ZITA

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Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary

CHARLES A. COULOMBE

TAN Books
Gastonia, North Carolina

Cover design by Jordan Avery

Front cover image: *Zita of Bourbon Parma (1892–1989) wife of austrian emperor Charles of Habsburg official portrait the day of her wedding in 1911*. Collection Gregoire / Bridgeman Images

Back cover image: *Charles of Austria-Este and Zita of Bourbon-Parma*, Carl Pietzner (1853–1927), 1911, Photograph. Wikimedia Commons.

ISBN: 978-1-5051-2730-0
Kindle ISBN: 978-1-5051-2731-7
ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5051-2732-4

Published in the United States by
TAN Books
PO Box 269
Gastonia, NC 28053

www.TANBooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

To His Imperial and Royal Highness the Archduke Karl and all the living members of the House of Habsburg, in whom reside the hopes that Zita so deeply cherished.

"Charles Coulombe has written a new biography of my grandmother, Empress Zita. This is very appropriate, as through the opening of her cause of Canonization the interest in her will grow in the next years. It seems that there is much love for Blessed Emperor Karl in the English-speaking world, and it is to be hoped that this erudite, well written biography of Zita will enable many to get to know better the long, moving, and moved life of Karl's wife, the last Empress of Austria."

—Karl von Habsburg

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer is indebted to the contributions of many other authors and speakers who have dedicated their work to the goal of preserving and promoting the rich Austro-Hungarian history, especially as it relates to the last royal couple, Charles and Zita. Of particular note is the work of Elisabeth Kovács, an Austrian historian, who wrote two volumes on Charles's life. These volumes were originally published in German as *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?* Her work is used, in varying degrees, to fill in many of the details of chapters 7 through 10 within this manuscript. For example, chapter 24 of Kovács's first volume is heavily relied upon for content of chapter 9 within this manuscript. Kovács's books were also a great source for quotes from the likes of Zita, Charles, and many other prominent historical figures. This writer is indebted to the Order of the Golden Fleece, which has been generous in granting permission to use Kovács's work for this purpose.

INTRODUCTION

Once more, this writer finds himself with his readers in the half-enchanted, half-doomed land of Austria-Hungary at the end of the nineteenth century. The last time we visited this legend-haunted time and place of Strauss waltzes, picturesque folklore, Ruritanian intrigue, and—most important for our purposes—deep and age-old piety, it was to explore the life and times of Blessed Charles of the House of Habsburg. Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia and Lodomeria, Illyria, Jerusalem, Grand Prince of Transylvania, Grand Voivode of Serbia, and duke or count of dozens of other places—forty-two titles in all. In the last book, *Blessed Charles of Austria*, we explored the venerable tradition that Blessed Charles inherited from his fathers, bound up with the very roots of our Western civilization: Greek philosophy, Roman legal and imperial tradition (the latter going back in some ways to the Persians), and the Catholic Faith. We saw his birth to a younger member of the family, his becoming heir to the throne through a series of unlikely (and occasionally tragic) events, his marriage to Zita and the start of their family, and his ascension to the throne at the direst point in his family's dramatic history—World War I. At the same time, we witnessed the growth of his deep Catholic Faith,

shared by his wife, which would sustain them both through the loss of his beloved uncle and mentor, Franz Ferdinand, their ascension to power, and the betrayal on all sides that would hound them until his untimely death in Madeira in 1922. To some degree, we then followed Zita's adventures and those of her children, culminating in her death in 1989, Charles's beatification in 2004, the passing of their oldest son, Otto, in 2012, and their religious and political legacy since.

In an age when westerners have seen an almost total failure of leadership, the story of a couple who combined their aspiration for holiness with heroism cannot help but inspire fascination in a public who hungers for such traits in those who govern them. As of this writing, there are now twenty-five shrines to Bl. Charles in the United States—ironically, the country most responsible for his fall (a terrible tragedy not just for him, his family, and his people, but for all of us, if we accept Winston Churchill's attribution of the cause of Hitler's rise to Bl. Charles's deposition). Thus, this writer was happy to oblige when asked to write a companion biography of Zita, Bl. Charles's helpmate in good times and bad.

But it is, in several ways, a rather more challenging assignment. While her husband has been beatified—and the second miracle through his intercession required for canonization has been approved by the requisite authorities—Zita is, at present, a servant of God. This means that her cause has been introduced, material about her is being gathered, and miracles wrought through her intercession are being sought. But there is no assurance by the Church of anything, save that a sufficient number of people believe in her sanctity to warrant an investigation into the possibility. In a word, the

book is open, and Catholics are free to believe or not in her current Heavenly position. It is not up to this writer to make that determination but to provide enough facts for his readers to look into the case further and decide for themselves, while awaiting the final decision by Rome.

