

Gotha: The Great Families of Europe

Foreward

There are some 800 families qualifying for entry into this register. The idea is to indicate who they are, how they became to be titled and whether or not the family is likely to continue.

The Twentieth Century has been one of great agitation and upheaval. There have been many movements of population before but, this time, the need to flee one's country has reached even the most important and apparently secure. Families, established for hundreds of years, have had to make new homes in foreign countries. For the most part, they are picking up the pieces and are slowly, but surely, re-establishing themselves. This is a not inconsiderable feat, since many arrived in Western Europe or America with little more than the clothes they were wearing.

This book is an attempt to produce a comprehensive list of all the "great" families of Europe. In some countries, the United Kingdom for example, this is a relatively easy matter. To find out about any of the oldest families, one need do no more than consult Debrett's Peerage. But this is no longer true where some distinguished names of, say, Poland or Georgia and concerned. No register of these exists, in many cases. However, to have reached a high rank, it is necessary to have performed some exemplary deed or service and it would be a pity if all record were lost. One Yugoslav (Serbian) duke, for example, was last heard of working as a foreman bricklayer in a London suburb. His grandfather liberated Belgrade in the first World War.

While memories, therefore, are still reasonably fresh, this book will try to collect details on all European families which carry the rank of prince or duke. Some may have been overlooked, despite the best efforts of the editors, and we would be grateful to receive any suggestions for inclusion in later editions.

Where ruling families, past or present, are concerned, some are better known by their family name; an example of this are the Habsburgs. Others would be virtually unknown except by the title of their country; Bavaria is probably more immediately familiar than the Wittelsbach family. Other dynasties really have no name at all and are only known by their countries; Denmark for example. In one or two cases, the family gave its name to its territory; Lorraine (Lotharingen in German) is derived from Lothaire II, a great-grandson of Charlemagne. In all cases, we have tried to choose the more obvious, with cross-references.



General

Austria

Balkans

France

Germany

Holy Roman Empire

Holy See (SCV)

Italy

Poland

Portugal

Russia

Scandanavia

Spain

United Kingdom

Territorial Distribution

[Click On Any Heading](#)

GENERAL

Titles: Since the dawn of time, it has been the custom to give leaders, be they civil, military or religious, some form of style or title. This is not just to distinguish them from everybody else but is also a gesture of respect for holders of high office. It is for this reason, for example, that many carry these titles with them, long after they have retired. Presidents of France and the U.S.A are forever addressed as Mr President. A General never loses his rank. Even retired ambassadors can still be called, "Your Excellency".

However, there are plenty of families that have produced one dazzling member and then sunk back into obscurity. Some have produced two brothers, brother and sister or, even, two generations of prominent people and then have never been heard of again. We are concerned with *families*. Now, it is true that some modern, distinguished people might, in the past, have been honoured in such a way that their names endured. We are looking for more than that. We need families that have built their way up, through the generations, until they have reached the summit. And, in almost every case, families of this type have received honours that they have been able to pass on to their children and have thus obtained a degree of immortality. This is not always the case; some distinguished names rely heavily on the founder or a later, even more distinguished member. But for the most part, those who have reached the highest rank, have done so by guarding what has been inherited and passing it on, often with a little added. After a few generations, they arrive with great names, titles and, usually, estates to support them. It is with them that we are concerned. And, to draw the line, we have chosen the two highest titles, prince and duke - along with the royal families that still survive. These are almost always old and have romantic and interesting histories to go with their names.

Way back in the Middle Ages, the (Holy Roman) Emperor was trying to keep order in his vast domains. So he sent out military governors to the various regions. They were little more than the equivalent, today, of colonel or general. Their titles then, however, were based on the Latin *comes* and *dux*. These are the present equivalent of count (or graf or earl) and duke. They were purely military ranks, held only while the general was in office. Those who were sent to particularly dangerous parts - usually on the borders or marches - were honoured with the rank, between the two above, of margrave or marquis.

The Emperor was a busy man, spending much of his time putting down rebellions. So, if one of his dukes died and had to be replaced, he was faced with a problem. If the duke had a son, and the son was loyal to his sovereign, the easiest solution was, often, to recognise the son as the new *dux*. In any event, the son was often well dug in and the people of the region were likely to be just as loyal to the family they knew as to some distant Emperor. So the latter had the choice between acknowledging the *status quo* and hoping for the best or of invading and replacing the son by force.

The result was, therefore, that dukedoms tended slowly to become hereditary. On the whole, new dukes did remain loyal to the Emperor since he, in the end, was the source of their legitimacy. Furthermore, in order to gain protection under the feudal system, it was necessary to swear fealty (loyalty and obedience) to whomsoever was above you in the

pecking order. Until this was done, your territory was fair game for any greedy neighbour or ambitious underling. You owed loyalty to the lord above you but he owed you protection in return.

Later kings and super-dukes emerged but nearly always they swore allegiance to the Emperor, an important local lord or, finally, the Pope. Even the Emperor deferred, in theory at least, to the Holy Father.

Dukes therefore, almost without exception, have titles with territorial connotations; and there could only be one duke at a time. One or two German states did experiment with co-dukes, but these were extremely rare.

In time, the Emperor, the Pope and certain other great leaders found it desirable to reward individuals, or even whole families, with a style that would rank them with dukes but, normally, without the land involved.

The style chosen was *principes* (prince).

Great care, though, should be taken with the title of prince. Sometimes it is territorial; the Princes of Monaco or Liechtenstein for example. Sometimes it is purely honorific, such as with the families of Poniatowski or Boncompagni. Sometimes the title does refer to an area, with the family name being quite different. Often it is just added to the normal surname, as with Borghese. To make matters more complicated, many foreign titles - *voivode etc.* - are translated by Western Europeans to the nearest equivalent which, in all practical terms, means prince. The Sturdza and Cantacuzino families are now generally ranked as such, though the styles recognised in their original countries would be meaningless to us.

Certain Landgraves and Margraves, in Germany, although technically ranking below dukes, also carry the prefix of Royal Highness. They ruled, as sovereigns, over independent or, at least, semi-autonomous states. They have been included in this register.

Some old families, also, prefer to be known for a very ancient title in preference to a more recent but grander creation. The Pretender to the French throne is the Count of Paris; his eldest son is the Count of Clermont. The father of the King of Spain, than whom one cannot be more elevated, was the Count of Barcelona.

We have only included those who also possess the title of duke or prince, even if they do not use them. In passing, it should be mentioned that some families only possess the rank of count but to all practical purposes rank as duke or prince. The Tolstoy, Zamoyski or some branches of the Erbach families can be included in this category. Indeed, the last-named should be addressed, on formal occasions at least, as Illustrious Highness. Nevertheless, these have been included.

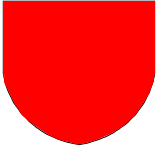
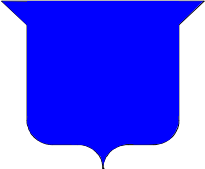
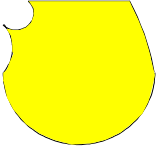
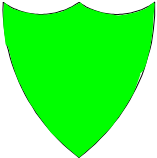
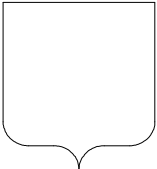
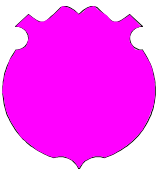
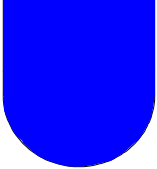
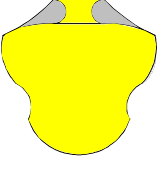
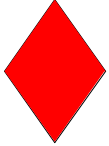
Address, generally, is largely a matter of local custom but we have tried to give an indication. Broadly speaking, though, non-royal rulers of independent countries, or those who once were rulers, are entitled to the prefix of Serene Highness. These include the Mediatised Sovereign States of the Holy Roman Empire. This situation came about, largely due to the efforts of Napoleon Bonaparte, when certain states were not considered, any

longer, to be viable on their own and were attached to larger units. Such families include Arenberg, Croy, Esterhazy, Fürstenberg, Hohenlöhe and others.

