Abstract

Dynastic marriage - as an imperative dynastic activity performed at the top of a monarchy, reflected entirely the royal lineage and mostly the diplomatic policy of states. Because of its important symbolic functions and political considerations, imperial families put it at the top of the court agenda, in both East and West. However, unlike other historical institutions, this topic received little attention in scholarship for a long time, and only emerged with the rise of study a plurality of court models as well as material analysis on members of imperial families. By studying dynastic marriages in different societies - the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties - this thesis attempts to bring about a systematic overview of three major concerns in dynastic marriage, and will find out the nature of this institution and its core value to rulership. These concerns, namely bride selection, wedding ceremonies and throne succession, constitute the three chapters in the main body, with each chapter combining theoretical regulations with empirical findings.
Dynastic Marriage in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank to Ariadne Schmidt, Nicolas Vaibbourdt, and Paul Flather, for co-ordinating the fantastic MA programme in the universities of Leiden, Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Oxford; to my supervisors Jeroen Duindam (Leiden) and Robert Evans (Oxford), for their criticisms and insightful comments on this MA thesis; to Derek Beales (Cambridge) and Andrew Thompson (Cambridge), for their continuous and generous moral and academic support; to Alasdair Thanisch, Beatriz Álvarez, Sarah Ní Chinnsealaigh, for their disinterested support; and to the staff of the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna for their helpful assistance in the archives.
INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the instrument which sets the rules governing a relationship, defines its participants, and establishes its behaviours and obligations. The higher the rank in a society, the more restrictive matrimonial ranges become, since at these levels, questions beyond a simple choice of partners are at stake. These matters are especially significant for the extended family, of which the dynasty is an example, where a sense of common familial purpose is strong and where the group exercises broad social controls over the child.¹

Marriage alliances were a central issue in the networks of dynastic families, confirming peace between powers and entailing the mission of producing heirs to the throne. However, did dynastic marriage function in the same way at different courts? What is the nature of this institution and its value to rulership? Only a comparison that studies this institution in different societies can answer these questions.

My intention is to focus on dynastic marriages in Austria and in China. The Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties are suitable counterparts in terms of historical context for comparative analysis for the following reasons: first of all, they are contemporaries. The Ch’ing dynasty was officially established in 1644 and replaced by the Republic of China in 1912. The Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty was founded upon the death of Charles VI, when the Habsburg dynasty ended in the male line. Maria Theresa’s marriage with Francis Stephen in 1736 created the Habsburg-Lorraine line and the house ruled until 1918. As the last dynasties in China and Austria, the large overlapping period makes the comparison synchronic. Secondly, aspects of both dynasties have received abundant attention from scholars, which provides a basic foundation for comparison. Thus, a comparative perspective on the Habsburg-Lorraine and Ch’ing dynasties offers a great opportunity to take insight into the different status of women and the relation between dynastic marriage and rulership at the time.

There are several conspicuous distinctions between these two dynasties and their marriage practices, which should be laid out at the beginning. First of all, although both dynasties have different names to their predecessors, the establishment of the Ch’ing dynasty is an outcome of successful overthrow, whereas that of the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty was not a break so much as a peaceful connection of two families by marriage. Secondly, although both the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine are called dynasties, unlike the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, the name of the Ch’ing dynasty and the name of the ruling house (i.e. Aisin Gioro family) are not identical. Thirdly, the Ch’ing emperor is a hereditary title, thus, alliances made with other ethnic groups through dynastic marriage in the Ch’ing dynasty were internal. Whereas in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties, theoretically, dynastic marriage was conducted externally as the title of Holy Roman Emperor is elective instead of hereditary. Fourthly, the number of legal partners of an emperor in the two dynasties is significant. Brides for the Ch’ing emperors were selected from the triennial draft of hsiu-nü (beautiful women) who were daughters of officials above certain rank in the banners. The twelve emperors in the Ch’ing claimed 219 consorts (including wives and concubines), whereas in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, the spouses of emperors were chosen according to a strict monogamous system, in which the emperor could have only one legal partner at a time. The seven emperors in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty claimed only eleven empresses.

Studying a representative of each dynasty not only reduces the degree of over-simplification and generalisation, but also brings the concrete matrimonial regulation to the real world. From the actual practice of matrimonial ritual, the second part of each chapter carries out a case-study by comparing the chosen emperor of each dynasty in terms of bride selection, betrothal agreement, and succession system. The choice of Ch’ien-lung in the Ch’ing dynasty and Joseph II in the Habsburg

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2 Banner system see Chapter 1.
3 In this thesis, only the marriages of Emperors of Holy Roman Empire (Franz I. Stephan, Joseph II., Leopold II., Franz II.), and that of the Emperors of Austria (Franz I.-same person as the last Emperor of Holy Roman Empire Franz II. after the dissolution of the HRE in 1806, Ferdinand I., Franz Joseph I., and Karl I.) will be analysed, the marriages of the cadet lines in the House of Habsburg-Lorraine are not the main objects and will not be presented in detail.
dynasty is based on their similarities: they were contemporaries - Ch’ien-lung (1711-1799)/ Joseph II (1741-1790); both installed two empresses during their lifetime, and both received the most academic attention due to their reformed rulership, making themselves more comparable than other emperors.

Three questions define the structure of my thesis:

1. How did the regulations of bride selection, wedding ceremonies and order of succession develop in the Ch’ing and the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties?
2. What are the similarities and distinctivenesses of dynastic marriages in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties?
3. What is the function of dynastic marriage and its value to rulership?

Religion, although an important criterion to choose marriage partners in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, will not be discussed in this thesis. The first reason is the very different nature and influence of Shamanism in the Ch’ing and Catholicism in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties: Shamanism had less influence in choosing the Manchu imperial marriage partners in comparison to that of Catholicism at Viennese court. The second reason is that the influence of religion needs to be analysed in many aspects due to its complexity and historical evolution in a certain period, thus, it should be left for more specialised research. Three concerns of dynastic marriage, namely bride selection, wedding ritual and succession system, constitute the three chapters in this thesis. In the first part of each chapter, the pattern of dynastic marriages in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties will be given. By means of listing the number of intermarriages and the procedure of bride selection (Chapter 1); explaining the rules of betrothal agreement and wedding ceremony (Chapter 2), and succession system (Chapter 3) in these two dynasties, this part provides an overview of the preferential alliances, rituals of matrimonial events, and regulations of throne succession in the two dynasties. Subsequently, the similarities and differences of dynastic marriages in the Ch’ing and the Habsburg-Lorraine will be laid out. In the second part of each chapter,
empirical evidence is reviewed in light of the pattern of the first part. Through a closer look at the chosen emperor in each dynasty - Ch’ien-lung (1735-1796) in the Ch’ing and Joseph II (1780-1790) in the Habsburg-Lorraine - the second part exemplifies how in practice dynastic marriages were conducted in the Ch’ing and the Habsburg-Lorraine.

The main finding of this thesis is that the rules of matrimony in the ruling house in both dynasties developed over time, thus it will be ahistorical to illustrate and compare the pattern of the regulations as invariable over a period of more than two centuries. Nevertheless, despite the differences in the specific marriage acts between the Ch’ing and the Habsburg-Lorraine, and between the ruling house and commoners, there are several conspicuous similarities in the pattern of dynastic marriages in the two dynasties. The first is summarised by Fichtner (1976)\textsuperscript{4} and Rawski (1991)\textsuperscript{5} from an overview of the affiliated houses with the ruling one: regardless of the time, there is a high percentage of repeated intermarriage in both dynasties. The second lies in the preferences in the choice of the empress and the successor, a decision made upon careful consideration. The social background of the empress and the birth order of the emperor’s sons are the key elements in the decision. The third is that the ruling houses in both dynasties resemble each other in the way they implemented marital regulations and customs: though highly compliant with regulation, the actual dynastic marriages were also influenced by the individual personalities of those who were involved in the decision-making process. Nonetheless, tradition still played a decisive role in the marriages. These similarities clearly show strong political considerations, leading to the conclusion that dynastic marriage functioned primarily as a political unit used to create kinship bonds and control inheritance, key to maintaining and reproducing a dynasty.

\textbf{Literature Review}

\textbf{Ch’ing dynastic marriage}


\textsuperscript{5} E. S. Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage and Problems of Rulership,’ \textit{Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society} (1991), pp. 170-203.
There is a considerable amount of literature on the Ch’ing dynastic marriage. Rawski depicts the preferential alliances of Ch’ing rulers as follows:

the marriage patterns of the Ch’ing emperors who ruled China from 1644 to 1911 were fundamentally shaped by rulership strategies that influenced the stratification system in several distinctive ways. By limiting marital alliances to the elite of the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese banner forces, the Ch’ing created a form of political endogamy that excluded ties between the ruling house and the Han Chinese bureaucrats.6

She also reminds us that the Ch’ing did not have a truly polygamous system of marriage and argues that the system of imperial concubinage was distinctive, being neither strictly monogamous nor polygamous. Yang Chen shows four phases of throne succession in Ch’ing history by scrutinising each succession case. Her knowledge of Manchu enabled her to use Manchu archives, making her research extraordinarily valuable.7 Li Xiao-li studied the convention of the Ch’ing dynastic marriage and pictured the spectacle of the wedding ceremony at the time. Her use of archival materials enhances her academic credibility and provides solid foundation for the comparison.8

**Habsburg dynastic marriage**

The literature on Habsburg dynasty is rich. Duindam brings to life the courtiers and servants of the imperial court in Vienna in his book *Vienna and Versailles*.9 The milieu in which dynastic marriage was conducted as studied by Duindam is the main source of the background of the Habsburg dynastic marriage in my thesis. The clear illustration of the relation between the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy by Evans and Wilson provides an outline of the relationships between the Hasbburgs and other ruling families within the Empire.10

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6 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.170.
However, the relation between dynastic marriage and rulership in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty is missing, leading to the dependence on studies of dynastic marriage at an earlier period. Fichtner’s *Dynastic Marriage in Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Diplomacy and Statecraft* examines Habsburg betrothal contracts in detail, arguing that the gift from the bride and from the groom was a carefully calculated result as both sides usually committed themselves to giving one another the same amount of money. In the individual case in this thesis, the marriage of Joseph II., Beales’s book *Joseph II* provides a full-scale portrait of Joseph II after fifty years’ study. Beales’s exhibition of the correspondence from emperors, empresses and chancellors at the court provides the closest connection to the sentiment of the contemporaries.

