MODERN WARS IN PERSPECTIVE

AUSTRIA'S WARS OF EMERGENCE

1683–1797

MICHAEL HOCHEDLINGER

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AUSTRIA'S WARS OF EMERGENCE

War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1683–1797

MICHAEL HOCHEDLINGER

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For Bettina, Helga and Rudolf

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHASH	Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
AHY	Austrian History Yearbook
AÖG	Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte
CEH	Central European History
GH	German History
HVJS	Historische Vierteljahrsschrift
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
JGO	Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
JMH	Journal of Modern History
MGM	Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen
MH	Mitteilungen des k. u. k. Heeresmuseums
MIÖG	Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung
MKA	Mitteilungen des k. (u.) k. Kriegsarchivs
MÖStA	Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs
ÖO	Österreichische Osthefte
RHD	Revue d'histoire diplomatique
SEER	Slavonic and East European Review
ZHF	Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung

GLOSSARY

Anterior Austria or Further Austria (*Vorderösterreich* or *Vorlande*)	Habsburg possessions in south Germany comprising principally the Breisgau, Swabian Austria and Vorarlberg.
Aufgebot	The provincial levies for home defence consisting of cavalry and a peasant militia on foot. They were called up and organized by the Estates of the individual provinces.
Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*)	The Habsburg Monarchy's 'Ministry of War' (1556–1848).
Colonel-proprietor or regimental proprietor (*Oberstinhaber* or *Regimentsinhaber*)	The proprietor, and nominal commander, of an infantry or cavalry regiment, normally a general, enjoying extensive prerogatives. A second colonel (or *Regimentskommandant*) actually took care of daily administrative business and led the regiment in battle.
Council of State (*Staatsrat*)	The supreme advisory body for domestic affairs in the Habsburg Monarchy established in 1761.
Court Chamber (*Hofkammer*)	The Habsburg Monarchy's 'Ministry of Finance' and supreme agency for the administration of crown domains.
Court Chancellery (*Hofkanzlei*)	The supreme administrative bodies for the Austrian provinces (*Österreichische Hofkanzlei*) and the Bohemian lands (*Böhmische Hofkanzlei*), abolished in 1749 but re-established as 'United Austro-Bohemian Court Chancellery' in 1762.

Deputation des status publico-oeconomico-militaris	A collegial conference body composed of the heads of various governmental bodies to discuss the annual military budget and the recruiting quotas (1697–1749).
Estates (*Stände*)	The corporatively organized provincial elites in the Habsburg Monarchy normally comprising landowning noblemen and prelates as well as the free cities and market towns assembling annually in provincial diets to discuss the ruler's monetary and other claims.
Feldmarschall-Leutnant (FML)	The third-highest rank for general officers in the Habsburg army.
Feldzeugmeister (FZM)	The second-highest rank for general officers in the Habsburg army (infantry and artillery or technical arms).
Field marshal (*Feldmarschall, FM*)	The highest rank for general officers in the Habsburg army.
General der Cavallerie (GdC)	The second-highest rank for general officers in the Habsburg army (cavalry).
General War Commissariat (*Generalkriegskommissariat*)	The supreme administrative and controlling authority for matters of military economy (recruitment, military budget, mustering, inspections, audit and so forth).
Generalfeldwachtmeister (GFWM), usually called *Generalmajor* (GM) from about 1750	The lowest rank for general officers in the Habsburg army.
Generalleutnant	The Emperor's proxy as commander-in-chief of his armed forces, last appointed in 1737.
Grundherrschaft	Literally 'landlordship'. Most of the land having passed into private hands by the beginning of the early modern period, the landlords – noblemen or landowning monasteries – had to exercise, through their manorial officials, certain public functions vis-à-vis their peasants.

	Grundherrschaft thus was not only the nucleus of rural life in general but also became the basic element of public administration in the country dangerously mediatizing the ruler's grip on his subjects.
Hereditary Lands (*Erblande*)	The heartlands of the Habsburg Monarchy, in essence the Austrian lands and, after 1627/28, the lands of the Bohemian crown where Habsburg rule was hereditary. Though the Hungarian crown was declared to be hereditary in 1687, the term Hereditary Lands does not normally comprise Hungary.
Imperial Chancellery (*Reichshofkanzlei*)	The supreme executive and advisory body to the Emperor for Reich affairs operating in Vienna (1559–1806).
Imperial Estates (*Reichsstände*)	Princes, prelates and Imperial Free Cities confederated in the Holy Roman Empire with a seat and vote at the Imperial Diet (*Reichsstandschaft*).
Inner Austria (*Innerösterreich*)	Administrative unit embracing Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Gorizia-Gradisca, Trieste and Fiume.
Insurrectio	The feudal levy in the lands of the Hungarian crown.
Konskriptions- und Werbbezirkssystem	A new recruiting system introduced in the Habsburg Monarchy in 1770–81 based on reliable censuses (*Konskription*) and fixed recruiting districts (*Werbbezirke*) assigned to each infantry regiment within the Habsburg lands.
k. k. (kaiserlich-königlich)	Imperial-royal, official adjectival designation for Habsburg authorities, functionaries and the armed forces replacing the older *kaiserlich* (Imperial) after 1745. It was in turn superseded by *k.u.k.* (*kaiserlich und königlich*) following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. The army remained *k.k.* until 1889.

Kontribution	The standard Military Tax in the Austro-Bohemian lands introduced in the 1620s to finance Austria's standing army.
Landrekrutenstellung	Literally 'provincial recruitment'. A recruiting system introduced in the 1680s under which the Austro-Bohemian provinces had to provide varying quotas of recruits from among their own subjects, especially in times of war to supplement the more costly voluntary enlistment.
Military Border (*Militärgrenze*)	A defence screen stretching from the Adriatic to present-day Romania which protected the Habsburg Monarchy against Turkish incursions.
Privy Conference (*Geheime Konferenz*)	The Habsburg rulers' supreme advisory body for matters of high politics, especially foreign policy.
Reich	The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (*Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*).
Reichsarmee	The army of the Reich proper as opposed to the Emperor's own standing army (also called 'Imperial army'). The *Reichsarmee* was no permanent force but only mobilized in case of *Reichskrieg*.
Reichsgeneralfeldmarschall	Imperial field marshal. The highest rank in the *Reichsarmee*.
Reichskrieg	The official state of war declared by the Imperial Diet and binding for the Reich as a whole.
Robot	Compulsory labour which the peasants had to perform for their lords.
Salzkammergut	A special district in Upper Austria and north-west Styria with rich salt-mines under cameral administration.
State Chancellery (*Staatskanzlei*)	The supreme executive body for Austrian foreign policy established in 1742.

INTRODUCTION

The belated great power

A central development during Europe's long eighteenth century was the emergence of a great power system which, with minor alterations, would survive up to 1914. Historians have recently shown considerable interest in the international and domestic trajectories of most of the leading states, with Britain, France and even Russia and Prussia attracting significant attention. Yet one great power remains understudied, and that is the eighteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy.

Between 1683 and 1718 Austria rose to European great-power status almost by accident: first, as a by-product of the Maritime Powers' struggle with France in which the Habsburg Monarchy proved a very useful continental ally and second, through a spectacularly successful Turkish War which the Sultan himself had provoked in an attempt to capture Vienna. Yet despite achieving enormous territorial expansion Austria still lacked the political, fiscal and military infrastructure to sustain her new role and accordingly suffered serious defeats, and its very existence was threatened during the 1730s and 1740s. The remarkable reforming initiatives of Habsburg Enlightened Absolutism from mid-century onwards were insufficient to win the Seven Years War but, within a generation, they strengthened the Monarchy's domestic power basis to such an extent that, for the first time, Austria became a major European factor in her own right by the late 1780s and early 1790s before encountering the new political and military forces of the French Revolution – with disastrous consequences.

Given the complexity of the topic and the ambitious time span – ranging from the siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683 to the peace of Campoformido in 1797 – it would have been impossible to cover all events and all themes in uniform depth. Instead, a conscious effort has been made to concentrate upon institutions, structures and broad developments: upon the geopolitical,

administrative and financial challenges with which the Austrian Habsburgs had to cope, the ways in which these developed as the Monarchy's territorial configuration was changing and the reforms dictated by the ever-increasing exigencies of European great-power politics.