Coats of Arms: When wearing armour, it was nearly impossible to distinguish the occupant. This, obviously, had disadvantages in battle so the custom arose of wearing a loose coat or tunic over the armour. Hence the expression coats of arms. No two people, at least in the same area, could use the same colours or devices and so heralds were appointed to regularise usage. At one time, sons and other relatives had to "difference" their coats so as to avoid confusion. These differences kept the heralds busy, though they usually followed a set pattern. Eldest sons just added a "label", second sons a "crescent" and so on. Cousins might invert the colours or just add a "border". It was, therefore, fairly obvious to which family junior members belonged, without their being confused with the chief.

Shields could vary according to the various regions and countries. For the purposes of this book we have chosen the "modern" form.

Traditional Shields

		
Old French	Old English	Central European
		
Swiss	Modern	Polish
		
Spanish	Italian	Women

Nowadays, the custom of differencing has largely fallen into disuse.

When warriors were mounted, it again became difficult, often, to make out just which coat of arms they were wearing. This was particularly true in the thick of battle. So the more important began adding some device to the top of their helmets (crests) or even crowns (coronets). As a result, in the *melée* of close combat, it was relatively easy to know whom to follow and protect.

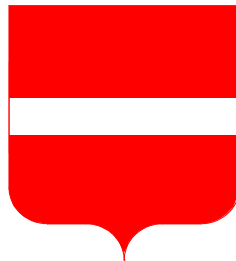
It is not correct to describe a coat of arms, usually depicted on a shield, as a crest.

The shape of the shield used in heraldry and the exact detail of the coronets vary according to local custom. We have unified these, to a large extent. It might be worth mentioning, though, that Western Europe was very greatly influenced by the French heralds. In the east, the dominant influence was that of the Holy Roman (or Germanic) Empire. It is, therefore, almost universal to portray all princes with the Holy Roman Empire "bonnet", be they from Italy or Lithuania.

Heraldry is, properly, a written art. All coats of arms are described in a precise form. It is up to the local artists to interpret the words as best they can. The colours are few and basic; red (*gules*), blue (*azure*), green (*vert*) and black (*sable*) being the main ones. The way the shield is divided up follows immutable rules. In addition to the colours, there are two metals, gold (*or*) and silver (*argent*), and occasionally furs. A colour can be added to a metal or vice versa. There is supposed to be only one example of a metal being added to another metal and that is the Kingdom of Jerusalem, where the rules were deliberately bent as a special honour. On the whole, therefore, a herald anywhere in Europe would come up with an almost identical interpretation; though the exact form of, say, a tree might sometimes vary.

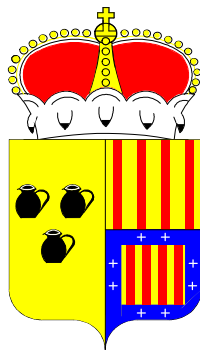
It is often stated, with some truth, that the simpler the coat of arms, the older the family. The Kings of Aragon, for example, bore a plain gold shield. It is hard to imagine anything simpler than that. However, one was found by the Emperor, gravely wounded. The Emperor dipped his fingers into the blood of John of Aragon and traced four red (*gules*) lines down the shield. This passed into history and the regions on both sides of the Pyrenees still use this device.

It is said that an early member of the Habsburg family fought so fiercely in a battle that, when he came back, his white surcoat was completely covered with blood. However, when he took off his belt, that part was still white. This became their own device and that of Austria.

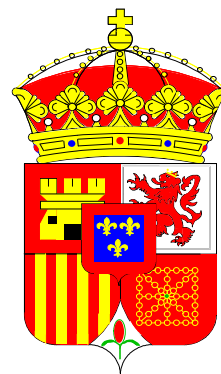


Other dignitaries bore arms that reflected some feat or achievement. Some coats of arms had significance to an area or a name. The only English Pope, Nicholas Breakspeare, used just that for his shield - a broken spear.

When some families married or inherited estates, they would "impale" or "quarter" the arms of the new wife, or whatever, with their own.

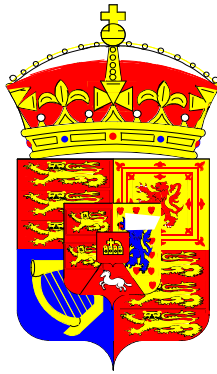


The shield of the Pignatelli Aragona Cortese shows the arms of all three families



The royal arms of Spain shows Castile, Leon, Aragon and Navarre with a reminder of their French origins

Sometimes, you find a small shield superimposed on a larger one. This "augmentation" or "escutcheon of pretence" was usually a special honour, sometimes at the instigation of the sovereign, to commemorate a particular feat. It often, as the name implies, records the claim of one family to another territory.



The arms of the Prince of Hannover displays those of the Royal House of Great Britain with suitable augmentations.

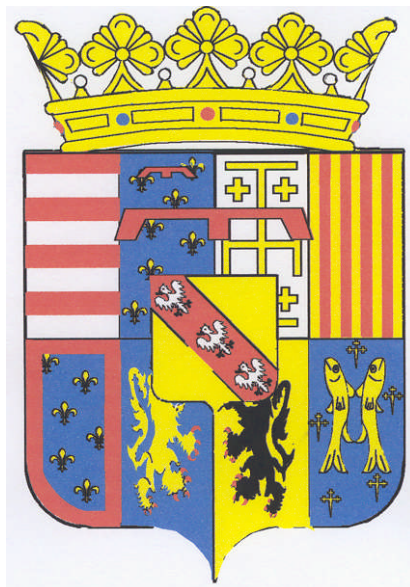
Those who take the trouble really to examine and understand coats of arms, can often trace the history of various families and this makes a visit, say, to a cathedral much more interesting.

General: It is sometimes said that titles and all the appendages are merely a faintly amusing anachronism. But the history of nations and sometimes whole regions can be followed through the exploits of single families. The Princes Andronikof, for example, exemplify a thousand years of events around the Black Sea.

Furthermore, it is worth remembering that many countries are again looking to their previous ruling dynasties as a unifying symbol. A delegation from Georgia went to discuss the future with the head of the Bagration-Moukhranskys; several other countries are thinking seriously of restoring their monarchies. The King of Spain was recalled and probably saved democracy, single-handedly, in his country. Many Polish princes are going home - and are being welcomed. The present Prime Minister of Bulgaria would, otherwise, be the King.

A family that has lasted several hundred years has demonstrated endurance, if nothing else. It is almost certainly too early to write them off just yet. And, whatever the reasons may be, they do seem to rise to the top again, even if they have had - as the modern term would have it - to "relocate" on some distant shore.

We give below, the arms of the great Dukes of Guise, since these incorporate almost everything an amateur needs to know on the subject.



Coats of Arms are read like a book, from the top left corner. The description, here, is in French since that language is the source of most heraldic terms.