The second factor is that she lived a lot longer than her husband and entirely without the support and counsel he would have given her had he lived. She found herself alone in the world, not only with eight children to provide for but a cause she considered greater than herself to keep afloat—that of the House of Habsburg. It was a daunting task and required a great deal of fortitude on her part—toward herself and those around her. Thus, she left behind a great many memories, both positive and negative, among those who knew her. Not having had that privilege himself, this writer must make sense of the sometimes contradictory impressions that Zita left on those who did know her.

Being fallen creatures, the personal, familial, and national histories of human beings are filled with these sorts of paradoxes. While those of us who are outside these occurrences may have some insights that the actual participants lacked, it is also true that we cannot know the actual circumstances as well as those who were there to experience them. This truth must haunt every historian in every case; it certainly haunts this writer now. All one can try to do is to present the truth as well as he can, and so it falls to us in this particular case.

On a minor level, having written a book about Bl. Charles, which also subsequently dealt with Zita's life, it will be impossible not to repeat certain things already written. However, while reading *Blessed Charles of Austria* would be

a good preparation for this book, we shall endeavor to tell a story that shall stand alone.

There is one last point to make. On April 1, 2022, this writer had the immense privilege of being present at Madeira for the centennial of Bl. Charles's death. It was a wonderful occasion that shall last forever in his memory. But the site of the Blessed Emperor's shrine church itself, as it would have been a century before, was chilly, foggy, and wet—a huge contrast to the warm and sunny town of Funchal directly below. Remembering how weak Bl. Charles's lungs had been (he had survived the pandemic of 1918 but was left with severe respiratory damage), I had a sudden rush of horrified sympathy for the poor woman who had struggled so hard to keep her husband alive in such a terrible situation.

With all of this in mind, we shall do our best to unlock the story of Servant of God Zita, Empress of Austria, Queen of Hungary, and consort to each of her husband's other titles. We shall begin by exploring her Bourbon and Braganza inheritance and then tell a tale starting in the Belle Epoque, when, as the 1937 film *The Prisoner of Zenda* assures us, "History still wore a rose, and Politics had not yet outgrown the Waltz," down through the various unfolding horrors unleashed by modernity, and finally, to our own time. It nevertheless will show us that while all else may change, loyalty, family, the aspiration to holiness, and all the contradictions and conflicts these may involve among us poor mortals do not.

Charles A. Coulombe
Trumau, Austria
July 4, 2022
Feast of St. Elizabeth of Portugal

Chapter 1

MANY NATIONS, ONE FAMILY

"Regardless of his personal imperfections, a monarch represents the majesty of history. He is an heir—a link in a chain that leads to the Middle Ages that in turn connects to antiquity and beyond, to the beginning of measured time when the first hero slew the dragon of disorder and established the rule of law."

—Charles Fenyvesi[1]

To truly understand the extraordinary woman born as Zita, Princess of Bourbon-Parma, we have to understand the history that, on the one hand, produced her and, on the other, that she strove ever to be worthy of, even before she married into her future husband's equally venerable Habsburg dynasty. Both the Bourbons (Zita's paternal family) and the Braganzas (her maternal family) boasted lineages and chronicles at least as complex as the Habsburgs could offer. As with her husband's clan, both of these family lines boasted of saints and sinners, peacemakers and warriors, even as all three virtually created the nations over which they ruled. Each of these three Houses is worthy of long volumes on their own, and many such have been produced, but

[1] Charles Fenyvesi, *Splendour in Exile* (New York: New Republic Books 1979), pp. 278–79.

we will give our readers just what is essential to understand Zita. Even so, we must start on her father's side, going very far back in time to a man named Robert the Strong (AD 830–866).

In the chaotic days after Charlemagne's empire was divided among his grandsons, each of their three realms suffered further fragmentation. After the bright, brief promise of the Carolingian Renaissance, when learning, political, and, above all, religious life reached a height unseen in the West for centuries, the greed for more power by the already powerful and the external attacks of the Vikings against the West altered the scene. But all the while, various nobles—some principled and some not—pursued their various aims, peacefully and otherwise, the monasteries and parishes continued to pray, scholars to learn, and farmers to farm. In the midst of this tumult, Count Robert the Strong—at times opposed to, and at other times allied with, Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald, first King of West Francia—made a place for his family and their followers in what is now central France. His son Odo (AD 857–898) succeeded his father at age nine.

