

The King & Her Minister

Habsburg Foreign Policy during the 'Austrian Security Crisis' as
Interplay between Theresian and Kaunitzian Legacies

by

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On the 25th of July, 1789, a lone courier left the Palais Kaunitz-Esterhazy in the Viennese suburb of Mariahilf. He bore a letter for the Emperor from the Austrian Chancellor, the Prince von Kaunitz-Rietberg, concerning “La revolte complete de Paris, et la Revolution plus ou moins étendue, qui doit en resulter naturellement en France,” which contained all the details of the “Catastrophe.”¹ Kaunitz was concerned about the effect the news might have upon the Emperor, but Joseph II assured him in his reply: “ma santé n’est pas derangé au point à m’affecter d’évenements auxquelles surtout je n’ai aucune part.”² Events in Paris certainly concerned him, but ultimately he deemed the affair beyond the scope of acceptable intervention. This was, after all, the age of the ‘Austrian Crisis’, a bewildering combination of events which circled around and within the Habsburg Monarchy. Letters concerning France interspersed themselves intermittently between lengthy, detailed correspondence regarding the Magyars, the Belgians or the progress of the war against the Ottomans.

To a historian like Michael Hochedlinger, a senior archivist for the Austrian State Archives, the short shrift given to developments in France is indicative of a wider apathy. Hochedlinger subscribes to the notion of the “primacy of power politics”, a variant of ‘Primat der Außenpolitik’, which recognizes *ancien régime* perceptions of domestic stability as the foundation of any effective policy within the European states system, and which accounts for the ensuing interaction between the two spheres.³ Under such a model, Hochedlinger contends, the evidence suggests that Austrian efforts against the

¹ The French cited throughout this project is replicated as published, with no attempt at correction. Adolf Beer, ed., *Joseph II., Leopold II. und Kaunitz: Ihr Briefwechsel*, (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1873), 335; The Chancellor had only just learned of the storming of the Bastille that same day. Franz Szabo, “Prince Kaunitz and the Balance of Power”, *the International History Review*, vol. 1 (3) (July 1979), 402.

² Beer, *Joseph II., Leopold II. und Kaunitz*, 336.

³ Michael Hochedlinger, “Who’s Afraid of the French Revolution? Austrian Foreign Policy and the European Crisis 1787-1797,” *German History*, vol. 21 (3) (2003), 293.

French Revolution were conducted, “not only with conventional means but also for perfectly traditional war aims.”⁴ Austria’s reactions to events in France, therefore, were dictated less by ‘conservative, reactionary’ tendencies and sympathies than by standard 18th Century foreign policy norms. His analytical framework is in opposition to both the ‘constructivist’ and ‘traditional’ perspectives of Austrian diplomacy in the period⁵ - it mirrors closely the views of Brendan Simms, a proponent of a ‘realist’ revival of ‘Primat der Außenpolitik’.⁶

Hochedlinger’s approach to the historical problem of Austrian policy in this era is riddled with as many problems as insights. His contention that Austria fought against France in a traditional manner is both obvious and far from novel – to expect any actor to respond to an unprecedented, extraordinary circumstance with unprecedented, extraordinary measures is to allow no learning curve to the actor in question and seriously misjudge motivations. To suggest that “both Austria and Prussia were merely eager to use the conflict with France as a convenient pretext to realize long-harboured territorial ambitions,”⁷ is a pessimistic assumption that the petty prizes were more important than the game. If this were the case, then Austria’s policy “would therefore have been simply to defect from the war...by simply ceding Belgium to France and seizing [Bavaria]” - but as Schroeder argues, with great validity, “Austria was politically and psychologically

⁴ Ibid., 294.

⁵ Represented by Paul W. Schroeder in the case of ‘constructivist’, and by figures like Alan Sked and the more restrained Karl A. Roeder, in the case of ‘traditional’.

⁶ Brendan Simms argues that domestic reform during the 18th Century was always a means to an international end and that the death of the Primat der Außenpolitik was unfortunate. The resurrection of this theory is, in his eyes, positive. The deficiencies in his argument are obvious enough – the states which he uses as evidence have particular security threats at particular times; Bavaria may fit his model in the 18th Century, but does it still fit the model after the 1813 Treaty of Reid? In any case, both Hochedlinger and Simms make the error of imposing onto the Habsburg Monarchy a historical theory used primarily to interpret Prussian/German history, without first ensuring its validity. Brendan Simms, “The Return of the Primacy of Foreign Policy,” *German History*, vol. 21 (3) (2003): 275-291.

⁷ Hochedlinger, “Who’s Afraid of the French Revolution?”, 317.

incapable of playing such a game of *à corsaire, corsaire et demi*.⁸ Hochedlinger's thoroughly negative, 'realist' portrayals of Austrian participation in the war, in which "it was obsessive greed for new land to make up for the war costs and territorial losses sustained during the conflict, not counter-revolutionary fanaticism, that made it virtually impossible for Thugut to back out of the war empty-handed,"⁹ clash directly with more specialized literature on the subject, such as Karl A. Roeder's biography of the much-maligned Baron von Thugut.¹⁰ Hochedlinger's dismissal of both the 'traditional' and 'transformational' approaches – almost derisory in the case of the former¹¹ – is under-evidenced, making his argument largely a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Despite these deficiencies, Hochedlinger's "Who's Afraid of the French Revolution", and its contemporaneous counter-part, *Austria's Wars of Emergence*, are suggestive on a broad range of issues relating to Austria's position, and provide a useful springboard to further analysis. The same can be said for the 'constructivist' catechism – Paul Schroeder's *Transformation of European Politics*. This magisterial work envisions Austria as leading Europe in an 'international revolution' which evolved alongside the

⁸ As Schroeder points out, France after the downfall of the monarchy happily endorsed the Austro-Bavarian exchange project, and such a course of action does seem largely feasible. Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 121. In any case, Hochedlinger himself notes that the issue of the Belgian-Bavarian exchange had been laid to rest by a renewed ban at a conference at The Hague in October-December 1790 in exchange for the restoration of Austrian rule in the Netherlands. Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence: War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1683-1797*, (London: Longman, 2003), 393.

⁹ Hochedlinger, "Who's Afraid of the French Revolution", 317.

¹⁰ See Karl A. Roeder, *Baron Thugut and Austria's Response to the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Hochedlinger has a tendency to set up traditional arguments in terms of 'textbook' clichés. Thus, "schematic accounts tend to assume that, from the start, Europe conceived of the French Revolution as a massive threat to the established social and political order which therefore had to be nipped in the bud." [Hochedlinger, "Who's Afraid of the French Revolution?", 297] Few, if any 'traditional' historians would assert such a thing – though the danger arguably did become apparent soon enough. Furthermore, by presenting the out-of-fashion dichotomy between a "revolutionary and modern France and an ultra-conservative European backwater like Austria" [Ibid., 294] as the hallmark of the 'traditional' argument originating in 19th century liberal historiography, Hochedlinger imagines his work as a modern re-examination of 'the actual'. This image, though inaccurate, serves to discredit the 'traditionalists' for his audience.

French Revolution and the subsequent wars. The Monarchy, he suggests, preceded all the other powers in articulating a need for a state system governed by law, mutual restraint and principle. Schroeder argues particularly that in two separate instances, in 1792 under Leopold II and in the 1813 Treaty of Ried, Vienna was the primary location of this 'international revolution'. This line of argument recognizes a unique Austrian legalism which is a hallmark of Metternichian foreign policy and later Habsburg policy in the 19th Century – it is most aptly embodied in Emperor Franz's motto, "Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum."¹² This emphasis on *Gerechtigkeit* within the legacy of Josephism seems to suggest a unique relationship between Josephist domestic 'progressiveness' and its conceptions of the international system. The 'constructivist'¹³ theory of the functioning of the European states system, then, forms a key lens of inquiry for the current project, even if it is not without its own flaws.¹⁴ Paul Schroeder's *The Transformation of European Politics* provides both an interesting foil and complement to more 'traditional' narratives of Austrian policy.

¹² This motto – "Justice is the Foundation of Kingdoms" adorned the Burgtor in Vienna, and was Franz II's personal motto [see James Shedel, "Fin de Siècle or Jahrhundertwende", in Steven Beller ed., *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, (New York: Berghahn, 2001), 80].

¹³ I use the term 'constructivist' with a certain looseness; as Jack S. Levy noted, there was in the early 1990s a "fine line" between "neoliberal institutionalism" and the "emerging group of scholars known as 'constructivists'." Jack S. Levy, "The Theoretical Foundations of Paul W. Schroeder's International System", *the International History Review*, vol. 16 (4) (November 1994), 736. Ultimately, with liberal institutionalism stemming somewhat narrowly from Wilsonian 'idealism', I have elected to conceive of the role of Schroeder in broader terms, concerned more with changes of values in the international arena than international governance.

¹⁴ Within his constructed system, Schroeder's claims about Russian and British invulnerability are outlandish enough to be seen as ludicrous. As Alan Sked argues: "the two hegemonies were perhaps invulnerable in their own spheres – the high seas or Asia – but that is hardly the point;" Sked is also warranted in criticizing Schroeder's 'over-systemization of the past' and his failure to recognize intermediary bodies, sub-hegemonies and hegemonies as very real sources of conflict [see Alan Sked, *Metternich and Austria: An Evaluation*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 60-61]. Charles Ingrao correctly assaults Schroeder's far from tenable assumptions about the 'anarchic' 18th Century and the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756. Charles Ingrao, "Paul W. Schroeder's Balance of Power: Stability or Anarchy?", *the International History Review*, XVI, 4 (Nov. 1994), 698.

These older explanations of Habsburg diplomacy have a tendency to stress 'counter-revolutionary' and 'balance of power' elements. Alan Sked, who in many respects defies categorization as an intellectual successor to A.J.P. Taylor, can be seen as broadly within the confines of this school; though even he would argue, in contrast to Hochedlinger's caricature, that "at first practically no one in Europe was troubled by events in France." To a historian like Sked, the drastic change in attitude was caused rather by the execution of the King and Queen of France.¹⁵ Karl A. Roider similarly sees no contradiction between Austrian coolness towards events and appeals from France and Habsburg support for the "conservative cause".¹⁶ Charles Ingrao contends that "what concerned both men [Joseph II and Leopold II] the most about the Revolution was its effects on the monarchy's international position," and that Leopold's advice to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette to continue to work with the Revolution was aimed foremost towards saving the French monarchy and the Habsburg-Bourbon alliance.¹⁷

Hochedlinger's image of the traditional historian is thus effectively a straw-man; what can now be seen as the 'traditional' school no longer includes Jules Michelet.

Furthermore, representing the Austro-French war in terms of a conflict between national and monarchical sovereignty simply has a certain basic 'grand narrative' coherence and explanatory value; it also seems likely that it would have been accepted by contemporaries and their successors.

The failings of the loosely defined 'traditional' argument are in some ways similar to those of Hochedlinger: it tends to obscure the unique in Austrian diplomacy and to

¹⁵ Sked, *Metternich*, 3.

¹⁶ Roider, *Baron Thugut*, 82.

¹⁷ Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 221.

operate with unexamined realist foundations. Authors of this school cannot convincingly account for change in the international system, and are thus often tied to portraying the *Vormärz* as a stale continuation of 18th century balance of power politics.¹⁸ Dealing with transformations within the European state system is integral to any robust understanding of Austrian diplomacy, I would argue, because Austria's foreign policy was often shaped by how its policy-makers felt the international system should function – a feature distinguishable right down to Charles I and Ottokar Czernin.¹⁹

The aim of this project is not merely to analyze Austrian policy in light of the three aforementioned lenses of the “Primacy of Power Politics”, constructivism and traditionalist realism. Rather, it is to use all three perspectives to elucidate a new interpretation of Habsburg policy, a new synthesis, which focuses more closely on Austrian discourses and values in the international arena. By the reign of the reformist Joseph II, I would argue, two competing personal legacies - Theresian and Kaunitzian – had emerged in the conduct and formation of Austrian diplomatic policy. Both of these discourses formed integral parts of Josephism – both then and later - but both are as distinct from it as their namesakes. This project aims to examine the substance and history of each legacy in turn, elucidating its various components, before extending the conflict between the discourses into the era of the ‘Austrian Security Crisis’ in order to suggest their continued dominance. The dualism of values between Maria Theresia and

¹⁸ Hence, H.M. Scott views the breakup of Napoleon's Empire as virtually identical to that of Charles XII; even arguing that the partitions of Poland in the 18th Century were analogous to the partition of Poland at the Congress of Vienna. [Sked, *Metternich*, 56]. Sked argues that simple ‘balance of power’ politics continued throughout the 19th Century, chastising Schroeder for his “fine distinction” between ‘balance of power’ and ‘equilibrium’ which, he writes, “would have been incomprehensible” to 18th century diplomats. *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹ See the conclusion of Jonathon Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Kaunitz, I feel, goes a long way towards explaining the ambiguity of Austrian policy in much of the 18th and 19th Centuries.

