

= Maria Theresa =

Maria Theresa Walburga Amalia Christina (German : Maria Theresia [maʔʔiʔa teʔʔeʔzi ʔ a] ; 13 May 1717 ? 29 November 1780) was the only female ruler of the Habsburg dominions and the last of the House of Habsburg . She was the sovereign of Austria , Hungary , Croatia , Bohemia , Transylvania , Mantua , Milan , Lodomeria and Galicia , the Austrian Netherlands and Parma . By marriage , she was Duchess of Lorraine , Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Holy Roman Empress .

She started her 40 @-@ year reign when her father , Emperor Charles VI , died in October 1740 . Charles VI paved the way for her accession with the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 and spent his entire reign securing it . Upon the death of her father , Saxony , Prussia , Bavaria , and France all repudiated the sanction they had recognised during his lifetime . Prussia proceeded to invade the affluent Habsburg province of Silesia , sparking a nine @-@ year conflict known as the War of the Austrian Succession , and subsequently conquered it . Maria Theresa would later unsuccessfully try to reconquer Silesia during the Seven Years ' War .

Maria Theresa and her husband , Francis I , Holy Roman Emperor , had sixteen children , including the Queen of France , the Queen of Naples and Sicily , the Duchess of Parma and two Holy Roman Emperors , Joseph II and Leopold II . Of the sixteen , ten survived to adulthood . She had eleven daughters and five sons . Though she was expected to cede power to Francis and Joseph , both of whom were officially her co @-@ rulers in Austria and Bohemia , Maria Theresa was the absolute sovereign who ruled by the counsel of her advisers . She criticised and disapproved of many of Joseph 's actions . Although she is considered to have been intellectually inferior to both Joseph and Leopold , Maria Theresa understood the importance of her public persona and was able to simultaneously evoke both esteem and affection from her subjects .

Maria Theresa promulgated financial and educational reforms , with the assistance of Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz and Gerard van Swieten , promoted commerce and the development of agriculture , and reorganised Austria 's ramshackle military , all of which strengthened Austria 's international standing . However , she refused to allow religious toleration and contemporaneous travellers thought her regime was bigoted and superstitious . As a young monarch who fought two dynastic wars , she believed that her cause should be the cause of her subjects , but in her later years she would believe that their cause must be hers .

= = Birth and background = =

The second and eldest surviving child of Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI and Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick @-@ Wolfenbüttel , Archduchess Maria Theresa was born early in the morning of 13 May 1717 , at the Hofburg Palace , Vienna , shortly after the death of her elder brother , Archduke Leopold , and was baptised on that same evening . The dowager empresses , her aunt Wilhelmine Amalia of Brunswick @-@ Lüneburg and grandmother Eleonor Magdalene of the Palatinate @-@ Neuburg , were her godmothers . Most descriptions of her baptism stress that the infant was carried ahead of her cousins , Maria Josepha and Maria Amalia , the daughters of Charles VI 's elder brother and predecessor , Joseph I , before the eyes of their mother , Wilhelmine Amalia . It was clear that Maria Theresa would outrank them , even though their grandfather , Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I , had his sons sign the Mutual Pact of Succession , which gave precedence to the daughters of the elder brother . Her father was the only surviving male member of the House of Habsburg and hoped for a son who would prevent the extinction of his dynasty and succeed him . Thus , the birth of Maria Theresa was a great disappointment to him and the people of Vienna ; Charles never managed to overcome this feeling .

Maria Theresa replaced Maria Josepha as heiress presumptive to the Habsburg realms the moment she was born ; Charles VI had issued the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 which had placed his nieces behind his own daughters in the line of succession . Charles sought the other European powers ' approval for disinheritng his nieces . They exacted harsh terms : in the Treaty of Vienna (1731) , Great Britain demanded that Austria abolish the Ostend Company in return for its recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction . In total , Great Britain , France , Saxony @-@ Poland ,

United Provinces , Spain , Venice , States of the Church , Prussia , Russia , Denmark , Savoy @-@ Sardinia , Bavaria and the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire recognised the sanction . France , Spain , Saxony @-@ Poland , Bavaria and Prussia later reneged .

