
REVIEWS

Charles Ingrao¹, *The Habsburg Monarchy: 1618–1815* (Third Edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 310 pp.

The revised third edition of *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618–1815*, written by Charles Ingrao and published in 2019, is divided into eight chapters. In the preface (xi.–xv.) the author explains that he decided to publish a revised edition due to the many new perspectives and understandings of the Habsburg Monarchy by a new generation of historians from Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the former Yugoslavia, which had emerged over the previous decade. As a result, the chapters were amended and expanded.

In the first chapter, “The Distinctiveness of Austrian History” (p. 1–24), Ingrao writes that the history of the Habsburg Monarchy in the nineteenth century, with all of the differences that led to its dissolution, cannot be understood without considering its first centuries. According to Ingrao, during its early years, the dynasty was able to conduct successful diplomacy, encompass a diverse number of states, and build strong ties with the German lands. The monarch was also able to play a key role as a symbol of continuity and security. Ingrao explains that, starting with Maximilian I, the Habsburg rulers created the basis for a future state in central Europe by continually expanding their territory through war or politically advantageous marriages. This led them to pursue a balance of power.

The second chapter, “The Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648)” (p. 24–58), begins with the state of the economy in the monarchy in the seventeenth century. It explains that the Habsburg estates in central Europe became somewhat isolated as trading centers shifted from the Mediterranean to

the Atlantic and northern European harbors. However, the price revolution and better placement of agricultural products pushed the Hungarian nobility of this period to become more actively engaged in commerce. The downside of this was insufficient investments in manufacturing, which created a dependence on imports of manufactured goods.

As Ingrao points out, Matthias I (1612–1619) and Ferdinand II (1619–1637) were able to maintain their positions only through great effort and with the help of allies, who were assembled around a goal of halting the spread of Protestantism. Ferdinand II then embarked on a period of Catholic responses. Jesuit seminaries were founded in Upper and Lower Austria and were given freedom to act against the Protestants. Despite the success of the Counter-Reformation in the Austrian lands, the emperor had to proceed with caution in Hungary and Transylvania, where Protestantism had become more deeply entrenched. Ingrao claims that it was not in the Habsburgs’ interests for the Croatian nobility to convert the Serbs to Catholicism, but it was also clear that it would be difficult to govern these areas without the help of the nobility. For this reason, they instead favored placing Catholic nobles in positions previously held by Protestants, particularly in Bohemia. The war had serious consequences for the Habsburg lands, both demographically and economically. Around 50,000 Protestants abandoned their land, which had a negative effect on the economy.

Ingrao begins the third chapter, “Facing East: Hungary and the Turks (1648–1699)” (p. 58–118), with Poland, which had been attacked by Sweden and Transylvania. The new emperor Leopold I also had to set aside large sums of money to secure the crown of the Holy Roman Empire for himself. He

¹ Born in 1948, Charles Ingrao is an American historian and professor of history at Purdue University. He focuses on the history of central Europe. He has written six books on the history of Central Europe and around forty articles on modern ethnic conflicts in the

Balkans. He was the editor of *Austrian History Yearbook* from 1997 to 2006. Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618–1815* (Third Edition), Cambridge 2019, 1.

was fortunate that the Czech nobility paid for part of the standing army and two-thirds of all taxes. Leopold I was also occupied with the Ottoman Empire, and above all the defense of Vienna. Ingrao argues that if the Ottomans had succeeded in taking Vienna, they would not have been able to hold it, because all of Christian Europe, led by France, would have entered the war under against them. The Great Turkish War created a sense of unity among the Germans, which had a positive effect on the Habsburgs' standing in the Holy Roman Empire. There was, however, an increasingly clear anti-Hungarian policy that included the settlement of Serbs, Germans, and Slovaks in the southern parts of the country.

The fourth chapter, "Facing West: The Second Habsburg Empire (1700 – 1740)" (118–168) describes the War of the Spanish Succession. After Charles II of Spain died, the Habsburgs went to war against France over the succession. Things became more complicated with Rákóczi's uprising in Hungary, although Rákóczi eventually failed to gain the support of all the Transylvanian nobility, and especially the Catholics. Although the dynasty lost the crown, the new emperor Charles VI (1711–1740) proved to be a worthy successor when he won a new war against the Ottomans (1716–1718). Because Karl VI had no male heir, the issue of succession was raised in the first few years of his reign. The Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 allowed for all Hapsburg domains to handed down to a female heir in their entirety. Ingrao further writes about War of the Polish Succession (1733–1738), in which the dynasty gained Russia as an ally in another war against the Ottomans (1737–1739), which they eventually lost. This motivated Charles VI's enemies to attack the Habsburg domains when Maria Theresa ascended the throne.

Ingrao begins the next chapter, "The Prussian Challenge: War and Government Reform (1740–1763)," p. 168–198, with the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748), in which several European countries became involved. Maria Theresa only regained her political prestige with the coronation of her husband, Francis I of Lorraine, as Holy Roman Emperor. Ingrao argues that the most important outcome of this conflict was that she succeeded by force of will to preserve the integrity

of the empire, and this enabled her allies to place their trust in her. The reforms she implemented later on were more focused on the return of Silesia than on disseminating the values of the Enlightenment.

