

## Maria Theresa with her Husband Francis I and Crown Prince Joseph (Joseph II) (1747)

### Abstract

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This painting shows Maria Theresa of Austria (r. 1740-80), her husband, Francis Stephan of Lorraine (Francis I, r. 1745-65), and Crown Prince Joseph (subsequently, Joseph II, r. 1765-90). Francis Stephan had relinquished his claim to the Duchy of Lorraine in 1735, eventually acquiring the Grand Duchy of Tuscany (1737) instead. In 1736, he married Maria Theresa, Emperor Charles VI's eldest daughter and female heir. He thus became entangled in the Habsburgs' struggle to retain control over their Austrian hereditary lands as well as *de facto* imperial succession, despite the extinction of the Habsburg male line. Maria Theresa and the Viennese government presented Francis Stephan as candidate for the emperorship in 1742, but competing claims by the electors of Saxony and Bavaria prevented him from acquiring the imperial crown at that time. In 1745, the death of his Bavarian rival, Charles VII, secured him the emperorship, *de jure* – and made Maria Theresa empress, *de facto*. As co-regent, Francis exercised little political influence. His marriage proved a happy one, however.

### Source

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Source: Franz Xaver Palko, Maria Theresa with her Husband Francis I and Crown Prince Joseph, oil on canvas, 1747. Heeresgeschichtliches Museum Vienna.

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