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TITLE PAGE: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Emperor Franz Joseph in Gala Uniform*, 1865.

LEFT: Joseph Albert, *Franz Joseph I, Aged 35*, 1865.

FOLLOWING PAGE: *Family tree for the House of Habsburg-Lorraine*, c. 1889.

## CHILDHOOD AT SCHÖNBRUNN

The six-year-old is long past crawling and explores every corner of the palace. Now he is standing in front of his grandfather, a gaunt old man with bony hands and a pale face. The flourishing archduke – they call him “Franzi” – has so many questions for the wizened old man! All at once, he is in the clutches of the schoolmaster – his entire day soon filled with duties; dress at seven, then lessons until the evening meal: drawing, German, writing, geography, and in the afternoons, dance, exercise and equestrian vaulting.

Archduke Ferdinand’s former adjutant, Heinrich Graf Bombelles, described by one officer as “a genial cross between a philosopher and a courtier”, was appointed as his tutor.

A second dignified aristocrat entered Franzi’s life: Johann Baptist Coronini-Cronberg. From him, the young boy learnt courtesy, dignity and discipline – he had to

make his mother proud.

A third, Franz Edler von Hauslab, a colonel of the bombardiers, did his best to mould the lad into a soldier. It would involve more than marching and fencing: should he aim to be a fit and proper officer, he must also practice punctuality and early rising.

The lessons included the major European languages: French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian and a little English. In between, there was time for chemistry, geography, religion, philosophy, technology, economics and law – he must be fully equipped for the place in the sun of which his mother secretly dreamt.



BELOW: Moritz Michael Daffinger, *Archduke Franz Joseph of Austria*, 1846.



TOP LEFT: The Gloriette and Neptune Fountain in the gardens of Schönbrunn Palace, c. 1900.

TOP RIGHT: Friedrich von Amerling, *Franz I with the Insignia of the Austrian Empire* 1832.

BOTTOM LEFT: Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, *Portrait of the Future Emperor Franz Josef I of Austria as a Grenadier with Toy Soldiers*, 1832.

BOTTOM CENTRE: Friedrich von Amerling, *Archduke Franz Joseph with Ensign*, 1838.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Moritz Michael Daffinger, *Archduke Franz Joseph*, 1840.

### FOLLOWING DOUBLEPAGE

Heinrich Tomec, *A View of Schönbrunn Palace*, circa 1900. • TOP: Menci Clement Crnčić, *Their Imperial and Royal Highnesses Archduke Franz Karl and Archduchess Sophie, with their children Franz Joseph and Carl Ludwig in a four-horse carriage*.



## THE DEBACLE OF SOLFERINO

Johann Nepomuk Mayer,  
*Portrait of the Emperor Franz Joseph I*, 1858.



Franz Joseph considered himself an absolute monarch by the grace of God. The birth of the eagerly awaited son and heir, Rudolf, on 21 August 1858, was a highpoint in a life filled with calamities. But as early as the next year, the tide had turned. After the less-than-glorious prelude that was the Battle of Magenta of 4 June 1859, Franz Joseph took over supreme command of the Aus-

trian troops for the Battle of Solferino on 24 June 1859. The engagement turned into a bloody fiasco, the young emperor's first great military debacle. As a result of evident deficiencies in the army leadership, the Austrian soldiers were defeated by the Sardinian and French forces. War in Sardinia resulted in tens of thousands dead and even more injured, the loss of Lombardy and dishonour to his forefathers' legacy. The Treaty of Zurich required him to cede the majority of the land to Napoleon III.

A new hope arose from the rout at Solferino, however: the suffering of men bleeding and gasping to death on the battlefield prompted the Swiss Henry Dunant to found the Red Cross. Five years later, a dozen states would sign the first Geneva Convention "for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field". No amelioration would be forthcoming for the bleeding Austria, however. In July of the same year, 1859, Alexander

TOP: *Emperor Franz Joseph I at the Battle of Solferino*, 1859.

BOTTOM: Fritz L'Allemand, *Emperor Franz Joseph on the Garden Steps on the Occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Order of Maria Theresa*, 1857.



Bach, the epitome of the neo-absolutist era, was forced to pack his bags and Count Agenor Gołuchowski, governor of Galicia, was appointed Minister of the Interior. Change was needed, the stock market was falling, the state coffers were empty. Hungary was still unsettled, students were demonstrating in the capital and the military police responded with rifle fire. The emperor remained stubborn, refused the constitution they were demanding. The heavy defeat in Italy forced the sovereign to compromise, resulting in the federalist October Diploma of 1860. Franz Joseph set forth that he was now minded to issue and enact his laws "with the assistance of the lawfully assembled parliaments". Fine words, but the new constitution led to fierce protests in Hungary, and criticism rained down in Austria too; the press stood united against it. Now, Gołuchowski was forced to yield and a new head of government entered the ring – Anton von Schmerling. Once again, a new constitution was drawn up but the Magyars also boycotted the February Patent of 1861. Hungary was an open wound, and now another scar burst too.



## THE MOST ROYAL IMPERIAL HUNT

Even as a child, he had followed his noble Papa through the hunting grounds around Ischl. At the age of 13, although under the aegis of an imperial and royal forester, he brought down his first chamois buck. Later, the passionate hunter would hold sway over his own count hunting office, led by a genuine privy councillor. Joseph Roth described the emperor as an excellent shot, as “one of the best huntsmen in the old monarchy. He had the huntsman’s hard eye, accustomed to watching for hours, a gaze that considers and occasionally also shows the magnanimity to spare the life of the object it has targeted. It is a myth that men drove the game in front of Franz Joseph’s rifle...”



