

Hannes Ettlstorfer

Emperor Franz Joseph

„I still haven't completed my duties“





Preamble

I still haven't completed my duties"¹ – with these regrets, the seriously ill emperor bids his valet, Eugen Ketterl farewell, on the evening of the 21st of November 1916. After that, Franz Joseph closes his eyes for the last time – and after a reign of 68 years,² finally becomes a myth. The reason for this is mainly due to his trust in God, and his adherence to God's grace, his spartanic lifestyle, as well as his „life familiar with all the bitterness of destiny.“³ A premonition of the inexorable fall of the monarchy, fatal misjudgements, added to the admission of his own imperfection, overshadow the last years of his life. Furthermore, the declaration of war by the aged emperor against Serbia on the 28th of July 1914, partly leads to the outbreak of the First World War at the time of his death, the consequences being a crushing defeat for Austria-Hungary, accompanied by hardship and misery, which already manifests itself everywhere on these November days. Franz Joseph's life is reflected, as in the case of hardly any other ruling person-

ality, in the serious upheavals in politics, economy, society, art and culture. At the beginning, he defends himself downright defiantly against these radical changes. He also accepts that he is increasingly „out of touch“ when it comes to ruling, and also as private individual, he clings to his role of emperor as is also emphasized in obituaries: „Only seldom did the human being appear to profane eyes, and when, the emperor sought to conceal him, in order to remain the emperor for all time.“⁴

„IT IS EASIER TO RECONSTRUCT THE FACTS OF AN AGE“

For this reason, it seems appropriate that even in the slim dimensions of a Franz Joseph portrayal, besides the mere facts, also time moods, atmosphere and mentalities resonate. It is, as Stefan Zweig explains in his epoch novel „Die Welt von Gestern“ „according to experience, it is a thousand times easier to reconstruct the facts of an age than its emotional atmosphere. That is expressed not in official events, but most likely in small, personal episodes“⁵ This publication about the life and works of Emperor Franz Joseph aims to combine both, and presents, in addition to an in-depth chronology, a kaleidoscope of

„We Viennese look back in trust to the past“ – so Karl Farkas. Is that the reason why this monarch also posthumously became a figurehead of the Austrian identity and mentality?

witness reports, newspaper articles and also anecdotes, which the French poet Prosper Mérimée supports: „In history, I only love the anecdotes.“⁶ Furthermore, we know that the emperor himself showed a keen interest in anecdotal chat or theatre gossip, which he, however, only dares to admit to in letters to his confidante, the court actress Katharina Schratt: „When you write theatre gossip to me, it gives me pleasure. That may not be right and proper of me, but true.“⁷ [...] How grateful I am to you, that you make the effort of taking notes of the various gossip. That will be wonderful, and I look forward to all these interesting reports.⁸ The present pasticcio is meant to be a colourful variety of information, of the humorous and mini-drama, further, snapshots in which the social momentum of this contradictory era is demonstrated.



FRANZ JOSEPH AS THE CONTINUATION OF THE CULTURAL HISTORICAL HABSBURG PORTRAIT

received great approval of this more culturally-historically oriented reading from Kral publisher's in Berndorf and its publishing director, Robert Ivancich. I wish, therefore, to express my thanks, for the trust placed in me, and for the assignment of this small series of Habsburg portraits. After my two publications: „Crown Prince Rudolf.“ „Anything is preferable to the truth“, (2020) and „Empress Elisabeth ,It would be easy if she were as good as she was beautiful“

(2021) the following publication about Emperor Franz Joseph should be seen as a continuation of these monographies which were also considered to be cultural-historical epoch portraits.

On behalf of the publisher, Anne Saskia Schmutterer M.A. undertook the professional proofreading, for which I wish to express my profound gratitude. Dr. Reinhard Linke then subjected the text to a final check, which was an invaluable service of friendship. Tina Gerstenmayer M.A. (D&K Werbeagentur G.m.b.H) strove to obtain a balance in her graphic design between illustration and text. From the pictorial side, my collector friends, Viktor Kabelka (Vienna, Gießhübl), Mag. Thomas Ilming (Gollarn), the Stadtmuseum Wels (Dr. Renate Miglbauer) proved once more to be particularly generous, in providing me with their photographic Habsburg fundus.

