

Pretenders And Contenders

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From 1598 to 1613, Russia's "Time of Troubles" saw at least three individuals, known as "False Dmitry," claiming the throne, with the first False Dmitry seizing it briefly. This chapter highlights the historical and ongoing occurrences of individuals asserting rights to thrones or positions they were not formally entitled to, spanning from ancient times to modern days across various countries.

Louis Alphonse de Bourbon leads a luxurious life as Spanish nobility while asserting he is the rightful king of France, Louis XX, illustrating the persistent nature of such claims beyond the historical context. Similarly, in Brazil, Pedro Carlos claims the abolished Brazilian throne, underscoring the challenges monarchies face even after their dissolution. The chapter further delves into historical examples, like the ancient Egyptian queen, Hatshepsut, who boldly declared herself "king," and the era of Queen Anne of Great Britain, who labeled her half-brother, James Francis Edward Stuart, a "pretender" in 1708.

The Roman Empire's 3rd century crisis introduced a plethora of pretenders to power, as documented in the "Historia Augusta," reflecting the instability and power struggles of the time. The narrative of Mary Willcocks, an Englishwoman who tricked Almondsbury's residents into believing she was the Princess of Caraboo, illustrates the audacity of imposters with no royal lineage.

The phenomenon of "antipopes" during the Middle Ages, individuals claiming the papacy without election by the College of Cardinals, highlights the contested nature of religious leadership. In Russia, following the execution of the royal family by communists, claims to the throne continued, notably by Maria Vladimirovna, emphasizing the enduring quest for lost monarchy.

Firmus's brief rebellion against Emperor Aurelian in CE 273 and the existence of rival dynasties within the same country represent internal challenges to established authority. The chapter mentions the relocation of the papacy to Avignon and Napoleon III's successful claim to the French throne, showcasing the complexity and variances of contenders' quests for power.

Pretenders, often of noble or royal background, differ from imposters, who typically lack any royal lineage. Despite DNA evidence disproving any Romanov survivors post-1918, claims to their legacy persist, with several women asserting they are Anastasia. This chapter encapsulates the enduring phenomena of pretenders and contenders throughout history, illustrating their impact on political and social landscapes.