



OTTO VON HABSBURG
FOUNDATION

CHARLES VON HABSBURG

EMPEROR AND KING

17 August 1887 — 1 April 1922

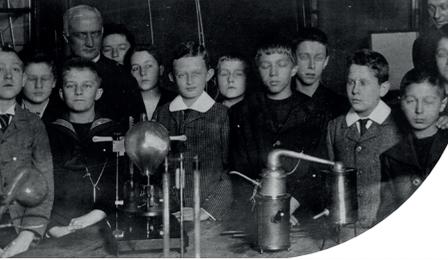
LIFE AND MEMORY



Archduke Charles of the house of Habsburg-Lorraine was born on 17 August 1887, in the castle of Persenbeug, in Lower Austria. The first child of Archduke Otto Franz of Austria and Princess Maria Josepha of Saxony was the fourth in line to the throne at birth and was not destined to reign.

His education followed the strict curriculum imposed on the Archdukes, with an emphasis on the acquisition of religious knowledge. For several years he attended the Benedictine gymnasium in Vienna. On completion of his studies, however, at the Emperor's decision – he graduated in private, to avoid having to compete with his future subjects.

He was sent off for a career in the army, and in addition to his military studies, he also attended the universities of Vienna and Prague, where he studied Law, Political Science and Canon Law. In 1902-1903 he travelled through Europe to broaden his knowledge.



Kaiserhuldigung 7.V. 1908.
Erzh. Karl-Prinz Lobkowitz.

- C. 1890, CHARLES AS A CHILD
- C. 1891, CHARLES AND ARCHDUCHESS MARIA JOSEPHA
- C. 1900, CHARLES IN THE GYMNASIUM OF THE BENEDECTINES IN VIENNA
- C. 1901, CHARLES AND BARON VON MATTENCLOIT
- 1908, THE OFFICERS OF THE 7.SZ. K.U.K. DRAGOON REGIMENT
- 1908, WILHELM II, GERMAN EMPEROR IS WELCOMED IN SCHÖNBRUNN, CHARLES AND PRINCE ZDENKO LOBKOWITZ
- C. 1908, WITH FELLOW SOLDIERS

He was described by those close to him as a generous, deeply religious person with a broad range of interests. As an Archduke of the House of Habsburg, in addition to his German mother tongue, French and English, he learned several of the languages of the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, including Hungarian.



II. MARRIAGE AND FATHERHOOD



On 13 June 1911, Charles was engaged to Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma in Villa Pianore, northern Italy. The wedding took place four months later, on 21 October, in the chapel of the castle of Schwarzau in Lower Austria. The event was attended by the Emperor Franz Joseph himself. After the wedding, they went first on a pilgrimage to Mariazell, then set out on their honeymoon: they travelled from Tyrol through the town of Gorizia, passing along the Dalmatian coast, and then sailed around the Adriatic Sea to Bosnia. They returned to Vienna through Sarajevo.



After the honeymoon, Charles and his regiment were transferred to Galicia, and Zita followed her husband. The newly-wed couple returned to Austria a few months later. Their first child, Otto, was born there on 20 November 1912. Over the next ten years, seven more children were born to the royal couple. Besides his military and later royal duties, he could spend little time with his loved ones. This would only change during their time in exile.

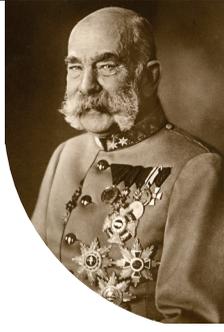
„My father [...] when we were in Madeira, had a bit more time for the children. He taught us a lot, and passed on much knowledge, but especially his religious faith,” (from the interview given by Otto von Habsburg to Professor Luigi de Anna in September 1995).



- C. 1914, CROWN PRINCE CHARLES AS A HUSSAR COLONEL AND ZITA
- 1911, ZITA AND CHARLES ON THEIR HONEYMOON IN REICHENAU
- 1911, EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH CONGRATULATES CHARLES AND ZITA ON THEIR WEDDING
- 1917, KING CHARLES AND CROWN PRINCE OTTO
- 1917, CHARLES AND ZITA WITH THEIR CHILDREN: FELIX, ROBERT, OTTO, ADELHEID
- 1911, GROUP PHOTO AT THE WEDDING OF CHARLES AND ZITA
- 1918, CHARLES AND ZITA IN PRESSBURG



Following the death of Emperor Franz Joseph's son, Crown Prince Rudolf, in 1889, the Emperor's younger brother, Archduke Karl Ludwig, became the heir presumptive to the throne. When he passed away in 1896, he was succeeded by his son, Franz Ferdinand. As Franz Ferdinand entered a morganatic marriage, his children could not be heirs to the throne. As a result, his younger brother Otto Franz and his children moved up the line to the throne. In 1906, however, Archduke Otto Franz died. Thus, with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, Charles became heir presumptive to the throne.