Odo grew up under Charles the Bald, who, in turn, later became emperor of the briefly reunited empire. In 882, the same year that Charles died and was succeeded by his sons, Odo was appointed Count of Paris, an originally military title that became hereditary in his descendants. Two years later, when Carloman II of Bavaria (who succeeded Charles the Bald as king of Italy and was the childless son of Louis the Stammerer) died, his cousin, Emperor Charles the Fat, inherited his throne, resulting in the Frankish Empire being

reunited for the last time. In 885, as both emperor and count, Charles the Fat would have his mettle supremely tested by the Vikings, who besieged the future French capital of Paris. Starting in late November of that year, Norsemen sailed up the Seine and demanded tribute. Count Odo refused, and thus began—after the repulse of several attempts to storm the walls—a siege that lasted almost a year. When the emperor and his troops finally arrived, Charles bought the Vikings off rather than fight them. This was a huge blow to his prestige, which was crumbling in East Francia and Italy as well as the West; he would be deposed in separate rebellions in 887. The following year, the French nobility took Odo as their king, and from that day to this, France has been independent. However, when Odo died in 898, he was succeeded by another Carolingian, Charles the Simple. The new king, having unwittingly set the stage for innumerable future dramas by allowing the Norse to settle in and rule Normandy, initially got on well with Odo's brother, Robert. Nonetheless, in 922, believing Charles had favored his enemies, Robert led another coalition of nobles against the king. Robert was crowned king at Rheims, but he would fall in battle in 923. Thereafter, the throne went back and forth between his relatives and the Carolingians until 987, when the last of these died, and Hugh Capet, grandson of Robert, became king. His descendants would rule France after him without interruption until 1792 and again from 1814 to 1848, and they would continue to have loyal adherents until today.

It is important to remember that those descendants quite literally made France. First, the direct line produced such

luminaries as Robert II, the Pious (whose older son, Henry I, would succeed him and whose younger son, Robert, would be the ancestor of the Dukes of Burgundy and the kings of Portugal), Philip Augustus, and St. Louis IX. The latter two went on crusade, and the last named is commemorated all over the world for combining strength with sanctity. Philip III, the son of St. Louis IX, would have, in turn, several sons: the eldest, Philip IV, would become famous for attacking Pope Boniface VIII and destroying the Knights Templars, and his second son, John Tristan, would found the House of Valois. John Tristan's son would then succeed Philip IV's childless heir.

The Valois, having succeeded the extinct main line of the House of Capet, would go on to produce some great luminaries of their own. When the son of Charles the Bald became King Philip VI of France in 1328, he started the French eastward expansion by securing the heirship of the Province of Dauphine (named after its ruler's title) for his own eldest son and future king. From that time on, the successor to the French was the Dauphin, just as the heir to the British throne is the Prince of Wales. Intermarriage with the kings of England eventually led to the inheritance struggle between the French and English monarchs called the Hundred Years' War, conclusively resolved in favor of the Valois by heavenly intervention under St. Joan of Arc. The sixteenth century saw disasters fall upon the royal house. Francis I, king during the French Renaissance, unsuccessfully struggled against both England's Henry VIII and the Habsburg Charles V for the position of Holy Roman Emperor. This began a series of conflicts between Francis I and the

victorious Charles V, which did not do them any good, and which saw Francis I ally Catholic France with the Muslim Turks against fellow Christians. Francis I's son, Henry II, would die as a result of a jousting accident, and all three of Henry II's sons would succeed him in turn, each dying childless. The eldest, Francis II, who was the first husband of Mary Queen of Scots, died early. Following his death, Mary returned to her homeland, where terrible events awaited her. His brother, Charles IX, who also died young, was under the thumb of their mother, Catherine de' Medici. The youngest then succeeded the throne, having already been briefly King of Poland, as Henry III.

The Protestant revolt's local version in France had already unleashed the terrible Wars of Religion; the last of these would be called the War of the Three Henries, as its protagonists were King Henry III; his distant cousin, Henry de Bourbon, leader of the Huguenot or Protestant party; and Henry Duke of Guise. The third was murdered by bodyguards of the first in 1588, and King Henry III was himself murdered by one of Guise's followers a year later. Henry de Bourbon abjured the Protestant religion and became king of a ruined country in 1589.

The House of Bourbon, as we know it, dates back to 1270, when St. Louis IX's sixth son, Robert, Count of Clermont, married the heiress Beatrix of Bourbon. Her family, rulers of the province of Bourbonnais, date back to 913. After a little over three centuries, this obscure branch of the Capets had outlasted all the others—save their distant cousins in Portugal, who had already had one break in their legitimate line and would shortly suffer another one (as we shall see). Along

the way, the Bourbons had acquired the Kingdom of Navarre but, shortly after, lost most of it to the newly united Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. But despite the terrible damage done to France by the wars of religion and the immense amount of rebuilding that would be required, the monarchy inherited by Henry IV, King of France and Navarre (as we must now call him), was the second greatest in Europe.