The Last & First Habsburg: Theresianism as Habsburg Dynastic Exceptionalism

The historical image of Maria Theresa is a deeply divided one, which has all too often been ensnared by debates over the reign of her son, Joseph II. The occasionally fierce tone of their disputes has seemingly drawn many to 'choose sides', a process graciously helped along by a tendency to view their disputes in ideological terms – Joseph the belligerent, idealist, modern 'reformer', and Maria Theresa the cautious, 'backward', pragmatic politician. While more specialized scholars easily avoid such characterizations, the imagery still holds remarkable currency in broader circles.²⁰ Jonathan Israel's *Democratic Enlightenment* observes that Maria Theresa was "undeniably popular but decidedly 'unenlightened'...personally deeply unsympathetic to Enlightenment ideals as such." The House of Austria, he insists, before Joseph,

had been focused on reinforcing ecclesiastical direction of society, supremacy of theology in education, censorship of reading...fomenting neo-scholastic anti-intellectualism, anti-Protestantism, and anti-Semitism. Vienna...remained Europe's very headquarters of intellectual backwardness and obscurantism.²¹

²⁰ See especially William J. McGill, "In Search of a Unicorn: Maria Theresa and the Religion of State," *The Historian*, vol. 42 (2) (1980): 304-318, for a more detailed examination of this tendency among scholars. McGill's analysis of the reign of Maria Theresa is perhaps the most generous of all, calling it "in its own right...the most important reign in Habsburg history," and asserting that "the Theresian enlightenment differed from the Frederician or Josephian enlightenment just as the personalities of the three monarchs differed. Her enlightenment was contained within the limits of her piety; she was bound by the persisting spirit of the Counter-Reformation. Ambitious and possessed of the strongest self-conviction, she yet was not consumed by the spirit of adventure and power as was Catherine [the Great]. No monarch of her age had such royal bearing or such devotion to her people." He sees her reign as "not a way station on the road to the modern state, but an alternative, one no more durable perhaps, but also perhaps no less satisfactory." William J. McGill, *Maria Theresa*, (New York: Twayne, 1972), 143 and 146.

²¹ Israel goes to great lengths to highlight Maria Theresa's religious intolerance, framing what reforms that were affected as little more than an expansion of state power when it coincided with her 'Jansenist' values. Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 283-285.

Religiosity, it would seem, has condemned Maria Theresa, and often her predecessors, as simply 'un-modern'.

More generous historians, however, applaud Maria Theresa's vigorous reform of the Austrian state, and her steadfastness in the wake of the War of the Austrian Succession. These successes, they frequently claim, are more a result of circumstance and personality, as Charles VI had done virtually nothing to prepare his daughter or his state for the succession. While this has a certain unassailable validity, it tends to obscure all that which Maria Theresa contributed to the development of the Austrian state beyond merely her "pragmatism...[and] almost infallible judge of talent."²² It is possible to argue that the reign of Maria Theresa effectively re-established the Habsburg state, with a much wider, longer lasting and more significant legacy than is often assumed.

For instance, the Pragmatic Sanction, and the sweeping constitutional and dynastic overhaul it represented,²³ may have been installed by her father, but it was only her robust and determined defence of this radical departure that ensured its survival. This defence was not just against Prussia or France, but against Bavaria and Saxony, whose rulers both were married to Josephine daughters and who thereby had a legitimate claim based on House law that had only recently been extinguished. Dowager Empress Wilhelmina Amalia argued with a certain amount of logic that her daughters' rights were inalienable, stemming from divine right, and no forced renunciation at marriage could

²² Ingrao, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 154.

²³ As Andrew Wheatcroft notes, the Pragmatic Sanction not only sought to secure permanent hereditary succession in all Habsburg territories, thus making them a concrete entity if still a conglomeration, but it also sought to violate the tradition of private House law through its public ratification. Andrew Wheatcroft, "In the Blood: the Secret History of the Habsburgs," *History Today*, vol. 46 (9) (1996): 25.

overturn the *Family Pact* of 1703 which Charles VI had signed under oath.²⁴ Maria Theresia's inheritance thus stood on a weak legal foundation in terms of the laws of the House of Austria. It seemed yet weaker given the Habsburg's peculiar emphasis on blood rather than gender, which stood in contrast to many of their continental neighbours and made the succession look yet more suspect.²⁵ In this sense, Maria Theresia's reign owed itself entirely to Habsburg exceptionalism, and the survival of the Pragmatic Sanction in the circumstances of her ascension validated it with a constitutional force forged through war.

The dynastic break which Maria Theresia represented, then, was serious but far from catastrophic. She became the vessel of transference for Habsburg traditions to the new House of Habsburg-Lorraine, the blood link which allowed the continuance of a sizable dynastic mythology. It follows that the particularities of her opinions and experience would dictate which traditions would be most prominent. I would argue especially that the reason her influence on the mythology and discourses of the new Imperial House has received so little attention from current historians is due to its broad concurrence with previous Habsburg values – she was a product of the *Erzhaus*, after all. The key tenets of the Theresian legacy were a strong sense of justice, a keen legalism, a firm belief in the dynasty's inherent mission, and a deeply pious Catholicism. Many of these values were mutually reinforcing or corollaries of combinations of them, as no aspect of Theresian discourse stood independently. Nor were any immediately novel or

²⁴ Charles Ingrao, "Empress Wilhelmine Amalia and the Pragmatic Sanction" *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 34 (1981), 333-341. Paradoxically, the fact that Charles VI had forced the Josephine branch to renounce their rights in favour of the Caroline reinforced the legitimacy and validity of their rights of reversion in the eyes of some contemporaries. See: "Doubts about the Pragmatic Sanction" in Leonard W Cowie, ed. *Documents and Descriptions in European History 1714-1815* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1967), 53-54.

²⁵ In particular, it directly clashed with the Salic traditions and assumptions of the Holy Roman Empire since Charlemagne. Wheatcroft, "In the Blood."

unique; they all have clear antecedents in Habsburg history. Nevertheless, there were - however subtle - several significant changes in the construction of these values during her reign.

In analyzing the origins and alterations of the constituent parts of Theresianism, it makes most sense to begin with the heart of the Habsburg 'world-view' - its Catholicism.²⁶ This *pietas austriaca* was predicated on two particular veneration: *pietas mariana* and *pietas eucharistica*. Both have their own distinct mythologies: *pietas mariana* from Ferdinand II's naming of the Virgin Mary as the ultimate commander of his forces,²⁷ and *pietas eucharistica* from the tale of Rudolph I, who gave up his horse for a priest bearing the Sacrament, "a deed which elicited the priest's prophecy of Hapsburg world dominion."²⁸ Both retained currency until the end of the Empire in 1918, and both owed their continuance to Maria Theresia, who instilled a powerful sense of *pietas eucharistica* in her own children - including Joseph II²⁹ - and whose Jansenism led her to back away from the Baroque coronation of Mary in favour of her portrayal as "Gnadenmutter" and "Schutzfrau".³⁰ Maria Theresia was personally extremely pious - as Israel has pointed out - and this clearly did have an effect on policy. Furthermore, she

²⁶ The centrality of Catholicism to Theresianism- and Austrian governance as a whole - in this analysis is designed to be at least superficially in line with T.C.W. Blanning's contention, in his *Cultures of Power*, that religion in the 18th Century was vastly more important than is often assumed. Citation?

²⁷ Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca*, translated by William D. Bowman and Anna Maria Leitgeb, (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004), 14 and 52.

²⁸ Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 208. The Habsburg dynasty also reinforced this association with the Eucharist throughout the early modern period through numerous other miracles associated with previous Emperors, as well as through appropriating the legacy of Clovis through Mary of Burgundy. Ibid, 209-210.

²⁹ Joseph II "proved his devotion in his almost daily presence, even when on trips, at the celebration of the eucharist." Ibid., 25.

³⁰ "Mother of grace" and "protector", respectively. Joseph II would preside over the banning of the crowning of Mary, but in turn personally protected the chapel at Mariazell from destruction. Ibid., 66.

saw God as the ultimate force in her life.³¹ Her variation of divine right stressed disinterestedness and service to those beneath her – a theme examined later – but also displayed a Spanish Habsburg stress on humanity and “vulnerability before God”, as opposed to the Bourbon adaptation which indulged in exalting immortality and divinity.³² Maria Theresa’s reign thus represented a continuance of the firmly Catholic Habsburg tradition, which formed the philosophical foundation of the House of Austria’s mission and character.

The new dynasty’s mission was transformed by impulses towards service of “the people”, which Maria Theresa went so far as to suggest superseded that of her own family.³³ The image of the Monarch as ‘first servant of the state’ became a true tradition of the Habsburg Monarchy, which helped discursively to drive forward many reforms which may have contradicted aristocratic and Catholic interests.³⁴ The loss of the Imperial Crown, albeit briefly, was also a key moment in the reorientation of the dynasty’s mission. The Monarch and the Imperial Crown were separated for the entire

³¹ She wrote in her “Political Testament” – a series of documents assembled by modern historians - that it was God: “Whose Almighty hand singled me out for this position without move or desire of my own and Who would therefore also make me worthy through my conduct, principles, and intentions to fulfill properly the tasks laid on me and thus call down and preserve His Almighty protection for myself and those He has set under me, which truth I had held daily before my eyes and considered that my duty was not to myself personally but only to the public.” C.A. Macartney ed., *The Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (New York: Walker, 1970), 99.

³² Alejandro Osorio, “The King in Lima: Simulacra, Ritual and Rule in Seventeenth-Century Peru”, *Hispanic American Historical Review* vol. 84 (3) (2004), 461.

³³ She writes in her political testament, “I love my family and my children, so that I spare no effort, trouble, care or labor for their sakes, yet I would always have put the general welfare of my dominions above them had I been convinced in my conscience that I should do this or that their welfare demanded it, seeing that I am the general and first mother of the said dominions.” The ‘reality’ of such a statement is debatable, but the significance of her committing it to paper suggests that it was at least partially believed. Macartney, *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, 100.

³⁴ As was the case with state interference in labour relations on the advice of specialist Franz Anton von Blanc, using peasant unrest to push forward reformist agendas in Hungary and Bohemia during the 1760s and 1770s. Robin Okey describes Maria Theresa’s candor for reform in the peasant question: “she would not...risk eternal damnation by being deterred from just policies by a few selfish nobles.” Similarly, Maria Theresa’s appropriation of Jesuit property after 1773 was predicated on the conviction that, “the Church’s wealth was not being put to the best public good.” Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy c. 1765-1918: from Enlightenment to Eclipse*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 34-36.

duration of Maria Theresia's reign until 1780, as she herself refused to be crowned Holy Roman Empress alongside Francis Stephen in 1745.³⁵ The Habsburg pretensions to truly pan-European rule effectively died out under Charles VI and Maria Theresia, as the dynasty stepped away, however reluctantly, from its Spanish and Holy Roman Imperial titles. The correlation between the divorce of the Imperial title from the Monarchy at the same time that massive state reforms and state expansion occurred is suggestive, if not, perhaps, definitive proof of this reorientation. Of course, the Emperor for the next thirty-five years would always be a co-regent, and the Habsburg Monarchy still cared a great deal for its position within the *Reich*. Its main effect, in focusing dynastic interests on Austria, Hungary and Bohemia specifically, was to provide a more or less territorially satiated outlook in terms of its territories further afield and a stronger desire to consolidate and expand within adjacent regions.³⁶ Maria Theresia's defence of her inheritance raised the Habsburg commitment to Central Europe, a moment embodied with such grandeur by the immortal image of the Queen with Joseph II in her arms, appealing to the Hungarian Diet. Moved by both loyalty and chivalry, the Diet pledged the young Queen the "life and blood" of the Hungarian kingdom.³⁷ Maria Theresia and the dynasty entered into new, mutual bonds of loyalty with the Monarchy's subjects.³⁸