TOP: Wilhelm Gause, *Emperor Franz Joseph on a Hunt Picnic*, 1908.

BOTTOM: Edmund Mahlknacht, *Emperor Franz Joseph in Ischl Hunting Dress*, 1877.

In 1903, the Russian Tsar Nicholas expressed the wish to be allowed to join in a chamois hunt in the imperial hunting grounds at Mürzsteg – a desire met by Franz Joseph, resulting in a hunting trip to the Styrian mountains over several days. Prince Gottfried of Hohenlohe reported: “The next morning, they set off in good time. The Russian Emperor took one of his Cossacks to his position, and was also allocated a Mürzsteg forester. The latter two, naturally, could not agree and before they had even set off, became embroiled in a bitter exchange of words in front of the assembled company, during which each of them, in his own language, tried to make something clear to the other. As I later learnt from the head huntsman, the Cossack had wanted to bring a shotgun with him, ‘just in case’, in addition to his master’s two rifles, which the Styrian hunter – outraged – believed he should forbid him! The weather was favourable for, once the sun had scattered the autumnal morning mist, the mountains shone in all their glory. They hunted in the ‘lodge’, and most successfully at that. Altogether, 73 chamois and 2 deer were brought down, of which 11 fell to the Emperor of Russia, and 2 to our Emperor, with 17 chamois to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. ... After dinner, at which members of the opera orchestra provided the table music, they inspected the haul by torchlight and with fanfares.”



Charles Scolik, *Photo of Emperor Franz Joseph in Hunting Dress*, 1900.



## SUMMER IDYLL AT ISCHL

HE SEEMED TO STAND  
OUTSIDE TIME, ABOVE  
THINGS, BEYOND GOOD  
AND EVIL, ALREADY  
WREATHED IN ANECDOTES  
AND TRANSFIGURED  
BY LEGEND, ALMOST  
TRANSCENDING  
EARTHLY THINGS.

*Felix Salten*

Josef Schuster, *Emperor Franz Joseph on the balcony of the Kaiservilla.*



Year after year, the imperial family spent their summer holidays in Ischl, a dot on the map in the heart of the Salzkammergut, recommended in numerous landscape paintings and postcards. Even as a young lad, Franz Joseph had spent secluded summer days there, after 30 hours' exhausting travel on dusty country roads. It was not until much later that the little town would be connected to the European railway network. In all, Franz Joseph would holiday in Ischl 57 times, not including short visits at Easter or hunting trips in autumn.

During the 1830s, the family generally stayed at a house on the Esplanade belonging to the mayor, Wilhelm Seeauer; it was not until 1853 that Archduchess Sophie's mother bought Villa Eltz at the foot of the Jainzen, which she bestowed on Franz Joseph as an engagement present. After the necessary renovations, the imperial family were able to stay in what was now called the Kaiservilla from 1857 onwards.

Because the emperor's birthday fell at the height of summer, his birthday parties, featuring illuminations, ceremonial addresses and congratulations, became the high-point of Ischl's summer season. For his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday, for example, 1,500 cyclists paid homage to the emperor in Ischl. On his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, a special train brought huntsmen to Ischl from every country in the empire to honour their very own Nimrod, the mighty hunter. They had collected money and erected

a statue of the emperor in hunting garb; on 24 August 1910, it was unveiled in his majesty's presence. The anniversaries of his accession to the throne were also celebrated in Ischl, with participants from many nations; these included his golden and diamond jubilees in 1898 and 1908.

What a time! The monarch roamed the countryside without security measures: "The Ischlers are quite harmless!" he informed the secret service, which strove to observe his majesty as discreetly as possible. The resourceful secret police even had to disguise themselves as huntsmen so as to guard the fearless emperor on the hunt. And indeed, through all the years, it never occurred to a single assassin to lie in wait for the emperor in the Salzkammergut idyll.

The emperor was a popular guest in Ischl, and could be encountered out for a hearty ride, at the station or on a stroll. The imperial visitor also attracted many other noble guests to the spa town, causing not a few additional gulden to flow into the town coffers. There is a long list of illustrious visitors to the court in Ischl: the Prussian king (and later German Kaiser) Wilhelm I came several times, first in 1871, and then 1874, 1875, 1877, 1880 and 1882. Other guests included Prince Otto von Bismarck, the French Empress Eugénie, the former American President General Ulysses Simpson Grant, King Carol of Romania (who visited twice), the boyish king Alexander of Serbia, aged only 15, and – a particularly exotic apparition – Chulalongkorn, king of Siam, in whose honour Johann Strauss conducted a special gala performance of his *Fledermaus*, on 21 June 1897. For this he was awarded the Order of the White Elephant, first class, and rewarded with a bowl of pure gold.



TOP: The Kaiservilla in Ischl. Postcard 1914

BOTTOM: Rudolf von Alt, *The Esplanade in Ischl*, 1840.

### FOLLOWING DOUBLEPAGE

*Emperor Franz Joseph on an evening walk with his daughters Gisela and Marie Valerie on Jainzenberg, 1910.*