As with the other Catholic monarchies, the kings of France had important spiritual duties. If the Holy Roman Emperor was made a canon of St. Peter's at his coronation, the King of France was, in his turn, by right, a canon of St. John Lateran. While the Holy Roman Emperor could serve as a deacon at papal Masses in St. Peter's, the King of France could serve as a subdeacon at papal Masses in St. John Lateran. While the Holy Roman Emperor's subjects might suspect their sovereign of having some sort of control over the weather—and so dubbed a pleasant day *Kaiserswetter* (emperor's weather)—the French kings, at least since the time of St. Louis IX, were believed to have the ability to cure the disease of scrofula—for this reason called "king's evil"—by touching the infected. Both the Holy Roman Emperor and the kings of France were successors of Charlemagne, and for this reason, the lists of both sovereigns began with Charles I. As a token of this, when the kings of France died, their funeral shrouds would be sent to Aachen for a second funeral to be conducted by the canons of the cathedral, who had custody of Charlemagne's shrine. Both monarchs were girded with swords believed to have been owned by the great emperor at their respective coronations. In truth, the Holy Roman Emperor was crowned at Rome by the pope with the

crown of Charlemagne, but when crowned at Rheims, the King of France was anointed with the Sacred Chrism, which was supposedly brought by the Holy Ghost from heaven for the baptism of Clovis in 496—an event seen as the beginning of the Christian Frankish realm. Since France claimed the Franks—who were the first barbarian tribe to convert to orthodox Catholicism (as opposed to the Arian beliefs of the Goths and Vandals)—as its forebears, the country became known as the oldest daughter of the Church, and her king as that communion's oldest son. Moreover, the saintly Frankish queens—such as Sts. Clotilde, Radegonde, Bathilde, and the rest, each of whom founded monasteries and nurtured the Church while their husbands were often too busy to do so—were held to have passed on some of their deep but combative holiness to their French successors. The Habsburgs had their renowned and venerable *Pietas Austriaca* (Austrian piety) as their own unique method of practicing Catholicism, but the Bourbons inherited from their Capet and Valois ancestors the *religion royale* (the royal religion). Henry and his successors would use it both to try to save their own souls and to inspire their subjects to help them rebuild and expand the shattered nation their ancestors had built together.

So it was that Henry was crowned at Rheims with all the pomp of his forebears. Also like them, he was anointed with the Sacred Chrism of Clovis, supposedly granting him the ability to cure the king's evil in all whom he touched. With his minister, Sully, he began a program of reconstruction for his devastated country, ranging from improving roads to conserving forests. The Edict of Nantes allowed his erstwhile Huguenot co-religionists to basically rule themselves

in fortified cities around the kingdom. Henry also promoted France's trade with the rest of the world and supported Samuel de Champlain's expeditions to the New World. In many ways, he was the father of French Canada, the city of Quebec being founded in his reign. Unfortunately, he continued the alliance with the Turks against the Habsburgs that the Valois had initiated. Despite this, Henry's queen, Marie de' Medici, was Habsburg on her mother's side and a very strong woman. When her husband was assassinated in 1610, she was left as regent for her son, the nine-year-old Louis XIII.

Although he was declared of age in 1614, Louis XIII's mother continued to rule the kingdom until, at age seventeen, the young king took power from his mother, sending her away from court and executing her most unpopular assistants. Despite the enmity between the Habsburgs and the French, Louis XIII married the daughter of Philip III of Spain, Anne of Austria—truly one of the most remarkable women of the seventeenth century, although this was not evident at that time, not least because of her mother-in-law's antipathy. When Marie's influence was removed, Anne could breathe a little more freely.

In the meantime, skillfully dealing with various plots against the throne, Louis XIII made use of various able men—most notably Cardinal Richelieu—to form and carry out policy. Huguenot plotting required military repression of their armed fortress-cities, although they retained toleration. But all of this meant that Louis had little time for his queen. Four miscarriages over twenty years did not help, neither did the rift that developed between her and Cardinal Richelieu over both personal issues and the cardinal's opposition to the

Catholic side in the German Thirty Years' War. The latter tension started with support for the Swedes and culminated in outright French intervention. Worse yet, in 1635, war broke out between Spain and France, putting the queen in an almost impossible position. Two years later, Richelieu made her a virtual prisoner, but heaven came to her rescue.

Anne was extremely devout, receiving this by way of her parents, to whom she had been quite close. This piety stood her well during the various ups and downs of her married life. After two barren decades, Louis XIII vowed to the Blessed Virgin that he would consecrate his kingdom to her if only she would give him an heir, and his dutiful queen most certainly added her prayers to his. Louis XIII was as good as his word. Dom Gueranger describes the event in his coverage of the feast of the Assumption in his *Liturgical Year*:

> In all the churches of France there takes place today the solemn procession which was instituted in memory of the vow whereby Louis XIII dedicated the most Christian Kingdom to the Blessed Virgin.
>
> By letters given at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, February 10, 1638, the pious king consecrated to Mary his person, his kingdom, his crown, and his people. Then he continued: "We command the Archbishop of Paris to make a commemoration every year, on the Feast of the Assumption, of this decree at the High Mass in his cathedral; and after Vespers on the said day let there be a procession in the said church, at which the royal associations and the corporation shall assist, with the same ceremonies as in the most solemn processions. We wish

the same to be done also in all churches, whether parochial or monastic, in the said town and its suburbs, and in all the towns, hamlets, and villages of the said diocese of Paris. Moreover, we exhort and command all the archbishops and bishops of our kingdom to have Mass solemnly celebrated in their cathedrals and in all churches in their dioceses; and we wish the Parliaments and other royal associations and the principal municipal officers to be present at the ceremony. We exhort the said archbishops and bishops to admonish all our people to have a special devotion to the holy Virgin, and on this day to implore her protection, so that our Kingdom may be guarded by so powerful a patroness from all attacks of its enemies, and may enjoy good and lasting peace; and that God may be so well served and honoured therein, that both we and our subjects may be enabled happily to attain the end for which we were created; for such is our pleasure!"