= = Early life = =

Little more than a year after her birth , Maria Theresa was joined by a sister , Maria Anna , and another one , named Maria Amalia , was born in 1724 . The portraits of the imperial family show that Maria Theresa resembled Elisabeth Christine and Maria Anna . The Prussian ambassador noted that she had large blue eyes , fair hair with a slight tinge of red , a wide mouth and a notably strong body . Unlike many other members of the House of Habsburg , neither Maria Theresa 's parents nor her grandparents were closely related to each other .

Maria Theresa was a serious and reserved child who enjoyed singing and archery . She was barred from horse riding by her father , but she would later learn the basics for the sake of her Hungarian coronation ceremony . The imperial family staged opera productions , often conducted by Charles VI , in which she relished participating . Her education was overseen by Jesuits . Contemporaries thought her Latin to be quite good , but in all else , the Jesuits did not educate her well . Her spelling and punctuation were unconventional and she lacked the formal manner and speech which had characterized her Habsburg predecessors . Maria Theresa developed a close relationship with Countess Marie Karoline von Fuchs @-@ Mollard , who taught her etiquette . She was educated in drawing , painting , music and dancing ? the disciplines which would have prepared her for the role of queen consort . Her father allowed her to attend meetings of the council from the age of 14 but never discussed the affairs of state with her . Even though he had spent the last decades of his life securing Maria Theresa 's inheritance , Charles always expected a son and never prepared his daughter for her future role as sovereign .

= = Marriage = =

The question of Maria Theresa 's marriage was raised early in her childhood . She was first engaged to be married to Leopold Clement of Lorraine , who was supposed to visit Vienna and meet the Archduchess in 1723 . However , news reached Vienna that he had died of smallpox .

Leopold Clement 's younger brother , Francis Stephen , was invited to Vienna . Even though Francis Stephen was his favourite candidate for Maria Theresa 's hand , the Emperor considered other possibilities . Religious differences prevented him from arranging his daughter 's marriage to the Calvinist prince Frederick of Prussia . In 1725 , he betrothed her to Charles of Spain and her sister , Maria Anna , to Philip of Spain . However , other European powers compelled him to renounce the pact he had made with the Queen of Spain , Elisabeth Farnese , as the marriage of heirs to the thrones of Spain and Austria would have destroyed the European balance of power . Maria Theresa , who had become close to Francis Stephen , was relieved .

Francis Stephen remained at the imperial court until 1729 , when he ascended the throne of Lorraine , but was not formally promised Maria Theresa 's hand until 31 January 1736 , during the War of the Polish Succession . Louis XV of France demanded that Maria Theresa 's fiancé surrender his ancestral Duchy of Lorraine to accommodate his father @-@ in @-@ law , Stanisław I , who had been deposed as King of Poland . Francis Stephen was to receive the Grand Duchy of Tuscany upon the death of childless Grand Duke Gian Gastone de ' Medici . The couple were married on 12 February 1736 .

The Duchess of Lorraine 's love for her husband was strong and possessive . The letters she sent to him shortly before their marriage expressed her eagerness to see him ; his letters , on the other hand , were stereotyped and formal . She was very jealous of her husband and his infidelity was the greatest problem of their marriage , with Maria Wilhelmina , Princess of Auersperg , as his best @-@ known mistress .

Upon Gian Gastone 's death on 9 July 1737 , Francis Stephen ceded Lorraine and became Grand Duke of Tuscany . In 1738 , Charles VI sent the young couple to make their formal entry into

Tuscany . A triumphal arch was erected at the Porta Galla in celebration , where it remains today . Their stay in Florence was brief . Charles VI soon recalled them , as he feared he might die while his heiress was miles away in Tuscany . In the summer of 1738 , Austria suffered defeats during the ongoing Russo - Turkish War . The Turks reversed Austrian gains in Serbia , Wallachia and Bosnia . The Viennese rioted at the cost of the war . Francis Stephen was popularly despised , as he was thought to be a cowardly French spy . The war was concluded the next year with the Treaty of Belgrade .

= = Accession = =

Charles VI died on 20 October 1740 , probably of mushroom poisoning . He had ignored the advice of Prince Eugene of Savoy who had urged him to concentrate on filling the treasury and equipping the army rather than on acquiring signatures of fellow monarchs . The Emperor , who spent his entire reign securing the Pragmatic Sanction , left Austria in an impoverished state , bankrupted by the recent Turkish war and the War of the Polish Succession ; the treasury contained only 100 @, @ 000 florins , which were claimed by his widow . The army numbered only 80 @, @ 000 men , most of whom had not been paid in months ; they were nevertheless remarkably loyal and devoted to their new sovereign .