In the summer of 1914, Emperor Franz Joseph took the heir to the throne to acquaint him with the duties of a monarch. Two years later, on 21 November 1916, upon the death of Franz Joseph, Charles succeeded to the thrones and was crowned King of Hungary on 30 December 1916 in Buda Castle.

- c. 1891, THE YOUNG CHARLES AND EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH
- c. 1905, FRANZ JOSEPH
- 1913, ARCHDUKE CHARLES AND FRANZ FERDINAND CROWN PRINCE AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE JUBILÄUMSKIRCHE IN VIENNA
- 1914, CROWN PRINCE CHARLES
- 1916, ZITA, OTTO AND CHARLES AT THE FUNERAL OF FRANZ JOSEPH
- 1916, CORONATION IN BUDAPEST
- 1917, CHARLES AND HIS WINGMAN IN BERLIN
- 1918, PORTRAIT OF KING CHARLES
- 1916, THE ROYAL COUPLE AND OTTO AT THE CORONATION



Österreichs Thronfolger
Carl Franz Josef
rechts: Kaiser des Reichs

The young Emperor came to the throne at a very difficult time, he inherited an empire at war on several fronts and beset by serious internal tensions. As a military officer, Charles had already visited the battlefields of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy before 1916, and became familiar with the military situation and the geopolitical realities of the time. As a young monarch, he regularly reviewed the troops, which swiftly earned him popularity. He reorganised the military command in order to keep a tighter grip on the army, and to promote the much hoped-for peace treaty. From December 1917 he became commander-in-chief of the entire force.

From the moment Charles came to the throne, he sought to end the war. In 1917, he attempted to conclude a separate peace treaty with the help of his wife's brothers, Prince Sixtus and Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, and Pope Benedict XV, but all his efforts failed. In November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy lost the war and fell apart.



**CHARLES AND ARCHDUKE FRIEDRICH,
SUPREME COMMANDER**

- 1918, CHARLES IN MAJOR GENERAL'S UNIFORM
- 1913, VISIT TO THE TORPEDO FACTORY OF SANKT PÖLTEN
- 1917, ZITA AND CHARLES RECEIVING THE GREETING IN ADELSBERG
- 1917, CHARLES REVIEWING THE TROOPS IN GALICIA
- 1916, CHARLES IN HUSSAR'S UNIFORM IN TURKEY
- 1917, CHARLES IN PULA ON BOARD THE BATTLESHIP VIRIBUS UNITIS
- c. 1920, COUNT TAMÁS ERDŐDY AND SIXTUS IN SWITZERLAND





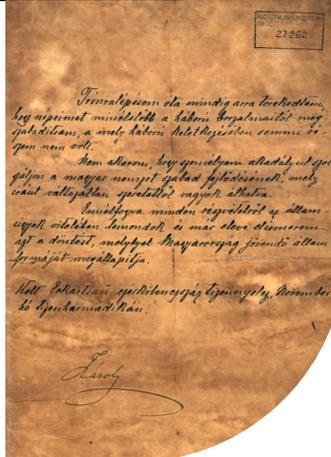
During the course of his reign, Charles took a number of crisis management actions. He reconvened the Imperial Council in 1918, after a long period without it, and he initiated the federal reorganisation of the Monarchy. But these steps could no longer save the empire. The revolutions that broke out in the ruins of the lost war, and the new states that emerged from the war, had no place left for a Habsburg emperor.



Charles renounced the exercise of his rights as Austrian Emperor on 11 November 1918 in Vienna, and as Hungarian King on 13 November 1918 in Eckartsau. Embracing the concerns of the British ruling circles and accepting their help, he left Austria for good on 24 March 1919. He and his family went into exile in Switzerland.



The Alpine country accepted the former monarch on condition that he refrain from political expressions of any kind. Although Charles promised to do so, he retracted his earlier statements at the Swiss-Austrian border and continued to declare himself Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.