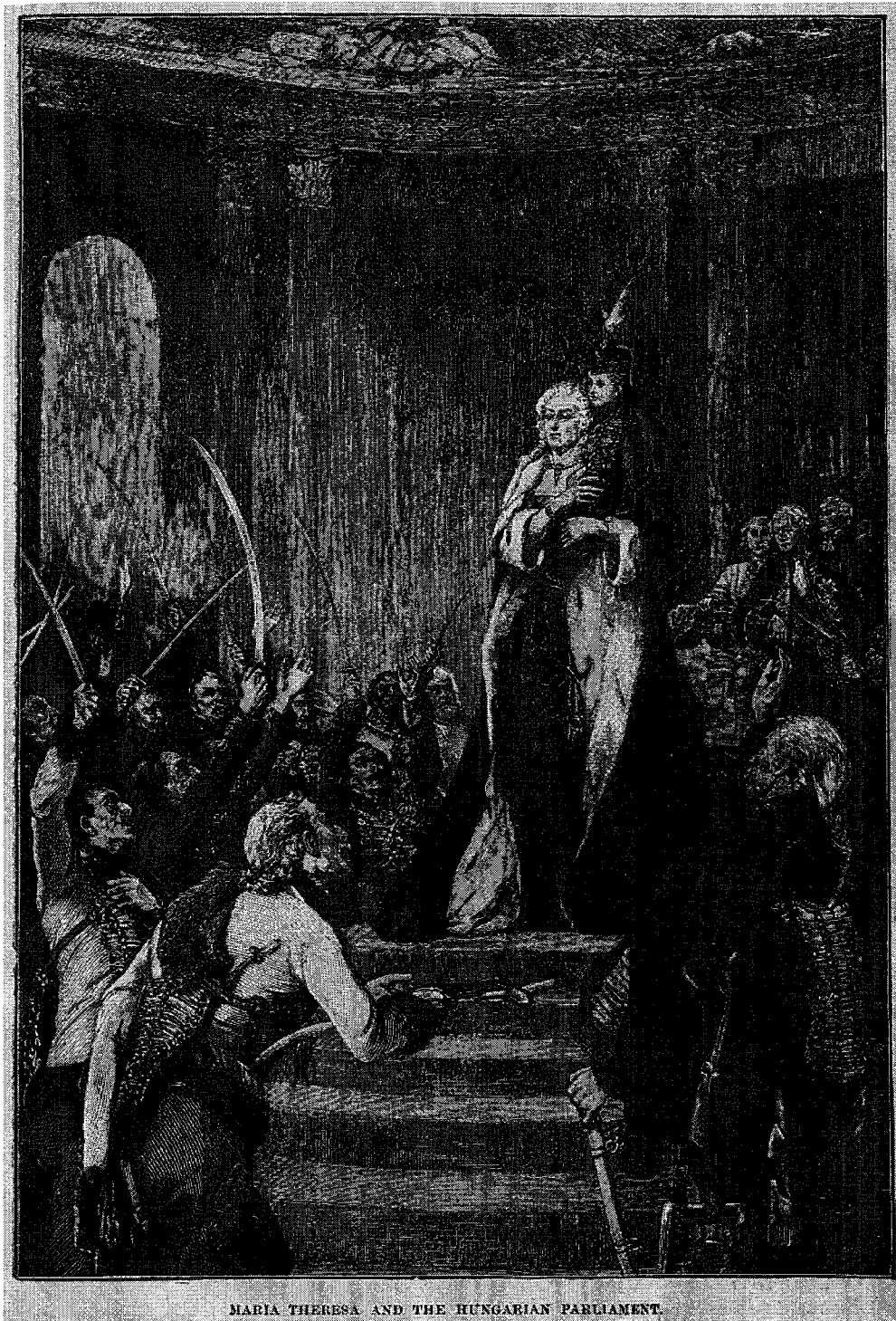
The War of the Austrian Succession itself had a broad reinforcing effect on all aspects of Theresianism, from the strict morality of her Catholicism and her faith in the virtuous mission of the *Erzhaus*, to her visions of justice and state legalism. Maria

³⁵ Wheatcroft, *In the Blood*.

³⁶ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, (London: Longman, 1994), 30.

³⁷ Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 155.

³⁸ RJW Evans echoes this line of thought, suggesting that Maria Theresia's 'Austrian' identity was forged out of "defence of [her realm] against a Prussian – and Bavarian-led 'Germany', which formed a novelty in Habsburg history." R.J.W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary & the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c. 1683-1867*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27.



I - 19th century British rendering of Maria Theresa at the Hungarian Diet with Joseph II.³⁹

³⁹ Taken from *Cassell's Illustrated History of England*, Special Edition, (London: A W Cowan, 1890).
 Source: Look and Learn: History Picture Library, "Maria Theresa and the Hungarian Parliament."
 Accessed April 1st, 2012. <http://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/M084348/Maria-Theresa-and-the-Hungarian-Parliament>.

Theresia's reign was predicated on a legal document, the Pragmatic Sanction,⁴⁰ which had been accepted both within the Monarchy and outside of it by many other European powers. That it was so callously and cynically abrogated by many of the states which had ratified it in order to seize large swathes of her territory was outrageous and granted her position a certain degree of self-righteousness. The election of Charles Albert, one of the chief architects of the war, by many of Charles VI's allies – and the attempt at suspending the Bohemian vote – added to Austrian fury.⁴¹ The identity of her reign was aligned in diametric opposition to the perceived ruthless opportunism of her international opponents; this positioning called on Austria to be a fair, just power. Maria Theresia demonstrated her commitment to this line of thinking when she strongly, and famously, opposed the Partition of Poland in 1772, and equally opposed repudiating the Austrian agreement with the Sublime Porte in 1771.⁴² Her self-image also translated into domestic reform, where starting in 1752, Maria Theresia undertook an ambitious codification of the diverse laws of the Monarchy in the strongly opposed *Nemesis Theresiana*. While it still insisted on the use of torture – until she finally agreed to be rid of it in 1776 – and the

⁴⁰ This foundational constitutional document had been drafted by her father, Charles VI, early in his reign at the expense of other members of the Habsburg family. Charles determinedly pursued international recognition of it, making it a key foreign policy objective of Austrian diplomacy prior to his death in 1740, with most major powers – including the Holy Roman Empire, Prussia, Russia, Spain, Great Britain and France – having signed on.

⁴¹ Maria Theresia angrily pointed to the rule of the Imperial Interregnum, denouncing Bavaria, Saxony and Prussia and calling their votes, and the election, invalid – but to no avail. *The Manifesto of Her Hungarian Majesty upon the Late Pretended Election of an Emperor of Germany : Stated from the Public Acts of the Empire and the Laws of Nations* (London: T. Cooper, 1742), 3.

⁴² The Monarchy had signed a convention with the Ottoman Empire in 1771 essentially guaranteeing the survival of the Porte against the Russians in exchange for Little Wallachia and subsidies. It never came into force, however, because of Russian agreement to evacuate the Danubian Principalities and Kaunitz's shrewd delaying tactics. Maria Theresia was insistent throughout 1771/1772: "No war...no total abandonment of the Turks, and no money." See Karl A. Roider, *Austria's Eastern Question, 1700-1790*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 119-127 and 133.

“aggravated death penalty”,⁴³ the code was a positive step towards synchronizing and modernizing law in the various Habsburg domains, even if it remained unpublished in her lifetime. The Monarchy also increasingly stepped into the realm of regulation, as in the case of serfdom in the 1760s and 1770s.⁴⁴ Even in Hungary, the Queen often heeded advice from prominent - and surprisingly loyal - Magyar aristocrats and officials, “to respect constitutional channels as far as possible.”⁴⁵ The opening salvos of Maria Theresia’s reign, and the legacy of the House of Austria, constructed an enduring and particular image of the Monarch as ‘just’ - operating within the confines of the law for the sake of all subjects.

These core tenets of Theresian discourse - Catholicism, destiny, legalism and justice – were all transformed by the reign of Maria Theresia and its circumstances. Equally, they were closely intertwined and fed effectively off of one another, so that it is difficult to separate the Theresian matrix from the matrix of values and mythology constructed by her predecessors. Nevertheless, the consequence of her reign for the subsequent history of the Monarchy was of the highest order; it is in many ways this historiographical assertion that drives the urge to locate Habsburg dynastic exceptionalism within Theresian discourse. This discourse was itself the bearer and perpetuator of the experiences of the all-but vanished *Erzhaus*, and in turn it was the House of Austria whose historical legacy Theresianism rested upon. The existence of this Theresian legacy suggests that Paul Schroeder’s identification of the unique in Austrian

⁴³The argument between Maria Theresia and her ministers is thus essentially legal in nature. Karl A. Roeder ed., *Maria Theresa*, (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 51-52.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61. Take for example the Queen’s *Urbarium* in Hungary, proclaimed in edict against the will of the Hungarian Diet in 1767, which established royal commissioners to oversee the regulation of both *in natura* and *in aequivalenti* serf-lord relationships – payments in kind or in cash, respectively. István Udvari, “The *Urbarium* of Maria Theresa in the Languages of the South Slavic Peoples of the Hungarian Kingdom,” *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 49 (1/2) (2004), 105 and 107.

⁴⁵ R.J.W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary & the Habsburgs*, 22.

policy with Leopold II is misplaced; the origins of Habsburg exceptionalism are much earlier. This assertion cannot, however, be proven without recourse to the arena of diplomacy, where the Queen's legacy would come into new interaction with the countervailing ideas of the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg, and the resultant dialectical synthesis would come to shape Habsburg foreign policy long after Maria Theresia's death.

On Trial in a New Ballhausplatz: Kaunitzian Discourse & Theresianism

The Ballhausplatz, for two centuries shorthand for Habsburg foreign policy in the same vein as the Quay d'Orsay, Wilhelmstraße or Whitehall, was designed and built by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt in four years, from 1717-1721, under Charles VI.⁴⁶ It, and the ministry which presided over Austrian diplomacy, were thus still rather young by the time of the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg's tenure as *Hof- und Staatskanzler*. Kaunitz presided over the "first golden age" of the Ballhausplatz, overseeing the significant changes attendant with the arrival of state archives from Graz, Innsbruck and Prague to Vienna as part of Maria Theresia's administrative centralization reforms.⁴⁷ Considering the remarkable influence of the Ballhausplatz on the history of the Habsburg Monarchy, and on the Republic of Austria beyond it, the building is a fitting symbol for the foundational nature and endurance of both Kaunitzian and Theresian legacies. It was also the primary setting of the ensuing discursive 'conflict' or interplay, and it provides a solid point of departure for a brief discussion of Austrian diplomatic policy during the Queen's

⁴⁶ Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, "Ballhausplatz 2: Video Tour." Accessed February 11th, 2012. http://www.bka.gv.at/site/cob_45669/3552/default.aspx

⁴⁷ Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, "The Kaunitz Era." Accessed February 11th, 2012. <http://www.bka.gv.at/site/3875/default.aspx>

reign. However, even with the location established, and the première discourse sketched out, any analysis of the diplomatic arena requires that the meaning of 'Kaunitzian' be elaborated.

Rendering Kaunitzian diplomacy in succinct form is remarkably difficult. This is largely the result of conflicting interpretations of the 'eccentric' Prinz. The image put forth by Franz Szabo - of Kaunitz as a fervent adherent to 'Primat der Innenpolitik' - almost prefiguring much later Habsburg ideas of becoming a "super-Switzerland"⁴⁸ - was strongly contested by both T.C.W. Blanning and Derek Beales in their joint statement of reservations about his thesis. They assert that there is a great deal of historical evidence that would seem to contradict the high-principled morality that Szabo attributes to Kaunitz.⁴⁹ Two ways of reconciling the two positions seem plausible: the first is to reinterpret Kaunitz through application of Hochedlinger's notion of the "Primacy of Power Politics", which would contend that Kaunitz's professed emphasis on domestic reforms was merely part of a wider phenomenon of viewing stability as the basis of any successful policy; the second is to interpret the divergence of evidence from Kaunitz's self-perception as indicative of a 'pragmatic' recognition of a dichotomy between the ideal and the 'real'. Kaunitz was, after all, famous for his "political algebra", which only failed through the intervention of "exterior forces" - especially "the inability of others to

⁴⁸ F.R. Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy Among the Great Powers*, (New York: Berg, 1990), 2-3.

⁴⁹ T.C.W. Blanning and Derek Beales argued against Szabo's reinterpretation of Kaunitz's diplomacy through the lens of several documents produced near the end of his life by pointing out that, "the highly interesting documents used by Dr. Szabo seem to represent an attempt by the chancellor to fit his policies of the previous forty years into a new moralistic framework, a deathbed repentance of Machiavellism." Derek Beales and T.C.W. Blanning, "Prince Kaunitz and the 'Primacy of Domestic Policy,'" *The International History Review*, vol. 2 (4) (October, 1980), 624. Szabo, aptly responds best: "There is certainly no doubt in retrospect that the foreign policies of the great powers in the eighteenth century, including that of the Habsburg monarchy, were 'cynical, opportunist, and materialistic.' As foreign minister, Kaunitz must certainly share some of the responsibility for these policies, but to conclude that he was little more than the most deft practitioner of frank international Machiavellianism because he possessed an unmatched capacity for dispassionate analysis of the complex problems of the international body politic would be a mistake." Szabo, "Kaunitz and the Balance of Power," 401.

recognize their true interests.”⁵⁰ Discernable in his method are both logic and circumstance – an echo of the suggested dichotomy between value and ‘fact’. Kaunitz, then, can be seen as representing both constructivism and realism – caught between Schroeder and Hochedlinger.

I would argue, however, that Schroeder’s constructivism ultimately supersedes Hochedlinger. In asserting that the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg’s policy was essentially one of ‘Primat der Innenpolitik’, the standard ‘realist’ retort would surely be that such a reform effort existed only to expand state power in order to destroy Prussia. The logical counter-argument is simple: *to what end?* The Habsburg mission is far more intertwined with the process of reform than it may at first seem; in any event the burden of proof falls on the ‘realists’. Offensive realism can be safely dismissed – the move to destroy Prussia and revert to the old system of Utrecht is essentially defensive in its conception if not, perhaps, its execution – so ‘defensive realism’ must instead be invoked. Instead of a quest for the expansion of state power, realization of the ‘defensive realist’ theory in this instance would entail a demonstration that the goal was survival and survival alone. Even if this could be achieved, the question remains: *to what end?* It is difficult to imagine that so systemic a political practitioner lacked an over-arching existential aim. Of course, supersession does not imply extinguishment – the ‘real’ in Kaunitz’s policy was an important and broadly ‘realist’ component of his recommendations to Maria Theresia.