Maria Theresa found herself in a difficult situation . She did not know enough about matters of state and she was unaware of the weakness of her father 's ministers . She decided to rely on her father 's advice to retain his councillors and defer to her husband , whom she considered to be more experienced , on other matters . Both decisions , though natural , later gave cause for regret . Ten years later , Maria Theresa recalled in her Political Testament the circumstances under which she had ascended : " I found myself without money , without credit , without army , without experience and knowledge of my own and finally , also without any counsel because each one of them at first wanted to wait and see how things would develop . "

She dismissed the possibility that other countries might try to seize her territories and immediately started ensuring the imperial dignity for herself ; since a woman could not be elected Holy Roman Empress , Maria Theresa wanted to secure the imperial office for her husband . However , Francis Stephen did not possess enough land or rank within the Holy Roman Empire . In order to make him eligible for the imperial throne and to enable him to vote in the imperial elections as elector of Bohemia (which she couldn 't because of her sex) , Maria Theresa made Francis Stephen co @-@ ruler of the Austrian and Bohemian lands on 21 November 1740 . However , it took more than a year for the Diet of Hungary to accept Francis Stephen as co @-@ ruler . Despite her love for him and his position as co @-@ ruler , Maria Theresa never allowed her husband to decide matters of state and often dismissed him from council meetings when they disagreed .

The first display of the new queen 's authority was the formal act of homage of the Lower Austrian Estates to her on 22 November 1740 . It was an elaborate public event which served as a formal recognition and legitimation of her accession . The oath of fealty to Maria Theresa was taken on the same day in Hofburg .

= = War of the Austrian Succession = =

Immediately after her accession , a number of European sovereigns who had recognised Maria Theresa as heiress broke their promises ; Queen Elisabeth of Spain and Elector Charles Albert of Bavaria , married to Maria Theresa 's deprived cousin Maria Amalia and supported by Empress Wilhelmine Amalia , wanted portions of her inheritance . Maria Theresa secured the recognition of King Charles Emmanuel III of Sardinia , who hadn 't accepted the Pragmatic Sanction during her father 's lifetime , in November 1740 .

In December , King Frederick II of Prussia invaded the Duchy of Silesia and requested that Maria Theresa cede it , threatening to join her enemies if she refused . Maria Theresa decided to fight for the mineral @-@ rich province . Frederick even offered a compromise : he would defend Maria Theresa 's rights if she agreed to cede him at least a part of Silesia . Francis Stephen was inclined

to consider such an arrangement , but the Queen and her advisers were not , fearing that any violation of the Pragmatic Sanction would invalidate the entire document . Maria Theresa 's firmness soon assured Francis Stephen that they should fight for Silesia and she was confident that she would retain " the jewel of the House of Austria " . The invasion of Silesia by Frederick was the start of a lifelong enmity ; she referred to him as " that evil man " .

As Austria was short of experienced military commanders , Maria Theresa released Marshall Neipperg , who had been imprisoned by her father for his poor performance in the Turkish War . Neipperg took command of the Austrian troops in March . The Austrians suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Mollwitz in April 1741 . France drew up a plan to partition Austria between Prussia , Bavaria , Saxony and Spain . Marshall Belle Isle joined Frederick at Olmütz . Vienna was in a panic , as none of Maria Theresa 's advisors expected France to betray them . Francis Stephen urged Maria Theresa to reach a rapprochement with Prussia , as did Great Britain . Maria Theresa reluctantly agreed to negotiations .

Contrary to all expectations , a significant amount of support for the young Queen came from Hungary . Her coronation as queen of Hungary took place in St. Martin 's Cathedral , Pressburg on 25 June 1741 after she had spent months honing the equestrian skills necessary for the ceremony and negotiating with the Diet . To appease those who considered her sex to be the most serious obstacle , Maria Theresa assumed masculine titles . Thus , in nomenclature , Maria Theresa was archduke and king ; normally , however , she was styled as queen . No 18th century commentary saw this crossing of gendered titles as inappropriate or impossible .