**Historical Comparison**

Comparative history as a genre still seems in need of theoretical legitimation. Osterhammel remarks in his *Sozialgeschichte im Zivilisationsvergleich* that for the civilisation comparison, there are few examples, no methodology and no agreement on a fundamental canon. Under this circumstance, several books and articles devoted to the subject by practising historians are the main reference for my thesis. Kaelble's *Der historische Vergleich* is one of them, which provides four types of historical comparison.

**Sources**

**Sources on Ch’ing dynasty**

The archive on Ch’ing dynastic marriage is well preserved. The ritual procedures are described in detail in the *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (Administrative Regulations of the Ch’ing Dynasty), which was codified during Kuang-hsu’s reign by the secretaries of the grand council. The record of the individual emperor was edited under the command of Beiyang government and compiled in *Ch’ing-

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11 Fichtner, ‘Dynastic Marriage’.
Particularly important to the case study in this thesis is *Ch'ing-kao-ts'ung shih-lu*, where the history of the Ch’ien-lung Reign was recorded during the reign of his successor, Chia-Ch’ing. The punishment of illegal marriage is recorded in *Ta-Ch’ing-lü-li* (*Great Ch’ing Legal Code*), the only legal code in the Ch’ing dynasty. These archival materials are descriptive and came from the perspective of the rulers.

**Sources on Habsburg dynasty**

The archival sources on Habsburg dynastic marriage are preserved in Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv, a branch of the Austrian state archives in Vienna. General information on Habsburg dynastic marriage can be found under the series of Hofakten des Ministeriums des Inneren (*Court Act of the Ministry of the Interior*). Individual marriage contracts are held under the series of Ministerium des kaiserlichen Hauses: Vermählungen (*Ministry of the Imperial House Weddings*). These sources are descriptive and juridical, and also represent the view of the rulers.

**Methodology**

1) Comparative: in this thesis, I compare the institution of dynastic marriage in the Ch’ing and Habsburg dynasties, aiming to better define the nature of dynastic marriage and, at the same time, elicit the different social conditions in these two dynasties according to the differences of regulations of dynastic marriage in the two courts. The analytical intention (analyse causes, develop typologies, or both), the first among four intentions developed by Kaelble, will be dominant in this comparison as the thesis will collect an equal basis in sources on both sides. In this way, dynastic marriage in the Ch’ing and Habsburg dynasties will receive equivalent attention and be compared symmetrically.

2) Quantitative and Qualitative: the strength of quantitative approach is that it leads to present larger patterns of development across time and place, and hence to make visible pathways and experiences in historical perspectives alternative to our own. The problem is that the larger the territory covered, the more abstract the study becomes. This thesis, therefore, combines quantitative
and qualitative method - bringing all emperors in the two dynasties together, but also detailing one
dynastic marriage in each dynasty.

3) Approach of anthropology and sociology: my thesis will be conducted in an
interdisciplinary approach. This approach is addressed by Fichtner:\textsuperscript{15}

Historical Comparison requires not only history discipline, to answer this sort of
question, the work of structural anthropologists and sociologists seems promisingly
helpful, if only because both disciplines have analysed extensively the institutions of
kinship, marriage, and the family - all basic building blocks in dynastic politics.

Different from the current ideal of marriage, which involves a relationship of love, marriage
historically functioned as above all an economic and political unit used to create kinship bonds,
control inheritance, and share resources and labor. The combination of historical and
anthropological concepts enable me to understand the relationship of dynastic marriage in Ch’ing
and Habsburg-Lorraine diplomacy not only through the rationalisations of contemporaries but also
through the nature of the institution itself.

\textsuperscript{15} Fichtner, ‘Dynastic Marriage’, p. 246.
CHAPTER 1 BRIDE SELECTION

From a comparison of the number of the consorts, the emperors in the Ch’ing dynasty and the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty possessed, one could easily conclude that the difference is simply between polygamy and monogamy in these two societies. However, by scrutinising the status of the women in the harem in the Ch’ing dynasty, this assumption will be proved inaccurate in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter aims to provide an overview of the bride selection procedures in the two dynasties and the political and cultural backgrounds behind the selection systems.

Polygamy versus Monogamy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>emperor</th>
<th>consorts (including empress)</th>
<th>empress (entitled alive)</th>
<th>empress (including empress titled posthumously)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurhaci</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hung Taiji</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shun-chih</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’ang-hsi</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yung-cheng</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’ien-lung</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chia-Ch’ing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tao-kuang</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsien-feng</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’ung-chih</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuang-hsu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsuan-t’ung</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>219</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The twelve emperors\(^1\) in the Ch’ing claimed 219 consorts; whereas in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, the seven emperors in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty installed only eleven empresses.

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\(^1\) Including Nurhaci and his son Huang-tai-Chih, who are the rulers of the Manchu before the official establishment of the Ch’ing dynasty. Although Nurhaci never became emperor, he is widely regarded as the founder and the first leader of the Ch’ing Dynasty outside China.
Table 2
Empress(es) of each emperor in the Habsburg- Lorraine dynasty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reign</th>
<th>Emperor</th>
<th>Empress</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1736-1765</td>
<td>Franz I. Stephan</td>
<td>Maria Theresia</td>
<td>1736-1765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765-1790</td>
<td>Joseph II.</td>
<td>Isabella von Bourbon-Parma</td>
<td>1760-1763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Josepha von Bayern</td>
<td>1765-1767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1792</td>
<td>Leopold II.</td>
<td>Maria Ludovica von Bourbon-Spanien</td>
<td>1764-1792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-1806 (Emperor of Holy Roman Empire) 1804-1835 (Emperor of Austria)</td>
<td>Franz II.(1792-1806)/ Franz I.(1804-1835)</td>
<td>Elisabeth Wilhelmina</td>
<td>1788-1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Theresa von Bourbon-Neapel</td>
<td>1790-1807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Ludovika Beatrix von Modena</td>
<td>1808-1816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Karoline Auguste von Bayern</td>
<td>1816-1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1848</td>
<td>Ferdinand I.</td>
<td>Maria Anna von Savoyen</td>
<td>1831-1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848-1916</td>
<td>Franz Joseph I.</td>
<td>Elisabeth in Bayern</td>
<td>1854-1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-1918</td>
<td>Karl I.</td>
<td>Zita von Bourbon-Parma</td>
<td>1911-1922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1\(^2\) summarises the total number of consorts (including the number of empresses) of the twelve emperors in the Ch’ing dynasty. Table 2\(^3\) lists the empress of each emperor in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty. The difference in the number of the consorts of the emperors in these two dynasties is striking. The Viennese court applied a strict monogamous system. The only two emperors who installed more than one empress in their lifetime, Joseph II. and Franz II., wed different woman in a chronological order due to the death of the previous empress; whereas in the Ch’ing dynasty, every emperor owned a harem composed of more than one woman.

However, the difference between the two dynasties should not be simply concluded as polygamy versus monogamy. Although the Ch’ing rulers could have serial marriages, they were only allowed to have one empress at a time - in accordance with Han-Chinese custom.

\(^3\) B. Hamann, *Die HABSBURGER: ein biographisches Lexikon*, edn (Vienna, 1988). The table is summarised according to the records in this book.
Nurhaci owned a harem of fourteen wives, whose status did not differ from one to another and were equality addressed as fujin (lady) in Manchu language.\(^4\) By contrast, the Han Chinese patriarchal system strictly forbade polygamy. The stipulation in the Ming Legal Code, that ‘妻在，以妾为妻者，杖九十，并改正。若有妻更娶妻者，亦杖九十’;\(^5\) was later endorsed by the Great Ch’ing Legal Code: the Han Chinese custom of ‘serial monogamy’\(^6\) by the Manchu rulers to replace their own custom of polygamy. All the consorts of the Ch’ing emperors, including the future empress, who remained unknown while being selected into the harem of the (future) emperor, were chosen indiscriminately from the triennial draft of hsiu-nü. This hsiu-nü were either immediately selected as wives or concubines for princes or the emperor, or became ladies-in-waiting. Those who entered the imperial harem were graded into an eight-rank hierarchy\(^7\) differentiated by privilege and living allowance.

This complex selection procedure was not found at their western counterpart’s court. The Habsburg emperors could only have one legal partner at one time (but could remarry after her death). In Salic Law, a legal marriage could be contracted between an adult freeman and an adult free woman,\(^8\) prohibiting additional partners. However, we should not overlook the illegal partners of the Habsburg emperors. Mistresses were not uncommon at the Viennese court since the nineteenth century, and were ‘considered perfectly acceptable for noblemen to keep’\(^9\).