⁵⁰ William J. McGill, “The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Italy and the Netherlands, 1742-1746,” *Central European History* vol. 1 (2) (1968), 138. This adherence to algebraic formula does not suggest a belief in human control – or the rationality, rather than the anarchy, of the international system – as Harvey L. Dyck has contended, but rather the ultimate desirability and unfortunate mutability of control – the “exterior force” reigns supreme, and only systematic, careful, impassionate, prioritized, reciprocal plans at “the right moment” can overcome these forces. See Harvey L. Dyck, “Pondering the Russian Fact: Kaunitz and the Catherinian Empire in the 1770s”, *Canadian Slavonic Papers* vol. 22, (4) (December 1980), 451.

If this distinction between the ideal and the 'real' is an important, perhaps even the most important, aspect of the Kaunitzian legacy in Austrian diplomacy, there are several other crucial aspects, some of which have previously been mentioned. The systematization of methods in the creation of policy through formal logic – Kaunitz's "algebra" – is a noteworthy aspect, which allowed Austria to play Schroeder's "game of *à corsaire, corsaire et demi*,"⁵¹ whenever circumstance demanded it. Kaunitz's emphasis on domestic affairs, particularly his profession that, "it is a matter of common knowledge that I have long been of the opinion that the Austrian Monarchy is in a position to procure such power and strength through wise domestic reforms as to make the most spectacular conquests superfluous,"⁵² was an important impetus towards relating diplomacy and reform to each other. Kaunitz also stressed reciprocity in international obligations - to the point of recommending that Austria 'go first' - a value which led him to acquire a degree of disdain for the British by the time of Aix-la-Chapelle.⁵³ Britain, he concluded, was of little assistance in Continental affairs, especially when it came to Prussia.⁵⁴ This realization proved to be a lasting insight – not until the Napoleonic Wars did a working

⁵¹ Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 121.

⁵² Szabo, "Kaunitz and the Balance of Power", 401.

⁵³ He came to this realization both through experiences at Turin and Brussels, particularly in dealing with the British, Sardinia and the United Provinces [see McGill, "Roots of Policy in Italy", 143]. It was reinforced and solidified by his belief after Aix-la-Chapelle that "in all things England had shown preference for her other allies and had given every indication of neither liking nor respecting Austria." Britain's coercion of its ally to peace was viewed negatively by Habsburg officials, as it violated their notion of the proper conduct of an 'ally'. McGill is wrong to accuse Kaunitz of unjustly ignoring the British: that Austria *might* well have secured the same concessions through cooperation with her allies rather than collusion with a hostile power is telling on its own. See William J. McGill, "Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rittberg and the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748," *Duquesne Review* vol. 14 (1969): 161 and 164. It is also important to note that Kaunitz did not view reciprocity through 'joint-partition' positively: his opposition, to destructive cooperation with Russia and Prussia, even if it ended in mere resignation, was both moral and pragmatic, since the proposed agreements against Poland or the Ottoman Empire substituted raised stakes for resolution. The essential security problem remained. Whether or not he viewed the mechanism as an, "inherently more unstable political constellation than a conventional competitive inter-state relationship, since it lacked the self-adjusting tendencies that well-articulated rivalry of the balance system produced," as Dyck proposes, is open to debate. Dyck, "Pondering the Russian Fact," 459.

⁵⁴ McGill, "Roots of Policy in Italy", 132.

relationship with Britain resurface, and arguably the experience of that era turned Habsburg foreign ministers from that path for good. Less astutely, as Harvey L. Dyck as has noted, Kaunitz also came to view the decline of the Porte as irreversible and absolute, channelling Habsburg policy away from any meaningful support of the Ottoman state. He wrote to Maria Theresia in June 1777,

That Russia fully intends to overthrow the Turkish empire is as little in doubt as is the impossibility of thwarting the successful realization of this goal, which, to judge by present circumstances is entirely inevitable. This supposition must be made the basis of all future measures.⁵⁵

The chimera that this view represented would lead Austria to tragedy in its last Turkish war which broke out after Maria Theresia had died.

If contempt for Britain and the Porte were integral legacies of Kaunitzian diplomacy, then equally, if not more so, was a resolute opposition to Prussia. Kaunitz's views on the fledgling Great Power were formed at the outset of his career, and persisted until the end. The origins of his intense dislike for the Hohenzollern kingdom were both personal and political: Frederick's invasion of Bohemia threatened his Moravian estates, and Kaunitz also disputed the East Frisian succession with the monarch.⁵⁶ Politically,

⁵⁵ Dyck, "Pondering the Russian Fact," 457. This clashes resoundingly with Maria Theresia's sweeping letter to Count Mercy in late July 1777: "The partition of the Ottoman Empire would be, of all enterprises, the most reckless and dangerous. What should we gain, if we were to extend our conquests to the walls of Constantinople? Unsalubrious, uncultivated Provinces, inhabited either not at all, or by unreliable Greeks, which would not add to the forces of the Monarchy, but rather exhaust them...I will never lend my hand to a partition of the Porte, and I hope that my grandchildren after me will see the Turks in Europe." Macartney, *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, 192.

⁵⁶ It is notable that during Frederick II's occupation of Moravia, Kaunitz's estates were expressly protected. Nonetheless, the traditional, hard-won estates of the reborn House of Kaunitz were under threat. McGill, "Roots of Policy in Italy", 140. His mother was the heiress of the Free Country of Rietberg, and by extension the heiress of the Catholic cadet branch of the House of East Frisia, which became important upon the eminent extinction of the main branch of that family under Charles Edzard, who died childless in 1744 [On the history of the Kaunitzes, see Franz Szabo, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism, 1753-1780*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7-12]. Ironically, it had been Leopold I who had given the Hohenzollern's title to the succession in 1694. Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, Volume II: the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich, 1648-1806*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73.

Prussia represented an immediate security threat which broke the norms of diplomatic agreements,⁵⁷ but which also broke the laws of the Empire, violated the religious balance in Germany and embodied a new, tyrannical "military state".⁵⁸ Prussia became Austria's primary foe during the War of the Austrian Succession, a fact which Kaunitz was all too aware of: "I have always regarded our efforts to extinguish her [Prussia] as correct and the peace concluded *in extremis* as a necessary evil."⁵⁹ This perspective he very much shared with his Queen.

Directly comparing Theresian and Kaunitzian visions of diplomacy is at once fruitful and misleading. Certainly, the level of trust and cooperation between the two figures is easily explained in the process, but it also has the capacity to obscure that joint goals often stemmed from very different considerations, which produced sharply divergent opinions in certain circumstances, such as in 1771-1772. On the surface of policy, Maria Theresa and the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg agreed that the 'traditional system' was defunct and should be replaced with an understanding with the Bourbons. Initially, they both viewed Prussia - both in ideological and 'geopolitical' terms - as the arch-enemy, viewed Russia with relative indifference,⁶⁰ and agreed that deep domestic

⁵⁷ Ibid., 141.

⁵⁸ Kaunitz's letter to Daun, then the Austrian commander during the Seven Years' War, that "the 'tone' and 'spirit' that made the Habsburg army so different from the Prussian were qualities to be cultivated, not discouraged," is indicative of his belief that the conflict with Prussia had a ideological dimension. Franz Szabo, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism, 1753-1780*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 266. And while D.B. Horn is right to assert that Kaunitz saw the conflict in Germany "as the defence of Empire, Law and Roman Catholicism against the unprincipled and heretic king of Prussia," it is wrong to claim that this was 'mere representation' in a game of power politics so that Kaunitz could win "the unfaltering support of his mistress." D.B. Horn, "The Diplomatic Revolution," in J.O. Lindsay ed., *The New Cambridge Modern History: Volume 7, the Old Regime, 1713-1763*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 441.

⁵⁹ McGill, "Roots of Policy in Italy", 145.

⁶⁰ That Habsburg perceptions of Russia went through three stages, from natural ally in the 1750s, to an unimportant anti-Ottoman power in the 1760s, to dynamism and power thereafter, is one of Dyck's most useful ideas. Dyck, "Pondering the Russian Fact," 452-453. Indifference in this context pertains more to an ignorance of Russian aims and lack of respect for Russia as a Great Power - Russia was nevertheless an



II - Map of the European Alliances at the height of the Seven Years' War, early 1762⁶¹

reform was necessary to restore the states system to its rightful basis as established at Utrecht. Cooperation between Kaunitz's mission to Paris in 1750 and the final outbreak of hostilities in 1756 was facilitated by an almost lockstep agreement on the progression of Habsburg policy against Prussia: from merely trying to decouple France from Prussia in 1749, to attempting to offend neither Britain nor France in the course of the Imperial election, to backing off from *rapprochement* with France in late 1752 to avoid isolation,

important ally in Austria's policy formations prior to 1762. William J. McGill, "The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Vienna and Versailles, 1749-1753," *the Journal of Modern History*, vol. 43 (2) (June, 1971), 235.

⁶¹ Adapted from source. The Historical Atlas of Europe, "1748," accessed February 3rd, 2012. <http://home.zonnet.nl/gerardvonhebel/1748.htm>

and lastly to outright renunciation of the 'traditional system' at Versailles in 1755.⁶² After the failure of the Seven Years' War, the great "*va banque* gamble that simply had to be taken,"⁶³ the two figures' visions of policy began to diverge. This is not to suggest, however, that differences were not apparent at the outset: while Kaunitz shared Maria Theresia's moral revulsion of Frederick, he was willing to compromise temporarily with him in an effort to lure France away from its support of the King in Prussia. This Maria Theresia dismissed out of hand.⁶⁴ Kaunitz's ability to distinguish the requirements of the 'real' from the ideal could, especially when it came to Prussia, run aground on the rocks of Maria Theresia's stalwart, principled opposition.

Over the course of the remainder of her reign after 1763, the conflict between Theresian principle and Kaunitzian 'pragmatism' would be the major crux of their differences of opinion. The partition of Poland is one important, if famous, example. The end result of Austrian policy is well-known, as is the derisory quip by Frederick concerning Maria Theresia's complicity.⁶⁵ I would argue that her ultimate acquiescence to the partition was more a testament of her interaction with Kaunitz's pragmatism than a lack of opposition. As she wrote to Kaunitz in January, 1772:

We wanted to act *à la* Prussia and at the same time to preserve the appearance of honesty. This led us to deceive ourselves in respect of the means, as we are now deceiving ourselves about the appearance and course of events. I may be wrong....but were they to obtain for us even the share offered in the first plan of partition, were they to get us the District of Wallachia and even Belgrade itself, I should still think the price too high, for we should have bought it at the cost of our honour, of the good name of the Monarchy, of our good faith, and our religious principles. Since the outset of my unhappy reign we have at least tried always to show a true and just attitude, good faith, moderation, and loyal fulfillment of our obligations...In the past year this has all been lost. I admit that I find this almost

⁶² Ibid., throughout.

⁶³ Szabo, "Kaunitz and the Balance of Power," 403.

⁶⁴ McGill, "Roots of Policy in Vienna and Versailles," 237.

⁶⁵ "The more she cried the more she took," is how the derisory remark is usually translated.

intolerable, and that nothing in the world has pained me so much as the loss of our good name. Unfortunately, I must admit to you that we have deserved it.⁶⁶ The Queen's letter highlights well the broad points of Theresianism, and her tone seems evidence for her anger and resignation. Nevertheless, the partition went ahead, with Austria gaining by far the most valuable share; Kaunitz's logic 'won out', especially after Maria Theresa's counter-proposal that Austria regain Silesia instead of participating in robbing Poland was denied.⁶⁷ A fairly common view of Habsburg policy in this instance is that the Queen's rhetoric was superfluous, because the 'realist' partition went ahead as suggested by Russia and Prussia. This is the ultimate supremacy of 'pragmatic' realism. I would argue instead that viewing the Austrian decision through the lens of interplay between the two chief policy-makers - discounting Joseph II's influence - allows for Theresian values to retain their voice without implying perpetual submission. Maria Theresa did not always give way, as the Peace of Teschen and the War of the Bavarian Succession demonstrate.⁶⁸

That Kaunitz proved to be a strong influence on Maria Theresa, and vice-versa, follows logically with relative ease. On a superficial level, the interaction between the two conceptions of the state system seem to mirror the conflict of Schroeder and

⁶⁶ Macartney, *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, 189.

⁶⁷ This denial was hardly surprising. *Ibid.*, 188. The Queen did stress that leaving Poland without compensation or suddenly waging war on the Turks would be particularly unjust. *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁸ The War of the Bavarian Succession, 1778-1779, was fought over the possibility of Austria partitioning Bavaria in a deal with Charles Theodore, Elector of Bavaria. The war was extremely inconclusive, and ended before any major action at the Peace of Teschen in 1779, through which Vienna gained the Innviertel and Russia guaranteed the Reich's constitution. Beales' monograph on Joseph II and Bavaria is very instructive on the war, and describes at length Maria Theresa and her peace efforts. Her commitment to a quick conclusion to the war went so far as to offer nearly complete capitulation to Frederick even as the military situation did not look bleak. Beales attributes this to a poor international situation, though it is hard to believe Maria Theresa's cataclysmic assessment of Austria's position is more than an attempt to convince Joseph II to agree to peace. As Kaunitz's cryptic near-incitement of the Ottomans against Russia demonstrates, Austria was not so alone, and the idea that Russia would "send an expeditionary corps to make an incursion into Hungary" on the insistence of Frederick is curious. The real reason that Maria Theresa sought peace so ardently is that she opposed the war from the very start. See Derek Beales, *Joseph II and Bavaria: Two Eighteenth Century Attempts at German Unification*, (the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 112-113, and 124-127.