Thus was France again proclaimed Mary's kingdom. Within a month after the first celebration of the feast, according to the royal prescriptions, the Queen, after twenty years' barrenness, gave birth on September 5, 1638, to Louis XIV. This prince also consecrated his crown and sceptre to Mary. The Assumption, then, will always be the national feast of France, except for those of her sons who celebrate the anniversaries of revolutions and assassinations.[2]

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[2] Prosper Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, vol. 4, *Time after Pentecost* (1901), pp. 418–19.

The birth of Louis XIV was followed two years later by a brother, Philippe d'Orleans, who is the progenitor of today's House of Bourbon-Orleans. This custom of consecrating their country to the Blessed Virgin Mary has continued to this day and is why the French, French Canadians, and French Acadians in Louisiana celebrate the Assumption as a holiday.

In 1643, Louis XIII died, and Anne became regent for their four-year-old son, whom she had crowned at Rheims almost immediately, with all the customary pomp. Appointing Cardinal Mazarin—a one-time protégé of Richelieu's who had switched sides—she would be faced with a rebellion of the higher nobility, called the *Fronde*, which she and her minister would successfully repress. They then turned their attention to improving the kingdom and its daughter in Canada.

Anne bears comparison with her descendant Zita. Both were strong women of deep piety, who were nevertheless forced by historical events to take difficult stands and whose toughness was wondered at by contemporaries and descendants alike. Anne's piety was shown in many ways during her regency. Already, with her husband, she had founded the great Royal Abbey of Val-de-Grace in Paris, which survives today as a hospital. She took her son on tours of their realm, visiting innumerable shrines and abbeys, among which were Sainte Anne d'Apt in Provence, where St. Anne's body is venerated to this day; Notre Dame de Cotignac, also in Provence (where an apparition of St. Joseph in 1660 would lead Louis XIV to consecrate his kingdom to Our Lord's foster father); Sainte Anne d'Auray in Brittany; Notre Dame

de Rochefort du Gard in Languedoc; and many others. So devoted was the queen to her name saint that she supported the first shrine at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre in Quebec. This, together with her interest in the colony in general, led to the great devotion to St. Anne that characterized Quebec until the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s.

Although her regency ended in 1651, she continued to wield a great deal of influence with her son. The war with Spain ended in 1659, and peace was sealed with a wedding between her niece, Marie-Therese, and her son. Two years later, a son—another Louis—was born to the royal couple, and Anne retired to Val-de-Grace to live a life of monastic piety. Although her son's infidelity from practically the beginning of his marriage caused Anne great pain, she suffered in silence until breast cancer claimed her life five years later. But she had the satisfaction of knowing that she had left her son a strong kingdom.

Louis XIV would reign for seventy-two years and one-hundred-and-one days—thus far, the longest reign of any monarch in recorded history (although Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, nearly caught up with him). On the positive side, Louis XIV continued the great program of domestic growth that his grandfather and father had initiated. He built a number of impressive buildings, the greatest of which remains his Palace of Versailles, which would remain the center of the court until the French Revolution. In many ways, Louis XIV was the prototypical Bourbon. For good and ill, his image would hover over his and his brother's descendants until the present day. In his own time, he was the monarch against whom all others set the standard.

The "Sun King's" centralizing internal policy created the foundation of the modern French state (although the Revolution would carry this to its logical extreme by destroying the provinces). His expulsion of those Huguenots who would not immediately convert eliminated a potential fifth column, while chasing away a number of talented individuals to Protestant Europe and the English colonies in America. His foreign policy continued the enmity between France and the Habsburgs; while gaining large territories for France, it also plunged the country into a series of wars that cost far more in blood and treasure than they brought.

One of these wars was the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714). Louis XIV's brother-in-law, Carlos II of Spain, was somewhat enfeebled mentally and physically (although not nearly so much as later legend would have it) and produced no heirs. Carlos II's older sister, Marie-Therese, had married Louis XIV and produced two boys: Louis, the Grand Dauphin and presumed heir to his father as King of France, and Phillip, whom his father proposed to Carlos II as his heir. But Carlos II's younger sister, Margaret Theresa, had married the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I, who had his own two sons—the heir, the future Emperor Joseph I, and his younger son, Archduke Charles. Moreover, the archduke was a Habsburg. Although Carlos II would recognize Philip as his heir, after his death in 1700, war broke out between France and Spain on the one hand and Austria and its allies on the other. When the smoke cleared, Philip was indeed king of Spain and its American and Asian colonies, but Austria retained Spain's Belgian and Italian possessions. Louis XIV lived only another year. As his son and grandson

predeceased him, his five-year-old great-grandson became Louis XV.