1. Royaume de Hongrie: fascé de gueules et d'argent. *These are the old arms of Hungary and the relation to Austria is obvious.*
 2. Royaume de Naples: d'azur semé de fleurs de lys d'or au lambel de gueules. *The old coat of arms of France had fleurs de lys "sown" at random; the label indicates a branch line.*
 3. Royaume de Jerusalem: d'argent à la croix potencée d'or cantonnée de quatre croisettes du même. *This is the only authentic case of a metal being added to a metal.*
 4. Royaume d'Aragon: d'or à quatre pals de gueules. *See earlier as to how this shield came about.*
 5. Duché d'Anjou: d'azur semé de fleurs de lys d'or à la bordure de gueules. *This is the old coat of France but differenced in another manner to No. 2, above.*
 6. Duché de Gueldres: d'azur au lion contourné d'or armé, lampassé et couronné de gueules. *It is a feature of heraldry that animals, eagles etc face to the left as looked at. Since the shield was worn on the left arm, they would thus appear to be facing the enemy and not seem to be running away. For esthetic reasons, the real coat of Guelderland has been turned on this occasion.*
 7. Duché de Juliers: d'or au lion de sable armé et lampassé de gueules.
 8. Duché de Bar: d'azur semé de croix recroisettées au pieds fichées d'or à deux bars adossés du même. *The fish are supposed to represent a species known as "bar" and have been chosen for obvious reasons.*
- Sur le tout, Duché de Lorraine: d'or à la bande de gueules chargée de trois alérions d'argent. *An alérion (anagram of Lorraine) is a form of eagle, without claws or beak; this suggests the power and magnificence of this bird without any hostile intent.*
- Au lambel de trois pendants de gueules brochant en chef, sur le tout du tout. *This indicates a branch line, usually that of the elder or next to eldest son.*

The coronet is that of a French duke.

This attractive and interesting coat of arms is the, somewhat fantasist, invention of René d'Anjou. Usually known as the "bon roi René", he travelled around Europe, laying claim to several titles. As titular king of Jerusalem, a title that went back to the Crusades, he liked to be called King René - but he had no land. His father had married the Duchess of Bar (in her own right) and so he became Duc de Bar. Finally, he married Isabelle, who was Duchess of Lorraine in her own right. He thus became titular Duke of Lorraine and Bar and proceeded to create a blazon which included every important territory that the two families could claim to rule or be descended from. René, apart from claiming to be King of Jerusalem, was also Duke of Anjou, Count of Provence, effective King of Naples and titular King of Sicily. The others came from his wife.

A man of great personal charm, but no great fortune, he was forgiven this eccentricity. In due course, his second eldest great-grandson, Claude, became Duke of Guise. Claude kept the family coat of arms and added the label to indicate that he was of a branch line.

In the heat of battle, when everyone was on horseback, it was not always easy to distinguish the finer points of a coat-of-arms. So, leaders began to ensure that an esquire was always near them, carrying a banner for identification. Unfortunately these, often unarmed, followers were the first to be attacked. Leaders then started to wear a crown on their helmets. If the king or general seemed to have got lost in the throng, any of his followers could look round for this crown and knew where to rally for support.

As time went on and hand-to-hand combat became rarer, the crowns were surmounted by the heralds onto the shield and, nowadays, they denote the rank of the head of the family. As with all details of heraldry, the rules were punctilious.

Different countries used different coronets - as they used different shields - so we have largely unified these.

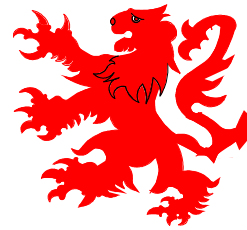
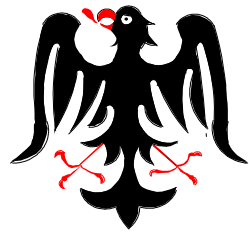
Sometimes a herald would surmount a shield with a helmet. These followed many of the same rules, though it is worth noting that the more important the owner, the more the helmet is turned towards the front. Gold was for senior ranks, mere iron for the also-rans.

We give below an indication of these crowns and helmets. Western Europe was almost entirely influenced by France, Eastern and Central Europe by the Holy Roman Empire. Thus Polish and Russian princes are shown with the Empire "bonnet".

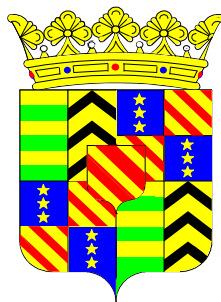
Crowns, Coronets and Helmets

Royal, Kings and Ruling Families		
Royal Princes (France)		
Duke (Germany)		
Duke (France etc.)		
Duke (United Kingdom)		
Prince (France etc.)		
Prince of the Holy Roman Empire		

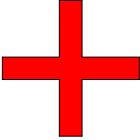



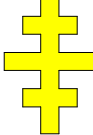
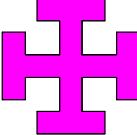
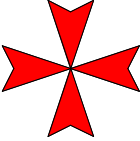
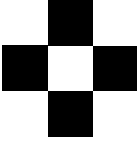

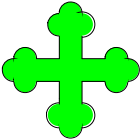

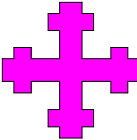
If the heralds could not find some allusion to a family's name or achievements the commonest devices to include were lions and eagles. Both of these suggest power and rank. There was, however, some reason why any other animals, flowers etc were displayed.






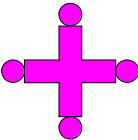
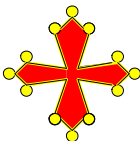

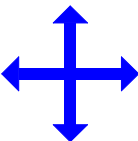
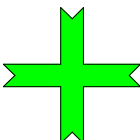
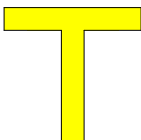
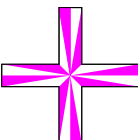


There are innumerable variations of both these animals, as there are of trees, bulls etc. Sometimes purely mathematical forms were employed. An example of one such shield is that of the Uzès family, the premier Dukes of France.



In view of the Christian leanings of most aristocrats, at least during the Middle Ages, crosses in all forms were also very popular.

 <p>Cross</p>	 <p>Latin</p>	 <p>Patriarchal</p>
 <p>Lorraine</p>	 <p>Papal</p>	 <p>Potence</p>
 <p>Maltese</p>	 <p>Quarter Pierced</p>	 <p>Pattée</p>
 <p>Treflée</p>	 <p>Ancrée</p>	 <p>Recroisetée</p>

 <p>Saltire</p>	 <p>Saltire Ancrée</p>	 <p>Perronnée</p>
 <p>Crosslets Fichée</p>	 <p>Fichée</p>	 <p>Pommée</p>
 <p>Toulouse</p>	 <p>Russian</p>	 <p>Flechée</p>
 <p>Eight Point</p>	 <p>St Anthony (Tau)</p>	 <p>Gironnée</p>

Austria (and the Holy Roman Empire)



The history of the Austrian aristocracy is inextricably linked to the Holy Roman Empire. The reason for this is that during the Empire's later years it was equally dominated by the Habsburg family.

There were Habsburgs, known in the early days as dukes of Austria. Apart from these, the title universally employed was prince. These, however came in various ranks:

Durchlaucht: This carried, with it, the additional qualification of Serene Highness.

Hochgeboren: Much the same, though often an intermediate stage.

Erlaucht: This is the style of ruling Counts and carries the additional qualification of Illustrious Highness.

Hoch und Wohlgeboren: Usually the rank of Count.