For important information and valuable pictorial material, I also wish to thank Prof. Dr. Johannes Ramharter, Mag. Philipp Ilming, the Stadtmuseum Tulln, Stift Schlägl, (Mag. Stephan Weber), the Dorotheum, Vienna, and friends who do not wish to be named. The illustrative section was rounded off with illustrative material from the collection Punkenhof II in Neulengbach, and Karmel St. Josef in Mayerling, for which I wish to express my special thanks to the honourable Mother

Superior Maria Magdalena and her Prioress Maria Regina.

„NOT A GOOD LISTENER, SINCE HE WAS IMPATIENT BY NATURE“

The many clarifying conversations with those aforementioned also proved to be of important assistance. Perhaps Franz Joseph's unwillingness to enter into dialogue or to listen, were the reason why he failed in many things, and also why he „didn't finish“ many things, as he protests on his deathbed. It seems as though Franz Joseph lost his belief in the spoken word in his youth, having lost trust in a passage known to him from the St. Matthew's gospel (Mt 8,8) – „Only say the word, and my soul will be healed“ „Even as a very young man, his reluctance to speak was often noticed (...) This was the reason why he didn't like people who spoke a lot to him. He mistrusted, even in younger years, men who spoke well and easily. Because of this, he was not a good listener, since he was impatient by nature.“⁹ Which consequences this „speechlessness“ of the emperor, this inability to listen and the lack of response to problems, that led to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 had, the following episode will illustrate, as Feldmarschallleutnant and

General Albert Freiherr von Margutti reports: „For those initiated, it was clear from the beginning, that the aged emperor did not want war at all. The whole court was permeated with this conviction. In the critical days, Generaladjutant Graf Paar told me that the emperor was horrified about the outbreak of war. In answer to my obvious question, if in that case, he should have avoided it, Paar being unable to give a plausible reply, blamed it on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Graf Berchtold.“¹⁰

„NOBODY BELIEVED IN WAR, IN REVOLUTIONS AND PUTSCHES“

The nostalgic, blissful image of the old emperor has obviously not been tarnished by this, nostalgia is considered a charming liar. With the passage of time, this era of Emperor Franz Joseph has attained the golden patina, which Stefan Zweig describes as: „The golden age of security“: „Everything in our almost thousand year old Austrian monarchy seemed to be stable for the long term, and the state the ultimate guarantor of this consistency.“¹¹ The ancient poet Publilius Syrus once warned: „The worst type of ruling is that of habit.“¹² Even today, the question

has to be asked, concerning the supposition of security in politics, economy and health: Have we not become so accustomed to achievements such as democracy, that we cannot imagine its massive endangerment?

Have violence and radicalism not caught up with us once again? Pandemic threats shift our sense of security from one day until the next. The example Franz Joseph demonstrates, is that in any case, it is no longer sufficient, to rule a country single-handedly, without anyone else having a say, in order to solve problems.

Hannes Etlstorfer,
21th of November 2020

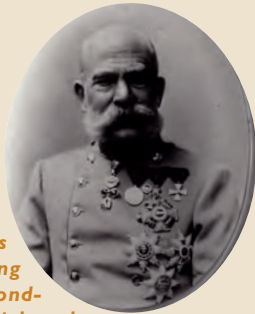




„All around him death circled and reaped and reaped“

EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH'S BIOGRAPHY IN CHRONOLOGIC STAGES OF HIS LIFE AND CITATIONS

Considering the length of his reign, and the ever changing political-military fate, here mainly events, moments of fate, turning points or upheavals pertaining essentially to the Danube monarchy, but also Franz Joseph's private life will be taken into account.¹³ We cannot always separate the two, but the character and the scope of this publication seem to merit such restrictions, with a view to attaining easier readability. Moreover, since there is certainly no lack of specialist literature about Emperor Franz Joseph, we can concentrate more on personality and mentality, personal strengths, weaknesses and quirks, which paint a picture of the „kind old emperor“ to which the long reigning monarch has in the present day mutated. For a long time, it seems, that he can even defy death itself, as, for example, Joseph Roth writes: „The emperor was an old man. He was the oldest emperor in the world. All around him, death circled, and



„How Austrian Franz Joseph was with his long wavy blond-brown thick and curly whiskers“ (Felix Salten).



