

From Kyburg to Habsburg

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The name of Zug appears for the first time in 1092, in the form "Ziuge".¹ The town was founded around or after 1200. The identity of the founders is disputed, although the counts of Kyburg are the most likely candidates, since the town appears later as part of the Kyburg inheritance.² Zug is first documented as a town in 1242. In 1273, Rudolf of Habsburg, who became king of the Romans in the same year, acquired the presumed Kyburg inheritance, and with it the town of Zug.

Under Habsburg rule the region was organised as an administrative unit. Between 1303 and 1307 the Habsburg land register, the Habsburger Urbar, recorded an "Amt Zug" comprising three districts: Zug, Ägeri and Baar.³ This three-part unit of town, lake valley and plain anticipated the later constitutional structure of the canton. The oldest surviving seal of the town dates from 1319.⁴

For the business history of the canton, the Habsburg period matters above all for what it left behind: a town with a market, walls and a small class of burghers, and a surrounding countryside of free and unfree peasants organised in cooperative communities. The town was the natural centre of trade for the region. The rural communities administered their pastures, forests and water rights collectively. Both institutions survived the end of Habsburg rule and remain visible in the canton today.

1 Notes

1. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)", section on the Middle Ages: first mention in 1092 as "Ziuge". ↩
2. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)": foundation of the town after about 1200, founders disputed; first mention as a town in 1242; presumed Kyburg inheritance acquired by Rudolf of Habsburg in 1273. HLS, "Zug

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(Kanton)": the town as territorial centre under the counts of Kyburg and later the Habsburgs. ↩

3. HLS, "Zug (Kanton)", section on the Habsburg period: the Habsburger Urbar of 1303–1307 describes the Amt Zug as a unit comprising Zug, Ägeri and Baar. ↩
4. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)": oldest surviving town seal of 1319. ↩

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