Succession is almost invariably by primogeniture. Sometimes, one or several brothers were raised in rank at the same time. Generally all members of a senior rank have the addition of Serene or Illustrious Highness, though this is not universal. In some cases, only the Head of the Family is a Prince, collateral lines carrying the style of Count, sometimes all members carry the same style.

To complicate matters further, many Princes or Counts were ratified by local Parliaments - Bohemia, Westphalia and so on.

This almost infinite variety appears to have been one of the weapons of the Emperors, always to leave a little in hand so that aspirants would be encouraged to perform further duties to merit the next rank upwards.

So, much of what applies above, also carries weight in Germany.

Included in this chapter is Hungary, where only four Princes were ever created.

Please see, also, the section devoted to the **Holy Roman Empire**.

[Return](#)

Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean

The history of this area is not only one of great movement but covers many fascinating moments of Christianity. From this part of the world, one can still find descendants of Byzantine Emperors, sometime re-located to Trebizond or Georgia.

There are Armenian princes, those from Greece, Moldavia, Bessarabia and such, often little-known areas, on the map. Many were incorporated into the Russian Empire, some served the Sultan. Some remained rulers of small territories and are still fondly regarded by the people. Montenegro was a kingdom and so was Albania - the only Moslem state so to be included.

We have tried to include them all though, by tradition, they do not rank as rulers or previous rulers - except the kingdoms.

[Return](#)

France

French titles are not easy to follow. The ranks are the same as elsewhere but the provenance can be varied. Some date back to the times when the Duke of Savoy or the King of Béarn ennobled some of their followers. The dukedom of Lorraine still gave out honours until the XVIII century.

Later kings tried to make some sense out of all this, without universal success. Families, which could date back to the Crusades, were put into the humiliating position of having to justify their ranks to some newly arrived functionary. Many were too proud to do so. At the same time, it must be observed that many people with titles simply could not justify their honours. Probably many had been accorded by the local citizens, who felt that such a grand lord should be referred to by something better than the equivalent of Mister.

In practice, most titles, until the Revolution, were tied to a piece of land. It was the *seigneurie* that was raised to the rank of barony or county - and not the *seigneur*. There are many cases where ownership of the land changed and the new lord took on the title. Even after the Restoration, although personal honours were accorded, these were tied to a *majorat*.

The idea was that a new duke should have some income to support his new rank. If the *majorat* were lost or subdivided, the title was supposed to lapse also. This was not often the case, in practice, though it did happen.

In addition to this, there are many cases where a son - or even a brother - would seize the title, despite the original Letters-Patent specifically denying this possibility.

Another interesting item is that, although nearly 100 new dukedoms were created during the XIX century, only a handful remain - a casualty rate without precedence.

The Salic Law - whereby female succession was forbidden - is commonly supposed to prevail in France. This certainly applied, as far as succession to the throne was concerned. There are, however, some cases where the Letters-Patent did provide for female descent - though this has largely fallen into disuse.

[Return](#)

Germany

Most German families with titles actually ruled over their territories. These were not just personal honours. Many, also, issued their coinage. Those which did have been included in Part One of this register.

Over the course of time, many of the more minor barons and counts came under the influence of a more powerful ruler and saw their own powers diminished. In the end, the vast majority owed allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor and then to Prussia

The ruler, after the Reformation, chose the religion for his people and this depended on his personal persuasion. However, this custom had one unfortunate result. With pockets, here or there, of Catholics or Lutherans the formula was laid for continual conflict, typified by the vicious and bloody Thirty Years War.

All this changed around 1806, when Napoleon dissolved the Holy Roman Empire. He had decided that many of the 'independant' fiefdoms were too small to be viable and attached many to larger units. He also promoted some of the rulers to the rank of King or Grand Duke. Finally the King of Prussia became an emperor and exerted influence over most of the rest of Germany.

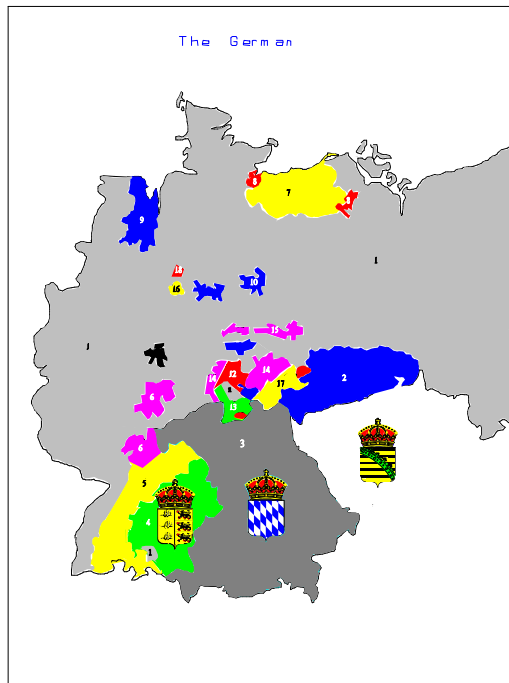
Because some of the rulers could be said to have had a somewhat precarious hold over their territories, they became extremely jealous of their rights. Anyone marrying a wife of inferior rank became even more prone to dispute - a custom which still prevails. So the heir to the Bavarian throne has elder brothers, who have married commoners and have thus lost their precedence.

This led to another, almost exclusively, German practice. It became very important to add an ever increasing number of quarterings to one's shield. Many, frankly, were quite fictitious and make the work of any herald extremely complex. In some cases, we have followed the coat of arms illustrated on the coins. Sometimes, we have reduced the blazon to the original (and most simple) form.

The Emperor sometimes created several brothers to the same rank at the same time; which accounts for the large number of branches demonstrated by the Hohenlohe family, for example.

Even within families, there were continual subdivisions of territory. Some of these came together again, when a particular branch became extinct. Saxony is an example of this. However, it should be added that because real power was involved, all this was regulated with scrupulous care. All German families can, therefore, be accepted as entirely authentic.

[Return](#)



Holy Roman Empire

To most people, the Holy Roman Empire remains something of a mystery. Its name varies; the French refer to *le Saint Empire* or, even, *le Saint Empire romain germanique*. All three adjectives are important.

Even the date of its inception is subject to debate. Many ascribe the start to Charlemagne, who really did create the first empire, as we would understand the term. He died in 814. However, his realms were immediately sub-divided. As a result, the first Emperor is usually taken to be Otto I - though his father Henri I l'Oiseleur paved the way. Otto I was the grandson of the Duke of Saxe and he lived from 912 to 973.

After the fall of Rome, western Europe entered into the dark ages and the centre of Christianity was to be found in Byzantium, infinitely more powerful and civilised than its western cousin. Various popes were far from happy about this eclipse, since they had continued to maintain their claim to be the heads of all Christians and the successors to Saint Peter. Slowly the idea gained ground that a western empire should be created, subject to and taking its legitimacy from the Holy See. This was increasingly encouraged by succeeding popes and explains the Roman and Holy parts of the name. This occurred at much the same time as the re-awakening of western Europe and really gained ground when Byzantium was occupied by the Moslem rulers and the Crusades began.

The empire slowly grew, though it was not - at least in the beginning - anything like a stable entity. It began as a collection of German states but it also included much of the north of Italy, including Lombardy etc and this explains the extra adjective of German. At various times, though, most of central Europe could be said to have been part of the empire.

However, although the Pope always tried to exert his authority, some of the emperors were not in agreement. An important quarrel broke out between Henry IV and Gregory VII for control of the empire and, effectively, of the Church itself. This was in the early part of the XII century. Finally, a peace of sorts was arranged following the celebrated Diet of Worms, 1122, between the same Henry IV and Pope Calixte II. In a sense, the authority of the Holy See was not unlike that of the United Nations today. It had the legitimacy but not much power to back this up. Many emperors, therefore, acknowledged the supremacy of the Vatican but then went their own way.

