The Habsburg–Lorraine secundogeniture in Tuscany

In the first decades of the 18th century, during the rule of the last Medici, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany became the center of attention of European Great Powers such as England, France, Spain, and Austria in terms of determining a new succession house in case of the male-line extinction of the House of Medici that had ruled in Florence for many centuries. There were two candidates being considered: the Spanish Infante don Carlos, and the Habsburg-Lorraine duke Francis Stephen. The Great Powers eventually gave preference to their interest in moving their borders to the Rhine River by annexing Lower Saxony and thus the young Habsburg duke won.

On July 9, 1737, Gian Gastone de’ Medici died, and on July 12, with Francis I Stephen, the House of Habsburg-Lorraine definitively ascended the throne of Tuscany for another 122 years. In 1743, following Francis’s death, his 10-year-old sons of Marie Theresia and Francis Stephen, Peter Leopold, ascended the Tuscany throne. He later became the emperor Leopold II, and became the most significant Enlightenment monarch of his time. His initiatives based on the Enlightenment ideas affected all areas of the state political governance, state administration, religious organizations, state economic management, financial system, and state legislation.

The abolishment of feudal privileges led to an increase in agricultural production. This encouraged agricultural improvements and industrial production. The abolishment of the death penalty in 1786, and the states of the criminal codes led to the advancement of the Tuscany territory. In 1789, a year after the death of his brother Joseph II, who died without issue, the Tuscan reformed emperor Leopold II, had to take up the rule of the Austrian monarchy, thus honoring the successor rights. Tuscany was entrusted into the hands of Leopold’s second son, Ferdinand III. He became the so-called Habsburg-Lorraine secundogeniture. The onset of his rule was marked by overall unrest in Europe, ignited by Napoleon’s expansion leading (also) to Italy. In 1799, the Grand Duke had to leave for exile. In 1801, he was forced to abdicate.

Tuscany was returned to Ferdinand, who in 1814 was the Bey of Tunis. Upon his return, Ferdinand rapidly engaged in political and economic reforms of the country. He contributed to the recovery of science and arts. In 1824, after his sudden death, the Grand Duchy came under the rule of Leopold II, second in the Tuscan successor line. The first decades of Leopold’s rule progressed relatively peacefully until the revolutionary 1840’s, as opposed to the time of his father’s rule. He is to be credited for the fertilization of coastal Maremma in the area of Siena provinces, and the construction of the road and railroad network. He followed in his grandfather Peter Leopold’s footsteps also in the legislative area by drafting civil and criminal codes, and issuing a liberal constitution. The post-revolutionary 1850’s of his reign were marked by stronger political orientation on the Habsburg monarchy, including the intervention of Austrian soldiers onto the Tuscan territory, which led to the suspension of representation in the new laws. During the Constitutional monarchy, there was a debate about the constitutional reforms. The 1860’s were marked by the abdication of Leopold II in favor of his son Francis IV. At the end of the 1860’s, the Oettingen dynasty began its new era of strong anti-Austrian resistance, causing Leopold II to leave the country on April 27, 1859. Shortly afterwards, the House of Lorraine of Tuscany was deposed, and in 1860 the Grand Duchy became part of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia.
IMAGO TUSCIAE
Tuscany Digitisation Project

The digitisation of cartographic materials gives evidence of the historically diverse documents of the Habsburg-Tuscany Family Archive. In 2013, digitisation of Tuscan maps and plans was carried out as part of the IMAGO TUSCIAE project. The sponsors include universities in Siena and Florence. The long-term goal of the project is to digitise the historic cartographic production related to the Tuscan territory deposited in various memory institutions of Italy, Czech Republic and Austria.

The Tuscany Project is a digital catalogue (Catalogo digitale della cartografia storica toscana) of the historic cartographic materials about Tuscany. The Italian sponsors created a form for metadata based on the generic description of cartographic documents corresponding to the requirements of the digital catalogue of cartographic production. The basis of the metadata records is the detailed description of the cartographic work with data related to the content of the depicted area, technical projects, exterior and interior of architectural constructions. All these records combined with the digital pictures of the cartographic works create information on the historic cartographic production with the Tuscany area, deposited in various national and international memory institutions. Digital access allows the experts as well as the lay audience to make full use of it. Thus, it makes room for a detailed comparative study leading to comprehensive evaluation from various aspects of interdisciplinary scientific fields.