Philip V, who had married in 1701, became the unquestioned king of Spain in 1714 on the proviso that neither he nor his descendants could sit on both the Spanish and French thrones. By his first wife, Maria Luisa of Savoy, Philip V had one son, Ferdinand, who would survive him. His wife died in February of 1714, but so anxious was Philip V to secure the succession that he remarried in December of that year to Elizabeth Farnese, heiress to the Italian Duchy of Parma. A little over a year later, she presented her new husband with the first of six children: the Infante Carlos. Ever since renouncing Spain's Italian territories in 1714, Philip V had schemed to get them back, and Carlos would be a big part of those schemes.

When Philip V's brother-in-law, the Duke of Parma, died in 1731, the fifteen-year-old Carlos succeeded him. Four years later, when war broke out between Spain and the Habsburgs, Carlos commanded the Spanish troops in Italy and reconquered Naples and Sicily. He was crowned king, becoming the first Bourbon King of the Two Sicilies, as he was already the first Bourbon Duke of Parma. But just as treaties prevented one man from becoming King of both France and Spain, so too with being king of Spain, king of the Two Sicilies, and duke of Parma. Although Parma was temporarily returned to the Habsburgs, the foundation was set for the creation of four separate Bourbon dynasties, descending from Louis XIV, and five in total, if counting the House of Orleans.

In 1744, as part of the War of Austrian Succession, Carlos reconquered Parma, which he gave to his younger brother, Felipe. He, in turn, became the progenitor of the House of Bourbon-Parma and Zita's direct male ancestor. Carlos, meanwhile, as Carlos VII, ruled happily in the Two Sicilies. His father, Philip V of Spain, died in 1746 and was succeeded by Carlos's older half-brother, Ferdinand VI. However, the new king of Spain remained childless, and when he died in 1759, Carlos succeeded him, taking the title of Carlos III of Spain. By the terms of the treaty, his oldest son (also Carlos) became heir to the Spanish throne, while his next son—yet another Ferdinand—was left behind in Naples as king. In time, he would become the father of the House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies. So it is that, when Louis XV died in 1774, the branches of the House of Bourbon were Bourbon-France, Bourbon-Spain, Bourbon-Parma, Bourbon-Two Sicilies, and Bourbon-Orleans (listed in order of seniority).

Louis XV's son had predeceased him, so it was his grandson who succeeded him as Louis XVI. Unlike his grandfather, Louis XVI was extremely moral and devout, and he was deeply in love with his wife, Marie Antoinette. She was, as the Archduchess Maria Antonia, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Francis I of Lorraine, and his wife, the last Habsburg heiress, Maria Theresa.

It was the failure of the male line of the Habsburgs that led to the War of Austrian Succession, wherein Carlos III had reconquered Parma. But the marriage of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1756 had signified a diplomatic revolution; henceforth, France, Spain, the Two Sicilies, Parma,

and Sardinia were to be allied with the Holy Roman Empire. France's former ally Prussia allied with the Habsburg's once-close British friends. Had this alliance occurred two centuries earlier, the history of the world would have been quite different. But, in any case, this realliance set the stage for the Seven Years' War, which would see France lose her empire in North America and prepare the way for rebellion in Britain's American colonies.

In the meantime, Carlos III, in many ways an able ruler, had imposed the sort of centralizing policies that his great-grandfather Louis XIV had used with France on Spain and its colonies. He had also joined with Louis XV and the other Catholic sovereigns of Europe in forcing the pope to abolish the Jesuits, whom he summarily expelled from his dominions. Both of these moves would bear bad fruit in Spanish America after his time because they ensured an ongoing lack of clerical personnel, and so weakened the missionary Church in the Americas. However, as a personally devout Catholic, Carlos required all of his civil servants to swear belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (a hotly debated topic at that time). Moreover, to replace the Jesuits, he financed various other orders and sent St. Junipero Serra and the Franciscans to evangelize California. Carlos is, in fact, the founder of the city of Los Angeles, which boasts a statue of him in its downtown plaza.

By that time, the British colonies in America were engulfed in civil war between the Loyalists, loyal to the Crown and supported by British troops, and the rebels, who were fighting for independence. Louis XVI, having put his country through a crash course of administrative and economic

reform, entered the conflict in 1778. His cousin, Carlos III, joined him the following year, thus ensuring the rebels' eventual victory—American Independence. Although this decisive intervention by two Catholic kings eventually forced the newly independent states to end their laws against Catholics (ironic, given the rebels' opposition to the British grant of religious freedom to Catholics in French Canada and the role this played in sparking the American Revolution), it turned George III, who felt deeply betrayed by Louis's and Carlos's actions, against Catholic emancipation in his remaining colonies, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland.