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\(^4\) Ting Yi-chuang, ‘Manchu tsao-ch’i te yi-fu-yi-chi-chih chi tsai Ch’ing-tai te yi-ts’un’, Ch’ing-shih-yen-chiu, (Beijing, 1998), pp. 37-47. According to Chao-erh-hsün, eds., Ch’ing-shi-k’ao, (316 vols., Beijing, 1927), ccxiv, when Tai-tsu (meaning the founder of a dynasty, here it refers to Nurhaci) started his career, regulations were rough and incomplete. There were no court titles and all his wives were called Fu-chin, complying with the old convention. The later historical records the title as fei, which is a paraphrase instead of the original appellation.

\(^5\) My translation is ‘if a concubine were treated as a wife when the wife is still at her position, the husband should be flogged by a stick ninety times and the mistake should be corrected; if a man married another wife when he already has one, he should be punished in the same way’. See T‘u-Ch’ing-li-li.


\(^7\) The eight ranks see pp. 34-5.


Comparing the status of the concubines in the Ch’ing dynasty to that of mistresses in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, both mostly came from aristocratic circles, rendered ‘services’ to the emperors, and received remunerations. Yet the concubines in the Ch’ing belonged to the emperor, whereas the mistresses in the Habsburg-Lorraine could be other men’s wives. Another difference is that the son of the concubines in the Ch’ing could be the heir to the throne, which was not acceptable in their western counterpart.

**Internal versus External?**

Theoretically, it seems that before the Austrian Empire in 1804, the status of the bride was legally equal to that of the groom in the case of the Habsburg-Lorraine, while being subordinate to the emperor in the Ch’ing dynasty. Yet the empirical practices in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty did not comply with this theory.

The Holy Roman Emperor was elected from several eligible electors from a select group of leading families ruling conglomerates of major fiefs as hereditary possessions. The House of Habsburg amassed the largest territories, and continued to obtain election to the Holy Roman title after 1438 until the demise of the Empire in 1806, with only one break in 1742-5 when the elector of Bavaria (later Karl VII.) was chosen.\(^\text{10}\) As the empirical evidence shows, the incumbent usually assured the election of his own heir as the successor unless his family died out. And as *Overhaupt* (overlord), ‘the emperor was always lord of lords; the highest feudal lord.’\(^\text{11}\)

In the Ch’ing, however, the supremacy of the imperial family was indisputable. The Ch’ing rulers regarded themselves as the rulers of the whole world;\(^\text{12}\) the Ch’ing government did not


\(^{\text{12}}\) It should be noted that until the reign of Ch’ien-lung, seven treaties were concluded between the Ch’ing government and other countries. i.e. one during the K’ang-hsi Reign, four during the Yung-cheng Reign, and two during the Ch’ien-lung Reign. The total number of treaties in the Ch’ing dynasty accounts for one hundred and eighty-six. The most important two treaties concluded among the aforementioned seven are Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 (the first treaty between China and another country in accordance with the standard of international law) and Treaty of Kyakhta of 1727 between the Ch’ing Empire and Imperial Russia, Tien Tao, *Ch’ing-chao Tiao-yue Ch’uan-Ji. (Compilation of Ch’ing Treaties)*, (3 vols., Heilongjiang, 1991).
normalise diplomatic relations until the establishment of *Tsung-li-ya-men* in 1861 (the governmental body in charge of foreign affairs in imperial China during the late Ch’ing dynasty). Before that, the agency in the Ch’ing government that dealt with the Ch’ing Empire’s tributary countries and western peoples who came by sea is called *Li-fan-yuan* (Office for Relations with Principalities), treating all other states as vassal states. In this context, alliances with other ethnic groups through dynastic marriages in the Ch’ing dynasty were concluded internally.

Thus, although the head of House of the Habsburg-Lorraine was notionally elected to be the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the continuity of their election made the empire ‘a suzerain rather than a sovereign state’¹³, making the scale of the dynastic marriages internal, both in the Ch’ing dynasty and in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty.

As the rulers of lands, would they chose to make as many alliances as possible to expand their territories? Table 3¹⁴ summarises the total number of Ch’ing consorts, Table 4 lists the empress of each emperor in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty. The striking fact, however, is the common pattern of repetitive marriage to the same family in these two dynasties in the period studied.

Empresses of the Ch’ing court, who held the title while alive, only came from select Manchu and Mongol clans. Rawski concludes, ‘of the 641 Manchu clans listed in the *Pa-ch’i Man-chou shih-tsu t’ung-p’u* compiled in 1745, only 31 were favoured by the Aisin Gioro lineage with marriage.’¹⁵ Among the Manchu clans, the Niohuru clan shows an exceptionally close bond with the ruling house: 25% of empresses, 6.6% of princes’ wives, and 6.3% of princesses’ husbands were of the Niohuru; The Ch’ing ruling house also displayed a strong preference for Mongol spouses: 25% of Mongolian empress, and 56% of the Mongol’s male descendants and 16% of the Mongol daughters marrying into the Aisin Gioro main line. Among the Mongolian clans, the Khorchins, being the earliest Mongol allies of the Manchus, were particularly favoured: one

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¹⁴ The emperors in the table begins with Nurgaci. This table is illustrated by Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.175.
¹⁵ Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.174.
empress, one prince’s wife and twelve sons-in-law.  

Similarly, of the eleven marriages concluded by the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, four took place with the House of Bourbon (two of them with the cadet line the House of Bourbon-Parma and one of them with another cadet line the House of Bourbon Two Sicilies), three with the House of Wittelsbach, followed by one with the House of Lorraine, one the House of Württemberg, and one with the House of Savoy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Empress (titled alive)</th>
<th>Princes’ wives</th>
<th>Princesses’ husbands</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongol</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of women</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Manchu affines |           |     |       |     |
| Donggo         | 0         | 3   | 1     | 4   |
| Fuca           | 1         | 5   | 3     | 9   |
| Guololo        | 0         | 2   | 1     | 3   |
| Guwalgiya      | 0         | 6   | 4     | 9   |
| Irgen Gioro    | 0         | 3   | 2     | 5   |
| Nara           | 0         | 7   | 4     | 11  |
| Niohuru        | 5         | 4   | 4     | 13  |
| Tatara         | 0         | 2   | 0     | 2   |
| Tunggiya       | 2         | 2   | 0     | 2   |
| Ula Nara       | 3         | 0   | 0     | 3   |
| Yehe Nara      | 1         | 1   | 0     | 3   |
| Other Clans    | 4         | 13  | 5     | 22  |
| Total no. of clans | 8       | 23  | 12    |      |

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emperor</th>
<th>Empress</th>
<th>House (by birth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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16 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.176.
17 Although Franz Stefan was the legal emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the marriage of him and Maria Theresia was arranged by the side of Maria Theresia, the House of Habsburg, and not by the side of Franz Stefan, the House of Lorraine. In this light, this thesis will analyse the alliance from the perspective of the House of the Habsburg instead of the House of Lorraine.
The Manchu clans favoured by the ruling Aisin Gioro lineage were those who had allied themselves with the Aisin Gioro long ago, and were awarded as the Manchu Eight Great House - the Guwulgiya, Niohuru, Sumuru, Nara, Donggo, Hoifa, Ula, Irgen Gioro, and Magiya clans. As shown in the table, only the Hoifa clan is missing from the list of imperial affines. The close bond between the Manchu and the Mongol was initiated in 1612, when the Manchus wooed the Khorchin Mongols away from adherence to the previous dynasty, the Ming, and presented them with gifts and Aisin Gioro wives. The tie with the Mongols was further rewarded by granting Mongol in-laws Manchu titles of nobility from 1636. By the period of the Ch’ien-lung Reign in the eighteenth century, the emperor declared ‘the pattern of marrying Ch’ing princesses to Mongols a tradition that should be maintained.’ As Lattimore notes:

Manchu sovereignty was not achieved by outright conquest but was always based on alliance with some one group of Mongols against another group and the status of Mongols within the empire was different from, and higher than, the Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maria Theresia (see footnote 27)</th>
<th>Franz I. Stephan</th>
<th>House of Lorraine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph II.</td>
<td>Isabella von Bourbon-Parma</td>
<td>House of Bourbon-Parma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Josepha von Bayern</td>
<td>House of Wittelsbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leopold II.</td>
<td>Maria Ludovica von Bourbon-Spanien</td>
<td>House of Bourbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz II. (1792-1806)/Franz I. (1804-1835)</td>
<td>Elisabeth von Württemberg</td>
<td>House of Württemberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Theresa von Bourbon-Neapel</td>
<td>House of Bourbon Two Sicilies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Ludovika von Modena</td>
<td>House of Austria-Este</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karoline Auguste von Bayern</td>
<td>House of Wittelsbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferdinand I.</td>
<td>Maria Anna von Savoyen</td>
<td>House of Savoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Joseph I.</td>
<td>Elisabeth in Bayern</td>
<td>House of Wittelsbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl I.</td>
<td>Zita von Bourbon-Parma</td>
<td>House of Bourbon-Parma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 The concept of the Manchu eight Great Houses is disputed, the thesis offered the view in Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.176.  
19 Ch ’in-ting ta-Ch’ing hui-tien shih-li, edn (360 vols, Beijing, 1899). Quoted from Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.177.  
Since the Baroque era, the marriage approach of the Habsburg was characterised by the famous hexameter ‘Bélla geránt aliī, tú felix Áustria núbe’\textsuperscript{21}. Hasburgs’s dynastic territory was composed of lands both inside and beyond the Holy Roman imperial jurisdiction, and went through an ongoing expansion through dynastic marriages. In the thirteenth century, the house aimed its marriage policy at families in Upper Alsace and Swabia. By marrying Elisabeth von Luxemburg (1409-1442), the daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund (1368-1437), Albrecht II. (1397-1439) acquired the rulership over Bohemia and Hungary. His successor Frederick III. (1415-1493) married Eleonore Helena von Portugal, enabling the Habsburgs to build a network with dynasties in the west and southeast part of Europe. Dynastic frontiers further pushed westwards into Flanders through the marriage of Maximillian I. (1459-1519) and Mary of Burgundy (1457-82) in the late fifteenth century, and culminated with the acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary\textsuperscript{22} through the double alliances of Maximilian I.’s granddaughter Mary (1505-1558) and grandson Ferdinand (1503-1564) with the House of Jagiellon. However, after that, the house slowed down the pace of expansion, and began to intermarry more frequently among themselves. A study of the marriage pattern of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty (1516-1700), from an extended pedigree up to 16 generations in depth and involving more than 3,000 individuals, shows that there was a clear pattern of consanguineous marriages, which led to the extinction of the Spanish Habsburgs. One of the assumptions of this shift is that they want to ‘keep their heritage in their own hands’\textsuperscript{23}. Therefore, it is interesting to note another shift at this time. Although antagonism between the French kings and the Habsburgs persisted since Maximilian’s Burgundian marriage due to the power of the Habsburgs - they were too formidable