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The Historic Value of Manuscripts

Peter Leopold - Manuscripts

At the time, Peter Leopold’s ephemeral nature, being visual, experiential, and often ephemeral, compared to the permanent nature of written or printed manuscripts, meant that many of his...
Ferdinand IV, (10.6.1835, Florence–17.1.1908, Salzburg), a titular Grand Duke of Tuscany, and his large family, lived in the Salzburg and Lindau manors. It was here that he performed the administration of his Austrian estates, the Ostrov manors in Bohemia, and his private property he had inherited in Tuscany. The extensive archive contains documents from 1859–1908. The documentation includes 12 diaries, 13 boxes of family correspondence, and 275 boxes of fascicle material organized by the Duke himself into a clear system of reference numbers. The archival collection provides a complete picture of the Duke’s actions, activities, and the administration of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the 19th century. The documents related to the Duke’s administration of Austria, Bohemia, and the family’s private property are of great significance. Ferdinand was a superb homesteader, tireless administrator of his family assets in Austria, Bohemia, and Tuscany, and he completed a grand project of transforming the Maremma area into a fertile region. He performed his duties resulting from his position as head of the secundogeniture in Tuscany with the same diligence, both on the level of family relations, and in the context of the imperial house. In 1881, Franz Joseph I even commissioned him to accompany Crown Prince Rudolf on his expedition to Egypt and the Orient.
Charters and Diplomas

The sub-fonds of the family archive contains 43 pieces of the cartulary material from 1606, 1779–1900. The archive group includes primarily certifications of order and military rank awards to the family members by Austrian emperors, including Maria Theresa, Francis I, and Franz Joseph I, plus certification of secundogeniture for the House of Habsburg in Salzburg in 1803. These charters and diplomas are made on paper and parchment, many times decorated with gilded and colorful elements that underscore the sig

Imperial coat of arms, eagle holding a white beam on the red shield, and the Order of the Golden Fleece chain and fleece. Detail from the Emperor Ferdinand II’s document, 1792

Franz Joseph I awards the Order of the Golden Fleece to the Archduke Ludwig Salvator on August 18, 1867

Diploma of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence founded by Peter Leopold, issued on September 25, 1785, on the naming of Ferdinand III the Honorary Member of the Academy

Imprint of the fishing seal ring of Pope Pius IX

Testament of Ferdinand I de’ Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Florence, October 10, 1606, autograph, parchment, sealed with a lead bulla

The Empress Maria Theresa’s patent of 15.12.1779 bestowing his own regimen to her grandson Ferdinand III of Tuscany

Testaments - Patents - Seals
The collection of photographs is rather unique, both in terms of its quantity of 4 thousand pieces, and of the contents, as well as for its documentary and technical value. The studio family photographs of the Grand Duke Leopold from the 1860's ranks among the oldest and most precious pieces. However, it is the family photographs of Ferdinand's Tuscan lineage and of their relatives originating from European monarchies that prevail. These photographs not only present portraits but also take us inside family events. Thanks to Ferdinand's passion for photography, we have documents of trips, hunts and chases, trips to and stays at Istria or Dalmatia. These are supplemented by photographs of mansions of the Grand Duke and the emperor. His snapshots from European tours are also valuable (Austria, Italy, Bohemia, the Kingdom of Hungary, Slovakia), as they depict not only sights, landscapes, city and village buildings, but also everyday life of the locals. Cartographic works demonstrate the impact of the reforms of Peter Leopold and Ferdinand on the changes of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, its provinces and regions. The plans of Tuscany cities and towns, construction plans of fortresses, town plans of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Pistoia and Prato, floor plans of the residential palace of Pitti, and gardens, fortifications of Florence, are all part of a collection of great interest.

• View of Dubrovnik
• Stereoscopic photographs from Swiss Alps
• Grand Duchess of Tuscany Maria Antonia with children
• View of Florence, Bad Herrenalb, Ludwig and Isabella, Aix of France castle, Turin, A. Strobel: La Cathédrale

The collection of maps and plans dating back to the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century numbering 2000 items, stands as an entirely unique part of the Habsburg-Tuscany family archive in terms of its contents and workmanship. The manuscript and partly coloured maps, plans and engravings from the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, are also unique. Cartographic works demonstrate the impact of the reforms of Peter Leopold and Ferdinand on the changes of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, its provinces and regions. The plans of Tuscany cities and towns, construction plans of fortresses, town plans of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Pistoia and Prato, floor plans of the residential palace of Pitti, and gardens, fortifications of Florence, are all part of a collection of great interest.