Much has outlived the monarch – even this oak planted in 1908 in front of Schloss Totzenbach (NÖ).

reaped and reaped. The whole field was empty already, only the emperor stood, like a forgotten straw of silver, and waited.“¹⁴

1830: Archduchess Sophie Friederike of Bavaria gives birth to a healthy boy, her first living child, after 48 hours of extremely painful labour, at 9.15 am on the 18th of August in Schönbrunn Palace. At Franz Joseph's birth, his future teacher, or Aja, Baroness Louise von Sturmfeder (1789–1866), is also in attendance. As nanny, she acts as second mother, and undertakes, as also with his younger siblings, this task, usually lovingly called by her nickname, „Ami“¹⁵. She describes not only the atmosphere during the difficult delivery by forceps, but also the touching concern of Emperor Franz I. for his daughter-in-law Sophie: „The good emperor gave her courage, and never left her side for a moment (...) In our room, all of those went out, that did not have the courage to endure it.(...) Some prayed, others wept. There was a horrible silence, then came terrible crying and wailing again, (...) until finally, the voice was heard, and the empress embraced us all tearfully and said: It's a son! Now there was rejoicing, the emperor came to the door, lifting his hands up to heaven and thanking God, we all pushed through, and kissed the hands (...) Now the emperor said: I never chase you away, but today I will.

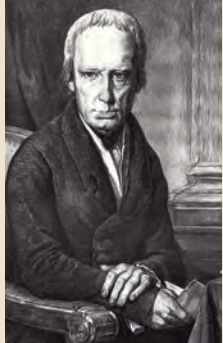


Franz Joseph as so-called little deity – spoilt as a child and pitied in old age. Klaus Ludwig Kerstinger 2020.

Archduchess Sophie only achieved motherhood after several miscarriages. Franz Joseph is a forceps birth.



The later Aja of Franz Joseph, Baronin Louise von Sturmfeder is already at the side of his mother at the difficult birth.



Emperor Franz I. worries about his daughter-in-law Sophie at the birth of Franz Joseph in Schönbrunn.

The Vienna Fürst-erzbischof Leopold Maximilian von Firmian baptises the little archduke Franz Joseph Carl.



*You may all come again, but now, peace is necessary.*¹⁶ The Wiener Zeitung announces the birth in the style of court reporting at that time: „Her imperial majesty, the serene Archduchess Sophie, wife of his imperial highness Archduke Franz Carl, joyfully gave birth to an archduke yesterday, the 18th of the month, at quarter past nine in the morning in Schönbrunn Palace, where the honourable couple are in residence.“¹⁷

The solemn baptismal ceremony takes place, then, on the 19th of August in the ceremonial hall in Schönbrunn Palace, which has been changed at short notice into a baptism hall, and is conducted by the Viennese Fürsterzbischof Leopold Maximilian Graf Firmian (1766–1831).¹⁸ At his baptism, the future heir to the throne receives the names Franz Joseph Carl.

1831: Little Franz Joseph has already advanced to being the darling of the family, and the much visited focal point in Viennese court life, as his teacher, or rather Aja, Baroness Louise von Sturmfeder, states with a certain amount of concern on the 15th of January: „Many visitors come to us. The whole world wants to see the little one. That is very tiring, and I fear, that the little one could lose his reputation of being charming. (...) Since the vaccination, he hasn't been outdoors. I believe that the doctor is so afraid that

he will be blamed for letting him go out in the bitter cold, that he won't allow him to go out before May. If that is his intention, then neither the archduchess nor I will agree, and one fine day, we will surprise him by going out. I often think, in horror, about how it will be in a (...) few months, when he is immediately praised, he will understand this, and it will most likely be, as the good emperor foresaw: „All our children are being spoiled by flattery, it is the most harmful thing!“ I saw him again today, it's always a day to rejoice.”¹⁹

The cholera, which is spreading in Vienna during the summer, upsets the imperial family: Archduchess Sophie is anxious about the wellbeing of her firstborn. Therefore, the little one is taken to Ischl shortly before his first birthday. On this several days long journey from Ischl back to Vienna via the Traunsee, we for the first time get to know him as a recalcitrant child: „The passage over the lake was very fortunate, but the little one would not sleep a wink and was quite grumpy. Breakfast was taken at Schiller and we continued our journey in terrible heat to Enns, where we stayed overnight.²⁰ [...] For the lunch of the little one, we took a rest in Kemmelbach. [...] Today the little one did not want to stay in the carriage. I had to make them stop, and then he was so wild, that he tore at his hair. The heat, the dust, this terrible driving had upset him terribly. He drank