Traditionally, historians of wars and warfare showed little interest in the close relationship between state, society and the armed forces. It was in Prussia that, through a relatively early integration of the research topic of military-civilian relations into academic historiography, this nexus first became the object of particular interest. In recent decades a wider, almost total view of the military has begun to reunite historians under the 'War and Society' rubric and the even more attractive banner of the 'new military history'. War, a regular instrument of political action on the international stage, and the standing army are now recognized as major driving forces in the process of state formation, centralization and bureaucratization in early modern Europe. Merely an unpopular and neglected branch of political and diplomatic history after 1945, modern military history can now be proud of its socio-historical orientation, heavily influencing other fields of the historian's diversified craft and attracting increasing numbers of scholars, not necessarily military historians in the traditional sense. This is appropriate, because war and the military are in fact part of general history and cannot be treated as an isolated speciality.

In Austria, the international transformation of military history over the past decades seems to have gone largely unnoticed. Early modern military history is practically nonexistent and international history languishing. It is self-evident that the one-sided orientation of recent historiography on the early modern Habsburg Monarchy must necessarily result in a dangerously false picture of the Monarchy's true nature, which was in fact distinctly martial: the need to mobilize domestic resources for well-nigh permanent war drove forward the growth and establishment of absolutist government, making eighteenth-century Austria a highly militarized state perfectly comparable to her rivals in east-central Europe, Prussia and Russia.

In this prevailing unfavourable historiographical context the following pages seek to rehabilitate the military and power-political factor in early modern Austrian history and to underline the centrality of military institutions in the creation – and maintenance – of centralized state power. Summing up what has so far been achieved and pointing to what still remains to be done in the study of Austria's early modern war effort and its institutional context, the present book is intended not least as an encouragement to further detailed archival research. This alone will prevent the refreshening impulse of the 'new military history' from degenerating into a hasty production of textbooks prone to comparatistic simplifications and daring conclusions but neglecting the minutiae of patient basic research.

This book cannot claim to be based on extensive archival research. What I have tried to do is to synthesize the relevant existing literature into a compact study of our present state of knowledge. It is to be hoped that this rather extensive processing of literature will provide a relatively sound ground work on which other scholars can build. I am fully conscious of the limitations inherent in this book, especially of my inability to make full use of works in Czech, Hungarian, Slovene or in any other language of Austria-Hungary's eastern successor-states. I have nonetheless struggled as best I could to avoid what historians of the nineteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy would call a 'Germanocentric perspective'.

Bibliographical Notes

On the (sad) state of early modern military and international history in Austria see my review article *'Bella gerant alii . . . ?' On the State of Early Modern Military History in Austria*, in: AHY 30 (1999) 237–277. I have pleaded for a re-evaluation of the power-political aspects of early modern Habsburg history in *Abschied vom Klischee. Für eine Neubewertung der frühneuzeitlichen Habsburgermonarchie*, in: Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit 1 (2001) 9–24. There is now a massive history (and biobibliography) of Austrian military historiography by Peter Broucek/Kurt Peball, *Geschichte der österreichischen Militärhistoriographie* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2000).

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Modest Origins – the Habsburg Monarchy During the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century

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CHAPTER ONE

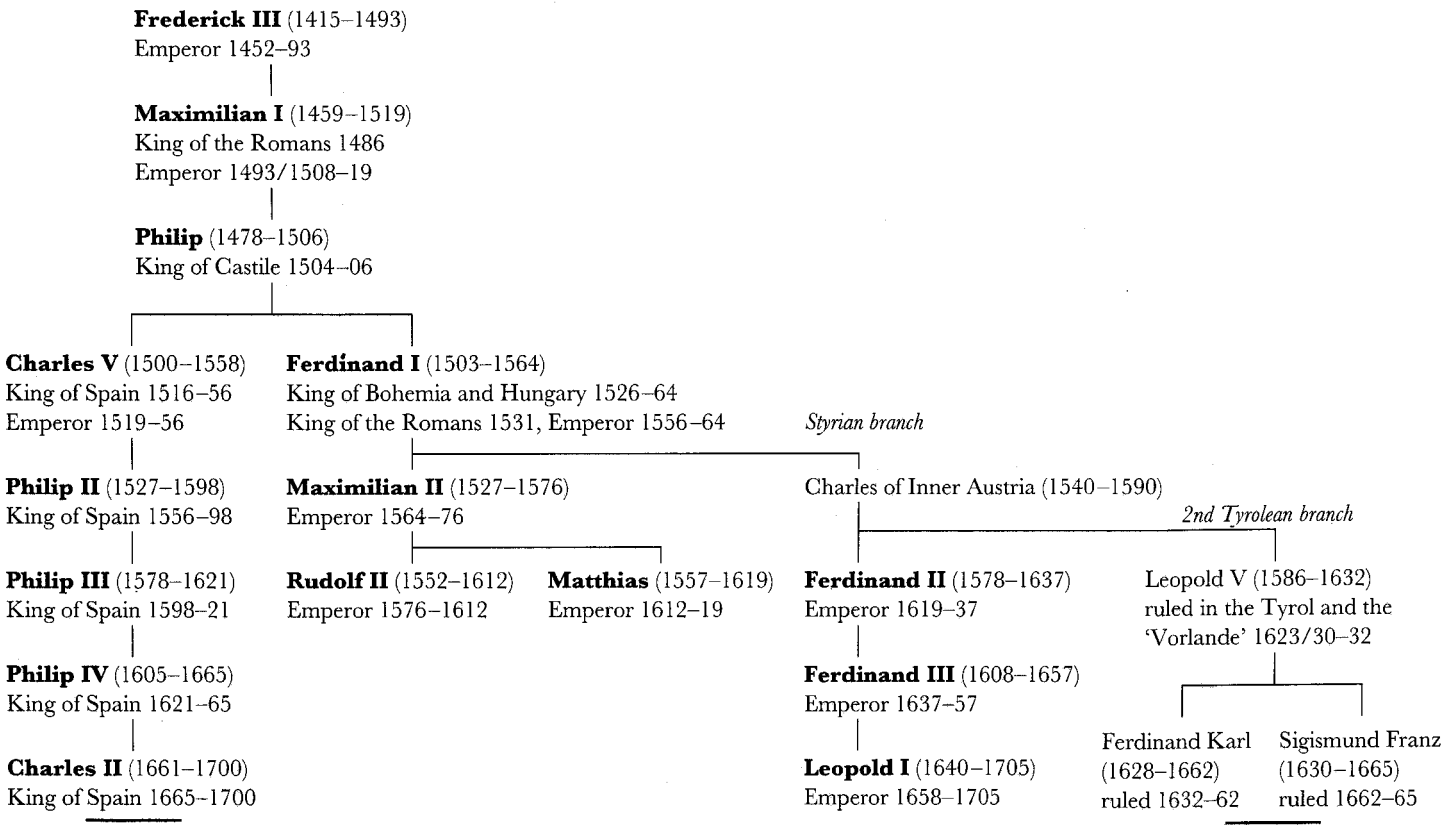
The domestic foundations

When in July 1683 a huge Turkish army invaded Austrian soil and soon laid siege to the city of Vienna, the Habsburg Monarchy was an impressive giant of c. 340,000 square kilometres of territory with a total population of around 8 million. Yet, beneath the seemingly splendid baroque surface, it had perhaps more of a 'trompe-l'oeil' and resembled a colossus on feet of clay, whose fate was always hanging by a thread, as the rapid advance of the Turks and the hasty flight of Emperor Leopold I from his capital revealed only too clearly.

The kingdoms, duchies and counties of which the Monarchy was composed lacked the centralization and absolutist efficiency that began to characterize other European great powers of this period. By French standards, for example, Austria was a structurally immature, almost backward state where corporate privilege and provincial particularism were important well into the eighteenth century and seriously restricted the sovereign's freedom of action. The territories which made up the Monarchy retained a separate identity and were governed separately and by their own elites. This perpetuated each province's sense of independence at the expense of a common identity and dampened the unquestioning self-sacrificing devotion to the Monarchy as a whole – long before, in the nineteenth century, nationalism would begin to undermine fatally this multi-ethnic empire.

Still, somehow and without ever really exhausting its rich resources, the composite Habsburg Monarchy, despite these defects and its centrifugal nature, managed to survive against a host of foreign threats and domestic difficulties. It was with every justification that in 1748, when the Monarchy, under the pressure of serious military and diplomatic setbacks, was embarking upon a revolutionary programme of modernization, reformers wondered how the Austrian Habsburgs had at all succeeded in holding their ground

Figure 1 The Habsburgs (Austrian and Spanish lines)



as well as they did, finally coming to believe in something like a 'miracle of the House of Austria'. The following chapters will try to explore the foundations of this political marvel.