- 1918, VISIT OF CHARLES, ZITA AND THE CHILDREN TO PRESSBURG
- 1917, CHARLES - PORTRAIT WITH MEDALS
- 1917, KING CHARLES AT THE HOLY RIGHT PROCESSION IN BUDA CASTLE
- C. 1917, CHARLES IN HUSSAR'S UNIFORM
- 1921, CHARLES AND ZITA IN SWITZERLAND AT THE HERTENSTEIN CASTLE
- 1918, PROCLAMATION OF KING CHARLES IV, ECKARTSAU
- 1919, CHARLES AND THE YOUNG OTTO IN FRONT OF PRANGINS CASTLE, SWITZERLAND
- 1917, OTTO VON HABSBURG PLAYING WITH HIS SIBLINGS
- 1921, CHARLES WITH NEWBORN RUDOLF IN PRANGINS, SWITZERLAND





Charles attempted to retake the throne of Hungary twice in 1921, but these attempts were unsuccessful. In the autumn, after a minor armed clash with the forces of Regent Miklós Horthy on the edge of Budaörs, Charles and his wife Zita were arrested and taken to the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany. Here the couple were kept in protective custody for several days. On 1 November, according to the decision of the Entente Powers, the royal couple were placed on a British gunboat near Baja, taken down the Danube, across the Black Sea, through the Dardanelles and the Mediterranean, to finally reach their ultimate place of the exiled on Madeira, a Portugese island in the Atlantic Ocean.

A few weeks after the events, the Hungarian Parliament declared the dethronement of the Habsburg monarch.



- 1921, CHARLES AND ZITA IN EXILE
- 1917, ZITA, CHARLES AND JÓZSEF HUNYADY, THE ROYAL CHIEF STEWARD
- 1921, PROCESSION OF CORPUS CHRISTI, WEGGIS, SWITZERLAND
- 1921, QUEEN ZITA WITH HER CHILDREN IN SWITZERLAND
- 1921, CAMP MASS ON HIS RETURN, BIATORBÁGY
- 1921, THE AD ASTRA AIRPLANE USED IN THE ATTEMPT TO RETAKE THE THRONE
- 1921, ARRIVAL OF THE CRUISER CARDIFF ON THE COAST OF MADEIRA



VII. THE LAST MONTHS

Charles and Zita disembarked in Madeira with their entourage on 19 November 1921. Here they were first accommodated in Villa Vittoria, which belonged to the Reid Hotel in Funchal. Then on 18 February 1922 they settled in Villa Quinta do Monte, on the hill overlooking the town. The children arrived on the island from Switzerland in early February 1922.

This family time together, however lasted but a short time. Charles took to his bed with a high fever on 14 March 1922. The illness, which was initially treated as a cold, developed within a few days and he was diagnosed with Spanish flu, known as the epidemic of the time. Charles died on 1 April 1922, at the age of thirty-four. He was buried three days later in the Church of Our Lady of the Mount (Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Monte) near Funchal. His mourning family moved to Spain in May



- 1921, ARRIVAL ON THE ISLAND
- 1921, ON THE WAY TO MASS
- 1921, VILLA QUINTA DO MONTE
- 1921, CHILDREN IN THE GARDEN OF THE VILLA (OTTO ON THE LEFT)
- 1922, THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES AND ZITA IN EXILE IN MADEIRA
- 1922, THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF KING CHARLES IV AT VILLA QUINTA DO MONTE
- 1922, KING CHARLES IV ON THE BIER
- 1922, THE ROYAL ORPHANS, ELISABETH, BORN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES, IN OTTO'S ARMS



S. M. Kaiser Carl I.
mit dem Kronprinzen Otho



Otto von Habsburg, then ten-years-old, Charles' eldest son, was present at the King's deathbed. He understood from the beginning the responsibilities of his legacy, and always strove to be worthy of the task. The former Crown Prince recalled his father in these words:

„One of the most important things my father taught us was tolerance. Tolerance between men, between nationalities, [...] and therefore he would have been a good king if he had had the opportunity.”



Charles was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 3 October 2004. Speaking at the event, Otto von Habsburg said:

„My father was one of the most faithful sons of the Church. With the beatifications, the Holy Father sets us an example in every vocation. And the fact that he chose my father makes me very happy, because as a politician I think we strongly need good examples.”

- C. 1917, KING CHARLES AND CROWN PRINCE OTTO
- C. 1918, CHARLES AND THE CHILD OTTO • 1912, ZITA, CHARLES AND THE NEWBORN OTTO
- C. 1918, CHARLES AND THE INFANT CARL LUDWIG
- C. 1915, THREE GENERATIONS • 1920, CHARLES, OTTO, ADELHEID AND ROBERT OUT FISHING
- 1919, CHARLES, OTTO AND ADELHEID • C. 1923, OTTO, PORTRAIT OF HIS FATHER ON HIS DESK
- C. 1955, OTTO, PORTRAIT OF HIS FATHER ON HIS DESK





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Visit of Charles to the airfield at Pergine (26 June 1917)
Glass negative from the collection of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation





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