Hochedlinger; it is only by acknowledging reciprocal influence and the tension between both 'constructivist' and 'realist' theories within Kaunitz's thinking that it is possible to transcend so dichotomous a quarrel. Even if the 'real' might prove decisive in numerous policy considerations, it is always related by its proximity to the 'ideal': Kaunitz's pragmatism infiltrated Theresianism, and Maria Theresa's dynastic exceptionalism came to transform the aims of Kaunitzian policy. This is the manner in which, I would argue, Austrian diplomacy managed to justify itself with such self-perceived morality while still navigating the relatively cutthroat realm of 18th century international politics. If Austria is the location of a fundamental transformation in the European state system, then it is not to Leopold II or Metternich that scholars should look, as Schroeder does, but rather to Maria Theresa and Kaunitz. Both were, in at least one respect, their progeny.

Nevertheless, such a line of argument relies heavily on the assumption that the two legacies in question survived the death of Maria Theresa. In order to begin to prove that viewing Habsburg policy through the prism of this discursive interplay is useful, it is necessary to examine the successive reigns of Joseph II and Leopold II. This task can be aided by reducing the temporal scale to the age of the 'Austrian security crisis', since this convergence of daunting domestic and international problems offers a window into a diversity of Habsburg reactions and reigns, which are themselves revealing. The most sensible manner of subdividing the period of 1787-1792 seems to be both geographic and temporal. To begin, then, with the Porte.

Pax Theresiana or Bellum Kaunitz? The Progression of Habsburg Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire from 1787-1790

Projecting the legacy of the Queen beyond her death on November 29th, 1780, cannot be done without certain pause. On the one hand, she had maintained strong personal connections with both her son Joseph II and Kaunitz during the last years of her reign, such that it would be difficult to contend that she did not have at least some lasting influence on diplomatic policy. On the other hand, Joseph's own personal predilections came into play during his rule, further complicating the previous relationship between Kaunitzian and Theresian modes of policy formation. Policies that the Queen had resolutely opposed suddenly became options upon her death – such as the alliance with Russia, duly concluded in 1781 after a meeting between Joseph and Catherine, which Maria Theresia had only finally consented to in the spring of 1780.⁶⁹ Scarcely three months after his mother's death, Joseph II wrote to Catherine:

Le traite défensif et d'amitié, et de la garantie réciproque, auquel V. M. I. avec tant d'amitié et d'une manière si flatteuse a voulu se prêter et permettre à Ses ministres d'écouter là-dessus le comte de Cobenzl, est aussi flatteur à mon cœur que, sûr de l'équité et de la réciprocité mutuelle qui caractérise toutes les actions et démarches même politiques de V. M. I., se trouvant en même temps parfaitement conformes avec les miennes, il aboutira, je n'en puis douter, à l'avantage mutuel de nos Etats et reconsolidera un système d'intérêt mutuel....⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Maria Theresia objected primarily to Catherine's personal habits. Roeder, *Austria's Eastern Question*, 159. I suspect that Roeder – and by extension von Ranke, Robert Salomon and Isabel de Madariaga – is correct in asserting: "Had the old empress lived, an Austro-Russian alliance would probably have come about but not perhaps in the tight form that eventually emerged." *Ibid.*, 160. Familiarity with the Eastern Question, however, suggests that anything less than the "tight form" which came out of the talks of 1780-1 would likely have fallen apart over the Crimean crisis or the war in 1787, though this thought is primarily conjecture.

⁷⁰ Alfred Ritter von Arneth, *Joseph II. und Katharina von Russland: Ihr Briefwechsel*, (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1869), 48-49. This predates the actual 'exchange of letters' which formed the secret treaty – a compromise to preserve the dignity of both parties, since Joseph II's name, as Emperor, would have had to be displayed first on both versions of the text [Isabel de Madariaga, "The Secret Austro-Russian Treaty, 1781", *Slavonic & East European Review*, vol. 38 (90) (December, 1959), 120-124] – but clearly prefigures it in intentions.

This represented a serious departure from the policy of the Queen. Two primary interpretations of the cause of this divergence are often given: either that Joseph II was finally set 'free' of his mother's stifling influence in foreign policy – Joseph as agent⁷¹ – or that Joseph II lacked the strong principles and confidence of his mother, so that Kaunitz was able deftly to override him – Kaunitz as agent.⁷² Neither trope is sufficient: Joseph clearly possessed agency and initiative, his chancellor expertise and argument. It would seem instead that the two were simply often of the same mind on many issues, working towards the same aim. As with Maria Theresia and Kaunitz – perhaps revealingly – joint goals often obscured underlying tensions. The war with the Porte in 1788 is just one example.

Austrian involvement in the clash between Russia and the Sultan in 1787 is frequently presented within the confines of narratives of Josephist ambition and military adventurism. Bernard provides a good illustration: "Joseph saw that cooperating with the Russians against the Turks might very well bring about...a confrontation at a time unfavorable to Austria, but in all probability he was so dazzled by the prospect of extensive conquests in the Balkans that he allowed himself to be persuaded to take the

⁷¹"Fifteen years of chafing at the bit left him ready to bolt when the reins were dropped. He *knew* what had to be done....Once the grim reaper had freed him from his mother's obstructive grasp, he would be able to bang heads together...[but] Until that merciful release, the Monarchy would go on being governed by committee and intrigue, with every proposal for change discussed, opposed, redrafted, modified, watered down, retracted or filibustered *ad infinitum*." Author's italics. T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 51. While not specifically being applied to foreign affairs in this instance, the perspective has a tendency to carry over into the field, especially in the crises over Bavaria, the Scheldt, and the Ottoman declaration of war on Russia.

⁷²Roider articulates this line of thought well, and with sympathy: "Throughout the period the Emperor displayed a marked reluctance to follow the course Kaunitz proposed, but, frequently unsure of himself in foreign affairs, Joseph was always disinclined to voice his doubts regarding a certain line of policy. Such expressions usually called forth from the chancellor a coldly reasoned defence of his position, and Joseph had great difficulty refuting the arguments. His intuition frequently warned him that his chief minister's suggestions were not in Austria's best interests, but he could not muster the self-confidence to challenge them openly or to embark on a different course." Karl A. Roider, "Kaunitz, Joseph II and the Turkish War", *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 54 (4) (October, 1976), 539.

risk.”⁷³ Austrian motivations were not nearly so expansionist, as policy in the Eastern Question from 1781-1787 demonstrates. In 1782, when the Empress Catherine suggested the time was ripe for the implementation of a partition of Turkey-in-Europe, the Ballhausplatz effectively applied the brakes by insisting that such a move was only possible if Russia, “placed between 60,000 and 80,000 men in Poland and agreed to let France have Egypt.”⁷⁴ Similarly during the Crimean annexation crisis in 1784, when Russia urged Austria to take its ‘equivalent’ – a move Kaunitz strongly supported, since he generally had fewer qualms about unilaterally seizing territory from the ‘decrepit’ Ottoman Empire in order to get ahead of Prussia – the Emperor rejected so *Realpolitik* a course and chose to pay to legally acquire certain commercial privileges in lieu of land.⁷⁵ If Prussia loomed large in the restrained policy towards the Porte - suggesting a purely ‘realist’ origin to Habsburg policy, this is true more generally: the destruction of Prussia had long since become a primary *raison d’être* of the Monarchy. The alliance with Russia was predicated on this hostility.⁷⁶ Also informing Austrian reluctance in the Balkans was the conviction that virtually all lands in the Ottoman Empire were empty and worthless, and would thus prove a weakness rather than a strength. Ironically, Habsburg policy famously feared Russian acquisition of this same worthless territory, undermining their

⁷³ Thus, Bernard contends: “Certainly only considerations of such a nature, rather than his lame-sounding and repeated declarations that as a man of honor he was bound to keep his pledge, can account for the assurances that he sent Catherine.” Paul P. Bernard, “Austria’s Last Turkish War: Some Further Thoughts,” *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 19 (1983), 20.

⁷⁴ Roeder, *Austria’s Eastern Question*, 163-164. The French condition is perhaps the most interesting, given the circumstances.

⁷⁵ Joseph, writing to Leopold, insisted that seizure of territory would bring about a huge coalition of enemies. Logically weighing the risks against the rewards, much as Kaunitz was fond of doing, he was “unable to conceive how [Kaunitz, a] man of intelligence has been able to get this into his head.” *Ibid.*, 166-167. Franz Szabo, ever Kaunitz’s apologist – rightly or wrongly – is keen to stress that this incident is an anomaly in the thinking of the Prinz, not the rule, and was essentially a dispute over France. Franz Szabo, “Prince Kaunitz and the Primacy of Domestic Policy: A Response”, *the International History Review*, vol. 2 (4) (October 1980), 630.

⁷⁶ Roeder, “Kaunitz, Joseph II and the Last Turkish War”, 539-540.

assertion. Theresian Catholicism – as well as broader conceptions of the intersection of religion and politics – shone through in this seeming absurdity: the Balkans, full of Orthodox “Greeks”, would be loyal to the Tsarina and could not be loyal Habsburg subjects like Catholics.⁷⁷ In the end, Austria simply did not covet Ottoman territory – a fact which facilitated their exit from the war in 1790-1791, and which necessitated their passionate stance against the Prussian Hertzberg exchange project, discussed in more detail shortly.

Why then, did the Monarchy become involved in the war? As many historians have suggested, the maintenance of the alliance with Russia was an important reason, though Austria, considering troubles in the Netherlands,⁷⁸ might well have preserved the alliance through benevolent neutrality and forcefully pro-Russian mediation at Constantinople. Considering that neither Russia nor Austria was prepared for the war, such a course of action may well have secured modest Russian gains without so long or costly a struggle. In the event, the legal distinction between *bellum justum* and *bellum injustum* still mattered,⁷⁹ and as Joseph noted,

La guerre que ces maudits Turcs viennent de déclarer à la Russie, et l’emprisonnement du ministre Bulgakow aux sept tours, malgré toutes les menaces et instances de mon Internonce et de l’ambassadeur de France, me mettent dans le cas absolu du *casus foederis*, car ils attaquent la Russie.⁸⁰

Theresian justice and conceptions of the good ally demanded Habsburg entry into the war, less it become like France, “[which] cabalera [*sic*] avec son activités ordinaire la

⁷⁷ Roider, *Austria's Eastern Question*, 193-194. This idea, only briefly mentioned by Roider, perhaps also sheds further light on why Maria Theresia was so apprehensive of Protestants domestically – by the same logic they were allies of the King of Prussia.

⁷⁸ Roider, “Kaunitz, Joseph II and the Turkish War”, 544.

⁷⁹ Robert A. Kann, “Causes of Eighteenth-Century Warfare in Europe,” in Gunther E. Rothenberg, Béla Király and Peter F. Sugar eds., *East Central European Society and War in the Pre-Revolutionary Eighteenth Century*, (Boulder Colorado: East European Monographs, 1982), 34.

⁸⁰ Alfred Ritter von Arneth ed., *Joseph II. und Leopold von Toscana: Ihr Briefwechsel von 1781 bis 1790*, vol. 2, (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1872), 115.

mission de Groschlag à Berlin, cache des desseins perfidies.”⁸¹ Kaunitzian reciprocity, also valued by Maria Theresia, suggested that Austria should willingly ‘go first’ to have an indebted Russia assist them later against Prussia. The war, thus, was the price to pay for both the honour of the *Erzhaus* and the alliance with Russia: the international ‘ideal’ of the good alliance and the ‘real’ need to co-opt Russia into a programme against Prussia coincided. I would argue, however, that in 1787 dynastic honour was more important an urge, since with Frederick II dead, Austro-Prussian tensions had cooled dramatically enough that the idea of another *renversement des alliances* was toyed with, and fears of Prussia could be dismissed by Kaunitz because “his successor has shown himself in all matters weak and vacillating.”⁸² The change of sovereign gave the Emperor hope that Prussia might at last renounce its immoral opportunism, though he was deeply sceptical of the likelihood of this outcome. Vienna had to wait and see.⁸³

It did not have to wait long. Prior to the Austrian declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire, the Ballhausplatz caught wind of Prussian plans to exploit Habsburg vulnerability – the famous Hertzberg Plan. In true Austrian style, a dispatch from the Prussian minister Count Hertzberg to the Prussian ambassador in Constantinople was intercepted by the *Geheime Kabinettskanzlei* – the Habsburg postal monitoring service which would become infamous in the 19th Century - which confirmed Joseph II’s worst

⁸¹ The verb “cabalera”, I suspect, does not actually exist – it seems a verbalization of ‘cabale’, which relates to conspiracy. Sébastien Brunner, *Correspondances Intimes de l’Empereur Joseph II avec son Ami le Comte de Cobenzl et son Premier Ministre le Prince de Kaunitz*, (Mayence : François Kirchheim, 1871), 61.