The question of terminology

There is, it appears, unanimous scholarly consensus that the Habsburg Monarchy was something very special and quite different from other European polities. It therefore comes as no surprise that this very distinctiveness and complexity is mirrored in an accordingly puzzling terminology.

Apart from the more general, and hence all the more unerring, terminus technicus 'Habsburg Monarchy', Austria (*Österreich*) presents itself as a helpful, if somewhat unprecise collective term including all those possessions which the 'German' branch of the 'house of Austria', as the Habsburgs liked to be called, had over the centuries managed to accumulate in their hands. It was on these so-called Hereditary Lands (*Erblande*) – owned in their own right though under very different legal titles – that the dynasty's power was essentially based, beginning with the seizure of the Austrian heartlands by the Swabian Habsburgs in the late thirteenth century. The overlapping of dynastic and territorial terminology demonstrates to what extent this loose conglomerate of kingdoms and provinces, united only in personal union and thus lacking a true comprehensive name, depended on its ruling family to provide unity, and on the dynastic principle as the rationale of government. From the start 'Austria' was . . . a 'family affair'. Geographically speaking, 'Austria' originally embraced hardly more than medieval Germany's eastern march elevated to the rank of duchy in 1156 and comprising roughly today's Lower and Upper Austria.

Around 1700 – after the reconquest of Hungary, which raised the Habsburg conglomerate to full great-power status – the term *monarchia austriaca* was coined, which embraced all Habsburg dominions. It did not, however, encompass the elective Imperial dignity of the German Reich, which the Habsburg family had held almost uninterruptedly since 1438. Nevertheless, emperor can very well be used as a synonym for the Austrian ruler until 1740; indeed, we may even speak of Imperial forces or Imperial diplomacy when referring to the Habsburg rulers' armed forces or the Habsburg diplomatic service. One may even use the rather extravagant English expression 'Imperialists'.

From 1740 on, however, given the strengthening of a genuine, dynastically (not ethnically) oriented 'Austrian identity', we should use 'Austrian' or 'Habsburg' as appropriate adjectives. A fundamental change of emphasis in

the relationship between the Habsburg dynasty and the Reich had gradually been taking place since the middle of the seventeenth century. As the dignity of the Holy Roman Emperor, though hierarchically still the most high-ranking title, was being reduced to a matter of prestige which more often than not proved a rather tiresome burden to the Habsburg rulers, the dynasty increasingly concentrated on the consolidation and expansion of its hereditary dominions. While, with the exception of Hungary, these were formally part of the German Empire, Habsburg dynastic power policy had become almost completely emancipated from the interests of the Reich.

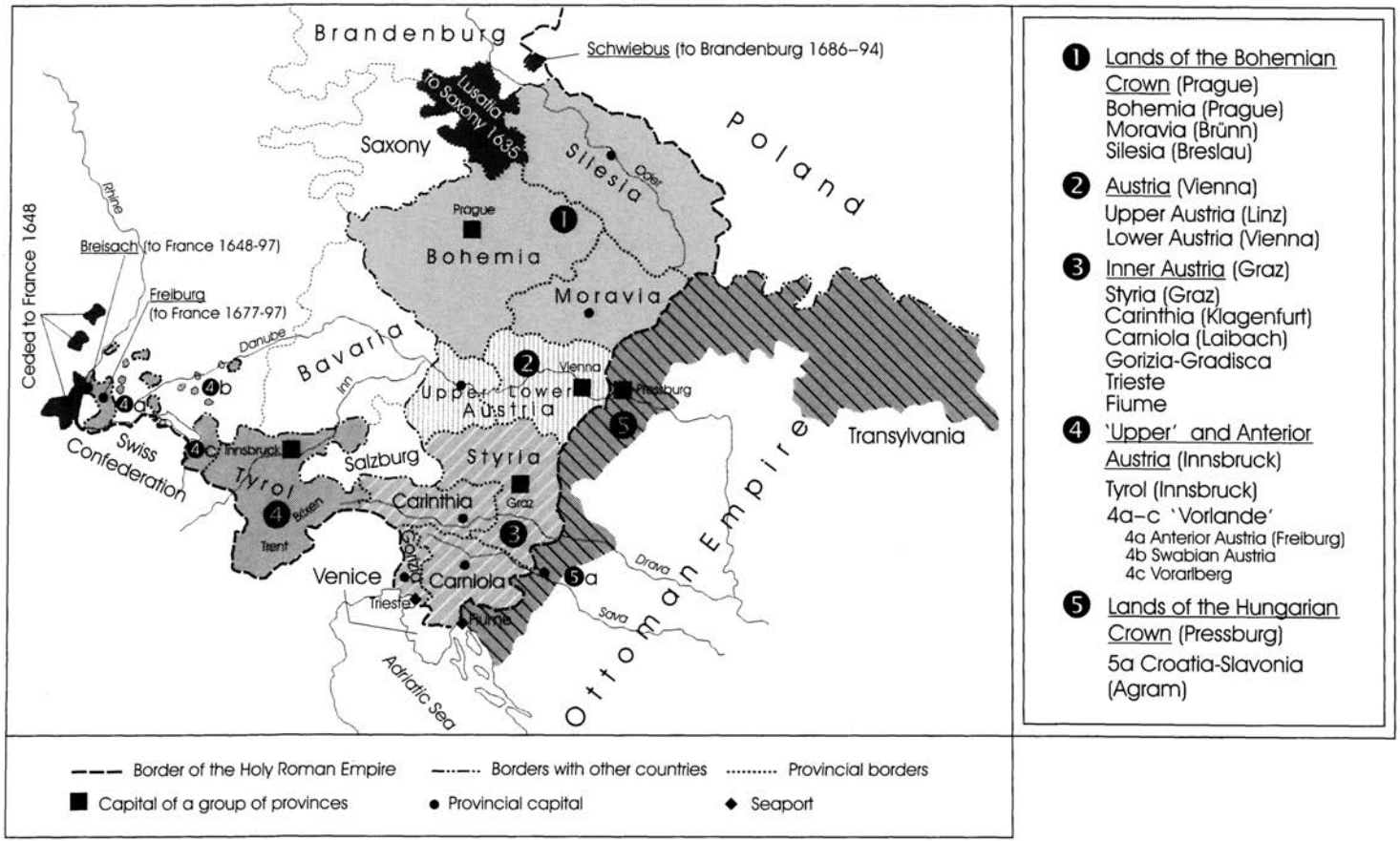
The territorial and administrative configuration of the Habsburg Monarchy

Three key marriages had helped to construct the empire of the Habsburgs of which, in 1683, the Austrian branch of the family still held the eastern half together with the Imperial crown. In 1477 Archduke Maximilian, son of Emperor Friedrich III, married Mary, daughter and heiress of the last duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. When the latter was killed in battle in the same year and his rich lands stretching from the Netherlands to the eponymous heart of Burgundy fell to Maximilian's wife, this clearly meant an enormous advancement in the hierarchy of European great powers.

The radiant Imperial crown could not really conceal the extreme weakness of the Habsburgs' power base in the Danubian heartlands, which were threatened by dynastic and territorial fragmentation, domestic unrest as well as Hungarian and Turkish incursions. Still governed by another Habsburg lineage and not reunited until 1490, the Tyrol and the outlying territories in southern Germany and Alsace were soon to become the centre of the Habsburgs' dominions under the reign of Maximilian I (1493–1519). Yet Maximilian's situation, both financially and politically, remained wretched and precarious, the Emperor living on expedients and borrowing for most of his lifetime.

It was only the Spanish alliance of 1496 that, in the long run, would unexpectedly pave the way to the status of world power. In 1496 Maximilian's son Philip married Juana, daughter of Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabella of Castile, who, surviving all other heirs, secured Castile and Aragón for her son Charles. Ruler of Burgundy on the death of his father Philip in 1506 and King of Spain in 1516, Charles inherited the German *Erblande* and succeeded his grandfather Maximilian as Emperor in 1519.

This vast empire, however, only had a short existence. As soon as 1521–22, Charles V conferred the Austrian Hereditary Lands on his younger



Map 1 The territorial configuration of the Habsburg Monarchy in the second half of the seventeenth century

brother Ferdinand. Thanks to marriage settlements made by his grandfather Maximilian, Ferdinand managed, in 1526–27, to extend Habsburg rule to the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, following the death of his brother-in-law, the childless Louis II, last of the Jagiellon kings. Charles V's abdication as King of Spain and as Emperor in 1556 sanctioned the final separation of the Habsburg family into two distinct branches, the Spanish one under Charles' son Philip II and the Austrian line under Charles' brother Ferdinand and his heirs. Ferdinand, King of the Romans (Emperor-designate) since 1531 and thus second in the Reich, now took the Imperial crown with the Austrian, Bohemian and Hungarian dominions in the east, while Philip received the Spanish Empire including the Netherlands, the remainder of the Burgundian heritage and the Spanish possessions in Italy.

