which to confront them. And, as we now know, the problems it confronted did not die with it, but persist today. Indeed, our ignorance of the Habsburg model and its legacy has inhibited our understanding of the tragic human and demographic catastrophes of twentieth-century *Mitteleuropa*.

This book will try to overcome some of these obstacles by presenting at the very outset several generalizations that can help unify and give purpose to the factual material, as well as to the monarchy's history beyond the volume's closing date of 1815. In keeping with the original Cambridge series' “new approaches” format, the rest of the volume will supplement the traditional narrative with additional generalizations and analyses that will hopefully give students cause for discussion, and scholars food for thought. From the very beginning of my research I have endeavored to afford social, economic, and cultural themes as much attention as possible, despite the relative dearth of published material on those subjects. By contrast, I have given minimal coverage to military campaigns, despite their immediate importance in defining the course of the monarchy's history. I have found it

impossible, however, to write a book about the Habsburg monarchy and its people without devoting a great deal of attention to the political, and even diplomatic actions of its leaders. Indeed, given the highly artificial nature of their state and society, Habsburg statecraft played the most decisive and unifying role in determining virtually all aspects of its history, including its social and cultural evolution.

If the Habsburg monarchy is complex, so is its nomenclature. To avoid confusion, the text refers to it as “the monarchy” or “the Habsburg dominions,” while reserving the terms “empire” and “Germany” for the lands and peoples of the Holy Roman empire. There are only two exceptions: in Chapter 4, I allude to a “second Habsburg empire” akin to the great dynastic conglomeration of Charles V; in Chapter 7, after the creation of the Austrian empire (1804) and dissolution of the Holy Roman empire (1806), the monarchy is finally accorded that designation. Although the word “Austrian” is occasionally used as an adjective to refer to the Habsburg monarchy’s army or foreign policy, “Austria” itself is employed only to represent those provinces that comprise the so-called Austrian lands. Only after the creation of the Austrian empire does the term stand for the entire Habsburg monarchy. Another maddening ambiguity about the monarchy’s terminology is the double connotation attached to the words “Hungary” and “Bohemia.” When referring to all of the Hungarian or Bohemian crownlands, I often employ the terms “greater Hungary” and “greater Bohemia”; by contrast, “Bohemia proper” and “Hungary proper” (or “central Hungary”) allude only to the individual component kingdoms of the same name. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to the problem of place names. Given east-central Europe’s mixed ethnic composition, many of its cities have two or three names. Whenever possible, the text uses the English-language names for towns, provinces, and geographical expressions. In those instances where there is no English equivalent, I have employed that designation which is most often found in other English-language histories, with other widely used alternative spellings in parentheses.

This is, without question, the most difficult writing project I have ever undertaken. Most of the problems have stemmed from the conceit that I could address university students, educated laypeople, and my fellow scholars in the same book. The greatest problem has been space. Whereas textbook publishers and their readers demand brevity, scholars crave a completeness and sensitivity to nuances that can only be addressed in a longer work. Trying to engineer both probably doubled the amount of time it took to complete the first edition. I am, however, grateful both to my first editor, Richard Fisher, for his willingness to expand the first edition a quarter beyond its contract length, and to Elizabeth Howard, for presenting

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me with the opportunity to prepare this enlarged second edition. Alas, one sacrifice that has carried over is footnotes. Editorial limits on the number of notes make it impossible to give proper credit to all the published authors whose work I consulted. Yet, as I soon found out, citing *some* of these scholars involves making arbitrary decisions that are unfair to those who are left out. One acknowledgment that I cannot forego is the dedication of this edition to the memory of my father-in-law, Harold Beloin.