By July , attempts at conciliation had completely collapsed . Maria Theresa 's ally , the Elector of Saxony , now became her enemy and George II declared the Electorate of Brunswick Lüneburg to be neutral . The Queen was once again in need of help from Hungary . In order to obtain it , she granted favours to the Hungarian noblemen and flattered them without conceding to all of their demands . She had already won their support when she appeared in Pressburg in September 1741 , hoping to persuade the Diet to call a mass conscription and recognise Francis Stephen as co ruler . Upon achieving both goals , she showed her gift for theatrical displays by triumphantly holding her son and heir , Joseph , before the Diet , thereby gaining sympathy of the noblemen .

In 1741 , the Austrian authorities informed Maria Theresa that Bohemian populace would prefer Charles Albert to her as sovereign . Maria Theresa , desperate and burdened by pregnancy , wrote plaintively to her sister : " I don 't know if a town will remain to me for my delivery . " She bitterly vowed to spare nothing and no one to defend her kingdom when she wrote to the Bohemian chancellor , Count Philip Kinsky : " My mind is made up . We must put everything at stake to save Bohemia . " On 26 October , the Elector of Bavaria captured Prague and declared himself King of Bohemia . Maria Theresa , then in Hungary , wept on learning of the loss of Bohemia . Charles Albert was unanimously elected Holy Roman Emperor on 24 January 1742 . The Archduchess , who regarded the election as a catastrophe , caught her enemies unprepared by insisting on a winter campaign ; the same day he was elected emperor , Austrian troops under Ludwig Andreas von Khevenhüller captured Munich , Charles Albert 's capital .

The Treaty of Breslau of June 1742 ended hostilities between Austria and Prussia . The Archduchess soon made the recovery of Bohemia her priority . French troops fled Bohemia in the winter of the same year . On 12 May 1743 , Maria Theresa had herself crowned Queen of Bohemia in St. Vitus Cathedral .

Prussia became anxious at Austrian advances on the Rhine frontier , and Frederick sacked Prague in August 1744 . The French plans fell apart when Charles Albert died in January 1745 . The French overran the Austrian Netherlands in May .

Francis Stephen was elected Holy Roman Emperor on 13 September 1745 . Prussia recognised Francis as emperor , and Maria Theresa once again recognised the loss of Silesia by the Treaty of Breslau in December 1745 . The war dragged on for another three years , with fighting in northern Italy and the Austrian Netherlands . The Treaty of Aix La Chapelle , which concluded the eight year conflict , recognised Prussia 's possession of Silesia and Maria Theresa ceded the Duchy of Parma to Philip of Spain .

= = Seven Years ' War = =

Frederick of Prussia 's invasion of Saxony in August 1756 began the Seven Years ' War . Empress Maria Theresa and Kaunitz wished to exit the war with possession of Silesia . Austria was aligned with France and Russia , Great Britain with Prussia and Portugal . Giving Austria huge subsidies came back to haunt France . It could not bolster defences in New France ; the British easily captured Louisbourg in 1758 , and went on to conquer all of New France .

Maximilian von Browne commanded the Austrian troops . Following the indecisive Battle of Lobositz in 1756 , he was replaced by Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine , Maria Theresa 's brother @-@ in @-@ law . Frederick was startled by Lobositz ; he eventually re @-@ grouped for another attack in June 1757 . The Battle of Kolin that followed was a decisive victory for Austria . Frederick lost one third of his troops , and before the battle was over , he had left the scene . However , later that year he won a spectacular victory against the Austrians at Leuthen , which secured Prussian control of Silesia for the rest of the war .

Maria Theresa openly lamented French losses in 1758 . France , having secured the Anglo @-@ Hanoverian neutrality for the rest of the conflict , in September 1757 , lost it in January of the next year . That June she suffered a crushing defeat at Krefeld and French forces withdrew to the Rhine .