\textsuperscript{21}‘Let others wage war, you - happy Austria - marry!’ K. Elisabeth, ‘Bella gerant alii, Tu, felix Austria, nube! Eine Spurensuche’ in Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur. (1997), pp. 30–44. The unknown author of the motto in the Baroque era is likely to be found in the book of A. Lhotsky, Quellenkunde zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte Österreichs (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichte (Graz, 1963), p. 71.

\textsuperscript{22}The House of Habsburg lost the territory of Bohemia and Hungary after the death of Ladislaus Postumus (1440-1457).

not to provoke envious sentiment, Maria Theresia still schemed Bourbon marriages for her two elder sons. The reason will be discussed in the second case study.

Case Studies

Ch’ing

On 18 July 1727, five years after the Yung-cheng emperor ascended the throne, the emperor presided over the marriage between his seventeen-year-old (nominal age) fourth son, Hung-li, the real name of the Ch’ien-lung emperor, and the posthumously titled Hsiao-hsien-ch’un empress, whose real name remains unknown. The sixteen-year-old (nominal age) bride was granted the title of Primary Consort, and ten years later, two years since the death of Yung-cheng and the succession by Hung-li, she was instated empress. The father of the emperor Ch’ien-lung, the Yung-cheng emperor, emphasised the girls’ family status and ruled that the entitlement for the consorts of ranks one to five should be given only to the girls from families of hereditary banner officials above a certain rank. Fuca’s (i.e. the surname of Hsiao-hsien-ch’un empress) family background qualified her for three main reasons. Firstly, she was descendent of the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner, the first among the prestigious upper three banners - the Bordered Yellow, Plain Yellow, and Plain White. Second, her surname Fuca is one of the eight most important surnames in the Manchu clans. Third is the post of her father, Li rung-pao, who was the Supervisor of Chahar Province before his daughter’s marriage to the future emperor.

Habsburg-Lorraine

Joseph II’s first marriage displays a similar pattern regarding the choice of the future empress for the future emperor. This great zeal in making alliances between the House of Habsburg and other

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24 The nominal age is one year older than the actual age.
25 The title of the empress in the Ch’ing dynasty could be conferred due to one of these three reasons. This will be discussed in Chapter 2.
26 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.181.
27 Ibid., p. 186.
28 Chao-erh-hsün, Ch’ing-shi-k’ao, eds (316 vols., Beijing), ccxiv.
houses could be vividly exemplified by the marriage of the nineteen-year-old prince Joseph, which was ardently pursued by Joseph’s mother, Maria Theresia.

There were good reasons for the queen Maria Theresia showing her enthusiasm towards Princess Isabella von Parma and pursuing the marriage so avidly. The first consideration of the marriage between her son and Isabella, the granddaughter of the king of France, lies in political speculation. She hoped that through this arrangement, the alliance between Austria and France could be reinforced, and the mother of the princess, the favourite daughter of Louis XV, could act as an influential advocate of the Habsburgs at her father’s court.\textsuperscript{29} In order to intensify this bond, another marriage with the House of Bourbon was planned at the same time by this forethoughtful queen - the marriage of her third son, Leopold and Maria Ludovica from the House of Bourbon.\textsuperscript{30} The reasons for which were inseparable from contemporary political conditions, The loss of Silesia to Prussia owing to Maria Theresia’s female accession motivated her to build alliances with a stronger family to win the territory back.

Joseph II’s first marriage, although happy, ended after only three years when his beloved wife Isabella died of smallpox. He was compelled to marry his cousin Maria Josepha von Bayern two years later. This second wife was the daughter of Karl Albrecht von Bayern (1697-1745) and a Habsburger Maria Amalie (1701-1756). The match complied with Joseph II.’s intention to win over the territory of Bavaria. However, the marriage was a disaster and ended with the death of the neglected empress of the same disease as her predecessor. Joseph II. was so distant towards his second wife that he did not even show up at her funeral. Twice widowed, the twenty-five year old emperor vehemently opposed a third marriage.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} A.R. Arneth, \textit{Geschichte Maria Theresias} (10 vols., Vienna, 1870), xi, p. 188.
\textsuperscript{30} Hamann, \textit{Die HABSBURGER}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{31} Hamann, \textit{Die HABSBURGER}, p. 323.
CHAPTER 2 WEDDING RITUAL

Following the bride selection are the preparation of the wedding ceremony and the full sequence of the wedding itself. In this thesis, I will only discuss the wedding ritual of (future) emperor and empress, the wedding ceremonies of their offspring who did not became dynastic rulers will not be my subject.

Statutory law versus Customary law?

In the Ch’ing, the ritual sequence developed over time along with the transition of the form of the harem - from their traditional nomadic polygamous system to the Han-Chinese transformed monogamous system. During the Nurhaci’s reign and the earlier period of Huang-Tai-ch’i’s reign, the wedding ritual was in general simple, comprising only feng-ying (bride escort from the empress’s family to the imperial palace), and yen-yen (banquets).

Yet the imperial harem system of placing empress in the centre of the imperial harem was not completed until K’ang-hsi Reign.¹ The ritual sequence of dynastic wedding was complicated with the development of this hierarchical system and was gradually fixed during K’ang-hsi Reign. From then on, the Ta-hun (the great wedding) of an emperor was often a ceremony of directly conferring the empress title to the chosen hsiu-nü.² There were, however, different ways of conferring the title of ‘empress’ in the Ch’ing dynasty: 1) Yuan-hou (original empress). This title was obtained either upon the announcement of the imperial edict of Ta-hun in the situation that she married the emperor after he ascended the throne, or was conferred on the wife after the coronation of the emperor (if he had already married). 2) Chi-hou (step-empress). In this situation, the empress was promoted from lower rank after the death of the first empress. 3) Subsequently conferred after

¹ Chao-erh-hsün, eds., Ch‘ing-shi-k’ao, (316 vols., Beijing, 1927), ccxiv.
² Ta-hun was only carried out four times during the entire dynasty with its literal meaning (the wedding of emperor) since many emperors have already married before they ascended the throne. The five occasions are: 1) Shun-chih emperor, who was six years old when he was put on the throne and was married at the age of fourteen; 2) K’ang-hsi emperor, who ascend the throne at eight, and was married at twelve in 1665; 3) T’ung-chih emperor, who became emperor at six and was married at the age of seventeen; 4) Kuang-hsu emperor, who was put on the throne when he was only four and was married at the age of nineteen.
her son became emperor (either when she was still alive and was promoted to empress dowager or posthumously).

The sequence of events that comprised a dynastic wedding began with the announcement of the imperial edict issued by the emperor. The *Chih-t’zu* (imperial edict)\(^3\), stating '皇帝钦奉太后懿旨，纳某氏为皇后。兹当吉日令辰，备物典册，命卿等以礼奉迎'\(^4\). This was followed by *na-t’sai-li* (betrothal), *ta-ch’eng-li* (notification of the wedding day), *ts’e-li*, *feng-ying*, *ta-hun-he-chin-li* (ritual in the nuptial chamber), *chao-chien* (respect to the empress dowager), *miao-chien* (respect to the gods and immediate ancestors), *ch’ing-he* (receipt of congratulations of the court and officials), *pan-chao* (announcement to the citizens), *yen-yen*.

The *na-t’sai-li* is a betrothal ceremony led by two emissaries (chief and vice), who brought the gifts and the *Chih-t’zu* to the bride’s father from the court. The father and brothers of the bride would wait for and greet the *na-t’sai* procession on their knees and listen to the announcement by the chief emissary from the *Chih-t’zu* with full ritual obeisance (three prostrations and nine kowtows). The *na-t’sai-li* was finished with a banquet at the bride’s father’s house. This betrothal ceremony was followed by the *ta-ch’eng-li*, when the wedding date selected by the *Ch’in-t’ien-chien* (Board of Astronomy) was announced, and more items\(^5\) to be used in the wedding were delivered to the bride’s house; the core of the wedding ceremony was the *ts’e-li*, when the gold seal and gold tablets conferring the title of empress were brought by two emissaries and presented to the bride at her father’s house, where the brothers and fathers of the bride carried out the same ritual obeisance as they did upon the *na-t’sai-li*. The ceremony then proceeds to the *feng-ying*, as the bride

\(^{3}\) The term is further explained in Chapter 3.