Only a few years later, on the death of Ferdinand I in 1564, the Austrian lands were in their turn subdivided, as had been the practice with the Habsburg dynasty in the later Middle Ages. Ferdinand's realm was partitioned among his three sons. The eldest was given the Imperial crown, Bohemia, Royal Hungary and Austria proper. To the south, a second Habsburg court was established at Graz with Inner Austria as its hinterland, and a third archduke was installed at Innsbruck to rule over the Tyrol and its dependencies. Not only separate princely courts but full administrative bodies, modelled on the Viennese example, were set up for each of the three groups of provinces.

In 1619 Ferdinand of Inner Austria succeeded Emperor Matthias thus merging his Inner Austrian provinces with Austria proper, Bohemia and Hungary. But it was not until 1665 that, following the extinction of the (second) Tyrolean branch, the Tyrol and the southern German territories finally reverted to Emperor Leopold I and the Viennese branch of the family. Though undone in the following century, the partition of 1564 continued to have far-reaching and lasting effects. Provincial particularism and separate identities were further encouraged much to the disadvantage of general solidarity among the Hereditary Lands, not to mention the increasingly complicated and kafkaesque construction of central and provincial administration. The groups of provinces organized for the partition of 1564 survived the formal reunification of all Habsburg dominions in 1665 as important elements of the administrative structure of the Monarchy, their bureaucracies being not merged but laboriously fitted into the central administration. Strongly dependent upon cooperation with the self-confident provincial elites, Vienna shrank from any forcible incorporation and usually preferred more artificial constructions. Taking these provincial groups as our basis, we shall now review the territorial and administrative configuration of the Habsburg lands in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Austria

The Habsburg heartland lying astride the Danube, Austria proper, consisted of two distinct provinces each with their own Estates. They were separated by the river Enns and consequently named Austria above the Enns and Austria below the Enns, more popularly – and anticipating today's practice – Upper Austria and Lower Austria. Together Upper and Lower Austria formed the archduchy of Austria with a population of approximately 1 million before the plague of 1679 and the devastating Turkish invasion of 1683. Administration for the two lands and for the Austrian capital of Vienna with its estimated 90,000 people in the early 1680s was handled by the *Niederösterreichische Regierung* (Lower Austrian government) in Vienna, presided over by a *Statthalter* (governor), with a *Landeshauptmann* (provincial captain)* in the Upper Austrian capital of Linz as subordinate branch office.

Until the reforms in the age of Maria Theresia, the crown lacked any administrative functionary of its own below its provincial representatives, essentially having to rely on the landlords (*Grundherren*) for upholding law and order, tax collection and all kinds of patrimonial jurisdiction, which the landowners exercised over their peasants. What has been vaguely termed *Grundherrschaft* (manorial or seigneurial régime, literally 'landlordship') formed the organizational basis for most of rural life throughout the early modern Habsburg Monarchy and the main supporting element of public administration until 1848. For centuries noble and clerical landowners and their estate administration, identical with local administration, had served as a sort of 'insulating layer' between sovereign and population. The ordinary subject thus totally escaped the Emperor's direct grip, except in his own domains.

If *Grundherrschaft* as basic element could be found everywhere in the Monarchy (except in the largely defeudalized Tyrol, where the rural population had managed to preserve its special status) the lot of the peasants differed from region to region and obviously depended very much on who actually owned the land they cultivated. All these varying kinds of land lease created a condition of dependence which could reach from fairly tolerable conditions to what has often been described as *Leibeigenschaft*; such 'second serfdom' was typical of east-central Europe in general and, within the Habsburg Monarchy, of Hungary and the Bohemian lands in particular, where peasants were personally unfree and *glebae adscripti*, tied to the soil.

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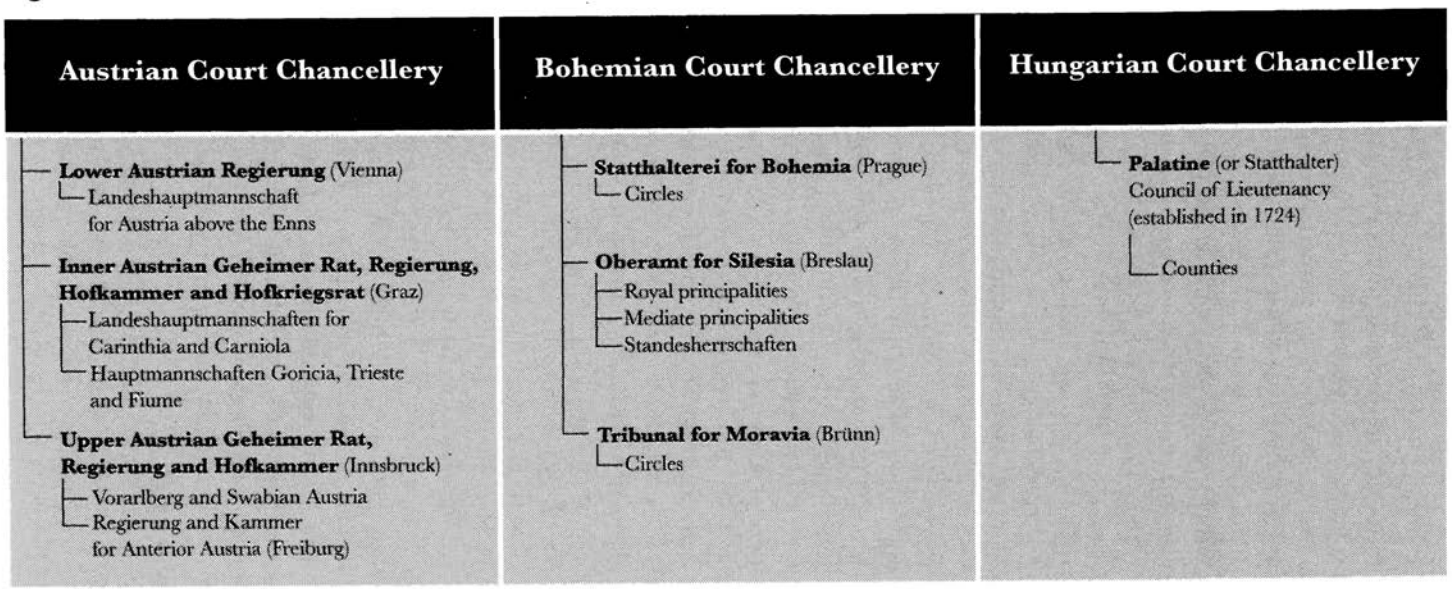
* In subordinate provinces (Upper Austria, Carinthia, Carniola) the *Landeshauptmann* was the sovereign's representative in military as well as jurisdictional matters, whereas in provinces such as Lower Austria, Styria or the Tyrol, where a full-blown provincial government existed, he was leader of the Estates and president of the provincial diet.

Figure 2 Provincial administration



The ruler's control of the individual provinces was in fact limited, most of the actual administrative business being handled by the provincial Estates and their apparatus.

In addition to rent in cash and kind, the peasants were subjected to compulsory labour (*robot, Frondienst*) on the tax-free land reserve cultivated by the lords themselves (dominical land). The extent of such *robot* may serve as an indicator for the quality of landlord–serf relationship. The rise of labour dues provoked considerable social unrest during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the expansion of the dominical lands and the overall intensification of lordship rights became apparent. *Robot* was of particular importance in the Bohemian lands, where the large noble estates were heavily dependent on labour dues to farm the vast demesne. This large-scale demesne farming was rare in the transitional zone of the Austrian heartlands, where the major part of lordly income sprang from rents and fees. Protective measures were soon taken by the sovereign in an attempt to reduce robot dues and other burdens to reasonable proportions: in 1679 for Austria proper, in 1680, in the wake of a massive peasant revolt, for Bohemia, in 1713 for Moravia. New robot patents for Bohemia followed in 1717 and 1738, but compulsory labour remained a continuous problem throughout the period.