Considering the vast areas that came under the various emperors and its undoubted influence, most people would be hard put to name more than a very few of the leaders. Henry IV, because he imprisoned and ransomed - for a fortune - Richard I, Coeur de Lion, of England is one such. Another is Frederick I Barbarossa, who made Sicily the centre of his domains; though anyone who has heard of him might not know that he was the Holy Roman Emperor. His son had the splendid nickname of Stupor Mundi and he, also, has passed into history.

In 1273, Rudolph I became King of Germany and also took the title of Emperor. From then on the Habsburgs and the rank of emperor became increasingly synonymous - though a glance at the list below shows that several other families also held the honour.

The emperor was elected from a restricted band of his peers and, later, on, the Electors became formalised and a list of them is also attached.

In 1806, Napoleon decided that the whole, ramshackle edifice had outlived its purpose and finally abolished it. He attached some of the minor, and unviable, states to more powerful units and recognised the heads of some of the latter as Grand Dukes or even kings. The rulers that lost out are now referred to as having been “mediatised”. It must also be said that Napoleon was acting in his own interests, since he wanted the title of Emperor for himself and went to the lengths of having his son crowned as King of Rome. His pretensions did not outlast his final defeat at Waterloo. At the same time that Napoleon crowned himself as Emperor, the ruler of Austria assumed the title of Emperor of Austria. He claimed the old mantle and this situation lasted until the Great War, when so many kings etc abdicated.

The Holy Roman Empire is sometimes referred to as the First Reich; the second being when the King of Prussia elevated himself to Emperor of Germany. The Third Reich was claimed by the late, unlamented Adolf Hitler. Like the first, his was going to last for a thousand years. While the first did endure for almost this vast expanse of time, Hitler’s did not.

The Habsburg still retain an unparelled *mystique*, see our entry under that name.

Some of the most interesting princes were created under the auspices of the Empire. Their coats-of-arms are shown being surmounted by the famous “bonnet”; unless they were also kings or dukes, when that crown is given precedence.

Since the Empire was truly an international realm, it is not always easy to identify the country of origin of some of these princes. They can be found in Italy, the German-speaking countries, the Czech Republic and so on. When some order was put into the Russian Empire, the same bonnet was adopted for the rank of prince. Polish princes also surmount their shields with the same bonnet.

Below is the list of the Emperors

CAROLINGIENS :

- 768 : **CHARLEMAGNE** (742-814), son of Pépin le Bref, King of the Franks
- 814 : **LOUIS I**, the Pious or the Débonnaire (778-840)
- 840 : **LOTHAIRE I**, (795-855)
- 855 : **LOUIS II** (825-875), Emperor
- 875 : **CHARLES II**, le Bald (823-877), son of Louis I, King of France, (840-887)
- 881 : **CHARLES III**, the Fat (839-888), son of Louis I, deposed. King of France (884- 887)
- 887 : **ARNULF** (?-899), illegitimate son of Carloman, himself son of Louis le Germanique, elected.
- 901 : **LOUIS III**, the Blind (880-928), King of Germany
- 911 : **CONRAD I**, (?-918), Duke of Franconia, elected King of Germany

HOUSE of SAXE(SAXONY) :

- 919 : **HENRY I**, l'Oiseleur (v. 876-936), son of the Duke of Saxe
- 962 : **OTTO I**, the Great (912-973)
- 973 : **OTTO II** (955-983)

996 : **OTTO III** (980-1002)

1002 : **HENRI II**, the Saint (973-1024), grandson of Henry I

SALIANS et FRANCONIANS :

1027 : **CONRAD II**, the Salien (v. 990-1039), son of Henry, count of Spire

1039 : **HENRY III**, the Black (1017-1056)

1056 : **HENRY IV**, (v. 1050-1106)

1106 : **HENRY V**, (v. 1081-1125)

HOUSE OF SAXE :

1125 : **LOTHAIRE III**, (v. 1060-1137)

HOUSE OF HOHENSTAUFEN :

1138 : **CONRAD III**, (1093-1152), Duke of Franconia

1152 : **FREDERIC I**, Barberossa (1122-1190), his nephew

1190 : **HENRY VI**, the Cruel (1165-1197)

1198 : **OTTO IV**, (1175 or 1182-1218), son of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxe

1220 : **FREDERIC II**, (1194-1250), son of Henry VI

1250 : **CONRAD IV**, (1228-1254)

1250-1273 : Interregnum. ALPHONSE X the Wise, of Castille, had been Emperor from January to April 1257, by right of his mother

RICHARD of Cornwall, Pretender

HOUSE OF BOHEMIA :

1253-1278 : **OTOKAR II** (1230-1278), Son of Wenceslas I, King of Bohemia (1205-1253), the only crowned Empire king. He fought against Alphonso and Richard, was chased out by Rudolph of Habsburg (1218-1291) and killed at Dürnkrut.

HOUSE OF HABSBERG :

1273 : **RUDOLPH I**, (1218-1291), King of Germany

HOUSE OF NASSAU :

1292 : **ADOLF** (1248 ou 1255-1298), King of Germany, deposed

HOUSE OF HABSBERG :

1298 : **ALBERT**, (1255-1308), son of Rudolph I

HOUSE OF LUXEMBURG :

1308 : **HENRI VII**, (v. 1269-1313), son of the Count of Luxemburg

HOUSE OF BAVARIA :

1314 : **LOUIS IV**, (1287-1347), son of the Duke of Bavaria, King of the Romans (1314); Emperor (1328), deposed (1346)

HOUSE OF LUXEMBURG-BOHEMIA :

1346 : **CHARLES IV**, (1316-1378), son of John the Blind, King of Bohemia, King of the Romans (1346), crowned (1355)

1378 : **WENCELAS** (1361-1419), son of Charles IV, King of Bohemia, abdicated in 1411

ELECTOR PALATIN :

1400 : **RUPERT** (1352-1416), rival of Wenceslas

HOUSE OF LUXEMBURG:

1410 : **SIGISMOND** (1368-1437), brother of Wenceslas, King of Hungary (1387), King of the Romans (1410), crowned (1433)

HOUSE OF HABSBURG :

1438 : **ALBERT II** (1397-1439), son-in-law of Sigismond ; not crowned by the Pope

1452 : **FREDERICK III** (1415-1493), son of Ernest, Duke of Austria

1493 : **MAXIMILIAN I** (1459-1519)

1519 : **CHARLES V, CHARLES QUINT** (1500-1558), son of Philippe le Beau, Count of Flanders (son of Maximilian Ier), King of Spain, under the name of Charles I (1516-1556), abdicated

1558 : **FERDINAND I** (1503-1564)

1564 : **MAXIMILIAN II** (1527-1576)

1576 : **RUDOLPH II** (1552-1612)

1612 : **MATHIAS** (1557-1619)

1619 : **FERDINAND II** (1578-1637), son of Charles, Duke of Styria (son of Ferdinand I)

1637 : **FERDINAND III** (1608-1657)

1657 : **LEOPOLD I** (1640-1705)

1705 : **JOSEPH I** (1678-1711)

1711 : **CHARLES VI** (1685-1740), German Emperor, Sovereign of Austria and of Hungary

After 1493, apart from Charles Quint, the emperors were no longer crowned by the Pope

HOUSE OF BAVARIA :

1742 : **CHARLES VII** (1697-1745), Elector of Bavaria

HOUSE OF HABSBURG-LORRAINE : (As Holy Roman Emperors)

1745 : **FRANCIS I** (1708-1765), son of Léopold, Duke of Lorraine, husband of Maria-Teresia (daughter of Charles VI).