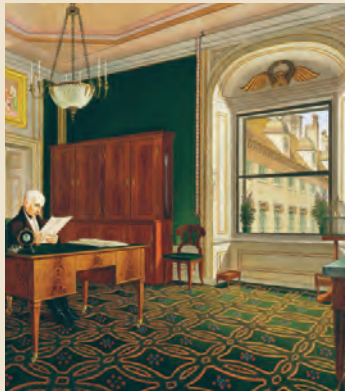
Archduke Franz Carl, Emperor Franz Joseph's father in younger years. His whole life is spent in the shadow of his wife Sophie.



Little Franzi yells and screams even in such magnificent carriages if the journey lasts too long for him. This wagon is from the carriage museum in Laa/Thaya.



Emperor Franz I. likes to have fun with the children, also with his grandson Franz Joseph.



Emperor Franz I. in his office in the Vienna Hofburg. His grandson is even allowed to play with the canaries. A painting by Johann Stephan Decker.

two glasses of water and while I tried to console him, all carriages went ahead. I asked Coudenhove to stay behind us, because I did not think I would be able to continue with the little one further than St. Pölten. Luckily, he calmed down though and fell asleep and we arrived well and healthily in Vienna at 9:30. I gave him his evening meal and put him to bed right away."²¹

1832: On the 6th of July, Franz Joseph's brother Archduke Maximilian is born in Schönbrunn Palace, is baptised there, and receives the names Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph. He is Sophie's favourite son, and meets a tragic end as Emperor Maximilian of Mexico in 1867. Louise von Sturmfeder reports round about the same time about problems with the child's mother, moreover about the educational progress of the prominent pupil: „The archduchess comes every evening before retiring, to bid her son goodnight, which I find is a completely natural and good thing for a mother to do, however, what worries me, is that she has often woken him up. Today, the poor child got such a fright, that he cried for more than an hour. I took the liberty of asking her to approach his bed with the utmost caution, especially now, when he is teething. The poor child has neither day nor night any peace as it is."²² On the other hand, Baroness Sturmfeder is surprised, „what a spirit of order lives within him.

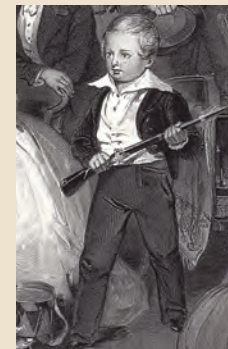
You could actually say that it is inbred. Without anyone telling him, he tidies up his toys, and does not rest, until everything is in its proper place. He also perseveres, and continues in his efforts when he doesn't immediately succeed in something. (...) What drives him to distraction is, when one doesn't understand him right away, which happens often enough, since as a rule, he only pronounces one syllable, and as a result, many words sound the same. „Wagen“, this is the only word, which he pronounces with two syllables, and that with an Austrian dialect, which I find delightful, but his mother doesn't like. I want him to speak in the Austrian dialect, a little, at least. (...) He was with his father, for a long time today, who has a talent for making him act so naughtily, that in the end, he doesn't know himself how to cope. In order to calm him down, I put him in his little carriage, and soon, he was well behaved again. He went to the emperor, and when I wanted to have him say adieu, he literally rebelled."²³ When she deems it necessary, the baroness can also be strict with the child: „My dear little man, who waddles courageously in front of me, takes up all of my attention. At times, I have to lead him in a different direction, then again, remove him from a most inviting pile of dirt or stones. I also yell a stern word in his ears, or scream at his participating companions „Let him go”."²⁴



Franz Joseph with his brother Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph, later Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.



The little archduke Franz Joseph at three. Neue Zeitung 18th of August 1908.



The imperial world of toys should strengthen role models. „At 8:45, I came to Mama, where I received a rifle with a capsule to shoot at a disk (...)” – Franz's diary entry on the 4th of October 1843, his name day.



Franz Joseph learns to read. The military world fascinates him already as a child far more.



