

Press release funeral ceremonies

HIRH Dr. Otto von Habsburg and his wife, HIRH Regina von Habsburg will be buried on July 16th, 2011 in the Imperial Crypt in Vienna.

The Imperial Crypt at the New Market in Vienna is the traditional burial place of the Habsburg family. It is the only of its kind worldwide. For almost 400 year members of the imperial family have been buried here. Prior to this there were a number of burial places; a further, large burial vault in Vienna is situated under St. Stephen's cathedral. Here a number of older Habsburgs are buried including Duke Rudolf "the Founder" und Emperor Friedrich III.

In 1618 Empress Anna, the wife of Emperor Mathias requested in her will that a burial vault should be established under the Capuchin Church in Vienna. Over the centuries the burial vault was enlarged eight times. The joint coffin of Empress Maria Theresia and Emperor Franz Stephan is particularly impressive. The only non-Habsburg person to be buried in the vault is Duchess Fuchs-Mollard, the governess of Maria Theresia. Alongside 119 members of the Habsburg family 12 Emperors and 19 Empresses are buried in this vault – the represent 400 years of European history.

The last major burials in the vault were those of Emperss Zita in 1989 and the Archduke Karl Ludwig in 2008. He was the fourth son of the last Emperor.

After the Second World War and due to the exile and the refusal of entry to Austria the family founded a further family burial vault in the Swiss monastery Muri in the Conton Aargau. The monastery was founded by the first Habsburg Emperor Rudolf I. Among others Archduke Rudolph, the younger son of Emperor Karl and Empress Zita was buried there in 2010.

The burial rite has a long tradition. The body is embalmed while the heart is removed and buried separately. During the monarchy the hearts were buried in copper urns in the "Herzgruft" in the Loretokapelle in the Augustine Church in Vienna. The "Herzgruft" is open to visitors on Sundays.

Empress Zita buried the heart of her husband, Emperor Karl, in the family tomb in Muri. In 1989 her own heart was buried next to her husband. The heart urn of Regina von Habsburg will remain in the family vault of the Sachsen-Meiningers in the Heldburg in southern Thuringia. The heart of Otto von Habsburg will be buried in the Hungarian Benedictine Pannonhalma Archabbey.