⁸² Roeder, “Kaunitz, Joseph II and the Turkish War”, 544.

⁸³ Joseph II writes back to Kaunitz after the chancellor has announced the death of Frederick II : “Mon cher Prince comme Militaire je plains la perte d’un grand home et qui fera Epocque à jamais dans l’art de la guerre, comme citoyen je regrette qu’elle est arrivée cette mort 30 années trop tard l’année, 1756 elle auroit été autrement avantageuse qu’en 1786, je n’ai pas la moindre esperance de son successeur et tant que Herzberg sera l’âme de tout il faudra s’attendre encore à pire au reste pour le moment comme vous dites très-bien il faut le voir venir et agir alors en consequence adieu mon chere Prince croyés à ma sincere amitié et parfaite estime.” Beer, *Joseph II., Leopold II. und Kaunitz*, 240-241.

fears.⁸⁴ The fantastical Hertzberg scheme, wherein Austria would gain the Danubian Principalities, returning Galicia to Poland, which in turn would cede Danzig and Thorn to Prussia, directly and solely targeted the Habsburg Monarchy, hoping to reap territory for Prussia without having to fire a single shot. The brute coercion of the Prussian plan moved the Emperor to write to his representative in St. Petersburg:

Rather than allow the king of Prussia to possess a single village, much less realize this grand project in its entirety, I would rather fight a war to destruction; and if you are unable to procure for me the perfect assurances on the part of Russia that it will never consent to allow the king of Prussia to reap any advantages from this war, I will not hesitate a moment to reach an immediate arrangement with the Porte...and leave Russia all alone in order to turn all my forces against the king of Prussia.⁸⁵

Until the plan could be definitively laid to rest, no Austro-Prussian *rapprochement* was possible, and it had the effect of reinforcing Imperial reluctance to prosecute the war on the Porte with any vigour.

Portraying the Habsburg war effort as so nonchalant does run counter to a substantial body of evidence. Firstly, Austria mobilized some 294,173 troops in order to combat the Ottomans – hardly a minor commitment, and larger than both the Russian and Ottoman forces.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the Habsburg forces made an immediate attempt on the city of Belgrade, before even declaring war. While the campaign of 1788 languished in defence, the campaigns of 1789-1790 were decisive, resounding successes that saw

⁸⁴ For a brief history of the institution, see Sked, *Metternich*, 164-170. The interception itself is discussed in Roeder, *Austria's Eastern Question*, 179.

⁸⁵ There is a degree to which this note can be interpreted as attempting to force the Russians to commit to protecting Austria, but the degree of outrage and the terms - "a single village" – coupled with the hesitancy of the Emperor to engage in the war at all suggests that he was indeed aware that he was "marching against the wrong enemy." Ibid., 180. He also sent similar pronouncements to Count Mercy in Paris: "I regard the King of Prussia as the only irreconcilable enemy of my house...the least aggrandizement on his part can only be a defeat for me. I will never approve it [the exchange project] and to prevent it I will sacrifice my last penny and my last man." Roeder, "Joseph, Kaunitz and the Turkish War", 546.

⁸⁶ Matthew Z. Mayer, "The Price for Austria's Security: Part I – Joseph II, the Russian Alliance, and the Ottoman War, 1787-1789," *the International History Review*, vol. 26 (2) (June, 2004), 269.

Austria in command of much of the Balkans, leading where the Russians had been too slow to act. Even the defensiveness of 1788 was naturally a product of Austrian tactics and close proximity, with its emphasis on preservation – of men, matériel, and the relatively densely populated borderlands.⁸⁷ Responding to this evidence, it must be noted that both the first and last issues are somewhat related: the ‘cordon’ which was the pinnacle of Habsburg military theory demanded a large, thinly dispersed force, and yet more troops were necessary to call to the colours in order to be prepared for a sudden Prussian onslaught. The second issue is more difficult to explain, and is likely purely strategic in its objectives: it is doubtful the sudden successful capture of Belgrade could have forced the Porte to terms, but it clearly was the focal point of the entire Austrian war effort and likely the most desired prize should the whole affair prove successful. While it must be admitted that such an underhanded tactic runs strongly against Theresianism, it also must be remembered that the Ottoman state was technically on the ‘periphery’ of the states system, and as the citizens of the Banat were to experience, war with the Porte was of a radically different character to that with France or Prussia. Habsburg defensiveness, on the other hand, is more illustrative of nonchalance. Matthew Z. Mayer insists the ‘cordon’ was the result of fears that if forces were concentrated, the enemy might penetrate into Hungary, leaving massive numbers of Habsburg subjects and a half-century of intensive development exposed.⁸⁸ Mayer’s position is untenable, however,

⁸⁷ Hochedlinger, *Austria’s Wars of Emergence*, 386.

⁸⁸ Mayer, “Price for Security I”, 280.

because the Austrian army was aware that its cordon was liable to puncture and did not fear the Turks as much as it dismissed them.⁸⁹

A more sound interpretation, and one with precedents down to the Great War, was that Austria waged a thinly defensive war because it expected another power to bear the brunt of the fighting. In the case of this war, Austria specifically imagined that Russia would be the Porte's primary opponent, and that St. Petersburg would take the lead in diverting the Ottomans from Serbia.⁹⁰ Since the Monarchy had only minor designs on Ottoman territory and was not the traditional enemy of Turkey any longer, it might reasonably expect to be able to enter the war and merely assist the Russians in decisively ending the conflict. Joseph protested when it became apparent that his policy of joint offensives with the Russians would not immediately materialize: "it is simply intolerable that the Russians should remain inactive for so long, and thus bring down on my head the entire Turkish army."⁹¹ Joseph had very particular conceptions of how the war was to proceed, which explains his curious orders to his army in Moldavia to abandon the capital, Jassy, on two separate occasions because the Russians were supposed to hold the province.⁹² With the Russians caught up with Sweden, proceeding painstakingly slowly, and the spectre of another campaign against the whole of the Turkish army, Joseph II sought peace. He hoped that the lack of any Russian gains and the modesty of Austria's acquisitions could allow for a peace on the basis of *uti possidetis* – but the Russians

⁸⁹ Mayer himself provides ample evidence of the Emperor, Kaunitz, and Austrian generals insisting that the Ottomans would not put up serious resistance, or would not be able to withstand the might of 'modern technology.' *Ibid.*, 269-270.

⁹⁰ Paul P. Bernard, *Joseph II*, (New York: Twayne, 1968), 136.

⁹¹ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 177.

⁹² Bernard, "Austria's Last Turkish War", 27.

managed to capture Ochakov on December 17th, 1788.⁹³ This dashed hopes of peace and led almost inevitably to a second campaign. As one observer notes:

Ce seroit sans doute, si nous étions d'autres gens, le moment à présent de pousser la guerre avec vigueur; mais Dieu nous en préserve dans les circonstances où nous sommes; et dans notre détresse, c'est encore un bonheur, que l'Empereur soit si presse à faire la paix à tout prix, son voeu n'étant autre que celui de tirer son épingle du jeu le plutôt possible. Cet important événement de la prise d'Oczakow n'est donc agréable à l'Empereur que s'il peut amener la paix, mais la crainte que ce ne soit un nouveau obstacle, l'inquiète extrêmement.⁹⁴

Explaining, finally, the effective campaigns of 1789-1790, is the search for a decisive victory which would bring the Ottomans to meet the Emperor's exceedingly moderate terms. In this sense Kaunitz and Joseph II agreed on the course of action, though their aims diverged drastically, with the Chancellor bewildered by the Joseph's willingness to sacrifice virtually everything when the Porte seemed so close to complete collapse.⁹⁵

Austrian policy vis-à-vis Constantinople was to remain relatively stable thereafter. In any case, further discussion at this juncture brings the analysis too close to Reichenbach, inviting a host of different considerations that quickly outpaced the war with the Porte. Considering only Austrian policy from 1787-1790, it would appear that the twin legacies of Kaunitz and Maria Theresia on diplomacy broadly persisted, despite the death of the Queen. Kaunitzian modes of policy persisted for obvious reasons, but it is interesting to note the incongruence between the Chancellor's policy of 'holding firm' and the Emperor's insistence on peace. In the absence of the Queen, her discourse was

⁹³ Mayer, "Price for Security I," 283.

⁹⁴ Adolf Beer and Joseph Ritter von Fiedler eds., *Joseph II. und Graf Ludwig Cobenzl: Ihr Briefwechsel*, vol. 2, *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum: Diplomataria et Acta*, (Wien: Historischen Commission der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1901), 316. A slightly different section, and translation, can be found in Mayer, "Price for Security I," 284.

⁹⁵ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 188. Whether or not this was the case – that Austria could have obtained colossal gains if it had been more resolute in continuing the war, is impossible to say. Kaunitz certainly had a point, but he also had a predilection to under-rating the Ottomans massively and overstating their plight. The problem of whether or not such gains would be worthwhile remains, in any case.

not submerged entirely, speaking to its power as well as its interaction with and acceptance by Kaunitz. In particular, the centrality of hostility to Prussia was never seriously challenged during the reign of Joseph II, except for the brief possibility of some *denouement* upon the succession of Frederick Wilhelm II. The alliance with Russia, if not perhaps the ideal policy in the eyes of Maria Theresia, was designed to reinforce the 'traditional' alliance system, isolate Prussia, and tacitly support the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. More or less strict adherence to treaty law bound Austria to come to the aid of Russia at an inopportune moment, while discussion of opportunistic partition schemes elicited passionate reactions from the Emperor. Longstanding ambiguity about the value of territory in the Balkans, established –and influenced – by the reign of the Queen, encouraged restraint upon Habsburg policy-makers in regards to the sudden war with the Sublime Porte. The ideal of the 'first servant of the people' clearly continued in the reign of Joseph II, who shared Kaunitz's belief that domestic strength was qualitatively superior to foreign conquests. Suffering of Habsburg subjects moved Joseph II deeply in the Banat, but he retained the fiery sense of justice that allowed him calmly to draft plans to fight the dreaded two-front war against Turkey and Prussia.⁹⁶ The mission of the House of Austria had lost none of its passion, even if prolonged hostility to Prussia was beginning to erase memories of the wider objectives of Habsburg existence. Nevertheless, the legacy of the Queen persisted, and the Austrian exceptionalism which would drive forward Schroeder's 'transformation' of the European state system continued

⁹⁶ "It was in this last crisis of his life that Joseph showed himself at his best – sensible, flexible, resolute and decisive....he drew up a plan for meeting the challenge of war on two fronts, sending 88 infantry battalions and 52 cavalry regiments to face the Prussians and the Poles in the north, keeping 124 and 68 respectively to hold the Turks in the south, and leaving 24 and 4 to deal with the interior." Ibid.

unabated. The *Erzhaus* would soon rediscover its purpose through the prism of the French Revolution.

Renversement des Renversement des Alliances et 'La Catastrophe': Vienna, Reichenbach and Paris, 1789-1792

Joseph II died on the 20th of February, 1790, provoking reactions from all corners of Habsburg society as ambiguous as his legacy.⁹⁷ His own attitude toward the end focused on the position of the Monarchy and its future. In fond farewell instructions written days before his death to Count Cobenzl, then ambassador at St. Petersburg, Joseph wrote,

Je vous joins ici pour Elle la réponse d'un mourant, car tel est mon état et je suis perdu sans ressource. Faites bien valoir que la Monarchie Autrichienne ayant tant fait et tant souffert pour la Monarchie Russe, on ne croye[sic] point que par ma mort on soit quitte de sa dette. J'attends ici dans peu mon frère le Grand-Duc; assures bien qu'il est dans les mêmes principes.⁹⁸

His brother, Leopold II, formerly the Grand Duke of Tuscany, is yet another dynamic to incorporate into the legacies of Maria Theresia and the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg, though his reign broadly supports my contention that the key to the 'transformation' of the European states system was not in 1792, as Schroeder argues, but in 1740. In many ways, Leopold II was an anomaly – his brief reign dominated by strongly countervailing policies to his predecessors, the gradual removal of Kaunitz as Chancellor, and a sharply different intellectual current. He is often celebrated: "the wisest and most truly

⁹⁷ T.C.W. Blanning goes into some detail on this subject, and provides several interesting examples. *Ibid.*, 198.

⁹⁸ Joseph to Cobenzl, February 16th, 1790. It reached St. Petersburg on March 6th. Beer and von Flieder, *Joseph II und Cobenzl, Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, 385.

enlightened of all the Habsburgs,"⁹⁹ is a common epithet. He is seen by many academics as the only member of the House of Austria who transcended the many personal failings of Maria Theresa, Joseph II and Kaunitz; he rises above the incipient mutual character recriminations that dominate their troubled historiography.¹⁰⁰ Paul W. Schroeder goes so far as to exalt that, "what saved Austria in early 1790 was [his] accession," and that he "not merely accept[ed] the idea of constitutional monarchy but actually aim[ed] for one in the long run." To add yet another feather to his liberal-gradualist cap – Joseph's antithesis – Schroeder suggests that Leopold's policy was designed to "escape from war in general."¹⁰¹ Moving beyond these glorifications – merited or not – Leopold represents a further historical problem that requires attention.

