

Preface

Georg Habsburg-Lothringen

*International Symposium 'The Habsburg Mediterranean, 1500–1800',
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The history of the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem is strongly connected to the Imperial House of Habsburg-Lothringen. As grandson of the last emperor of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy I have gladly accepted the invitation to fill the position of the President of the Austrian Society of the Holy Land—the friendship society for the Austrian Hospice—when I was asked to do so some years ago. The Habsburg family continues to support the Austrian Catholic presence and activities in the Holy Land and Holy City; and my brother Karl will join us a little later during the symposium. Our children also take great interest in our work in the Holy Land; we have guided some of them in the Holy Land and others will follow their elder sisters and cousins in due time. And we are very pleased to see what the present Rector of the Hospice, Hon. Markus Bugnyar, has achieved during his years of tenure here in the heart of the Holy City, in the Via Dolorosa. It is fantastic to see how he together with the Vice-Rector, Sister Bernadette, has developed the role of the Austrian Hospice over the years, this 'Casa Austria' beyond all the important developments regarding the main purpose of this House serving as accommodation for pilgrims from Austria and the former Austrian Hereditary Lands. I am also very grateful for the establishment of the so-called Academy of the Austrian Hospice that serves as a platform for scientific conferences, learned lectures and cultural presentations. And as a member of the House of Habsburg I do appreciate, of course, when such conferences deal with the history of my own family.

It is a historic fact that Habsburg was present in the Mediterranean long before the mid-nineteenth century when the Austrian Hospice was founded in Jerusalem or the Battle of Lissa took place under the command of admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff on 20 July 1866. In the years at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the people of the Austrian Monarchy developed an intense relation to 'its' Mediterranean—the Austrian Riviera with Trieste as the main city as well as other important touristic destinations like Brioni, Duino, Grado, Portorož and Abbazia, the 'Pearl of the Austrian Riviera.' And of course, Pula as the main military harbour. All these cities could easily be reached by train departing from Vienna. And even today Austrians have fond memories

and even romantic feelings in this respect referring to this part of history as *als das Meer noch bei Österreich war* (“when the sea was still Austrian”).

Anyhow, the earlier history of the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century is less well known but equally important in the course of the history of Europe—and beyond. Therefore, I am especially grateful that so many speakers have gathered here in order to shed light on this most interesting part of history.

My special thanks go to the two organizers of this symposium, Dr Stefan Hanß, until recently Research Associate in Early Modern European Object History at St John’s College, Cambridge, and since this month Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Manchester—my best wishes for this new position; and Dr Dorothea McEwan, Honorary Fellow of the University of London, first and long-time archivist in The Warburg Institute whom I want to congratulate for recently having been elected as member of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences in recognition of her impressive publication record and outstanding contribution to research in the intersection of religious history and art in Ethiopia. And all the contributors: Géza Pálffy (Budapest), Eric Dursteler (Provo), Sundar Henny (Bern), Tobias Graf (Oxford), Václav Bůžek (Budweis/České Budějovice), Suzanna Ivanič (Kent), Katherine Bond (Basel), Peter Rauscher (Vienna), Evelyn Korsch (Erfurt), Michael J. Levin (Akron), Phillip Williams (Portsmouth), Emanuel Buttigieg (Malta), Alexander Koller (Rome) and William O’Reilly (Cambridge)—my gratitude to you all.

Once, the Habsburg Lands were an Empire where the sun did not set. You will now open a thalassographic approach, as Dr Hanß called it, that centred on the early modern Mediterranean. Together you will address a series of new research questions addressing the cultural, economic, material, military and political presence of Habsburg subjects in the early modern Mediterranean in a comparative perspective. I am thrilled to hear new research on the exploration of the Habsburg Mediterranean and will be happy to tell my children. Thank you.