Criminal jurisdiction was yet another sphere of public authority to have passed mostly into private hands. It was organized in judicial districts (*Landgerichte*) extremely unequal in size and importance numbering more than 600 in Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Upper and Lower Austria. Nevertheless, they were still used as administrative units to group the even more disunited and scattered *Grundherrschaften* in a more convenient order and were also responsible for public safety measures. In between the *Landgerichte* and the *Grundherrschaften* the Roman Catholic Church as the state church of the Habsburg Monarchy could offer another structural component for administrative purposes: the parish. Final appellate jurisdiction and supreme administrative control over the Austrian lands were assumed by the Austrian Court Chancellery (*Österreichische Hofkanzlei*) in Vienna (established in 1620, see p. 46), which also conducted the annual negotiations with the Estates. The Viennese Court Chamber (*Hofkammer*) administered cameral revenue. Directly subordinate to the Court Chamber, and exempt from ordinary provincial administration, was the Upper Austrian *Salzkammergut*, whose salt-mines made it one of the richest treasures among the sovereign's domains.

Inner Austria

Created in 1564, Inner Austria (*Innerösterreich*) was rather a hotchpotch of lands, populated by some 1 million people and comprising:

1. the duchy of Styria (Graz), a part of Austria since 1192
2. the duchy of Carinthia (Klagenfurt), which had fallen to the Habsburgs in 1335
3. the duchy of Carniola (Laibach), in Habsburg possession since 1335 and particularly exposed to Turkish incursions ever since the first invasion of 1415, with the county of Istria/Mitterburg (Austrian Istria)
4. the county of Gorizia-Gradisca, completely acquired only in the first decades of the sixteenth century, and finally
5. what was later to become the *Litorale Austriaco* with its two main seaports of Trieste (acquired in 1382) and Fiume/Rijeka (bought in the second half of the fifteenth century).

The ruler's authority was represented by a *Landeshauptmann* in Carinthia and Carniola, and by a captain in Gorizia, Trieste and Fiume respectively. The situation was particularly complicated in Gorizia and Gradisca (Austrian Friuli), where a confusing system of exclaves and enclaves made it difficult to draw up a precise border with the neighbouring territory of the Republic of Venice.

The highest central authority and supreme jurisdictional body for Inner Austria, directly representing the sovereign, was the Privy Council in Graz which had survived the reunification of Inner Austria with Austria proper in 1619. It consisted of the *Statthalter* (governor), chief of the Inner Austrian government, which actually organized and ran provincial administration and justice, and the heads of the other Inner Austrian administrative bodies such as the Inner Austrian War Council and the Inner Austrian Court Chamber. Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and Gorizia sent noble councillors as their representatives to sit in the government alongside university-trained jurists.

The southern zones of Styria and Carinthia as well as Gorizia-Gradisca had an important share of Slovenes, Carniola being predominantly populated by this southern Slav population.

Tyrol and the Vorlande

The Byzantine structure of the Inner Austrian administration was still surpassed by the third group of territories under consideration (*Ober- und Vorderösterreich*), formed by the mountainous Tyrol and the so-called *Vorlande*, a long series of scattered enclaves in southern Germany situated between the Rhine, the Danube and Lake Constance, which the Habsburgs had accumulated over the centuries and were administered from Innsbruck.

The *Vorlande* consisted of:

1. Anterior Austria (*Vorderösterreich*), including Habsburg possessions in the Black Forest, especially the Breisgau, the meagre rest of the Habsburg possessions south of the Rhine and, before 1648, Habsburg Alsace (Sundgau).
2. Swabian Austria (*Schwäbisch Österreich*) centring around the margraviate of Burgau.
3. Vorarlberg (literally the land 'before the Arlberg', a mountain range separating this part of the *Vorlande* from the Tyrol). It had had a complex process of territorial consolidation, and the region continued to remain a heterogeneous patchwork well into the nineteenth century with several foreign enclaves.

All of the three *Vorlande* had their own provincial Estates, which at least joined forces and pooled their financial contributions to face the ruler's increasing demands from the 1720s to 1750. Swabian Austria and Vorarlberg were administered directly from Innsbruck, but Anterior Austria had an intermediate provincial government of its own with its seat in Freiburg im Breisgau; it was subordinated to the Privy Council in Innsbruck.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the county of Tyrol, including the present-day Austrian province of Tyrol as well as the regions south of the Alps which now form part of Italy, acquired some new territories in the North (at the expense of Bavaria) and on the Venetian border (the so-called '*welsche Confinen*'). Together with the region of Trent, Gorizia-Gradisca and the *Litorale*, the latter contributed the Italian element to the multi-ethnic Habsburg Monarchy. The Tyrol *de facto* included the bishoprics of Brixen and Trent which, though in principle independent principalities of the Reich, were closely bound up with the county of Tyrol, being represented in the all-Tyrolean diet and contributing to the Tyrolean defence system in case of emergency.

As in Graz, a separate Privy Council, Government and Court Chamber continued to operate in Innsbruck even after the Tyrol's reunion with the rest of Austria in 1665. The survival of obsolete provincial administrations in both Graz and Innsbruck was perhaps the most telling expression of the extraordinary persistence of provincial particularism, which was long allowed to radiate into the top echelons of government.

Since the 1630s the *Vorlande* had been an important theatre of war; at the end of the Thirty Years War, they were exhausted accordingly. In the 1750s, the *Vorlande* contained some 300,000 inhabitants, but there are no reliable data for the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Information is no more satisfactory for the Tyrol, which contained 384,000 people in 1754

and may have had some 250,000 to 300,000 inhabitants around 1700. Five hundred thousand people for the Tyrol and the *Vorlande* seems to be a realistic figure.

The Lands of the Bohemian Crown

The Bohemian lands (also known as the 'lands of the Crown of St. Wenceslas' in honour of Bohemia's national martyr-patron), a constituent part of the Reich ever since the tenth century, were made up of the kingdom of Bohemia (capital: Prague) and its dependencies: the margraviate of Moravia (capital: Brünn), the duchy of Silesia (capital: Breslau), the margraviates of Upper and Lower Lusatia (which were both handed over to Saxony in 1635), and the Bohemian county of Glatz, which had a special status and whose destiny had by tradition been closely tied up with that of Silesia.

Provincial administration in Bohemia proper was handled by the council of lieutenancy (*Statthalterei*) in Prague, a collegial body consisting of the Bohemian grand officers under the presidency of the chief burgrave. In Moravia the system was quite similar to that of Bohemia except that the collegial body of grand officers running provincial administration in Brünn was called the *Tribunal* (established in 1636) and had the *Landeshauptmann* of Moravia as its head.

It was Silesia that perhaps had the most bewildering and medieval structure of all Habsburg lands. Under the feudal overlordship of the Kings of Bohemia as supreme dukes a series of 16 semi-independent Silesian principalities had survived into the early modern period. Gradually these principalities fell to the Habsburgs – the last important dukedoms to revert to the King of Bohemia being Liegnitz, Brieg and Wohlau in 1675 – and were administered either directly (*Erbfürstentümer*) or were again distributed to noble families as a reward. Seven of these privately owned mediate principalities (*Mediatfürstentümer*) still existed in 1740 when Prussia invaded the duchy of Silesia and occupied the lion's share of the province. Troppau and Jägerndorf were administered by the house of Liechtenstein, Sagan by the Lobkowitz family, Münsterberg by the Auerspergs, Teschen by the house of Lorraine and so forth. Each of these tiny principalities had Estates of its own which in turn sent delegates to the all-Silesian Estates. These had developed from meetings of the Silesian princes in person but gave way, after the 1660s, to an assembly of delegates (*conventus publicus*), consisting of the representatives of the principalities and the free towns as well as the great Silesian landowners of independent, almost princely status (*freie Standesherrschaften*).

While, as we have seen previously, the sovereign could reach most of his subjects in the Austrian lands only through the intermediary of the landlords,

things were slightly different in Bohemia and Moravia. Since the thirteenth century, special administrative organs existed to supervise the privately run local administration: the circles (*Kreise*), headed by a royal official, the circle captain (*Kreishauptmann*). The division into circles – around twelve in Bohemia and six in Moravia – constituted the basic framework of administration in these lands.