Moreover, their intervention did neither Bourbon cousin much good. Spain had Florida returned to her, having lost it to Britain in 1763, and France got nothing but bankruptcy out of her contribution. When, five years after the war, an Icelandic volcano erupted and destroyed many of the crops in France, there was neither money nor credit to aid the starving. The stage was set for the French Revolution, which would break out in 1789, with horrific consequences for every branch of the House of Bourbon (even the Orleans, who initially supported it in hopes of taking the throne), every other European dynasty, and of course, thousands upon thousands of Europeans.

Louis XVI and his queen would be judicially murdered in 1793; Louis's sister, Elizabeth, would be martyred the following year; their son, Louis XVII, would die of neglect in 1797; Carlos IV, who had succeeded his father in 1788, would be forced by the invading French to abdicate in 1808; and so it went. The rise of Napoleon Bonaparte brought order out of chaos and peace to the Church for a while—and

then despotism. It took all of Europe acting in concert to defeat him. The result was the Congress of Vienna and the period called Restoration.

The long road that led the House of Bourbon from the time of Charlemagne to the Congress of Vienna—that storied gathering in the Habsburg capital—was, if anything, even more convoluted for the Portuguese dynasty, the House of Braganza. In the beginning, it was the same path because the Braganzas also descend from Robert II, the Pious, whose younger son, likewise named Robert, was made Duke of Burgundy in 1032. In a sense, they, too, are Capets. Robert's younger grandson, Henry, born in 1066, had two older brothers and, therefore, no prospects in Burgundy. He did, however, have relatives among various Spanish noble houses. When he was twenty years old, his kinsman, Alfonso VI, King of Leon and Castile, sent out a call for volunteer warriors after his army was decimated by the Moors in battle. It turned out to be a fateful trip.

Arriving with a group of French knights in 1087, Henry soon made a name for himself in the never-ending fight with the Moors. Iberia was in the throes of the *Reconquista* that began with Christian resistance after the Muslims conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula in 711. What would later become the major kingdoms of Iberia—Asturias, Leon, Castile, Aragon, Navarre, etc.—emerged from those first small refuges in the north, including Covodonga, where King Pelayo, founder of the Christian Kingdom of Asturias, won a decisive battle against the Moors in 722. Given a strong boost by Charlemagne, the Christian armies had pushed the Moors back considerably when Henry of Burgundy arrived,

but much remained to be done. To reward his prowess, Alfonso VI gave him control of the territories between the Minho and Tagus Rivers, an area that would be called the County of Portugal. In 1109, after Alfonso VI's death, Henry declared himself independent. He fixed his residence at the Castle of Guimaraes and started the building of Braga Cathedral, where he would be entombed when he died in 1112, leaving his three-year-old son, Alfonso, to succeed him.

In time, Alfonso proved himself the worthy son of his father—overcoming various difficulties culminating in the battle of San Manuel in 1128, whereby he secured his country's independence, and on July 25, 1139, he delivered a crushing defeat to the Moors at the Battle of Ourique. From that time on, his subjects acclaimed him as the first king of Portugal, a title confirmed by a treaty with the mother state of Leon in 1142. So important is this battle in Portuguese consciousness that the country's coat of arms bears five small cross-shaped shields that represent the five Moorish kings defeated by Alfonso.

Alfonso I of Portugal died in 1185 and was succeeded by his son, Sancho I, who kept pushing ever southward against the Moors, eventually setting up a capital, Coimbra. His troops eventually reached the Algarve, now the southernmost province of the country. His grandson Alfonso III would complete the liberation of the country from the Moors in 1249. As with France, Spain, and most of Europe, Portugal's kings would literally assemble their country.

One king would succeed another in Portugal until King Ferdinand I died in 1383. His widow, who was regent for their young daughter, was Castilian and very unpopular. The

result was an uprising that drove out mother and daughter and placed Ferdinand's illegitimate half-brother, Juan, on the throne. As Juan had been Grand Master of the Knightly Order of Aviz when he officially assumed the kingship in 1385, his new dynasty was called the House of Aviz. His son, Duarte I began the Portuguese conquests in Africa when he seized Ceuta in Morocco from the Moors. Duarte I's younger brother, Prince Henry the Navigator, founded the famous school that, in time, would produce such explorers as Vasco da Gama. This continued as the fifteenth century progressed, and more exploration gave way to more colonies and markets along the African coast. Under Manuel I, the characteristic *Manueline* architecture developed, and Brazil was discovered. The reign of John III (1521–1557) saw Portugal become a world power, controlling lands from the East Indies to the Caribbean. But John III's son predeceased him, and so his grandson succeeded him as Sebastian I.