1765 : **JOSEPH II** (1741-1790)

1790 : **LEOPOLD II** (1747-1792)

1792 : **FRANCIS II** (1768-1835), elected Emperor of the Romans. In 1804 he took the title of Hereditary Emperor of Austria and, in 1806, on the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire, he added the title of King of Hungary.

As Emperors of Austria:

1835 : **FERDINAND I** (1793-1875), brother of Francis II, he abdicated in 1848. He married, in 1831, Marie-Anne of Savoy (1803-1884)

1848 : **FRANZ-JOSEPH I** (1830-1916), his nephew. He married, in 1854 Elisabeth (Sissi) of Bavaria (1837-1898). Their son, Rudolph, born in 1858, was heir but died in mysterious circumstances at Mayerling (30.01.1889), having married, in 1881, Stéphanie of Belgium. From this union there was only a daughter, Elisabeth (1883-), princess of Windisch-Graetz

1916 : **CHARLES (KARL) I** (1887-1922), his great-nephew, who renounced his thrones in 1918. He married in 1911 Zita de Bourbon-Parme (born 1892). Their son, Otto, is now the head of this illustrious family

Electors:

These bore the Germanic title of Kurfürst. Originally restricted to seven dignitaries:

The Prince-Archbishops of **Cologne, Mayenz and Treves**, the Margrave of **Brandenberg**, the Duke of **Saxe**, the **Count Palatine** of the Rhine and the King of **Bohemia**..

This lasted until 1623, when the Count Palatine lost his rights in favour of the Duke of Bavaria. In 1648, after the Treaty of Westphalia, the Palatinate recovered its rights, bringing the number to eight. In 1692, a new electorate was created in favour of **Hannover** but the extinction of the dukedom of Bavaria, in 1778, reduced the number again to eight. Hannover, it should be noted was a Protestant state.

[Return](#)

Holy See (Sancta Citta Vaticana)

The Vatican City is an independant, sovereign country - even today - and the Head of State is His Holiness the Pope.

From quite early times, until the latter half of the XX century, the Supreme Pontiff could and did award titles. The rank of prince was usually reserved to close relations; amongst the last of such was when Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) raised his nephew to the rank of Prince Pacelli. The latter had worked for many years for the Holy See and this was his reward.

This was not always the case, where blatant nepotism was often the rule. Most Popes, not having any children of their own, still wanted to see their names perpetuated, and with honour. The illustrious Prince Chigi Albani della Rovere could number three Popes among his ancestors. He was also the Head of State of another, very small independant country, which finds its present territories to be one house. This case concerns the Knights of Malta or to be more precise, the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta. Of all orders of this type, this is certainly the most distinguished. It has a long and fascinating history and also claims the right to create titles. Those who have been honoured form an interesting group and include Count John McCormack, the late Irish tenor.

To return to the Vatican, since most of the Popes were Italian, most of the princely descendants also have this nationality. They are referred to under their present names, later on.

[Return](#)

Italy

About one senior European title in three comes from the area now called Italy. And, since many Italian dukes and princes also hold at least one other title of comparable rank, the proportion is really much higher.

The reasons for this are partly historical and partly a matter of tradition. Italy only became one unified country towards the end of the XIX Century. Before that, it was a diffuse collection of states, duchies and minor kingdoms. It is said that even after the Second World War only 30% of the citizens could speak pure Italian, the rest spoke a form of patois, peculiar to their region.

This diversity of sources for obtaining ennoblement is reflected in the wide variety of traditions of inheritance. We have, therefore, tried to give an indication in each case.

The main source of these senior titles is the South. Naples and Sicily were important from early times. Frederick I Barbarossa, 1122-1190, was the Holy Roman Emperor and fought continually against the Pope. Emperor Frederick II, 1194-1250, was also King of Sicily. He was known as *Stupor Mundi*, the Wonder of the World.

Later Naples and Sicily came under the influence of Spain. Spanish kings either ruled directly or were represented by members of their families. The Spanish tradition is therefore strong in that titles can pass through the female line. A very large number of dukes and princes have gained their honours thanks to an inheritance from a marriage. Unlike Spain, however, it is very rare, nowadays, to find a woman actually being the bearer of the title.

Spain, Napoleon and others also ruled over parts of the North of Italy, at various times, and were prepared to reward their followers with titles. Many Northerners looked to the Austrian Empire for advancement, so it is not unusual to find princes of the Holy Roman Empire numbered amongst Italian families.

Then there is the Holy See. Papal titles were awarded until quite recent times and there is no bar, theoretically, why they should not continue to be so. Many of these were, until the 1970s, known as the Black Aristocracy. They assisted the Pope on ceremonial occasions, usually dressed in black. Such families include the Massimo, Orsini, Ruspoli and Colonnas. Many of these still live in their original palaces, which can be so sumptuous that even a French Minister might feel a twinge of jealousy.

With these titles, some pass only on the basis of primogeniture, usually male. Some can pass through a daughter, in default of a son. Some apply only to the holder of the honour and his wife. Some also carry a distinction for the son, or all male children, or indeed all children and even all members of the family. It all depends on the creation.

There are two other distinctions, which really only apply to Italy. The first is the right to be addressed as *don* or *donna* (lord or lady). This honour is much prized but does not apply, as it would in Spain, to all holders of senior titles. It is a distinction separately awarded and separately recorded.

Another peculiarity to Italy is the honour of "noble" or "patrician". These are really buried in the Middle Ages, where they carried with them special privileges and duties. Each independent city maintained rolls and those entitled were carefully inscribed. Even today, despite the fact that they are little more than historical relics, they are still cherished and many holders like to be so addressed.

When Italy became one country, various efforts were made to tidy up the registers of exactly who was entitled to honours. A Senatorial Commission was created to sort the matter out. This was also done in Russia some time earlier. However, not everyone wished to co-operate with a regime that was not universally accepted. In the end, though, most did and we try to give at least one of the dates when these titles were centrally registered. The fact

that were not enrolled, however, should not be taken as an indication that they are not perfectly authentic.

Before leaving this section, mention should be made of the remarkable Caracciolo family. No fewer than eleven different branches hold the rank of prince or duke; often both. Not only that but many still have, as an address, a palace with the same name as the title. There is nothing comparable anywhere in the world.

[Return](#)

Poland

Poland has had a troubled history. From the late Middle Ages it was an independent kingdom - almost an empire in its own right. There were, under its control, Poland itself, known as the Crown (Korona), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Byelorussia and part of what we now call the Ukraine but was then known as Ruthenia. Lithuania, itself, had covered a huge area at one time.

This state of affairs came to an end towards the final years of the XVIII Century, when the country was divided between Prussia, Austria and Russia. Inevitably, therefore, the influence of these three countries have had an effect.

From quite early times, as in some other countries, the nobility formed a crucial part of the social structure. The nobles elected the king, who remained for the rest of his life. He might come from their own number or be a complete foreigner. In practice, in later times, it was quite often someone who was not of Polish origin. The nobles also elected the Sejm, the Parliament. Each noble had equal rights in both these procedures. In addition, senior ranks in the army, the church and the civil administration were considered as the preserve of the nobility.

Not that there was any shortage of recruits. All legitimate children of a noble inherited his privileges and, eventually, this class comprised about one person in ten in the country. In addition, there were additions from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, as courtiers and almost anyone who distinguished himself, in almost every imaginable field, was raised in status.

