

## Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (Late 17th Century)

### Abstract

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Born in 1640, Leopold I (r. 1658-1705) succeeded his father, Ferdinand III (r. 1637-57), as ruler of the Austrian Habsburg hereditary lands and, subsequently, as Holy Roman Emperor, a title he assumed at the young age of eighteen. Highly educated, Leopold took an active part in government affairs and tried, with some success, to reassert imperial influence in Germany amidst the prolonged fragmentation caused by the Thirty Years War. Leopold's absolutist program of Catholic Counter-Reformation prompted resistance, especially in Hungary. During his reign, the Imperial Diet [*Reichstag*], which his father had convened in Regensburg in 1653, was transformed into the Permanent Imperial Diet (1663). With this change, the Diet became permanently available, which meant, among other things, that it could better respond to threats such as the Ottoman invasions. In foreign policy, Leopold's reign was marked by a series of military conflicts, including his successful wars against the Turks after the near-loss of Vienna in 1683 and his desperate responses to Louis XIV's (r. 1661-1715) expansionist wars. Leopold's military engagement with Louis XIV resulted in territorial losses for the Empire but eventually kept France at bay. In the painting below, Leopold is draped in the imperial robe and gestures toward the imperial crown. Painting by unknown artist, late seventeenth century.

### Source

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