Resoundingly positive perspectives of Leopold's reign often fail to engage critically with the incongruence between an idealized, liberal Emperor and Austrian policy. Schroeder, in his introduction to Leopold, states that Kaunitz found it, "hard to quarrel with so reasonable and patient a monarch or abandon his service in a crisis, just as

⁹⁹ Macartney, *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, 204.

¹⁰⁰ For an overview of relatively recent historiography which is demonstrative of this predilection for choosing a 'side' in the personal struggles of the three policy makers, see Charles Ingrao, "From the Reconquest to the Revolutionary Wars: Recent Trends in Austrian Diplomatic History, 1683-1800," *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 24 (1993), 210-214.

¹⁰¹ Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 64-65. A sharp distinction with Joseph II's reported 'military adventurism'. These characterizations of Leopold II are perhaps not surprising; given the little amount of literature – in any language – on him, almost all descriptions of him have recourse to Adam Wandruszka's lonely biography. Matthew Z. Mayer is keen to stress, in sharp contrast to prevailing interpretations connected to Joseph II, the naivety and duplicity of Leopold II [Matthew Z. Mayer, "The Price for Austria's Security: Part II - Leopold II, the Prussian Threat and the Peace of Sistova, 1790-1791," *the International History Review*, vol. 26 (3) (September, 2004), 488], while Michael Hochedlinger draws attention to suggestive 'counter-revolutionary' activities of the Emperor, calling him "enigmatic and devious". Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence*, 418.



III - Map of European Alliances in 1790¹⁰²

Frederick William found it difficult to fight someone who insisted on offering him peace and friendship.”¹⁰³ The disjuncture between this image of the Emperor as righteously seeking an end to conflict with Prussia— ‘saving Austria’, as it were – and the obvious priority given to regaining Belgium, retaining the Russian connection and preventing any Prussian gains, despite threats of war, is curious. As one Hungarian historian has noted, the ‘Austrian Security Crisis’ in the period was more apparent than real - Joseph, Leopold and their enemies may have seen doom in the mirror, but Austria

¹⁰² The Historical Atlas of Europe, “1772,” accessed February 3rd, 2012. <http://home.zonnet.nl/gerardvonhebel/1772.htm>

¹⁰³ Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 65.

was far from the verge of collapse.¹⁰⁴ As Matthew Z. Mayer notes, “the loss of the Austrian Netherlands was the only catastrophe” in 1790.¹⁰⁵ The success against the Ottomans in 1789 and early 1790 gave the Monarchy a great deal of leverage, and the disorganized if obdurate Porte was likely an increasingly negligible threat without Prussian support. Given that Prussia was completely isolated in its aggressive policy towards the Emperor, Frederick Wilhelm’s threats lacked force, since Austria could rely, however poorly, on Russian support already pledged.¹⁰⁶ Hungary would have presented a problem, perhaps, but then it is difficult to imagine that a narrow revolt in 1790 would have fared any better against a massive and fully mobilized Imperial army than it did in 1848. Of course, perception matters more than such musings, and in this sense the crisis was ‘real’. It is important to look past the opaque severity of the crisis, however, to avoid obscuring a revealing question of Leopold’s policy: what motives drove the Emperor to peace? What emerges is a seemingly very Kaunitzian set of priorities.

As Karl A. Roeder deftly summarizes in his monograph on Austrian and the ‘Eastern Question,

The Monarchy’s essential task, as Leopold saw it, was the restoration of internal order...Pacification was uppermost in the emperor’s mind, and pacification would

¹⁰⁴ Eva Blasas, quoted in Matthew Z. Mayer, “Price for Security II”, 474.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Austrian finances may also have been in dire straits, but as P.G.M. Dickson notes, the situation was not disastrous by the time of Leopold II, even if his statistics underline the importance of regaining Belgium in terms of the Monarchy’s coffers. His article, too, provides an interesting look at the function of the Diplomatic Revolution, which safeguarded both the Austrian Netherlands, where the Habsburgs raised revenue, and the United Provinces, where the Habsburgs raised credit. P.G.M. Dickson, “Count Karl von Zinzendorf’s ‘New Accountancy’: the Structure of Austrian Government Finance in Peace and War, 1781-1791,” *the International History Review*, vol. 29 (1) (March, 2007), 46-47.

¹⁰⁶ Roeder, *Austria’s Eastern Question*, 180. As Roeder points out later, the prospect of joining Russia in a war against Prussia was not attractive, given the recent lethargy they had shown against the Ottomans and their willingness to let others fight for them. Ibid., 191. Austria would be reminded of this lesson many times during the Revolutionary Wars.

not occur if he demanded greater sacrifices from a war-weary population. The Austro-Turkish war had been the undoing of many of his brother's reforms."¹⁰⁷

Kaunitz's 'Primat der Innenpolitik' is mirrored in this prioritization of Belgium, domestic stability and reform over the Balkans. The calculated move to resist Prussian pressures to ensure the best possible settlement was a function of the 'real' requirements of the international system and indicative of the outlines of a tolerable settlement. The notion that Leopold sought to achieve long-term peace, too, can be interpreted within the Kaunitzian ideal of total escape from war. Leopold's methods of achieving the intended result were also broadly similar to what the Chancellor had argued way back in Turin at the outset of his career – that Austria 'go first' by displaying goodwill in order to induce other powers to follow suit. This Kaunitzian reciprocity can be seen in the extent to which Leopold, upon his accession, threw himself at the feet of the British,¹⁰⁸ whom he believed could return his restraint and assurances by taking action at Berlin:

Je crois qu'il seroit utile de répondre, que par ce qui avoit été traité déjà avec la Porte et qui avoit été communiqué à l'Angleterre, le Roi aura vû, que la Cour de Vienne et son Allié en faisant tout leur possible pour établir un armistice avec la Porte, avoient prévenu les intentions du Roi. Que je suis toujours dans les mêmes sentiments, et que j'ai toute raison de croire que l'Impératrice pense de même, et que je serai charmé de voir, si le Roi de son côté pourra faire cesser les empêchements qui ont été mis à la conclusion de la paix et de l'armistice par les insinuations et la conclusion du Traité entre la Cour de Berlin et la Porte.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 192.

¹⁰⁸ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 200.

¹⁰⁹ Leopold goes on to describe briefly his conservative policy towards the Netherlands, designed in this instance with the British in mind, in the same letter: "Que quant aux affaires des Pays-Bas, je suis fermement résolu, que tant dans le cas, qu'ils retournent volontairement sous ma domination, que meme dans le cas, où je me trouvasse forcé de les reconquérir par les armes, je n'y entreprendrois jamais la moindre chose contraire à l'ancienne Constitution des Provinces Belgiques, et j'admettrois avec bien du plaisir, satisfaction et réconnoissance le renouvellement de la garantie de la Cour d'Angleterre..." Beer, *Joseph II., Leopold II. und Kaunitz*, 365.

It would be expected, on this basis, that the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg and Leopold II should have been in agreement over policy – that this is manifestly not the case requires explanation.

My suggestion would be that Leopold's conciliation of Prussia and willingness to sacrifice the honour of the dynasty in the face of Hohenzollern extortion strongly alienated Kaunitz, whose tenure under Maria Theresia had developed his complete contempt for Prussia. While formal Austro-Prussian relations had always been respectful, it was a stark contrast to Joseph II's reaction to the Hertzberg scheme when Leopold wrote to Frederick Wilhelm in 1790:

Elle peut trouver dans les circonstances qui ont accompagné l'entrée et les opérations de mes troupes des garants satisfaisants de ma modération et de ma clémence envers des sujets revenus de leur égarement. V.M. peut croire en ma bonne foi sur mon empressement et mon exactitude à satisfaire à ce qui me reste à remplir de mes engagements. Ils s'accordent trop avec la justice de mes principes, pour que je ne me fasse un devoir de redresser les griefs qui ont été la source des troubles, en rendant incessamment à mes provinces belgiques, ainsi que je l'ai promis dans tous les cas, la constitution dont elles ont joui avant le dernier règne, - prêt à reconnaître et confirmer de la manière la plus obligatoire la garantie des deux puissances maritimes, à laquelle V.M. s'est déclarée et a été invitée de prendre part.¹¹⁰

In this sense, Leopold II did not continue his elder brother's role as the dynast – there was little Theresian honour in the Emperor's diplomacy, even if it aimed for peace, abhorred war, affirmed constitutional particularism and sought nought but friendship with the Monarchy's enemies. To see the legacy of his mother in his policy would be a misattribution; it stemmed from entirely different intellectual currents. It is hard, for instance, to imagine a Habsburg Emperor, before or since, arguing so naïvely that the sovereign,

¹¹⁰ Alfred Ritter von Vivenot ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserpolitik Oesterreichs während der Französischen Revolutionskriege, 1790-1801*, volume 1 (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1873), 62.

is only the delegate of the people for whom he is appointed, and he should devote to it all his cares, efforts and night watches...that if the sovereign in fact does not keep the law he has *de facto* abdicated from his position...his subjects are no longer bound to obey him.¹¹¹

His cold avoidance of the summons of Joseph II to come to Vienna in the weeks prior to his death, less he be associated with his brother's policies,¹¹² further violates Theresian ideas of the family, service and honour. This divorce from a tradition of Theresianism which Kaunitz had interacted with for so long likely abetted their conflict. His gradual displacement by the ill-fated Counts Cobenzl and Spielmann, advocates of the Emperor's policy, did little to assuage their differences. It is easy to wonder if the Grand Duke of Tuscany was an effective arbiter of Imperial initiatives – Leopold's reign was entirely unique and without serious precedent in this respect. Perhaps, too, much of the current biographical image of the Emperor misses the mark. In any event, Leopold did not live to see the sidelined old Chancellor's opposition vindicated by the Prussian *note verbale* at Merle in 1792.¹¹³

The Habsburg move towards reconciliation with Prussia in 1790, I would argue, was integrally linked with the disappearance of France from the international stage. It may have been part of an attempt to detach Britain from Prussia, as T.C.W. Blanning

¹¹¹ Translator's italics. He goes on to describe how "the sovereign should rule only through the law, and that the author thereof is the people, which can never renounce this, nor can be robbed through any desuetude or tacit or forced consent of an inalienable right that is a natural right...the only purpose of societies and governments is the happiness of their individual members." The document in question, written to his sister Marie Christine, the *Statthalter* of the Austrian Netherlands, has its own troubled history, and was likely written to appease Belgian detractors. Macartney *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, 205. The object of Leopold's politics – the public good – was not so different a goal from Joseph II [T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 64] and was not a foreign concept to Maria Theresia, but the structures that were to affect this goal could not have been more different.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 204. Matthew Z. Mayer, "Price for Security II", 489. There is a certain logic to Leopold's decision, though it is not without its faults, as being co-regent with his brother for a brief period had advantages as well as drawbacks.

¹¹³ Roeder, *Baron von Thugut*, 101.

suggests,¹¹⁴ with the goal of using Britain to moderate Prussian threats. Considering, however, that the Austro-Prussian *rapprochement* continued apace far beyond this function towards joint action on developments in France suggests that this is too narrow an interpretation. It certainly presented a stunning and successful solution to Austria's security crisis, which was finally available once Kaunitz, now one of the last bastions of Theresian policy, could be safely overridden. Spielmann was, in a sense, willing to finally give Prussia a 'second chance',¹¹⁵ while Prussian isolation ensured that it was in a similarly cooperative mood. Most importantly, the British mediated success at Reichenbach served as a bridge to overcoming decades of distrust and perceptions of injustice; the Prussian abandonment of the Hertzberg exchange, their acquiescence to the Habsburg reconquest of the Austrian Netherlands and the conclusion of the Peace of Sistova in 1791 further fostered a sense of amicability between Vienna and Berlin. This fleeting accommodation between the two rival courts would not have lasted, I would argue, without the crucial joint experience of the French Revolution, which by Sistova had moved well beyond the initially welcomed phases of 1789. To explain the *renversement des renversment*, it is thus necessary to look to the catastrophe.

For even if the House of Austria was preoccupied by events in Southeastern and Eastern Europe in the opening days of the French Revolution, it was far from silent on the matter. The events in France were famously greeted by Joseph II, Leopold II and Kaunitz, so much so that it would surprise few to learn that they considered the

¹¹⁴ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 200.

¹¹⁵ This line of thought is derived from the downfall of Cobenzl and Spielmann in early 1793 on the heels of the Second Partition of Poland, which proved the untrustworthiness of both Russia and Prussia. Cobenzl was promoted to the head of the office of Italian affairs, while Spielmann had the joy of being reassigned to the Imperial Diet as a *second* delegate. The completeness of the reversal of the pro-Prussian policy in 1793 is best encapsulated by Franz II's letter to Kaunitz professing that the new foreign minister, Baron von Thugut, "has had the honour of being trained by your instructions and formed by your principles." Roeder, *Baron von Thugut*, 104-107.