Although, in theory, all nobles were equal, this was not the case in practice. Those with great estates and influential friends naturally exercised considerably more authority than those without these advantages. So, inevitably, certain families grew in power and were rewarded with special privileges as a result.

However, despite its history, Polish heraldry is quite different from that of the rest of Europe. A coat of arms could be inherited by all the children of a noble, be they male or female, and these in turn could pass their rights on to their children. No differences were required since, presumably, the devices had never been important in time of battle.

But what makes Polish arms so unusual is that they are independent of the family. A coat of arms has its own existence, with its own name.

The same device could be used by several families, sometimes hundreds of quite unrelated families. By contrast, sometimes members of the same family used quite different designs. The older the arms, the more people there are likely to be using it. It is therefore quite useless to try to trace any family connection nor history, for that matter, by looking up the coat of arms of any particular individual. The only possible exception to this is the well-known rider on his horse that is so closely associated with Lithuania and appears, also, on some Russian shields; Galitzine, for example. The name of the coat of arms of some of the princes does sometimes bear a relation to the name of the prince - such as Drucki-Lubecki.

In the pages that follow, since few Poles have a family name, in the Western European sense, we have given the name of their coat of arms. But, just because two or more families bear the same device it should not automatically be assumed that they are in any way related. They may be and, if this is the case, we try to draw attention to the fact.

[Return](#)

Portugal

Portugal was established, within its present borders, around 1280. For sixty years, until 1640, however, it was ruled by the Kings of Spain and so Portuguese dukes follow many of the same rules. Indeed, it is not always easy to decide which is their their real country of origin.

Portugal was, though, a great power in its own right - at least in the New World. The Pope, himself, finally felt constrained to divide this entity into two parts. Such explorers as Prince Henry the Navigator and Vasco da Gama had opened up many of those parts of the world which had previously been unknown to Europeans.

After 1640, Lisbon took great pains to ally itself to England against the pretension of Madrid.

[Return](#)

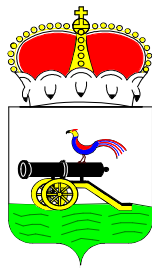
Russia

Heraldry, in Russia, made an appearance later than in the Western European countries. This is largely because the traditions and history of the region are so different.

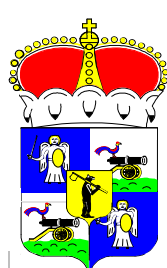
For a long time, the country comprised little more than the area around Moscow, a relatively minute principality. This can be dated about 1300. A century and a half later, however, the territory had expanded considerably.

By then, the various principalities, were beginning to get established. These included Rostov, Galicia and so on.

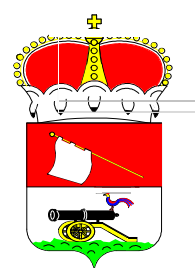
Roughly half of all the Russian princes descend from one man, Vladimir Sviatoslavich, variously known as the Christianiser of Russia or the Charlemagne of Russia. In fact he was Great Prince of Kiev and his dates are c.956-1015. Kiev, today, is the capital of the Ukraine. His numerous descendants take their names from their estates but a connection can be made through their coats-of-arms.



Karpov and Rzhevsky



Lvov and Shakhovsky



Tatischev

In each case a bird of paradise, seated on a cannon, features

By 1584, Russia was already an empire, with huge territories which included Siberia, the land of the Cossacks, down to the Caspian Sea and so on. By 1725, further acquisitions included parts of the Ukraine, Estonia, Livonia and parts of Asia.

It was not long afterwards, 1722 in fact, that Peter the Great decided that some sort of order had to be established. Each territory absorbed had its own customs and social structure and, inevitably, its own pattern of entitling and rewarding distinguished people and former rulers. A degree of unity had to be achieved and so, to this end, he created an official Heraldry Office. This was under the direction of a Master of Heraldry and under the general supervision of the Senate (a fact sometimes referred to when Russian families are described).

The first Vice-Master was an Italian. His duties included the creating of civic arms and putting general order into the system. By the time we reach Tsar Paul, a fresh effort was made to put uniformity into the whole enterprise. He only reigned from 1796-1801 but, from the second year of his rule, the government published lists of all those who had existing arms and those who were honoured, from time to time, thereafter. This continued for some time but not every family was prepared to cooperate; as was the case in France, when Louis XVIII tried much the same venture. They did not help their own cases, since many are now looked upon with distrust, when really they were just too proud to fill in yet another form. These lists included, amongst more junior levels, those of the old aristocracy (before 1685), those ennobled since and any foreign aristocrat who had, by then, been accepted as a Russian national.

This last case became more and more frequent as the power of the Tsar grew. Many remote princelings decided that there was probably more to be gained in the service of the Tsar of all the Russias, than by ruling some mountain territory or some remote part of Asia.

Thanks to the first Vice-Master, Russian heraldry leans heavily on that of Western Europe and, more particularly, on that of Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. For this reason, the prince's "bonnet" is the same as used in those two systems. But, it must be said, that the designs on Russian shields can show considerably more imagination. Not for Russian heralds the old adage, "qui porte le moins est le plus". Many coats of arms are minor works of art in their own right and a great deal can be learnt by studying them. Unfortunately, in many cases, the precise reason why a particular design was chosen seems to have been lost.

It should also be noticed that the rules governing such matters, as observed in the West, are treated in a more relaxed fashion in Russia. Several families use identical arms but they are related, albeit very distantly. Otherwise, readers will find that he is in reasonably familiar territory, when he studies Russian shields.

Other favourite symbols include bears, eagles and the rider on a white horse - which usually denotes Lithuanian descent. This may, today, be quite a small country but it was once an empire. Also recognised as Russian princes were those who left the Golden Horde to be accepted by the Tsar and refugees from other empires, Byzantium, Trebizond via Georgia and even one Chinese prince, who dates from centuries before Christ.



Kurakin



Meschersky



Volkonsky

There is no doubt that the Master and Vice-Master of Arms were men of great artistry. Russian coats-of-arms, therefore, are the most interesting to be found - and each design has its own significance.

But what do we make of the three candles on the back of the chair in the Galitzine (or Golitsyn) family or the chair, come to that? A connection with the Kurakins is clear.

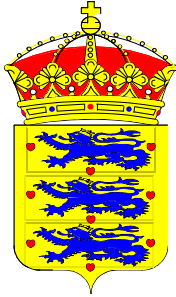


Galitzine

[Return](#)

Scandinavia

The three kingdoms, which make up this entity, share much of each others' history



Denmark



Sweden



Norway

Denmark dominated the area, until the extinction of the old line, in 1448, when the House of Oldenburg took over the throne. Part of their domains included Norway, Greenland and some of the islands to the north of Scotland. King Canute, King of England, came in fact from Denmark. Only the royal family has provided people with titles.

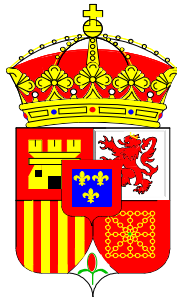
Sweden really came into being in 1523, when Gustavus Vasa founded the modern kingdom. A century later, his grandson Gustavus II established the country as an important power. By 1720, the heiress was supplanted by her husband, the Prince of Hesse, who became Frederick II. But dynastic problems succeeded each other and the last king of this line died in exile in 1837.

Meanwhile, the French had arranged for one of Napoleon's marshals, Bernadotte, to be installed as monarch and the House of Bernadotte flourishes to this day.