In 1759 , peace negotiations at The Hague came to nothing . The series of Franco @-@ Austrian losses were reversed until , in 1762 , the Empress Elizabeth of Russia died . Her successor Peter III greatly admired Frederick , and at once withdrew Russia 's support from the French coalition . Prussia began a drive to expel the Austrians from Saxony , and the French from Hesse @-@ Kassel . Though she was only partially successful as her own forces were exhausted , the conflict had essentially descended into a costly stalemate , with Maria Theresa no longer believing that she could retake Silesia . The peace treaties of Hubertusburg and Paris exacted harsh terms from France , as she was forced to relinquish most of her American colonies . For Austria , though , the result was the status quo ante bellum .

= = Family life = =

Over the course of twenty years , Maria Theresa gave birth to sixteen children , thirteen of whom survived infancy . The first child , Maria Elisabeth (1737 ? 1740) , was born a little less than a year after the wedding . Again , the child 's gender caused great disappointment and so would the births of Maria Anna , the eldest surviving child , and Maria Carolina (1740 ? 1741) . While fighting to preserve her inheritance , Maria Theresa gave birth to a son named after Saint Joseph , to whom she had repeatedly prayed for a male child during the pregnancy . Maria Theresa 's favourite child , Maria Christina , was born on her 25th birthday , four days before the defeat of the Austrian army in Chotusitz . Five more children were born during the war : Maria Elisabeth , Charles , Maria Amalia , Leopold and Maria Carolina (1748 ? 1748) . During this period , there was no rest for Maria Theresa during pregnancies or around the births ; the war and child @-@ bearing were carried on simultaneously . Five children were born during the peace between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years ' War : Maria Johanna , Maria Josepha , Maria Carolina , Ferdinand and Maria Antonia . She delivered her last child , Maximilian Francis , during the Seven Years ' War , aged 39 . Maria Theresa asserted that , had she not been almost always pregnant , she would have gone into battle herself .

Maria Theresa 's mother , Empress Elisabeth Christine , died in 1750 . Four years later , Maria Theresa 's governess , Marie Karoline von Fuchs @-@ Mollard , died . The Empress showed her gratitude to Countess Fuchs by having her buried in the Imperial Crypt along with the members of the imperial family .

Shortly after giving birth to the younger children , Maria Theresa was confronted with the task of marrying off the elder ones . She led the marriage negotiations along with the campaigns of her wars and the duties of state . She treated her children with affection but used them as pawns in

dynastic games and sacrificed their happiness for the benefit of the state . A devoted but self @-@ conscious mother , she wrote to all of her children at least once a week and believed herself entitled to exercise authority over her children regardless of their age and rank .

Following her fiftieth birthday in May 1767 , Maria Theresa contracted smallpox from her daughter @-@ in @-@ law , Maria Josepha of Bavaria . She survived , but the new empress did not . Maria Theresa then forced her daughter , Archduchess Maria Josepha , to pray with her in the Imperial Crypt next to the unsealed tomb of Empress Maria Josepha . The Archduchess started showing smallpox rash two days after visiting the crypt and soon died . Maria Carolina was to replace her as the pre @-@ determined bride of King Ferdinand IV of Naples . Maria Theresa blamed herself for her daughter 's death for the rest of her life because , at the time , the concept of an extended incubation period was largely unknown and it was believed that Maria Josepha had caught smallpox from the body of the late empress .

In April 1770 , Maria Theresa 's youngest daughter , Maria Antonia , married Louis , Dauphin of France , by proxy in Vienna . Maria Antonia 's education was neglected , and when the French showed an interest in her , her mother went about educating her as best she could about the court of Versailles and the French . Maria Theresa kept up a fortnightly correspondence with Maria Antonia , now called Marie Antoinette , in which she often reproached her for laziness and frivolity and scolded her for failing to conceive a child .

Maria Theresa was not just critical of Marie Antoinette . She disliked Leopold 's reserve and often blamed him for being cold . She criticised Maria Carolina for her political activities , Ferdinand for his lack of organisation , and Maria Amalia for her poor French and haughtiness . The only child she did not constantly scold was Maria Christina , who enjoyed her mother 's complete confidence , though she failed to please her mother in one aspect ? she did not produce any surviving children .

One of Maria Theresa 's greatest wishes was to have as many grandchildren as possible , but she had only about two dozen at the time of her death , of which all the eldest surviving daughters were named after her , with the exception of Caroline of Parma , her eldest granddaughter by Maria Amalia .