Revolution as merely furthering their own work.¹¹⁶ There are, however, several historiographical problems which vitiate attempts to explain Habsburg policy towards the French Revolution.¹¹⁷ The first is the slowly unfolding nature of the crisis in France, which rendered strong or immediate reactions unnecessary and allowed for Austrian perceptions to evolve over the course of events without a definitive 'breaking point', though perhaps with a few milestones. The second has been mentioned - it is the problem of personality. As will be explored, the differences between Joseph and Leopold were substantial, though this line of inquiry is at least partially obstructed by their different contexts in the progressing collapse of the French monarchy. The Austrian response to events in France can be divided roughly into two policies – non-intervention and moderation. Attempts to moderate the course of the Revolution can be attached to Leopold II's series of diplomatic pronouncements, while strict non-intervention was a hallmark of Joseph II and Kaunitz. This division highlights the alienation of Leopold from the constructed foreign policy system of Maria Theresa.

The broadly 'Theresian' response engendered by Kaunitz and Joseph to the French Revolution was staid, and was not caught up in a flurry of activity precisely because its matrix of values prioritized peace, international law, the domestic sphere and a reciprocal respect for the French state as ally.¹¹⁸ Minor complaints from Alsatian princes to the Imperial Diet or the intrigues of unaccredited, unofficial émigrés did little

¹¹⁶ Charles Ingraio, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 220-221.

¹¹⁷ Aside from the two listed above, other [somewhat less] prominent issues - which will not be explored - include the relative weight of émigré influence, Marie Antoinette's safety, and the accession of Franz II in 1792.

¹¹⁸ This last condition was the result of the original treaty of alliance, which envisioned strictly equal partners, down to the tiniest of details during the marriage of Marie Antoinette to Louis XVI. Thomas E. Kaiser, "Who's Afraid of Marie Antoinette? Diplomacy, Austrophobia and the Queen," *French History*, vol. 14 (3) (2000), 249. The loose and non-dependant nature of the alliance may have reinforced this image.

to persuade Habsburg decision makers to take any action prior to 1791.¹¹⁹ This is not to suggest Hochedlinger's realist 'apathy' is evident in the Theresian reaction – it is hard to imagine why Kaunitz would devote so much energy to writing so carefully structured and detailed a piece as his *Réflexions sur la Constitution Française* if Hochedlinger was correct.¹²⁰ The prevailing inaction of Joseph II was predicated on the assumption that the turmoil occurring in France did not directly concern the mission of the *Erzhaus*, which had long since abdicated from its pan-European pretensions. Even should the Emperor have desired to affect the outcome through support for certain factions, he was astute enough a judge of French attitudes to note in late 1789: "l'état de la France est tel, qu'il faut compter qu'elle n'existe plus pour nous, et l'esprit de ceux qui la gouvernent savoir des États généraux, tel, que toute liaison avec moi leur paroisse contraire à leurs intérêts."¹²¹ Besides, the Revolution had not yet raised the stakes too high. The Chancellor could express his displeasure with certain facets of the revolutionary programme even early in Leopold II's reign, safe in the expectation of a somewhat comforting reply, as the French ambassador de Noailles describes.

'Il serait difficile d'être partisan de votre Constitution actuelle.' 'Je le suis et très-hautement,' répondis-je, 'depuis que le Roi s'est déclaré chef de la Révolution.' M. le Prince de Kaunitz ne dit plus rien et la conversation prit une autre marche.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence*, 403.

¹²⁰ This fascinating and lengthy document is reproduced in von Vivenot, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserpolitik Oesterreichs*, 290-303. The title refers to a small subsection of the work, but in lieu of a wider name I have used it to designate it in its entirety.

¹²¹ Perhaps he was even aware of the counter-productive effects of attempts to use Marie Antoinette to affect French policy. Beer and von Flieder, *Joseph II und Cobenzl, Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, 358.

¹²² I have inserted several quotation marks to delineate the dialogue more clearly, as I interpret the original author intended. Gehrard Wolf, "Quelques Remarques Concernant la Politique étrangère de Vienne, de Paris et de la Faction Duport-Lameth après le 20 Avril 1792," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, (288) (1992), 225.

Distasteful though developments proved, Kaunitz steadfastly insisted that any intervention would either devolve into civil war or prove extremely costly to all of Europe, all the while also questioning whether, beyond rescuing Marie Antoinette, the Emperor had any legal right to act.¹²³ Still directed firstly against treacherous, unjust Prussia, the synthesized dialectic between Maria Theresia and Kaunitz encouraged non-intervention, and would continue to do so until the French declared war on Franz II and started on the path to completely transforming the conflict into one in which the destiny of the House of Austria was very much intertwined. On the other hand, Leopold's policy of 'moderation' is well known, and it is also accepted as the motive behind the Circular of Padua and the Declaration of Pillnitz, which were merely designed to 'soften the treatment of the Royal Family.'¹²⁴ While they certainly were not intended to provoke the subsequent war, these two initiatives were designed to intimidate the National Assembly into accepting a compromise with the Crown and reverse its suspension of the King.¹²⁵ These active attempts at moderation deviated sharply from a policy of strict non-intervention through attempting to shape the French Revolution to suit the political sensibilities of the Emperor, himself a constitutionalist. That they had the opposite of their intended effect is irrelevant; this merely demonstrates how poorly many external observers understood the Revolution.

What is important is that this Imperial policy required a rapid *rapprochement* with Prussia, since no action could be taken against France with the risk of Prussian aggression remaining over the Monarchy. While Reichenbach and the crisis in the East had begun the process of ameliorating Austro-Prussian differences and paved the way for

¹²³ T.C.W. Blanning, *The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars*, (London: Longman, 1986), 87.

¹²⁴ Charles Ingrao, "Trends in Austrian Diplomatic History," 216.

¹²⁵ Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence*, 404.

the possibility of joint action in the future, we have reached the point where, as T.C.W. Blanning states, Austria's further pro-Hohenzollern "conversion can be dated with some precision: 10 June 1791." This concurrence of news of the flight of the French royal family and a sudden reversal in talks with Prussia is demonstrative of how France directly transformed Austro-Prussian relations.¹²⁶ In the end, far from refraining from further international adventures and practicing a Kaunitzian 'Primat der Innenpolitik', as Schroeder's portrait would seem to suggest, Leopold pursued an ambitious foreign policy which exposed the Habsburg Monarchy to a host of new risks that his son inherited after his sudden death. This course runs counter to much of the English literature on the Emperor, and demonstrates that the problem of his personality remains to be resolved. It also draws attention to the perhaps unmerited adoration which many commentators shower upon him; especially given the dire consequences of the policies he followed during his brief reign. If there is any defense of his policy of 'moderation', it lies in its appeal to political principle and international cooperation, and its attempt to save the Queen of France – admirable ideals and goals which provided the foundation of Schroeder's location of the transformative in his diplomacy. There is, then, something to be said for Leopold, even if it is perhaps not accurate to see Austrian exceptionalism in him. That his reign differed sharply from the Theresian-Kaunitzian dialectic is apparent in its intellectual origins and practice; in this sense, Leopold II was a distinct break with the continuity of Habsburg policy since 1740.

¹²⁶ T.C.W. Blanning, *Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars*, 84.

On April 20th, 1792, a young Franz II was hurled into the maelstrom of the Revolutionary Wars by the French National Assembly via a complex declaration of grievances and a simple declaration of war. “L’assemblée nationale déclare, que la nation française, fidèle aux principes consacrés par sa constitution... délibérant sur la proposition formelle du Roi, et après avoir décrété l’urgence... décrète la guerre contre le Roi de Hongre et de Bohème.”¹²⁷ Chaos reigned over the Ballhausplatz during the initial days of the new King, not yet Emperor, after the second Habsburg passing in two years, complicating an already incoherent policy. The *note verbale* at Merle, when Frederick Wilhelm II notified the Austrians of his intention virtually to disappear from the war against France and take a slice of Poland with him in the process,¹²⁸ radically changed Imperial diplomacy once more. The perfidy of Prussia was once more apparent; the stage for the first duel with the Revolution was set. No one then foresaw the crushing defeats that would bring Vienna to its knees in 1797, and which propelled the conflict into the 19th Century. Austrian policy under Franz II and the Baron von Thugut did nevertheless regain its old fire after its momentary hesitation.

What this analysis has endeavoured to demonstrate has not been the bankruptcy of such prestigious methods as *Primat der Außenpolitik*, *Primat der Innenpolitik*, or the ‘Primacy of Power Politics’ - though in some ways the serious limitations of such perspectives may have been underlined – but rather that it is necessary for historians of European diplomacy to grapple more seriously with the framing impact of dynastic culture and personal legacy. The House of Austria is a fertile example to examine such ideas, precisely because of the concentrated nature of Habsburg power in the realm of

¹²⁷The entire text of the declaration can be found in von Vivenot, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserpolitik Oesterreichs*, vol. 1, 469.

¹²⁸Roider, *Baron von Thugut*, 96-97 and 101.

foreign policy and the deep historical traditions and values of the *Erzhaus*. Attempts to read only the expansion of state power, in a realist sense, into the reforms and 'revolutions' under Maria Theresia and Joseph II simply fail to grapple with the realm of the existential. As T.C.W. Blanning wrote, "If Joseph had been concerned only with the power of his state, he would not have devoted so much time and trouble to its weaker members: not even he could have hoped to transform a deaf and dumb blind crippled lunatic illegitimate unmarried mother into an effective fighting unit."¹²⁹ Diplomatic historians have too often confused the means for the end.

This narrative of Austrian policy has attempted to stress the exceptional nature of Habsburg international relations. It has seen in the legacy of Maria Theresia a firm commitment to justice, legalism, Catholicism and dynasticism; seen in the Theresian matrix the vessel of a heavy familial inheritance transformed through the experience of 1740-1748. To Maria Theresia, all things were done before God, in the service of the Crown's subjects in Central Europe. Her counterpart throughout most of her reign, with all his attendant influence, interpreted the world between the 'ideal' and the 'real', couched in his trademark algebraic logic and rational calculations of others' 'true interests'. Like his Queen, the Prinz von Kaunitz-Rietberg valued both reciprocity and Imperial law, with a strong antipathy towards the King in Prussia. He was always more willing to use the dichotomy of reality to navigate Austrian survival in the harsh world of 18th century Europe, but this merely has served to obscure that even the Chancellor viewed the real firmly in its proximity to the ideal.

The two legacies, Theresian and Kaunitzian, underwent a great deal of exchange during the lives of their namesakes; this is the interplay which has been proposed as a

¹²⁹ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, 83.

tool of reconciling the unique and the systemic in Austrian policy. It survived the death of the Queen through her family, especially Joseph II, and the continued service of the Prinz to three subsequent Habsburg Emperors. Vis-à-vis Russia and the Porte, Theresian values both forced the Monarchy into an inopportune war and provided the ideological restraint that ensured the possibility of exiting it unscathed. In France, both legacies militated against a strong Habsburg reaction to what appeared an internal matter of a respected, if disappointing, ally. And while Paul W. Schroeder's 'mutual restraint, principle and law' can be seen within the initiatives of Emperor Leopold II,¹³⁰ these were at arm's length from the prevailing policy frameworks of Vienna, and led slowly towards war with the Revolution and betrayal by the House of Hohenzollern. Schroeder's attempt to draw a connection between Leopold and Metternich - between a tenuous, momentary policy and the dominant Austrian politician of the *Vormärz* - therefore seems specious. Equally insufficient is the 'traditional' trope of the Counter-Revolution; Leopold, Joseph and Kaunitz were far from counterrevolutionaries, and Europe remained fiercely divided despite the French threat. Hochedlinger's perspective, lastly, reduces the House of Austria to a series of mindless automatons bent only on the accumulation of territory and a larger army.

This project has sought to transcend the prevailing theoretical quarrels of leading historians of Austria to grapple with dynastic exceptionalism in the realm of diplomacy as directly as possible. Its conclusions can only be tentative, given the limited temporal range examined and the degree to which it rests upon well established scholarship that

¹³⁰ This, I would argue, reinforces the theoretical argument of this project, if not directly its content. The existence of a counter-system derived from a different intellectual climate which happens to coincide with a complete reversal of policy is suggestive of the prevalence of Theresian and Kaunitzian modes of policy formation.

dates as far back as the mid-19th Century. Nevertheless, its argument is inspired by the ideas of its subjects. Maria Theresia said it best, when in a letter to her son Joseph – which might well have been an essay to the Monarchy itself – she wrote:

Je n'existerai plus, mais je me flattais de vivre après ma mort dans votre cœur, que votre famille nombreuse, vos Etats ne perdront rien à ma perte, au contraire y gagneront. Puis-je m'en flatter, si vous vous laissez aller à ce ton qui bannit toute tendresse et amitié? L'imitation n'est pas flatteuse; ce héros qui a tant fait parler de lui, ce conquérant, a-t-il un seul ami? Ne doit-il se défier de tout le monde? Quelle vie où l'humanité est bannie! Dans notre religion surtout la charité est la plus grande base, non un conseil, mais un précepte...

ne souhaitant que de vous voir estimé et aimé,
comme vous le méritez, de tout le monde...¹³¹

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¹³¹ Alfred Ritter von Arneth ed., *Maria Theresia und Joseph II: Ihre Correspondenz sammt Briefen Joseph's an seinen Bruder Leopold*, vol. I, (Wien: Druck und Verlag von Carl Gerhold's Sohn, 1867), 202-204.

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