Many of the kings of Portugal had been heroic, and some were literary, but Sebastian I was both. Like Arthur, like Charlemagne, and like Barbarossa, his reign cast a giant shadow in Portuguese history and literature. Extremely devout, the young and handsome king was determined to renew the Crusades, deciding to attack Morocco as being not only close to Portugal but also the headquarters of the slave trade. The result, however, was a disaster. Although the Muslims were severely mauled in battle and both of their senior commanders were killed, so too was Sebastian I and a large part of the Portuguese nobility. Sebastian I passed into legend as one of those sleeping monarchs who shall return when his country needs him. His nearest heir was his great uncle, Cardinal

Henry, who duly became king. Elderly and unable to marry, his death two years later found him and Portugal without heirs. After a short fight with an illegitimate relation, Antonio, Prior of Crato, Philip II of Spain—the Habsburg son of Charles V—became king as the nearest heir.

So it was that, from 1580 to 1640, the Habsburgs, in the persons of Philp II, Philip III, and Philip IV, ruled Portugal as well as their numerous territories. Being ruled by Spain made the Portuguese overseas colonies in the East Indies targets of the rebellious Dutch; nevertheless, under Philip II, there was little resentment toward Habsburg rule. However, under his successors, taxes rose, and there appeared to be little attempt to defend Portugal's own empire. At last, in 1640, the nobility began a revolt and selected the Duke of Braganza, a descendant of an illegitimate son of Alfonso I, to be their king. Nicknamed the Restorer by his subjects, the new king took the name of John IV and ushered in the latest dynasty, the House of Braganza. After he and his allies defeated the Spanish, the new monarch set about reasserting Portugal's independence. Although he lost Malacca and Ceylon to the Dutch, John IV's troops pushed them out of Brazil and Angola. When he died in 1656, he left his son a kingdom that, while still sporadically attacked by the Spanish, was fairly secure.

That son, Alfonso VI, would at last secure Spain's recognition of his realm's independence in 1668. Unfortunately, in that same year of triumph, Alfonso VI was somewhat enfeebled mentally and physically, and he found himself imprisoned by his brother, Peter, who proclaimed himself regent. Alfonso VI's queen, who had her marriage with him annulled,

married his brother. When Alfonso VI died at last in 1683, Peter succeeded him as Peter II. Peter II then renewed Portugal's old alliance with England as a counter to Spain.

When Peter II died in 1706, he was succeeded by his son, John V. An extremely devout ruler, John V cultivated a close relationship with the papacy, despite some ups and downs. As marks of favor, different popes had granted various titles to some of Europe's kings: as king of Hungary, the Habsburg Emperor was given the title Apostolic Majesty, while the king of Poland was Orthodox Majesty, and the sovereigns of France and Spain were the Most Christian King and Most Catholic King respectively. The kings of Portugal joined the elevated company when, in 1748, Pope Benedict XIV declared John V and his heirs the title of Most Faithful King. Patron of the arts and builder of palaces, keen diplomat, and skillful colonial administrator, John V's reign is considered an apogee in Portuguese history.

By contrast, his son Joseph's reign saw a great many problems. In 1755, five years after Joseph's accession, Lisbon was hit by a major earthquake that devastated a good piece of the country. Real power fell into the hands of his chief minister, Pombal. A child of the nascent Enlightenment, Pombal was anticlerical—and particularly hated the Jesuits, whom he expelled from the country in 1759. The other major Catholic monarchs of Europe joined in this crusade, which would culminate in the Order's wholesale suppression in 1773.

As Joseph had no sons, his oldest daughter, Maria, succeeded him as Portugal's first reigning queen in 1777. Although she married her uncle—who took the name Peter III—she was queen in her own right. As such, and

sharing her grandfather's piety, her first act was to dismiss Pombal. Particularly devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she had that divine image put on the insignia of the Portuguese Orders of Knighthood and built the first church in the world dedicated to the Sacred Heart—Lisbon's Estrela Basilica. The economy boomed under her careful management, and the first years of her reign were happy. But under the strain produced by the successive deaths of her husband, eldest son, and beloved confessor, the queen's mind gave way; in 1792, she was declared incapable, and her second son, John, became regent for the remainder of her life.

This year, which saw the final overthrow of Louis XVI, was a fateful one for Portugal and all of Europe. When Spain fell under the domination of Napoleonic France in 1800, it would only be a matter of time until Portugal's turn came. In 1807, the Franco-Spanish forces invaded. While the British committed themselves to defend Lisbon and its surrounding hinterland (a defense that would prove successful and spell the beginning of the end for Napoleon in the Iberian peninsula), they could not guarantee their victory. At Britain's advice, the regent, queen, royal family, and court fled to Rio de Janeiro to start a government-in-exile in Brazil. In the year of Napoleon's final defeat, 1815, the regent declared Brazil to be equal in status with the mother country, and he proclaimed his mother to be Queen of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves. Despite Napoleon's defeat, the Braganzas remained in Brazil for the moment and sent emissaries to represent them at the congress gathered in Vienna.