= = Religious views and policies = =

Like all members of the House of Habsburg , Maria Theresa was a Roman Catholic , and a devout one as well . She believed that religious unity was necessary for a peaceful public life and explicitly rejected the idea of religious toleration . However , she never allowed the Church to interfere with what she considered to be prerogatives of a monarch and kept Rome at arm 's length . She controlled the selection of archbishops , bishops and abbots .

Her approach to religious piety differed from the approach of her predecessors , as she was influenced by Jansenist ideas . The empress actively supported conversion to Roman Catholicism by securing pensions to the converts . She tolerated Greek Catholics and emphasised their equal status with Roman Catholics .

Besides her devotion to Christianity , she was widely known for her ascetic lifestyle , especially during her 15 @-@ year @-@ long widowhood .

= = = Jesuits = = =

Her relationship with the Jesuits was complex . Members of this order educated her , served as her confessors , and supervised the religious education of her eldest son . The Jesuits were powerful and influential in the early years of Maria Theresa 's reign . However , the queen 's ministers convinced her that the order posed a danger to her monarchical authority . Not without much hesitation and regret , she issued a decree which removed them from all the institutions of the monarchy , and carried it out thoroughly . She forbade the publication of Pope Clement XIII 's bull which was in favour of the Jesuits and promptly confiscated their property when Pope Clement XIV suppressed the order .

= = = Jews and Protestants = = =

Though she eventually gave up trying to convert her non Catholic subjects to Roman Catholicism , Maria Theresa regarded both the Jews and Protestants as dangerous to the state and actively tried to suppress them . The empress was probably the most anti Semitic monarch of her time , having inherited the traditional prejudices of her ancestors and acquired new ones . This was a product of deep religious devotion and was not kept secret in her time . In 1777 , she wrote of the Jews : " I know of no greater plague than this race , which on account of its deceit , usury and avarice is driving my subjects into beggary . Therefore as far as possible , the Jews are to be kept away and avoided . "

She imposed extremely harsh taxes on her Jewish subjects , and in December 1744 proposed to her ministers the expulsion of Jews from her hereditary dominions . Her first intention was to deport all Jews by 1 January , but having accepted the advice of her ministers , who were concerned by the number of future deportees , had the deadline slipped to June . She also transferred Protestants from Austria to Transylvania and reduced the number of religious holidays and monastic orders . In 1777 , she abandoned the idea of expelling Moravian Protestants after Joseph , who was opposed to her intentions , threatened to abdicate as emperor and co ruler . Finally , she was forced to grant them some toleration by allowing them to worship privately . Joseph regarded his mother 's religious policies as " unjust , impious , impossible , harmful and ridiculous " .

In the third decade of her reign , influenced by her Jewish courtier Abraham Mendel Theben , Maria Theresa issued edicts which offered some state protection to her Jewish subjects . She forbade the forcible conversion of Jewish children to Christianity in 1762 , and in 1763 she forbade Catholic clergy from extracting surplice fees from her Jewish subjects . In 1764 , she ordered the release of those Jews who had been jailed for a blood libel in the village of Orkuta . Notwithstanding her strong dislike of Jews , Maria Theresa supported Jewish commercial and industrial activity .

= = Reforms = =

Maria Theresa was as conservative in manners of state as in those of religion , but implemented significant reforms to strengthen Austria 's military and bureaucratic efficiency . She employed Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz , who modernised the empire by creating a standing army of 108 000 men , paid for with 14 million gulden extracted from each crown land . The central government was responsible for the army , although Haugwitz instituted taxation of the nobility , who never before had to pay taxes . Maria Theresa oversaw the unification of the Austrian and Bohemian chancellories in May 1749 .

Maria Theresa doubled the state revenue between 1754 and 1764 , though her attempt to tax clergy and nobility was only partially successful . These financial reforms greatly improved the economy .

In 1760 , Maria Theresa created the council of state , composed of the state chancellor , three members of the high nobility and three knights , which served as a committee of experienced people who advised her . The council of state lacked executive or legislative authority , but nevertheless showed the difference between the form of government employed by Frederick II of Prussia . Unlike the latter , Maria Theresa was not an autocrat who acted as her own minister . Prussia would adopt this form of government only after 1807 .