1833: Archduke Karl Ludwig Joseph Maria, Franz Joseph's second brother, is born on the 30th of July in Schönbrunn. He is remembered today mainly as being the father of the heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand, or as grandfather of the last emperor of Austria (Karl I. of Austria).



Emperor Franz I. on his deathbed. Before he dies, he blesses his two grandsons Franz Joseph and Ferdinand Maximilian.

1835: Franz Joseph's grandfather, Emperor Franz I., dies on the 2nd of March in Vienna: „He was only ill for a short time, and was immediately prepared for his own demise, and demanded that he provide for himself, ‚because‘ he said: ‚I am not afraid of death and never have been, but I would be afraid, not to die a Christian.‘ He wrote to his sons. (...) He blessed everyone and bade them farewell. He also blessed his two grandsons, (Franz Joseph and Maximilian). It was the poor little prince's first outing, to the deathbed of his grandfather“, said Baroness Sturmfeder.²⁵ Follower on the Austrian imperial throne is his son, Crown Prince Archduke Ferdinand, better known as Ferdinand the Good. On the 27th of October, the only sister of Franz Joseph, Maria Anna Karolina (Pia) called Ännchen, is born.



With Emperor Ferdinand I. the Good, a monarch unable to govern ascends to the throne in 1835.

1840: Franz Joseph's sister Maria Anna Karolina (Pia) dies on the 5th of February, at the age of only four, of an epileptic seizure. On the 24th of October, Archduchess Sophie is faced

with a further stroke of fate. She gives birth to another son, who is dead on arrival. The ten-year-old Franz Joseph enjoys, on the other hand, the summer in Salzkammergut, as Hanny Brentano recounts in 1908: „While Archduchess Sophie was sitting with Father Doppelbauer from Weißenbach am Attersee at the lake in the afternoon, she glanced repeatedly over at a boat on the edge of the lake, in which her eldest son, the ten-year-old Franz Joseph was playing, and as he, in boyish arrogance, began to teeter, so that the water sprayed up high, the concerned mother shouted full of fear ‚O, Father, look at that! Please tell Franzl not to do that!‘ Doppelbauer, however, remained comfortably seated, looked down towards the lake in amusement and said ‚Ah, if he falls in, we'll just drag him out again! When he becomes emperor, he'll have to put up with a lot more!‘“²⁶



In 1840, Archduchess Sophie not only has to endure the death of her only daughter Maria Pia but also the stillbirth of a further son.



Franz Joseph with his siblings Ferdinand Max, Karl Ludwig and Maria Pia.



Chosen facets of his personality

ONLY MISCALCULATED BY TWO DAYS

In „Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre“ Goethe writes: „It is a strange thing to have an elevated place in human society by ones birth.“¹⁵⁴ Such a place is guaranteed the prospective sons of the ambitious Archduchess Sophie Friederike of Bavaria, after she marries the third son of Emperor Franz I. (II.), Archduke Franz Carl in 1824. We can only guess, how strongly the politically ambitious archduchess rails against her fate, after suffering three miscarriages between 1825 and 1829. Undeterred, she still hopes for an heir to the throne with each birth. She does not give up and follows the advice of her court physicians, to try a stay at a health spa. She visits the

spa resort Pirawath¹⁵⁵ in the Weinviertel on the 22nd of August for a two-month stay, but this does not prevent the third miscarriage. Sophie's personal physician, Professor Franz de Paula von Wirer,¹⁵⁶ now recommends a spa stay in Ischl, where she arrives in 1827 after several days of travel, and where she is prescribed sole baths, sulphur baths, mud baths and whey drinks. Full of hope, she writes to her mother, Queen Karoline of Bavaria on the 9th of January 1830: „I have had the best news, that I could convey to you, my good Mamina. We are in no doubt that I am two months pregnant, that the bad times have passed. In the beginning, I had a lot of discomfort, now it is not so bad. The spa stay last summer made me stronger, now I hope to safely achieve our goal.“¹⁵⁷ Two weeks later she sends her mother the date of birth, which she has calculated herself, the 16th of August.¹⁵⁸

**Archduchess Sophie with her infant son Franz Joseph.
Lithography by Gottlieb Bodmer after Joseph Karl Stieler, around 1832.**