The chapter "Discovering the People: The Triumph of Cameralism and Enlightened Absolutism (1765–1792)," p.198–249, begins with the second period of Maria Theresa's reforms, which were led by the count of Kaunitz. Cameralism was implemented, which limited the nobility's financial interests in favor of the court. From 1765 on, Maria Theresa governed with the help of her son Joseph II, and together they focused on reform. They did much in particular to improve conditions for peasants. Ingrao notes that Maria Theresa was aware that her intolerant policies were pushing her Orthodox Christian subjects closer to Russia and the Protestant subjects closer to Prussia. Because of this, she permitted Protestants to practice their faith in certain places.

Emperor Joseph II was the true Enlightenment ruler. A Patent of Toleration was issued in 1781, which gave Protestant and Orthodox Christian subjects in the Habsburg Monarchy equal standing and granted them some civil rights. Due to the considerable obstacles Joseph II faced in implementing reforms, by the end of his life he was convinced the reforms had failed and he rescinded most of them, even though it was clear that some had had positive effects on society. Cities had expanded and the population had grown. These positive outcomes established the state as a Great Power, which would enable it to cope with the new European crisis brought about by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

In the chapter "The Age of Revolution (1789–1815)," p. 249–273, Ingrao touches on the consequences of the French Revolution for the monarchy's international and internal positions. Although Leopold II continued with Joseph II's policies, there was a feeling throughout the monarchy that reform and the ideas of the Enlightenment were what could in fact lead to revolution. As a result, Francis II (1792–1835) resisted further reform. Napoleon's coronation as emperor brought Vienna closer to Russia, yet the only result of this was an attack by Napoleon in 1805 and his conquest of the Habsburg capital. In

the period after 1805, Austria was led by two significant figures: Count Johann Philipp Stadion, the minister of foreign affairs, and Klemens von Metternich, who was initially ambassador to Paris. In 1813, through Metternich's diplomatic efforts, the monarchy changed sides and stood at the forefront of a victorious coalition led by Russia. Ingrao claims that Metternich had drawn up the declarations two years earlier, and the Congress of Vienna only confirmed them. These outcomes suggest a return to the balance of power that had existed before Napoleon. This was followed by a long period of reactions that would determine the fate of the monarchy a century later.

In the concluding chapter "Decline or Disaggregation" (p. 273–280), Ingrao provides some general thoughts about the reasons behind Austria's decline. There were attempts by the Habsburgs to homogenize its territories, but they were never completed. Ingrao argues that the monarchy survived its last century only because its survival was beneficial for the balance of power in Europe. Its collapse left a power vacuum that other Great Powers aspired to, including the Fascist states, the Soviet Union, the United States, and today the European Union.

Charles Ingrao's book, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*, shows how the Habsburgs created a state that even today many still remember and are conscious of through the historical processes that gave it a shape in the nineteenth century that would endure until its final collapse in the First World War. Furthermore, it offers clear insight into the development of an empire in which different peoples were incorporated, who then began their own cultural development and later established themselves as nations.

Translated by *Elizabeth Salmore*

Pavle Petković

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Steven Beller², *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815–1918*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, 315 pp.

Steven Beller's *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815–1918* contains an introduction, conclusion, and seven chapters. In the introduction (p. 1–25), Beller asserts that Austria-Hungary collapsed in part because it was unable to resolve the national question. It is for this reason that he thinks it should be studied as a blend of different peoples and territories with different economic, social, and cultural foundations. The state's geographical position—between Eastern and Western Europe—naturally left it open to western, Baltic, and Mediterranean influences. Beller notes that the Habsburg Monarchy has been long and unfairly been dogged by the "black legend," which began spreading in the seventeenth century, mostly through Protestant thought. This legend held that the Habsburgs were perceived as strict Catholics and oppressors; it was not until later that well-founded criticism emerged concerning its unwillingness to resolve the national question as a reason for its demise.

In the first chapter "1815–1835: Restoration and Procrastination" (p. 25–54), Beller writes about Francis I and Clemens von Metternich's response to the new challenges facing the monarchy. France's defeat came at the right time for the Habsburgs because they again found themselves at the center of diplomacy. Beller also emphasizes that Metternich put foreign policy ahead of domestic policy. The regime's fear of revolution was created by secret associations such as the Carbonari in Italy that created a negative perception of the Metternich regime. Also during this period, there was a cultural direction that, by the end of the nineteenth century, would be referred to as the *Biedermeier*, during which there was an increased interest in German culture, particularly in cities such as Vienna and Prague. Other peoples lacking freedoms also concentrated on developing their own cultural

² Steven Beller was born in London in 1958 to an English father and an Austrian mother. He studied history at the University of Cambridge, where he wrote his first book, *Vienna and the Jews 1867–1938*

(Cambridge 1989). In 1991, he moved to the United States, where he researches Jewish history and the history of Central Europe. Steven Beller, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815–1918*, Cambridge 2018, 1.