\(^{4}\) ‘According to the *Yi-chih* (order of Empress Dowager), Emperor instate XX as Empress. An auspicious date and *Shih-Ch’en* should be chosen to prepare for the items and the documents needed, as well as the dowry which should be brought to the empress’s family.’ *Chih-shu, Chih-t’zu*, The First Historical Archives of China. [http://www.lsdag.cn/wswz/678.jhtml](http://www.lsdag.cn/wswz/678.jhtml) (accessed on 10 June 2015).

\(^{5}\) The items delivered prepared by *Nei-Wu-fu* (the Imperial Household Department) from the court to the bride’s family at *ta-ch’eng-li* were divided into two categories: *chuang-lian* for the empress, and *tz’u-wu* for the bride’s family. *chuang-lian* should be carried back to the court, and *tz’u-wu* could be kept in the bride’s family. The included horses and saddles, 200 taels of gold, 10,000 taels of silver, 1000 bolts of silk fabrics, and large quantities of court clothing, gold and silver utensils. See Li Xiao-li, ‘Man-chu’, p. 23.
would be carried to the palace in a sedan chair with the empress’s regalia, and the day was completed in the nuptial chambers. The ta-hun-he-chin-li was a ritual that took place in the second room of the east wing of the K’un-ning-kung, where the bride and the groom sipped from the nuptial wine cup and ate the Ch’ang-shou-mien (longevity noodle) together. On the third day after the bride’s entrance into the palace, the empress would pay respect to the empress dowager (chao-chien) in the morning and then follow the emperor to pay respect to the gods and immediate ancestors (miao-chien). On the next day (the fourth day of the bride’s entrance in the palace), the couple would receive the congratulations of the court and officials (ch’ing-he), and announce the wedding to the public (pan-chao). The wedding ceremony was completed with banquets hosted by the emperor and the empress dowager for the parents and relatives of the couple and for officials (yen-yen).

The Habsburg-Lorraine weddings, unlike their Manchu counterparts, which were the innovative outcome of assimilation of the Han-Chinese custom into their own nomadic one, were less creative and referred often to ‘what has always been done’. The Deliberanda Notanda issued prior to Joseph II.’s marriage refers to the previous four marriages in the House of Habsburg,

Maximiliani II, de a. 1648
Ferdandi III. 1651
Josephi 1699
und Caroli VI. 1708’

The first serious codification of the Habsburg marriage procedures and the considerations involved in them was the Haustatut in 1839, a compilation of observations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Prior to that, the wedding ceremony was conducted in the following

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6 ‘Extract from the archive from the old Austrian marriage act. The previous marriage acts are overall incomplete and deficient. Only marriages of those are found in the record could be regarded as examples of betrothal agreement: Maximilian II. 1648, Ferdinand III. 1651, Joseph 1699, and Carola VI. 1708’ Vienna: Haus- Hof und Staatsarchiv, Hofakten des Ministeriums des Inneren, Deliberanda, Notanda.
procedure: akin to the Ch’ing custom, the ceremony began with the betrothal by proxy. However, the social status of this proxy was carefully contemplated in the Habsburg case - demonstrated in detail below in the individual case-study. On the contrary to the Ch’ing, financial issue was explicitly brought out and contracted in the second place, mostly concerning the disposition of the dowry after the death of a party. After reaching an agreement on property, the bride was escorted to Vienna and welcomed festively. The wedding ceremony took place in church on the next day, during which the ecclesiastical rite of the marriage was conducted. At the wedding night was the copulatio carnalis, the consummation of the marriage. After that festivals continued for days, with the activities like hunting, banquets, dance, and fireworks, whose attendees all came from high-ranking aristocratic or ruling houses. Opera premiere was the highlight. On the wedding of Joseph II. and Maria Josepha von Bayern, the premier of Gluck’s ‘Telemacho’. The wedding of her mother, Maria Amalie (1701-1756), and her father, Karl Albert von Bayern (1697-1745), also enjoyed this privilege - ‘Adelaide’ and ‘I Veri Amici’.8

The reason why systematic codification of the wedding ritual took place earlier is easy to understand. Until Maria Theresa's reign, both branches (Spanish and Austrian) of the house were running low on progeny and relatively few marriages took place. In such cases, betrothal and marriage arrangements were less contentious. For the Habsburgs, the question of finding appropriately noble or royal and politically useful partners for their children was a burning issue. However, the practice shows that a systematic betrothal agreement between the two parties involved in the dynastic marriage was a huge concern for Habsburgs compared to that for the Manchu rulers.

**Purchase versus Fair dealing?**

At the Ch’ing court, the *na-t’sai-li* and the *ta-ch’eng-li* are marked by gifts from the emperors to the bride and her family (her mother, her father, her grandfather, and even her brothers)9, and the

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7 Hamann, *Die HABSBURGER*, p. 323.
8 Hamann, ‘*Die HABSBURGER*’, p. 292.
9 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.188.
banquets held after the *na-t'sai-li*, which took place at the bride’s father’s house, were provided by the *Nei-wu-fu* (the Imperial Household Department) and not by the bride’s father.

At the Habsburg court, the wedding was undertaken by the husband’s family, and the dowry was not one-sided as at the Ch’ing court, where it was provided by the husband’s side (part of which would be ceremonially carried back to the court), but was based on a reciprocal principle stipulated in the Salic Law, issued by Clovis between 507 and 511.\(^\text{10}\)

For the Franks, betrothal preceded marriage, as among other Germans. The married woman’s endowment was made up of gifts from her husband and her father. The property could not be alienated by her husband and was normally passed to their children. Since the Frankish wife enjoyed such autonomy over her property, it should not be surprising that she retained her position as heir in her own kin group.\(^\text{11}\) This might explain why Franz II. (1768-1835)’s fourth wife, Karoline Auguste von Bayern (1792-1873), once widowed, was still favoured by the dynastic family. After her first marriage with Wilhelm I. (1781-1864) was dissolved by Pope Pius VII., Karoline Auguste von Bayern was proposed to by both the emperor and his brother.\(^\text{12}\) The fact that she was generously compensated after the first marriage might be a key component behind the courtship.\(^\text{13}\)

The same pattern was found in later centuries. Fichtner’s thorough study of gift exchange in the sixteenth century shows that the gifts of the bride and groom are both three in number. From the bride’s side there are: 1) a *Heiratsgut* (*dos* in the previous context), which was brought into the husband’s family for the use of her husband or his family, 2) a *Heimsteuer*, a gift by the bride’s father to her in return for her renunciation of any claims she could make on her father’s estate, and 3) a *Besserung*, an increment upon the *Heimsteuer*. The gifts from the groom’s side are: 1) a

\(^{10}\) Drew, *Middle Ages Series*, p. 29.
\(^{12}\) Hamann, *Die HABSBURGER*, p. 231.
**Wiederlegung**, a gift to the bride; 2) a *Wittum*, given by the husband’s family to the bride for her maintenance throughout her life; 3) a *Morgengabe*, paid to the bride by the husband upon consummation of the marriage in reward for her virginity.\(^{14}\)

Under these circumstances, *ebenbürtig* (of equal status) was extremely emphasised at the Viennese court: in order to be accepted as a member of the most exclusive aristocratic circle, one had to ‘produce proof of unbroken descent from at least sixteen aristocratic forebears - eight paternal and eight maternal ancestors’.\(^{15}\) Morganatic alliance, as a demonstration of the persistence of tradition, was not well received. It not only results in the loss of privileges for one’s descendants, but also means that the woman in question will receive a *Morgengabe* but no *Wittum* from her husband-to-be. These rules were applied to the marriage arrangements of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Sophie Chotek at the beginning of the twentieth century - her family was not on the list of noble houses eligible to marry a Habsburg Archduke.

The difference in the customs of gift exchange clearly reflects the status between the bride and groom. In the Ch’ing dynasty, the bride, though highborn, was ‘purchased’ by the husband, recognising his supreme status. For the Habsburgs, the dynastic marriage was in accordance to the principle of ‘fair dealing’ between the bride’s family and the groom’s family. The bride’s family had to pay, yet in return also guaranteed her independent living ability in case of domestic calamities. Here an anthropological approach is useful for understanding the institution of marriage itself. Many of the ethical positions on marriage are divided on the question of whether marriage should be defined contractually or by its institutional purpose.

On the contractual view, the obligations of marriage are taken as a set of promises between spouses, whose content is supplied by social surroundings and legal practices. One rationale is the assumption that

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existing marriage practices are morally arbitrary, in the sense that there is no special reason for their structure. Further, there are diverse understandings of marriage. If the choice between them is morally arbitrary, there is no reason to adopt one specific set of marital obligations.\textsuperscript{16}

From this point of view, the marital contract was concluded legally at both courts, with the law-maker being the emperor in the Ch‘ing and the families of the two parties in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty.

On the institutional view, marital obligations are defined by the purpose of the institution, taking procreation as essential to marriage.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, as one of the most important purposes of dynastic marriages is to produce a legal heir to the throne, apart from its contractual practice, dynastic marriages also contains the core institutional element, that marriage is between men and women because this is the unit able to procreate without third-party assistance.