= = = Medicine = = =

Gerard van Swieten , whom Maria Theresa had recruited following the death of her sister , Archduchess Maria Anna , founded the Vienna General Hospital , revamped Austria 's educational system and served as the Empress 's personal physician . After calling in van Swieten , Maria Theresa asked him to study the problem of infant mortality in Austria . Following his recommendation , she made a decree that autopsies would be mandatory for all hospital deaths in the city of Graz , Austria 's second largest city . This law ? still in effect today ? combined with the

relatively stable population of Graz , resulted in one of the most important and complete autopsy records in the world . Maria Theresa banned the creation of new burial grounds without prior government permission , thus countering wasteful and unhygienic burial customs . Her decision to have her children inoculated after the smallpox epidemic of 1767 was responsible for changing Austrian physicians ' negative view of inoculation . The empress herself inaugurated inoculation in Austria by hosting a dinner for the first sixty @-@ five inoculated children in Schönbrunn Palace , waiting on the children herself .

= = = Civil rights = = =

Among other reforms was the Codex Theresianus , begun in 1752 and finished in 1766 , that defined civil rights . In 1776 , Austria outlawed witch burnings and torture . It was later reintroduced , but the progressive nature of these reforms remains noted . Much unlike Joseph , but with the support of religious authorities , Maria Theresa was opposed to the abolition of torture . Born and raised between Baroque and Rococo eras , she found it hard to fit into the intellectual sphere of the Enlightenment , which is why she only slowly followed humanitarian reforms on the continent .

= = = Church = = =

Main reforms concerning the Roman Catholic Church were initiated and carried out under Maria Theresa , while the reforms under her son concerned their non @-@ Catholic subjects . The ecclesiastical policies of Maria Theresa , like those of her devout predecessors , were based not on anti @-@ religious principles , but on ensuring primacy of State control in Church @-@ State relations .

= = = Education = = =

Aware of the inadequacy of bureaucracy in Austria , and wishing to improve it , Maria Theresa reformed education in 1775 . In a new school system based on the Prussian one , all children of both genders from the ages of six to twelve had to attend school . Education reform was met with hostility from many villages ; Maria Theresa crushed the dissent by ordering the arrest of all those opposed . Although the idea had merit , the reforms were not as successful as they were expected to be since no funding was offered from the state ; in some parts of Austria , half of the population was illiterate well into the 19th century .

The empress permitted non @-@ Catholics to attend university and allowed the introduction of secular subjects (such as law) , which influenced the decline of theology as the main foundation of university education .

= = Late reign = =

Emperor Francis died on 18 August 1765 , while he and the court were in Innsbruck celebrating the wedding of his second son , Leopold . Maria Theresa was devastated . Their eldest son , Joseph , became Holy Roman Emperor . Maria Theresa abandoned all ornamentation , had her hair cut short , painted her rooms black and dressed in mourning for the rest of her life . She completely withdrew from court life , public events , and theater . Throughout her widowhood , she spent the whole of August and the eighteenth of each month alone in her chamber , which negatively affected her mental health . She described her state of mind shortly after Francis 's death : " I hardly know myself now , for I have become like an animal with no true life or reasoning power . "

Upon his accession to the imperial throne , Joseph ruled less land than his father had in 1740 . Believing that the emperor must possess enough land to maintain the Empire 's integrity , Maria Theresa , who was used to being assisted in the administration of her vast realms , declared Joseph to be her new co @-@ ruler on 17 September 1765 . From then on , mother and son had frequent ideological disagreements . The 22 million gulden that Joseph inherited from his father was injected

into the treasury . Maria Theresa had another loss in February 1766 when Haugwitz died . She gave her son absolute control over the military following the death of Count Leopold Joseph von Daun .

According to Robert A. Kann , Maria Theresa was a monarch of above @-@ average qualifications but intellectually inferior to Joseph and Leopold . He asserts that she nevertheless possessed qualities appreciated in a monarch : warm heart , practical mind , firm determination and sound perception . Most importantly , she was ready to recognise the mental superiority of some of her advisers and to give way to a superior mind while enjoying support of her ministers even if their ideas differed from her own . Joseph , however , was never able to establish rapport with the same advisers , even though their philosophy of government was closer to Joseph 's than to Maria Theresa 's .

