

Torture by Fire (1769)

Abstract

Although Maria Theresa of Austria (r. 1740-80) extended her reform program to include matters of criminal procedure, she did not follow Prussian ruler Frederick II in abolishing judicial torture (1740, 1754). Rather, the standards laid out in her criminal code, *Constitutio Criminalis Theresiana* (1769), continued to rely on earlier concepts of punitive justice – a point made clear by the following engraving, which presents Habsburg judicial procedures for “interrogation under torture” in meticulous detail. In the Austrian Empire, torture was finally abolished in 1777, due in part to the efforts of Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733-1817), jurist and *rector magnificus* at the University of Vienna.

Source



Source: Copperplate engraving by an unknown artist from the *Constitutio Criminalis Theresiana*, 1769. bpk-Bildagentur, image number 20031925. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

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