\textbf{Case Studies}

\textbf{Ch‘ing}

On 4 December 1737,\textsuperscript{18} one year after Hung-li (Ch‘ien-lung’s real name) became emperor, his wife Fuca was conferred the empress title, followed by a sequence of grand ceremonies. Dressed in chao-pao\textsuperscript{19}, Ch‘ien-lung ascended the Tai-he-dien (Hall of Supreme Harmony). The chief emissary, Ortai, the eminent Grand Secertary at court, and vice emissary, Hai-wang, chief of the Ministry of Rites, carried the imperial edict and annoued Fuca’s family’s house:

‘朕闻乾坤定位，爱成覆载之能。日月得天，聿衍升恒之象。当亲迎之初年，礼成渭涘；膺嫡妃之正选，誉蔼河洲。温恭娴图，敬协珩璜之度。承欢致孝，问安交儆于鸡鸣；逮下流恩，毓庆茂昭于麟趾。允赖宜家之助，当隆正位之仪。兹奉崇庆皇太后慈命，以金册金宝，立尔为皇后。尔其祗承懿训，表正壸仪，奉长乐之春晖，勗夏清冬温之节，布坤宁之雅化，赞宵

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., (accessed on 5 June, 2015).
\item \textsuperscript{18} The date is accordance to the lunar calendar used in Chinese dynasties. 4 December 1737 in the lunar calendar equals to 24 December, 1737 in the Christian calendar.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Full attire of the Manchu emperor, normally were required for grand ceremonies and sacrifice.
\end{itemize}}
I was informed, that the heaven and the earth would increase the bearing capacity once they had fixed their position; the auspices would continue once both the sun and the moon appeared in the sky. A (good) management of the harem is the foundation of human relations, whilst the virtues are the cornerstone of the rulership. Compliant with these principles and conventions, I was seeking (for the right person). My Di-fei (wife) Fuca descended from a family with great merits and was well educated. When we married, the spectacle of the wedding ceremony was as solemn as the wedding at Wei-Si river. The choice of Fuca is greatly equitable, thus, the river was shrouded in praises (from the people). (She is) temperate, modest, cultivated, cautious, obedient and cooperative, fitting in the norms of the virtues. With joy and filial piety, I pay respect to you at cock crow; while (heaven) is bestowing its grace, (you should) bear more children to fulfil your responsibility. (Since you) allowed me to rely on your assistance, I should aggrandise the ceremony of (your) accession. Under the command of the Empress Dowager Ch’ung-ch’ing, I elevate you to empress with gold tablet and gold seal. Upon receiving the pleasant edict, (you should) set an example for the harem, fulfil the filial duty at Ch’ang-le-kung, bestow decorous changes on the Kun-ning-kung, assist the diligent work (of the emperor), lead the harem with modesty and thrift, be merciful in order to receive much good fortune. Chung-ssu (grasshopper) and Chiu-mu (erect pine), the mild wind blows in the empress’s room. Ts’an-kuan (the silkworm palace) and Chü-i (formal dress with the color of mulberry leaf), the virtues are extended to the ocean and the universe. Embrace and enjoy as much fortune as heaven grants forever. Issued by the Emperor.’

In the morning of the second day, Ch’ien-lung, still in chao-pao, led the imperial princes and court ministers to pay respect to the empress dowager, who awaited this ritual performance at Ts’u-ning-kung. Subsequently, Ch’ien-lung went back to the Tai-he-dien to announce the wedding to the public. In the imperial edict at pan-chao, Ch’ien-lung emphasised the importance of the female virtues: ‘壸政与朝章并肃’ (the female virtues are as serious as the imperial edicts), as well

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20 Ch’ing-kao-ts’ung shih-lu (Real Record of Ch’ing-gao-ts’ung, Ch’ien-lung’s Temple name), (1500 vols, Beijing, 1986), lviii, pp. 2-7.
21 Wei-Si in the original text refers to an allusion in a poem in Classic of Poetry, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry. The wedding of the King Wen of the Chou dynasty took place at the Wei-Si river and the spectacle was magnificent.
22 He-chou in the original text refers to the poem Kuan-chü in Classic of Poetry, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry. The poem depicted the scene of wooing.
23 The palace where the empress dowager lived.
24 The palace where the empress lived.
25 Chung-ssu is the name of a poem in Classic of Poetry, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry. Grasshopper symbolises fertility and posterity.
26 Chiu-mu is also the name of a poem in Classic of Poetry, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry. Erect pine is to congratulate the newly-married male.
27 Ts’an-kuan refers to the poem Ts’an-kuan in the Sung Dynasty, in which the empress performed the rite of silkworm culture.
as her family background: ‘秀毓华门’ (born in a family with a magnificent door) - both qualified Fuca to undertake the role of empress.

**Habsburg-Lorraine**

Similar to the emissaries at the Ch’ing court, the proxy who conveyed the courtship to the bride on behalf of the imperial family played an eminent role in the wedding ritual at the Viennese court.

Prior to Joseph II.’s wedding, the choice of the candidate was prudently contemplated. Seven out of the twenty-two considerations stated in the *Notanda* were associated with the proxy,

‘Ob eine Desponsation per Procurationem vorgehen solle?  
Wer dazu solchen falls zu bevollmächtigen wäre?  
Wie die Vollmacht dazu einzurichten wäre?  
Von den Freundbezeugungen über die Nachricht von der geschehenen Dispensation  
Ob vorher ein eigener Gesandter mit dem Schmück? für Braut abzuschicken sey?  
Wo die Braut übernommen, und von wem Sie bis dahin geführt werden sollen?  
Wie der Parmesans Begleitung Hof: Staat bey seiner Rückentläßung zu beschenken sei?  
Was für ein Weg außer zu nehmen?’

Finally, the choice fell to Prince Wenzel of Liechtenstein, who put forward the formal courtship in Parma and then escorted the eighteen-year-old princess in a gorgeous procession to Vienna. Both his high birth and his post were indisputable at the court of the day. Even without his wealth and origin, nobody could surpass the military merit of Prince Joseph Wenzel, the leader of the Austrian forces which won the Battle of Piacenza, part of the War of the Austrian Succession.

Although at the time the state coffers were no longer able to defray the costs of warfare and the people were reliant on state aid, the marriage of the heir to the Habsburg throne, the Habsburg candidate to the throne of Holy Roman Empire, was celebrated with great expense. Maria Theresia, the mother of Prince Joseph, intended to use the wedding festivities to recover from the misery of the Seven Years’ War, and to give the rest of Europe the impression that the Habsburg

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28 ‘Whether the betrothal should be proposed by proxy? Who should be authorised in this case? How to endow the authority? The friend persuasion of the news about the already concluded betrothal agreements. Whether there was a special messenger carrying the jewellery to the bride sent? Where to take over the bride, and from whom should she be led from the place? How to repatriate the escorts from the Parma court? Which itinerary to take?’ Deliberanda, Notanda, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

29 Arneth, *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, pp. 189-190.

Monarchy still enjoyed inexhaustible resources. The pompous spectacle was immortalised on canvas for posterity in the oil painting ‘Entry of the Bride’\(^{31}\) by the court painter Martin van Meytens. The actual wedding ceremony took place in St Augustine’s Church, the parish church of the Court, and was followed by a public banquet at the Hofburg.\(^{32}\) The painting ‘Court banquet in the Great Antecamera of the Hofburg’\(^{33}\) by the same court painter depicted this spectacle. At the table sat only members of the imperial family. Maria Theresia and Franz I., the ruling couple, sat in the middle, with the bride to the empress’s left side and the groom the emperor’s right side. This seating plan was elaborately planned prior to the wedding as several Schemata (schemes) were found in the archive,\(^{34}\) vividly presenting the seating arrangements. The food was served by members of the noble families, dressed in black silk Spanish coats performing as cupbearers and stewards. The gold tableware was the bride’s wedding gift. The festivities continued for several days,\(^{35}\) during which a traditional highlight, serenata, took place in the Redoute Hall of the Hofburg.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{31}\) M. Meytens. *Einzug der Braut. Zeremoniensaal.* Schloß Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H.


\(^{34}\) *Hofakten des Ministerium des Inneren. Ministerium des kaiserlichen Hauses*, HHSA.


CHAPTER 3 THE INSTITUTION OF THRONE SUCCESSION

One of the key problems of rulership - succession - heavily influenced dynastic marriage.

Primogeniture versus Decision-at-will?

In the Ch’ing dynasty, the means of determining throne succession underwent change across the whole Ch’ing period. The convention could be reformed by any emperor or followed by the next generation. Unlike the Habsburg-Lorraine society where the long-established law in general outweighed the personal commands from an emperor, since the first Chinese emperor, Ch’in-Shih-Huang (literally meaning the first emperor of the Ch’in Dynasty, the first imperial dynasty of China), each emperor was the most authoritative source of the law. Ch’in-Shih-Huang coined the documents which record the words of the emperor 制书 Chih-shu, meaning the law. This term Chih-shu was changed into 制词 Chih-t’zu to address the words of emperors in the Ch’ing dynasty.1

Unlike the conventional view that there was no distinction between 嫡 Di (sons of the empress) and 庶 Shu (sons of concubines) in the Manchu imperial succession system,2 Du argues that there were strict distinctions between Di and Shu. Shu were only eligible when there was no Di or when Di abdicated. 3 Du and Rawski’s divergent views stem from their different methodologies, namely quantitative and qualitative.

In comparison to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), during which period in eleven of the fifteen cases of imperial succession a first son inherited the throne from his father,4 in the Ch’ing dynasty there were only two instances (Tao-kuang and Hsien-feng) of an empress’s son actually mounting the Ch’ing throne, and one instance of the throne passing to the eldest son.5 Thus, from

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2 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, pp.170-1.
4 Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.171.
5 Tu-chia-chi, ‘Ch’ing-chao’, pp. 32-6. Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.171.
the quantitative point of view, the Ch’ing did not adopt the eldest-son succession customs of the Ming dynasty.