The relationship between Maria Theresa and Joseph was not without warmth but was complicated and their personalities clashed . Despite his intellect , Maria Theresa 's force of personality often made Joseph cower . Sometimes , she openly admired his talents and achievements , but criticised him behind his back . She wrote : " We never see each other except at dinner ... His temper gets worse every day ... Please burn this letter ... I just try to avoid public scandal . " In another letter , also addressed to Joseph 's companion , she complained : " He avoids me ... I am the only person in his way and so I am an obstruction and a burden ... Abdication alone can remedy matters . "

After much contemplation , she chose not to abdicate . Joseph himself often threatened to resign as co @-@ regent and emperor , but he , too , was induced not to do so . Her threats of abdication were rarely taken seriously ; Maria Theresa believed that her recovery from smallpox in 1767 was a sign that God wished her to reign until death . It was in Joseph 's interest that she remained sovereign , for he often blamed her for his failures and thus avoided taking on the responsibilities of a monarch .

Joseph and Prince Kaunitz arranged the First Partition of Poland despite Maria Theresa 's protestations . Her sense of justice pushed her to reject the idea of partition , which would hurt the Polish people . The duo argued that it was too late to abort now . Besides , Maria Theresa herself agreed with the partition when she realised that Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia would do it with or without Austrian participation . Maria Theresa claimed and eventually took Galicia and Lodomeria , a province claimed by Hungarian monarchs since the 13th century ; in the words of Frederick , " the more she cried , the more she took " .

= = Death and legacy = =

It is unlikely that Maria Theresa ever completely recovered from the smallpox attack in 1767 , as 18th @-@ century writers asserted . She suffered from shortness of breath , fatigue , cough , distress , necrophobia and insomnia . She later developed edema .

The empress fell ill on 24 November 1780 , ostensibly of a chill . Her physician Dr. Störk thought her condition serious . By 28 November , she asked for the last rites , and the next day , at about nine o 'clock in the evening , she died surrounded by her remaining children . With her , the House of Habsburg died out and was replaced by the House of Habsburg @-@ Lorraine . Joseph , already co @-@ sovereign of the Habsburg dominions , succeeded her . Her longtime rival Frederick of Prussia , on hearing of her death , said that she had honored her throne and her sex , and though he had fought against her in three wars , he never considered her his enemy .

After several diplomatic failures and military defeats in the 1730s , Austria seemed to be declining , or even on the verge of collapse . After her forty years reign , Maria Theresa left a revitalised empire that influenced the rest of Europe throughout the 19th century . She gave the Habsburg dominions an efficient administrative system that allowed it to remain a great power in its own right , without the support of the Holy Roman Empire . Her descendants followed her example and continued reforming the empire . The acquisition of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria gave the empire an even more multinational character that would ultimately lead to its destruction . Her introduction of compulsory schooling , as a means of Germanisation , eventually triggered the revival of Czech culture .

The empress is buried in the Imperial Crypt in Vienna next to her husband in a coffin she had

inscribed during her lifetime .

= = Full title = =

Her title after the death of her husband was :

Maria Theresa , by the Grace of God , Dowager Empress of the Romans , Queen of Hungary , of Bohemia , of Dalmatia , of Croatia , of Slavonia , of Galicia , of Lodomeria , etc . ; Archduchess of Austria ; Duchess of Burgundy , of Styria , of Carinthia and of Carniola ; Grand Princess of Transylvania ; Margravine of Moravia ; Duchess of Brabant , of Limburg , of Luxemburg , of Guelders , of Württemberg , of Upper and Lower Silesia , of Milan , of Mantua , of Parma , of Piacenza , of Guastalla , of Auschwitz and of Zator ; Princess of Swabia ; Princely Countess of Habsburg , of Flanders , of Tyrol , of Hainault , of Kyburg , of Gorizia and of Gradisca ; Margravine of Burgau , of Upper and Lower Lusatia ; Countess of Namur ; Lady of the Wendish Mark and of Mechlin ; Dowager Duchess of Lorraine and Bar , Dowager Grand Duchess of Tuscany .

= = Ancestry = =

= = Popular culture = =

Maria Theresa appears as the leader of Austria in the computer strategy game Civilization V : Gods & Kings .

Maria Theresa appears in Episode 64 of Hetalia : Axis Powers , voiced by Michiko Neya (Japanese) and Stephanie Young (English) .