Norway: In 1905, the independantly-minded Norwegians decided to break away from their previous rulers and established a separate kingdom. They chose a yong Danish prince as the new monarch to mark this event and he took the throne under the name of Haakon VII - which emphasised the fact that they had a long and distinguished past of their own.

[Return](#)

Spain



Spain has a long and important history. The modern kingdom is made up from those of Castile, Leon, Aragon and the Basque country. Overall, is placed an escutcheon as a reminder of the house of Borbón's French origins.

For a long period, the area was ruled by the Moors and Cordoba still presents tourists with the strange anomaly of a Catholic cathedral inside a Moslem mosque. But it was not until 1492, when Isabella of Leon and Castile and her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, finally subjugated Granada, the last Mohammedan province in the peninsular. Their only son died early and the succession went, in 1516, to Ferdinand's eldest daughter's oldest son.

Charles was a member of the Habsburg family and three years later he was elected as Holy Roman Emperor. For the next two centuries, the Habsburgs juggled with their vast domains, which were a constant source of instability. The last of this line was Charles II who died, a childless and hopeless imbecile, in 1700. He left his throne to the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV of France - but on condition that the duke abrogate all his claims to that country. No-one in Europe wanted to see two such potent powers united at any time in the future.

While there are no Russian dukes, there are no Spanish princes - at least outside the royal family. Those who had acquired this honour, in one of the other Habsburg territories were required to exchange this rank for that of a Spanish duke.

The Kings of Spain still create new dukes. The present monarch's first prime minister became the Duke of Suarez. Señor Samaranch, who dominated the Olympic Games for such a long time, became a marquis.

There are certain singularities concerning Spanish titles. In the absence of a male heir, they pass through the female line. This means that titles last for a considerably longer time than in most countries. It can mean, however, that the family name can change and this, in turn, can make the construction of family trees much more complicated.

There is also a rank, that of Grandee, that does not exist elsewhere. .

There is a degree of mysticism about some of the oldest Spanish families, going back to the expulsion of the Moors and the gradual establishment of the kingdoms of Aragon, Castille and Leon.

But, perhaps, a turning point can be said to have been reached when Charles Quint appointed the twenty-five originals Grantees in 1520. They were drawn from twenty great families and readers will notice that not all were dukes. The first outward sign of their new dignity was to keep their hats on, in the presence of the king, and to be addressed as "cousin". They could not be imprisoned (without the special sanction of the monarch) and automatically bore high rank in times of war.

Slowly the honour was extended to two dukes of Portuguese origin, Abrantes and Aveyro, and then to all dukes. Later, as a mark of special distinction, certain individuals of lesser degree were so honoured, as were some foreigners.

This curious rank is still much prized and carriers of the style always make mention of the fact. The original Grantees were:

Title	Family name at that time
Duke d'Alba	Toledo
Duke d'Alburquerque	La Cueva
Marquis d'Aguilar	Manrique
Duke d'Arcos	Ponce de Leon
Marquis d'Astorga	Osorio
Duke de Béjar	Zúñiga
Count-Duke de Benavente	Pimentel
Count de Cabra	Córdoba
Duke de Cardona	Cardona
Marquis de Denia	Sandoval
Duke d'Escalona	Acuña
Duke de Frias	Velasco
Duke de Gandía	Borja
Duke d'Infantado	Mendoza
Count de Lemos	Castro
Count de Lerin	Navarra
Duke de Medina de Rioseco	Enriquez
Duke de Medina-Sidonia	Guzmán
Duke de Medinaceli	La Cerda
Count de Miranda	Zúñiga
Duke de Nájera	Manrique
Marquis de Priego	Córdoba
Duke de Segorbe	Aragón
Duke de Villhermosa	Aragón
Count d'Ureña	Acuña

[Return](#)

United Kingdom



To understand these titles, one must have an appreciation of the country's history. Some titles are described as English, some as coming from Scotland. These were created before the union of the two, under James I & VI, in 1603; new titles, from then on, are described as British. It was not until 1707, though, that the two parliaments were unified.

James I, however, included Ireland in his coat of arms and the country soon became known, officially, as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, later reduced to Northern Ireland. Some titles were designated as Irish, all the same. The Duke of Abercorn, for example, has an Irish dukedom.

Succession: English titles are on the basis of male primogeniture, for the most part. Some very old creations can devolve onto a daughter, in default of a son. Scottish titles descend to a son but, if there is not one, it can then pass to a daughter. Strictly, if there is more than one daughter, Lord Lyon King of Arms designates which is to be the heiress. Some Scottish peerages are in abeyance - with two or three or more co-heiresses - until he has made his decision. Irish titles follow the system of male primogeniture. With some new creations, it should be noted, there were no obvious heirs. Since the purpose of awarding a peerage was to honour both the recipient and his family, the new title would therefore have immediately become extinct. In these cases the honour was accompanied by Special Remainder, allowing it to pass through a daughter, brother, even uncle and, from then on, in a more conventional pattern. There are a few examples of Special Destination, where a particular heir could be nominated. The earldom of Mountbatten is an example of the former (see Battenberg), the barony of Bridport is an example of the latter (see Bronte).

Courtesy Titles: The eldest son of a senior peer can use his secondary title as a courtesy. It must, however, be of a junior grade. If the duke has more than one duchy, his son is known as Marquess, Earl or whatever other rank the father possesses. Sons and daughters of dukes and marquesses are described as Lord Edward or Lady Rose etc. and then the family surname. Only the daughters, not the sons, of earls are so honoured. Titles are entirely personal. An exception, in theory, could be made in the case of, say, a Holy Roman Empire prince (the Duke of Marlborough, for example). However, no subject of the Queen would dream of so describing himself. In any case, King George V requested, in 1917, that while the holders of such titles could continue to claim them, during their lifetimes, any foreign titles should die with them. This has largely been ignored.

House of Lords: All English, British and United Kingdom peers were entitled to sit in the House of Lords. No Irish peer is; the Duke of Abercorn sits as Marquess of Abercorn - one of his lesser titles - which is a Great British creation dating from 1790. For a long time, the Scottish peers elected a certain number, from within their ranks, to sit in the Upper House.

This was changed in 1963 and after that all were entitled to a seat. Until the creation of the Irish Free State, the Irish peers also elected Representatives; this has now been discontinued. Scottish and Irish peers take precedence over British peers, of the same rank, created since the union.

Life Peers: There is an increasing proportion of these, following a general reluctance to give hereditary peerages. To an extent, these are senators and their titles die with them. In addition, there have always been a certain number of Law Lords and so-called Lords Spiritual, the two archbishops (Canterbury and York) and two dozen other bishops (all Church of England). These are on the same basis as life peers.

The House of Lords has recently been deprived of its its hereditary members, apart from nearly one hundred, who continue. Thus it is gradually taking the same shape of other upper Chambers.

[Return](#)

Note on Territorial Distribution

Many people who live, say, in France have titles which originate in a quite different country. Examples are Princes Woroniecki (Polish), Lobkowitz (Bohemian) or Dedeyan (Armenian). We have given preference, in this list, to the country of origin. This list is, therefore, fairly approximate.

1.	Austria	28
2.	Bohemia	3
3.	France	59
4.	Georgia	21
5.	Germany	101
6.	Greece	3
7.	Italy	236
8.	Misc	42
9.	Poland	16
10.	Portugal	5
11.	Rumania	4
12.	Russia	78
13.	SCV	2
14.	Spain	137
15.	United. Kingdom	28
16.	Various	46

[Return](#)