Provincial administration in the three major parts of the Bohemian lands was coordinated by the Bohemian Court Chancellery (*Böhmische Hofkanzlei*), which had final appellate jurisdiction and was headed by the Supreme Chancellor of Bohemia. While Emperor Rudolf II (reigned 1576–1612) even chose Prague as his residence from the 1580s to the end of his reign, the crushing defeat of Bohemian separatism in 1620 caused the Bohemian Chancellery to be transferred from Prague to Vienna in the 1620s. The King's domains and direct income were administered by the Bohemian Chamber for Bohemia proper and Moravia, Silesia having a Chamber of its own. Both were subordinate to the Viennese Court Chamber. The lands of the Bohemian Crown constituted the heartland of the Habsburg Monarchy in terms of economic wealth and human resources, thus providing the bulk of state income through taxation as well as most of the recruits for the Emperor's own armies. Measuring some 120,000 square kilometres, the Bohemian lands formed roughly one third of the Monarchy's surface and contained some 4 million inhabitants around 1618 – almost twice as many as the Austrian lands. The Thirty Years War, during which this region was a major theatre of war, as well as waves of political and religious persecution may have reduced the population by as much as 45 per cent in Bohemia proper. Moravia and Silesia are believed to have lost 200,000 people each. By 1700, the Bohemian lands seem to have recovered, reaching almost pre-war level with 3.9 million people in all: some 2 million in Bohemia proper, 740,000 in Moravia and 1.1 million in Silesia. This was still substantially more than in the rest of the Hereditary Lands (the *Vorlande*, Tyrol, Austria above and below the Enns and the Inner Austrian provinces), whose population numbered between 2.1 million and 2.5 million around 1700. The majority in Bohemia and Moravia was Czech, with a strong minority of Germans. German and Czech were the two official languages after 1627. Silesia was predominantly German but also contained a sizeable percentage of Czech and Polish inhabitants.

Much has been made of the blood-letting the once proud Bohemian nobility suffered after the defeat of their rebellion of 1618–20, which had precipitated the Thirty Years War. The 'Renewed Constitution' of 1627, extended to cover Moravia in 1628, introduced an era of absolutism and reduced the considerable rights and privileges of the Bohemian and Moravian Estates and nobilities. The organization of the provincial government, until

then largely in the hands of the Estates, remained intact, but was monarchized in substance. The elective character of the Bohemian crown was abolished, and counter-reformation fully imposed. As many as 150,000 to 200,000 people are said to have emigrated from the Bohemian lands after 1620. Foreign nobles and even military adventurers of quite humble origins succeeded those native nobles ruined or driven away for political and religious reasons.

Still, the loyal Catholic part of the Bohemian nobility remained firmly in the saddle and continued to exert considerable influence at court, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century – not least because they were economically and financially powerful and, at times, important state creditors. The great noble families in the region such as the Liechtensteins were among the wealthiest in the Habsburg Monarchy controlling up to 15,000 serf families. Many even spoke of a veritable 'Bohemian party'. This faction reflected the considerable weight of the Bohemian lands within the Habsburg conglomerate and was personified by the Bohemian or Moravian grandees (and their clienteles). Members of the Lobkowitz, Kinsky, Wratislaw and Kaunitz families were called to the highest offices and thus managed to put their stamp on Habsburg policy – in a direction, it has been argued, that gave absolute priority to genuine Habsburg interests at the expense of the interests of the Reich. This dominance of the Bohemian oligarchy became even more obvious during the eighteenth century. 'Wherever we look in the Austrian government of this period we find Bohemians' (R.J.W. Evans).

The Lands of the Hungarian Crown

If Bohemia, until the breakdown of 1620, anxiously cultivated its already well-defined historical and political identity taking care that the elected king confirmed and swore to observe the traditional privileges, the spirit of independence, the jealous defence of the country's liberties and the tradition of opposition were even greater in the lands of St. Stephen's Crown, as the Hungarian provinces were also named in honour of Stephen, the first Christian king of the Magyars. However, this separatist tradition in Hungary, a common feature of Habsburg history down to the end of the Danubian commonwealth, stood in marked contrast to the dramatic situation of the kingdom after the Turks had annihilated the Hungarian forces, and with them medieval Hungary, at Mohács in 1526.

When, on the death of Louis II in that battle, Ferdinand I succeeded to the inheritance of his brother-in-law and was elected King of Hungary and Croatia in 1526–27, the 'bulwark and shield of Christendom', Hungary's honorary title for having absorbed Ottoman aggression for more than a

century, had already fallen to pieces; self-defence, let alone any screening of the central European hinterland, was impossible – Vienna itself soon became Christian Europe's border fortress.

Under the Turkish onslaught Hungary, then a much larger country than its present-day successor, disintegrated into three separate entities: Turkish Hungary, Habsburg or Royal Hungary and Transylvania.

1. The central parts of the Hungarian kingdom were occupied by the Turks in the 1540s and formed a new pashalik with headquarters at Buda (Ofen), the capital of ancient Hungary.
2. Most of Croatia, the western half of Slavonia (the region between the rivers Sava and Drava), a small strip of land between the Drava, the Balaton and the Danube and finally present day Slovakia, approximately 30 per cent of the entire territory, were controlled by the Habsburgs.

   Pressburg, just a few miles from Vienna, was made the administrative centre of Habsburg Hungary and remained so until the 1780s. All in all, estimates of the surface area of Turkish and Habsburg Hungary (including Croatia) amount to perhaps 120,000 square kilometres each. As far as density of population is concerned, the situation was much more to the disadvantage of Turkish Hungary. It only had some 900,000 inhabitants, maybe 1 million towards the end of Turkish domination, while Habsburg Hungary (including Croatia-Slavonia) is credited with a population strength of between 1.2 million and 1.8 million for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and with as many as 2.1 million inhabitants during the final decades before 1700. The Turkish attacks, and finally the permanent occupation of central Hungary, had set streams of refugees in motion. Only at the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the expulsion of the Turks, did Hungary – again within its medieval boundaries – once more attain the population level of 3.5 million to 4 million people which it had already reached around 1500. The proportion of Magyars had however dramatically decreased – from between 75 and 80 per cent of the total before the catastrophe of Mohács (1526) to around a half. Germans, Croats, Slovaks, Ruthenes, Rumanians and Serbs now made up the rest.

   Habsburg Hungary fell into two constitutionally distinct parts, Hungary proper, or what was left after the Turkish occupation, and the modest remnants of the kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia (*partes adnexae*), which had been integrated into the Magyar realm by personal union in the twelfth century. Croatia's distinct position within the Hungarian state was enhanced by important constitutional prerogatives such as a separate diet (*Sabor*), the autonomous election of the king and the existence of a personal representative of the Hungarian

King or viceroy (*Banus Croatiae*) holding office in Agram, but also by the Croats' resolute adherence to the Catholic faith. The Croatian *Sabor* sent deputies to the all-Hungarian diet at Pressburg, but had its rights considerably extended in 1715 before it largely abdicated its autonomy in 1790.

Only some 5 per cent of the Hungarian population – the magnates, Hungary's great aristocratic landowners drawn from a handful of leading families, and the gentry, the country's very numerous lower nobility – constituted the politically relevant, completely tax-exempt *natio hungarica* and monopolized political and administrative life. The Pressburg diet consisted of two chambers: the Upper House, where the high dignitaries of the realm (*barones regni*), the magnates and the supreme ecclesiastical dignitaries sat, and the Lower House with deputies of the gentry, the rest of the prelates and representatives of the royal free towns. Constitutional life in Hungary with its heated parliamentary debates was much more animated, even incredibly rebellious by absolutist standards, than either in the Austrian or Bohemian lands. Yet at the same time it was also more ponderous and formalistic. Though the diet, according to constitutional provision, had to meet only every three years, the Habsburg kings preferred to summon it as rarely as possible (no diets were held between 1662 and 1681); after 1715, they even tried to do without the Estates by having a sort of committee (*concursus regnicolaris*) vote without much ado what was necessary, especially taxes.

The supreme body for Hungarian administration was the relatively small Hungarian Chancellery operating in Vienna under the nominal direction of the Primate of Hungary, the archbishop of Esztergom, as arch-chancellor, but actually run by the Hungarian chancellor. The Chancellery not only forwarded royal orders to the Hungarian authorities and established contact with other central institutions; it also acted as a sort of Hungarian council to the king, giving advice on matters Hungarian and ensuring the constitutionality of royal acts.

The king's deputy in Pressburg, the Palatine, was elected by the diet from among the king's candidates, which made him an ideal intermediary between the two: he not only transmitted royal directives to the local administration but also had to execute the laws passed by the Hungarian Estates in diet assembled; he was the kingdom's supreme judge and took command of the Hungarian feudal levy when war threatened. The office of Palatine with its conflicting loyalties was left vacant for long periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and his administrative functions were then assumed by a royal stadholder.

Local administration – amounting to autonomous self-government by the gentry – was based on the division of the realm in more than

30 counties, administrative, military and fiscal districts. The county assemblies, the regular meetings of the local gentry, were the basic units of Hungarian political life where the Crown did not interfere. The king certainly nominated the formal head of the county, the high sheriff – mostly magnates or bishops – but the latter was hardly more than a figure-head; the actual job was done by the *vice-comes*, who was elected by the county assembly. It was also in this forum that the gentry designated their two delegates for the diet. Royal free towns as well as the mining towns in present-day Slovakia were not embraced by the county organization.