Table 5 shows the rank of the mother of each emperor and the birth order from Nurhaci to Hsuan-t’ung. The mother’s rank is in accordance with the highest rank attained during her husband’s lifetime, and the birth order is only among sons. The Ch’ing hierarchy, which differentiated concubines into seven ranks following empress, was not completely defined until K’ang-hsi’s reign, with the descending order and the limited number of certain ranks being: 1. 皇后 Huang-hou (empress), one in number, with allotment of ten palace maids; 2. 皇貴妃 Huang-kuei-fei, one in number, with an allotment of eight palace maids; 3. 貴妃 Kuei-fei, two in number, each with an allotment of each eight palace maids; 4. 妃 Fei, four in number, with an allotment of six palace maids; 5. 嫔 Pin, six in number, with an allotment of six palace maids were allocated; 6. 貴人 Kuei-jen, number indefinite, with an allotment of four palace maids; 7. 常在 Ch’ang-tsai,
number indefinite, with an allotment of three palace maids; 8. 答应 Ta-ying, number indefinite, with an allotment of two palace maids.⁶

As seen from the table, statistically, the Ming’s tradition of installing the empress’s first son as heir-apparent while he was still a child (or the eldest son of all the emperor’s children if the empress were barren) was not fully followed in the Ch’ing palace;⁷ legally, by the early eighteenth century, the Ch’ing rulers had substituted a system of secret succession in place of the Ming custom, which requires the emperor to seal the name of his choice in a coffer to be opened only upon his death,⁸ the Ch’ing rulers seem to have rejected tradition and created open competition, which evaluates the eligibility of the candidates by their performance rather than their birth order. This assumption follows the conclusion that this secret and delayed designation of the heir produced intense succession struggles, and was a destabilising force on the imperial family. There could be no discrimination in the education, marriages or political participation of one son as opposed to another.

Yet, this total reform of throne succession in the Ch’ing dynasty is challenged by a more systematic study by Yang (2001) and further denied by Du (2005).⁹ By scrutinising each succession case from the creator of Manchu power Nurhaci, to the end of the Ch’ing dynasty, it can be seen that even though most of the emperors in the Ch’ing dynasty were not born by the empress or the concubine of the highest rank, it is not because the Manchu rulers abandoned the Han-Chinese tradition and made Shu eligible, but because Di either died young (the choice of the successor during the Shun-chi’s reign and during the Ch’ien-lung’s reign), or were too young or too inappropriate (the choice of the successor during the K’ang-hsi’s reign) to succeed. In most cases, the succeeding emperor was actually of the highest rank among all his brothers. Even in comparison to most of the Han-Chinese dynasties (Western Han Dynasty: 40%; Eastern Han Dynasty: 16.7%;

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⁶ Ting Yi-chuang, Manchu te fu-nü sheng-huo yü hun-yin chih-tu, (Beijing, 1999).
⁷ Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, pp.171-2.
⁸ Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.171.
⁹ Tu-chia-chi, ‘Ch’ing-chao’.
Tang Dynasty: 44.4%; Sung Dynasty: 40%), the Ch’ing dynasty did not show unusually low percentage of Di succession. Considering the medical level of the time, it is not rare that the empress was barren and the emperor had to choose from other sons to secure the inheritance of the dynasty.

In order to grasp an overview of the pattern of the institution of throne succession in the Ch’ing dynasty, it is necessary to trace the historical change throughout Manchu and Ch’ing history. Yang suggests four types of succession: khan selection through noble voting, Chinese throne succession monopolised by the eldest son born by the empress, secret heir succession, and decision-at-will heir selection.

The first type of throne succession, khan selection through noble voting, was practiced before the official establishment of the Ch’ing Dynasty from 1622 to 1643. The founder of Manchu power, Nurhaci, left the power sharing politics to the eight princes in the hope of avoiding a fierce struggle over the khan title (the title of the Manchu ruler before the Ch’ing dynasty was officially established), after he failed to select his first son as heir and gave up his intention to name his second son as heir.

The second type, Chinese throne succession monopolised by the eldest son born by the empress, was practiced during 1675 and 1712, entitling the empress-born eldest son be the heir apparent. Starting from the power centralisation demanded by K’ang-hsi, this type failed due to the cultural conflicts between the Manchu tradition and the Han-Chinese tradition. Although K’ang-hsi was powerful enough to make the choice of heir apparent by himself, he could hardly control the cultural war arising in his family and among the leadership group of all the Manchu Eight Banners.

Thus, the third type, secret heir succession, initiated by K’ang-hsi, opened the door to combine the two cultural traditions: considering the eldest son born by the empress as the heir but at the same time legitimising other sons who possessed strong moral and administrative capability. This type was followed by the succeeding four emperors during 1712-1850. Unlike the
consequence assumed by Rawski, that this secret designation would cause intense contest for succession - dividing brother from brother, with the victor exterminating his rivals\(^{10}\) - on the contrary, with no heir being identified publicly, the imperial princes of the Yung-cheng court found no reason to engage in a power struggle over the heir position, and their political participation was much limited by the court. Interestingly, instead of a fierce competition, the Ch’ian-lung court saw a very silent group of princes who had no personal political standpoint.

The emergence of the fourth type of throne succession in the Ch’ing dynasty, decision-at-will heir selection, is the outcome of the a notorious powerful Empress Dowager, Tz’u-hsi, who separated the the position of emperor from the power of the emperor during 1862-1909. The choice of the last two emperors no longer depended on the blood but on her personal will.

Unlike in the Ch’ing, where the Manchu emperors had the right to choose the legitimate heir by their own will, the throne succession system in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty was not influenced by personal preference but strictly conducted according to the two systems, agnatic seniority and agnatic primogeniture, stipulated in Salic Law, permitting younger sons and females to be legitimate heirs to the throne. The basic inheritance laws stated that a man’s heirs in descending order of preference were: children (and their descendants), mother and father, brothers and sister, father’s sisters, mother’s sisters, father’s relatives.

However, the inheritance of land in the Frankish kingdom is complicated by the concluding statement that

‘concerning Salic land (terra Salica) no portion or inheritance is for a woman but all the land belongs to members of the male sex’\(^{11}\).

\(^{10}\) Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.172.

\(^{11}\) Drew, Middle Ages Series, p. 44.
In essence, the way of the inheritance of the Merovingian kingdom was handled as terrae Salica - as a benefice divisible among male heirs, while the female heirs would not be considered.\textsuperscript{12} Under these circumstances, lacking sons and in order to legitimate the inheritance rights of his future daughter, Karl VI., issued the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713, the first document to publicly abolished male-only succession. Despite the promulgation of this law, the accession of his daughter, Maria Theresia, resulted in the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession. Her rule was finally recognised in 1748 by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, with renouncement of the right to rule Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla. Compared to the action the emperors took to choose the successor in the Ch’ing dynasty, conformity to the written law was more emphasised with regard to legitimation issues in the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty: the power of the emperor did not surpass that of the law. Whereas in the Ch’ing dynasty, the emperor himself represented legal supremacy and enjoyed a higher degree of autonomous right in choosing his successor.

\textbf{Case studies}

\textbf{Ch’ing}

As many of Yung-cheng’ brothers, family members, and court officials were highly suspicious of the authenticity of his position, arguing that he took advantage of the secret succession system and forged his father’s will\textsuperscript{13} to legitimise his own succession, his son, the Ch’ien-lung emperor, became the first secretly designated heir to succeed his father. Although being the fourth son of Yung-cheng and a Shu, Hung-li (Ch’ien-lung), was chosen to be the secret heir-apparent because there was no Di. Interestingly, this change was accompanied by a cultural reorientation in Ch’ing political life as the Ch’ien-lung emperor, however, regretted the previous emperors’ (Shun-chih, K’ang-hsi, Yung-cheng) inability to follow the Han rule of eldest son’s heir legitimacy in his heir selection. He is said to have targeted two Di as his ‘secret’ heir-apparent,\textsuperscript{14} Yung-lian and Yung-t’sung, yet both died.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 44.
\textsuperscript{13} Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.172.
\textsuperscript{14} Tu-chia-chi, ‘Ch’ing-chao’, p. 43.
young. So as Ch’ien-lung became old, he chose Yung-yen, his 15th son, son of Huang-kuei-fei (the highest rank of concubines), to be his successor. One might wonder, why Ch’ien-lung did not choose Yung-yen’s elder brother Yung-ch’i (12th in line), who was born by Empress Ula Nara, to be his successor. As mentioned in the first chapter, Ch’ien-lung had such a disastrous relationship with his second wife, that by the 30th year of Ch’ien-lung’s reign, he punished this empress, which contributed to her death after slightly more than one year (similar to Joseph II.’s behaviour to his 2nd wife). After this, Ch’ien-lung even gave the order, that the funeral ceremony held for her should be in accordance with the level of Huang-kuei-fei instead of that of empress. Thus, Yung-ch’i was accordingly regarded no more as Di but Shu. Given this fact, when Ch’ien-lung was making the big decision, there was not a single legitimate Di but all the candidates were equally Shu.

Even though the first attempt of choosing Di was unsuccessful due to both untimely deaths, Ch’ien-lung justified the final decision by a seemingly enlightened attitude, stating that this secret designation was for the good of the country, thus the decision should not be made upon the birth order but upon the merit. Yet considering the contradiction between his initial deeds and his statement, it would be interesting to know what combination of motivations can be inferred. Superficially, it is conceivable that this secret heir succession would optimise the quality of the heir. From the opposite perspective, however, it might also indicate his longterm planning to guarantee the security of Di from the next generation. This assumption is not a mere fanciful illusion but could be exemplified by the choice made by the following successors. Both Chia-Ch’ing and Tao-kuang emperors gave strong preference to the eldest son, and both Tao-kuang and Hsien-feng (Tao-kuang’s successor) were Di even though they were secretly designated. This rule was broken because Hsien-feng had only one son, who was not born by the empress but was still legitimate to succeed.