3. A nucleus for an independent 'national' Hungary survived in the principality of Transylvania, with its elected ruler. This Hungarian march of about 60,000 square kilometres and 700,000 to 800,000 inhabitants (900,000 perhaps at the end of the seventeenth century) had always occupied a special position within the kingdom of Hungary.

   It became a major player in eastern European politics following the Hungarian collapse in 1526, when in the very next year the anti-German party in Hungary elected Jan Zápolya, voivode of Transylvania, anti-king against Ferdinand I. It was only as vassals to the Porte that Zápolya and his successors as princes of Transylvania could safeguard their political independence against Vienna's continuous efforts to integrate the principality into Habsburg Hungary. But time and again able Transylvanian war-lords endangered the Habsburg position in Hungary, notably in its eastern regions; secretly supported by Turkish officials, they even threatened in more than one bold raid Habsburg heartlands such as Lower Austria and Styria, especially during the first half of the seventeenth century. They repeatedly succeeded in concluding dangerous alliances with the sworn enemies of the house of Austria, most importantly during the Thirty Years War, and usually found ways to bring the Porte and its military muscle into their anti-Habsburg feuds.

   Even though the majority of its rulers as well as most Transylvanian Magyars were Calvinists, Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians could coexist in the principality. Such religious toleration made Transylvania a dangerous refuge for malcontents from Habsburg Hungary, as Vienna's staunch counter-reformatory policy tried to reverse the confessional balance in just a few decades. The situation of the Hungarian magnates was indicative of the general trend: mainly Protestant around 1600, the great families had largely returned to the fold by 1650. Transylvania, however, continued to act as a sort of protecting power for the Protestant element in Hungary and offered backing for anti-Habsburg resistance.

Transylvania was composed of three *nationes* each endowed with considerable autonomy: the politically leading Magyars, the Széklers (a Turco-Magyar mixed race) and the 'Saxons' – Germans who had been settled there in the Middle Ages and traditionally dominated the Transylvanian towns (10–15 per cent of the Transylvanian population). All of them sent delegates to the unicameral Transylvanian diet which, newly established in the 1540s, had the right to elect the prince; only the Romanian serfs, mostly Orthodox, had no political rights at all, although they constituted 30–40 per cent of the population around 1700.

The reasons for the distant relations and reciprocal animosity between Vienna and its Hungarian subjects were manifold. Unlike the rest of the Habsburg dominions – the Hereditary Lands which we have reviewed above – Austrian rump Hungary lay *outside* the Holy Roman Empire; it was unimportant fiscally but, as a seam towards the permanently dangerous Ottoman neighbour, absorbed a disproportionate amount of political and military attention and even more financial resources.

The region constituted a border zone in a constant state of emergency which, even in between the major 'regular' conflicts, saw permanent guerilla warfare and small-scale raids by both sides across the frontier, making official boundary marks worthless. Habsburg Hungary could thus be seen, rather pragmatically, as an extended buffer zone which, even if it was a bottomless pit, at least helped to cushion the Austrian lands against the full momentum of the Ottoman thrust. However, the Hungarians' never-tiring insistence on their historic rights and liberties – repeatedly culminating in open rebellion – was frowned upon by many as an obstructive reluctance to contribute their share to the common cause. It was a bad and seemingly unescapable dilemma. As early as 1569 the Hungarian diet had been forced to admit the country's inability to defend itself against Turkish raids and uphold Hungary's reputation as bulwark of Christendom. The Viennese central government together with the Estates of the Hereditary Lands therefore had to take care of the border defence – which they did by establishing the celebrated 'Military Border' (see pp. 83–92) – while the Hungarians, demanding complete self-government in the hands of native-born Magyars, were incessantly finding fault with their Habsburg kings infringing on Hungarian privileges.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Hungarian nobles, even the kingdom's supreme officials, played a very minor role at the Viennese court. They continued to mark out their distinctiveness by wearing their national costumes and certainly had to grapple with a serious language barrier – it was not for nothing that, despite Joseph II's initiative

in the 1780s to impose German, Latin nominally remained Hungary's administrative language until 1844! The deeply rooted Germanophobia, directed against the Viennese court's absolutist tendencies and religious intolerance but even more against the ill-provisioned and hence ill-disciplined Habsburg (i.e. 'German') soldiery, was difficult to overcome. It is no exaggeration to state that this Germanophobia on the Hungarian side was more than equalled by latent Hungarophobia in Vienna's social and political elite. Leading absolutists strongly recommended the Emperor's pitiless, and largely unsuccessful, Hungarian policy that characterized the 1670s and 1680s.

In the 1660s prominent Hungarian and Croatian magnates including the highest dignitaries of the realm, indignant among other things at the Emperor's Turkish policy, had begun to conspire against the life and reign of Leopold I. When their comic-opera plot, the so-called 'magnates' conspiracy', was uncovered and smashed in 1670–71, the Emperor's vengeance went far beyond the execution and expropriation of the leading conspirators to include the whole of Royal Hungary. True to the theory of forfeiture already tested in the Bohemian lands after 1620, a decade of arbitrary rule and religious oppression was ushered in: the Hungarian constitution was deliberately ignored, the office of Palatine left vacant and a *Gubernium* installed instead to translate Vienna's orders into action. This was tantamount to pouring petrol on the fire. Against a dangerous international background substantial concessions had to be made at the diet of Ödenburg in 1681, forced recatholization ceased and constitutional government was restored. All this came much too late to appease the situation.

With the repulse of the Turks and the rapid move southward of the Christian-Turkish dividing line *Hungaria eliberata* became more generous for a moment. In 1687 the Hungarian Estates solemnly relinquished their right of election and even their time-honoured *ius resistendi*, the right which they had enjoyed since 1222 to take up arms against tyrannical royal power if need be. The hereditary title of the Habsburgs to the crown of St. Stephen was officially recognized and Emperor Leopold's son, Archduke Joseph, crowned King of Hungary. Hungary, as the last of the Habsburg dominions, had thus become a 'hereditary land' too.

This of course did not mean that an age of harmony was dawning. The Magyars remained the Emperor's most difficult and unreliable subjects. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a large-scale insurrection, setting Hungary ablaze once more and ending with the confirmation of the country's special status, was to demonstrate the veracity of this sad insight. The attempt to extend even the moderate Austro-Bohemian variety of absolutism to Hungary had failed, and the lands of St. Stephen's crown would never really become integrated into the Monarchy.

Table 1 Approximate population of the Habsburg Monarchy during the second half of the seventeenth century

Archduchy of Austria	1,000,000
Inner Austria	1,000,000
Tyrol and the *Vorlande*	500,000
Lands of the Bohemian Crown	3,900,000
Lands of the Hungarian Crown	2,100,000
Total	8,500,000

Limited absolutism: the provincial Estates

The effectiveness, if not the existence, of absolutism has been challenged in recent years. The early modern Habsburg Monarchy was a particularly impressive example of the strong structural limitations with which even the most absolutist monarchical will could have to cope. Provincial particularism – embodied by the provincial Estates – commanded respect for the individual constitutions of the Habsburg lands. The Austro-Bohemian nobilities not only sat in the provincial diets to discuss, to reduce and even at times to reject, the sovereign's demands for money, recruits and supplies of all kinds; they also controlled the Estates-dominated provincial administration and staffed Viennese central administration, organized according to the collegial system which made central government unwieldy and not really suited to making decisions.

Needless to say, these were not ideal preconditions to encourage the sovereign to rule with an iron fist. Habsburg Austria had to hold the field without efficiently depriving the indigenous nobility of its natural authority and power or shaking off embarrassing constitutional bonds. The Habsburg sovereign, traditionally impecunious, depended not only on the provincial Estates' consent to impose taxation, but also on their administrative apparatus for the apportionment and collection of taxes. The piecemeal creation of an empire through inheritance and election clearly had its pitfalls, the diversity and individuality of the various dominions being correspondingly strong.

Historians have used different terms such as dualism, dyarchy, coalition, co-rulership or dynastic union of Estates-based provinces to describe the Austrian variety of half-baked absolutism that rested on the bi-polarity of sovereign and Estates. Even if, in the age of Absolutism, consent to the ruler's demands could normally be secured in the end, lengthy ritualized negotiations were first necessary. The negative impact on Austria's position

in the continuous power struggle among the European states of the early modern period is clear and helps to explain much of the half-heartedness and hesitancy typical, also, of the Habsburgs' international policy.

The Austrian provincial Estates originated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the dukes of Austria were no longer able to pay exclusively from their own resources not only the costs of administration and their household, but also the increasingly high costs of defence and warfare. Consequently, they were forced to ask the politically relevant of their subjects to contribute their share true to the *mutua obligatio* that linked lord and subject on every rung of society: protection from above, advice and aid – hitherto limited to military service – from below. The institutionalization or rather materialization of this bartering as a result gave those who granted the new financial resources, the privileged orders, an indirect say in high politics and also established the right to lodge complaints (*gravamina*) against abuses, whether real or imaginary, and to extract concessions in exchange.

From extraordinary help at moments of need, this soon developed into regular taxation, and the occasional meetings of the provincial elites were turned into regular provincial diets, one for each province. Normally, the higher nobility, the Estate of the lords (*Herrenstand*), the lesser nobility or knights (*Ritterstand*), the large landowning monasteries represented by their abbots and provosts (*Prälatenstand*) and the Estate of the free towns (*landesfürstliche Städte und Märkte*) sent delegates to the diet or put in a personal appearance. The influence of the free towns was being progressively reduced in some provinces in the same measure as their tax share was decreasing, and peasant deputies only existed in two lands: the Tyrol, where the fourth estate enjoyed special liberties, and Vorarlberg, which simply knew the two Estates of towns and peasants.

Diets were usually convoked by the sovereign once a year. The ruler, rarely attending in person, had his requests presented by special plenipotentiaries, after which bargaining began. The provincial Estates not only voted the taxes, but also allotted the tax quotas to the landlords – according to the size and value of the landed properties – and recovered the money through their collectors. This meant that an administrative machinery had to be created to ensure the functioning of tax collection, but also to keep the Estates alive as a political factor during the long intervals between the annual diets. Special permanent committees consisting of elected members of the Estates and appointed officials under their supervision managed day-to-day business. On the provincial level it was almost exclusively the Estates who looked after the provincial infrastructure such as road building, precautions against the plague, health care for the rural population and so forth.

The Tyrol, as always, was an exceptional case, not only because of the peasant representation. Here general or 'open' diets were becoming rare events, the ruler's demands being normally dealt with by reduced deliberative boards nominated by the four Estates. After 1720 current affairs were handled by two permanent administrative bodies officiating in Innsbruck and Bozen. Only four open diets were held in the course of the entire eighteenth century (1704, 1711, 1720, 1790).

Despite the Monarchy being a purely dynastic union, cooperation between the separate Estates of the provincial groups was normal, and preliminary initiatives towards an estates-general for the whole of the Hereditary Lands had been made repeatedly, especially during the first half of the sixteenth century. But all in all this proved an impasse which reflected the Monarchy's omnipresent lack of a single focus and also revealed the constant rivalries and petty jealousies between the provinces themselves. Though it complicated the annual fund-raising negotiations, the absence of a strong and serried 'parliament' certainly had real attractions for the dynasty, as it made 'divide and rule' a successful stratagem in the most desperate situations. It became essential when natural tensions between ruler and Estates, between centralism and particularism, were fuelled by the confessional conflict, in which a firmly Catholic dynasty opposed a landowning nobility now mostly converted to Protestantism, which had easily and rapidly oozed into the Hereditary Lands since the 1520s.

Open counter-reformation with the early signs of an uncompromising absolutism emerging during the final decade of the sixteenth century inevitably brought the inherent conflict to boiling point. Religious toleration had been a merely temporary phenomenon in Habsburg internal policy, grudgingly granted in the face of the perilous Turkish menace. Freedom of worship, conceded during the period of dynastic and territorial fragmentation after 1564, had been intended to purchase cooperation against the Infidel, but had been revoked after the end of the sixteenth century to give way to brutal re-catholization beginning, curiously enough, in the group of provinces most exposed to Turkish incursions: Inner Austria.

Protestant noble activists among the Estates in Austria proper and in the Bohemian lands could easily anticipate what was to become of religious and political liberty once hard-liner Ferdinand of Inner Austria had managed in 1619 to reunite most of the Habsburg lands which between 1608 and 1618 had disintegrated more and more into a federation of provinces virtually ruled by the Estates. Unheard-of things happened: The Upper and Lower Austrian Estates refused to do homage, Bohemia even deposed Ferdinand (though he was already the legally elected king) and turned to the Calvinist Elector Palatine, Friedrich. The rebellious Estates not only

formed leagues with their counterparts in other provinces but, more importantly, pursued an active foreign policy in collaboration with Protestant powers outside the Habsburg realm, including even the Turks and Transylvania. 1620 saw the crushing of the rebellion, followed by the final triumph of counter-reformation, which also proved a useful means to make the omnium-gatherum of crowns and titles more homogeneous.

Habsburg absolutism, however, remained incomplete. The personnel purge and emigration that swept through the nobilities of the Austro-Bohemian lands in the 1620s and the consequent refashioning of these elites no doubt helped to bring these into line and to lay the foundations of the Austro-Bohemian *Gesamtstaat*. The age of grandeur which the Estates had seen since the beginning of the sixteenth century was definitely over, especially in Bohemia, where the old constitution was declared null and void following the country's reconquest by force of arms. Yet, the fundamental constitutional rights of the Estates, first and foremost the right to approve taxes, were not touched. The dynasty had neutralized the Estates as a rival but it was still dependent on their infrastructure and thus their political cooperation. In telling contrast to Brandenburg-Prussia, Austria's great antagonist of the eighteenth century, Viennese central government was unable to gain control over taxation through crown officials and thus to link military and tax administration. A completely independent central bureaucracy was missing. The various Court Chancelleries recruited most of their personnel from the elites of the respective provinces, and these men necessarily played a double role. On the one hand, they represented the Crown vis-à-vis the provincial Estates; on the other, they also defended provincial interests against any possible curtailment from above.

The century-long Turkish threat was also multi-faceted in its impact on Austrian domestic politics. It has been described as a prime mover of Habsburg state-formation. Defence against the danger from the south-east and other foreign threats clearly promoted a moderate form of absolutist centralism and imposed a minimum level of cooperation between the individual provinces. But, on the other hand, the vital necessity to secure domestic support also made the dynasty and their absolutist tendencies vulnerable and open to political blackmail. That brute force was not the accustomed way of Habsburg policy-making clearly had deep historical roots. The House of Austria did not expand its dominions primarily by means of conquest. Rather, new territories, often gained by inheritance, were usually incorporated by contractual consensus with the respective domestic elites. All this ruled out any ruthless attempt to eliminate the intermediary powers within the Monarchy.

Economy

The economic situation of the Habsburg lands was poor. The Monarchy was essentially an inland state with no flourishing seaports and virtually no maritime trade, dominated by agriculture – 75–80 per cent of the population worked in this sector until well into the second half of the eighteenth century (the figure was even higher in Hungary) – and with little or no industry; the country was relatively sparsely populated and still suffering from the severe demographic losses caused by the Thirty Years War.

Fiscal pressure was permanent, internal trade was mostly in the hands of foreign wholesalers and external commerce more or less limited to raw materials. Communications, greatly hampered by internal customs barriers, and the monetary system were backward. The continuing monopoly of the guilds had led to craft production becoming fossilized. In a word – wide sectors in need of complete reform were lying open to the 'modernizing' efforts of Austrian cameralism.

The reform process was to drag on until the age of Enlightened Absolutism, but first steps were taken under Leopold I. In 1666 a central administrative board (*Kommerzkollegium*) was created to supervise and promote industry and trade throughout the Hereditary Lands. Trade with the Levant, developing so successfully in other countries, was put on an organized footing by the creation of the First Oriental Company in 1667. It did not flourish for very long, and Austro-Turkish trade relations remained in the hands of Turkish subjects, mostly Greek and Armenian merchants. The large wool manufactory in Linz, founded in 1672, was more successful, providing employment not only for factory workers on the spot, but also for hundreds and later thousands of spinners and weavers in the surrounding countryside. Textile industry alongside glassworks also flourished in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (often described as the Monarchy's most productive province), where the great landowners, increasingly influenced by a mercantilist mentality, hurried to promote manufacturing on their estates so successfully that it was to constitute 43 per cent of Bohemian noble estate income by 1750. To encourage trade and industry Vienna granted tax privileges, exemptions and even, at times, religious liberty to foreign specialists.

Finances

What was needed for great-power politics and particularly for its most effective, if most expensive, instrument, the standing army of the post-1648