Habsburg-Lorraine

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Joseph II.’s mother, Maria Theresia’s female accession triggered the War of the Austrian Succession and the emergence of the first non-Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor after the house’s three hundred years of consecutive election. However, after the short break between 1742-45, the Habsburgs continued being elected as the Holy Roman Emperor. And surprisingly, Joseph II. ‘was to be the first emperor to be elected by the much enlarged electoral college (Kurfürstenrat) and unanimously so, by all nine electors.’ As Evans and Wilson comment, ‘Re-election to the imperial title reflected the general recognition that only the Habsburgs, with their extensive hereditary possessions, were both worthy of the honour and capable of exercising it effectively’. The distinction of the House of the Habsburg-Lorraine kept the succession of the Holy Roman Emperor in their own hands. Even though Joseph II. did not have any offspring, his younger brother Leopold II. (1747-1792) succeeded him instead. Ferdinand I. (1793-1875), despite his epilepsy, he still ascended the throne (although was persuaded to abdicate later).

Succession order in this case played the predominant role in deciding the marital partner. Their brother Karl Joseph (1745-1761), the second son of Maria Theresia, was actually favoured by the ruling house because of his amiability and intelligence. However, this expected future Grand Duke of Tuscany suddenly died of smallpox when he was sixteen. His death not only elevated the status of his younger brother, Leopold, but also significantly influenced the wedding partner of the latter. Leopold was betrothed with Maria Beatrix d’Este (1750 -1829), heiress to four states Modena, Reggio, Massa and Carrara, when he was only six. Upon the death of his older brother, Leopold was to take up the great responsibility as heir to the Duchy of Tuscany. Thus, the marital alliance was shifted to a bond with a more powerful family. Maria Ludovica von Bourbon-Spanien was chosen. And Leopold’s younger brother, Ferdinand Karl, fulfilled the unmaterialised betrothal with Maria Beatrix d’Este instead.

18 Hamann, Die HABSBURGER, pp. 219, 256.
CONCLUSION

Although comparative research designs may be intellectually more satisfying than non-comparative designs, the price in terms of time is extraordinarily high. Comparativists need to invest at least twice as much time as non-comparativists and receive at best half their recognition. Considering the lack of legitimate typology on comparative history and its unrecognised value, my thesis will be a premature attempt to bring these two dynasties together. Only time will tell what weight should be attached to the qualifications of this comparative history. And I believe the nature of an institution could only be extracted through comparison - putting the institution into different societies. Taking a single moment and two innovative lines on the two sides of the Eurasian continent, I have tried to expand the geographical and cultural frame, in which historians usually reflect on the policies at court and the status of women. In this thesis, I try to break the stereotypes of East and West by bringing the two dynasties together, and to provide a comparative perspective in studying the relation between dynastic marriage and rulership.

The comparison of three matters of dynastic marriage - bride selection, wedding ritual, and succession system - shows both similarities and differences in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine. I will first list the differences from two analytical perspectives applied in this thesis, namely quantitative and qualitative.

Differences

Quantitatively, the number of the consorts varies a lot in the two dynasties, significantly, leading to the assumption that polygamy and monogamy was the bride selection practice in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine respectively, and the number of the type of dowry each party needed to fulfil suggests the different status of women in the two dynasties. The number of legitimate heirs in the two dynasties also differed greatly, too few at the Viennese and too many at the Ch’ing court.

Supplementing the quantitative method, the qualitative one provides a closer examination of dynastic marriage at an individual level, at the same time prevents oversimplification and
generalisation that often occurred in the quantitative method. The number of the consorts differed in
the two dynasties yet the system behind it was more similar than it at first appears - a looser
monogamy with an indefinite number of legal concubines in the Ch’ing and a more strict
monogamy with some illegal mistresses in the Habsburg-Lorraine. Secondly, the complete Manchu
imperial wedding ritual was formed in accordance with the final establishment of the ranking
system of the concubines, which could be seen as a statutory law to follow, whereas in order to
conduct the wedding for Joseph II. and Isabella, the Viennese court referred to their predecessors’
wedding ceremonies as the customary law. Thirdly, the choice of successors in the Ch’ing was not
an arbitrary decision by the emperors: the case-study shows a strong inclination of choosing Di to
succeed, yet due to various reasons there was more leeway in the Ch’ing primogeniture compared
to the strict primogeniture in the Habsburg-Lorraine.

By taking an overview of the marital regulations of the ruling house in each dynasty,
together with drawing an outline of the matrimonial conventions of the centuries prior to the period
studied, I found out a dynamic pattern of the matromonial practices in both dynasties, both
chronologically and vertically.

**Similarities**

The similarities can also be categorised into two parts - from the quantitative and qualitative view.

Quantitatively, first of all, there was a clear pattern of intermarriage in both dynasties. The
list of the houses that the Ch’ing and Hasburg-Lorraine imperial families chose to build kinship
bonds with implies strong political considerations behind the dynastic marital arrangement.
Secondly, given the distinctive position of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine within the empire, the
scale of dynastic marriages conducted in both dynasty could be regarded as internal instead of
external in practice. Furthermore, the two dynasties also resembles each other in the sequence of the
wedding ceremony - with the same starting point of sending emissaries with high position to the
bride’s family, and was completed with celebrating the wedding by offering banquets to people with
high-ranking positions at the court. Seen in this light, the dynastic wedding ceremony can also be regarded as a social platform to involve everyone - both commoners on the street and the noblemen at the court - to worship the power of the dynastic family. As Fichtner notes:

Indeed, a close examination of the pattern and a comparison of it with the dynastic marriage in other societies support the conclusion that it was diplomatic interests, above all, which both dictated dynastic nuptial arrangements and served to differentiate them from those of their lesser contemporaries.¹

The qualitative case-study serves as illustration of the image of dynastic marriage at court. This perspective also yields some findings about the similarities of dynastic marriage in the Ch’ing and Habsburg-Lorraine dynasties. The brides of both Ch’ien-lung and Joseph II. were chosen by the their mother. What’s more, the succession system in both dynasties suggests that the ruling families would choose the son of the empress to become the legitimate heir to the throne, while being more flexible in the Ch’ing by allowing other sons’ chance, yet strictly applied by the Habsburgs.

Above all, besides the different conclusions derived from quantitative and qualitative perspectives, the comparison of the theories and the actual practices also produced both divergent and convergent conclusions. As Rawski notes,

that rituals are not necessarily faithful reflections of social reality; rather, the roles that people act in rituals do not reflect or define social status… These roles are part of a drama that creates an image… that needs to be created because in many ways it contradicts what everybody knows.²

The qualitative perspective also shows the court politics and policies, usually being studied in no relation to the imperial family, are in fact fully incorporated with the emperor’s marriage life, child rearing, and heir decision.

Although dynastic marriages were arranged, the relationship of the wife and the husband should not be hastily concluded as negative. In the cases chosen for each dynasty, both Ch’ien-lung and Joseph II. enjoyed their first marriage. And the relation between dynastic marriage and

² Rawski, ‘Ch’ing Imperial Marriage’, p.247.
rulership can be vividly exemplified by the abrupt change in Ch’ien-lung’s ruling style after the death of his first wife, whom he loved greatly.

In the thirteenth year of the Ch’ien-lung Reign, Fuca’s death

乾隆无比沉痛, 遵照生前所请, 谥以“孝贤”, 并制《述悲赋》, 回顾“同甘而共辛”的过去, 以寄永诀的哀思³

During the funeral of Fuca, Ch’ien-lung punished dozens of officials, his eldest son and the third son for not fully respecting the convention of Manchu funeral and not showing as much grief as they should. His ruling style then changed abruptly from moderate to harsh.

A very similar writing by the empror was found after the death of the twenty-two year wife of Joseph II., to his father,

Alles habe ich verloren. Meine angebetete Gattin, der Gegenstand meiner ganzen Zärtlichkeit, meine einzige Freundin ist nicht mehr.⁴

**This comparison**

As a concluding mark, I would like to offer a path to the further study of dynastic marriage and the comparative studies by reflecting on my personal experience while composing the thesis. Due to the asymmetric nature of the available sources in different languages in these two courts, the choice of which aspect to compare should be made carefully before taking action. The asymmetry derives from the different emphases of the scholars of the Ch’ing dynasty and the Habsburg dynasty. It will be also interesting to consider why certain aspects were emphasised and some were neglected by a dynasty, whether it is due to the cultural differences or because of the incompleteness of sources in the other side. Furthuermore, the second direction is the relation between dynastic marriage and the foreign policy. As the marriage partners were mostly descendants of another eminent family, dynastic marriage should have influenced the foreign policy significantly.

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³ Produced an outpouring of grief from Ch’ien-lung. In accordance with her wish, Ch’ien-lung titled her the posthumous name Hisao-hsien (Fealty and virtuousness), and composed the poem Shu-pei-fu (Outpouring of grief). By recalling their common past of ‘sharing happiness and sufferings’, he expressed his anguish of the farewell to his wife. See Ch’ing-shih-kao, ccxiv.

⁴ ‘I have lost everything. My worshipped wife, the object of all my fondness. My only (female) friend is no more there.’ See Hamann, *Die HABSBÜRGER*, p. 172.
This thesis attempts to serve as a mediator to present the latest academic outcomes of both sides, filling gaps in the literature by selective study of relevant archival materials and published sources, and striving to eliminate the degree of information asymmetry as well as the degree of misconception towards other cultures. This thesis should establish an outline of dynastic marriages in the two courts, and contribute to a general framework of methodological perspectives allowing us to reappraise the essential features of the marriage institution in the ruling houses.
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