„LITTLE DEITY“

She has only „miscalculated“ by two days. On the 18th of August, Sophie gives birth to a healthy son, her first living child, at 9.15 am in Schloss Schönbrunn. The small Archduke Franz Joseph, who is soon admired and adored as a delightful child, is even given the nickname „little deity“ by the ladies-in-waiting, which soon becomes too much for his mother, who herself hands him around like a challenge cup at every opportunity



The Duke of Reichstadt with the small Archduke Franz Joseph and the Princess of Salerno.

and even carries him around during audiences.¹⁵⁹ Shortly before 6 in the morning, his father Franz Carl comes to Franz Joseph's cradle, then four doctors, at 9 am his grandfather Emperor Franz I. and his fourth wife, Empress Karoline Auguste, who is also the sister of Archduchess Sophie.¹⁶⁰ When the latter proudly presents her son Franz Joseph in a pink dress, the closest friend of Sophie, Herzog von Reichstadt, in the face of this even then considered tasteless getup, remarks that the small boy looks like „strawberry ice cream with cream“.¹⁶¹ Napoléon's son, Napoléon Franz Joseph Karl Bonaparte, who had been appointed Herzog von Reichstadt by his grandfather Emperor Franz I. (II.), at this time lives at Schloss Schönbrunn together with his mother Empress Marie Louise, and has a close relationship to Archduchess Sophie who is six years his junior. They attend balls, concerts and theatre productions together, which leads to the rumour that Franz Joseph, born in 1830, is the son of this duke and son of Napoléon who died in 1832 ...¹⁶²

„BUT, AREN'T YOU THEN ALSO EMPEROR?“

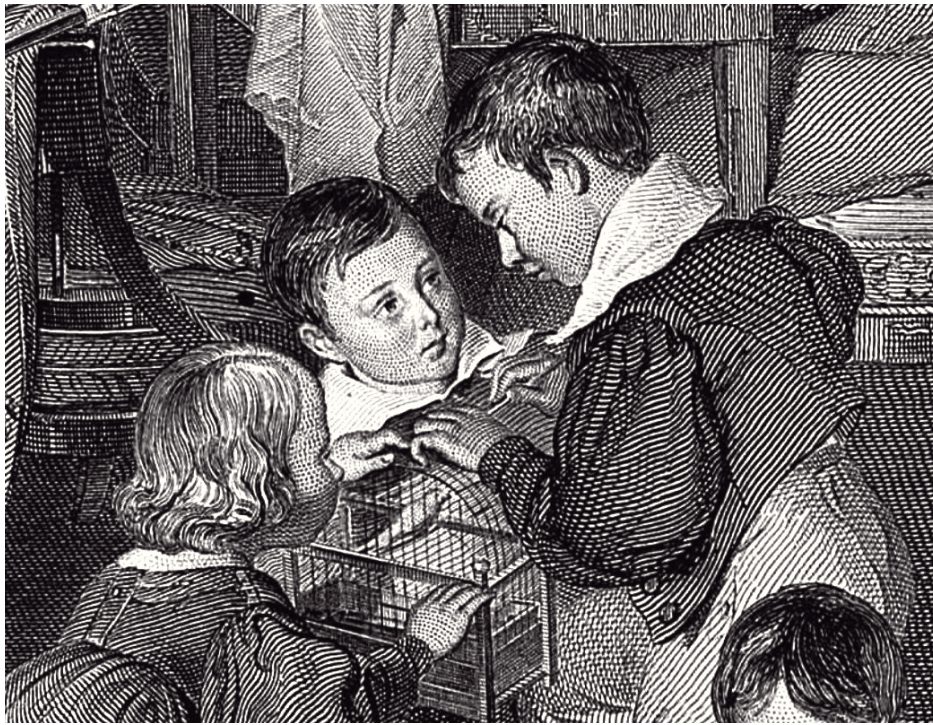
The upbringing to which his mother subjects him from an early age is very strict. The reason for this is obvious: Her first-born must be made a ruler early on, since his sickly and overwhelmed uncle, Emperor Ferdinand I. is unlikely to produce any progeny, and his not overly talented father, Archduke Franz Carl has little aspiration to the throne: He prefers to pursue his private interests and is softly coerced by his wife to forgo the throne in favour of his son Franz Joseph. This is also reported in an anecdote from Ischl: as father of two emperors (Emperor Franz Joseph I. and Emperor Maximilian of Mexico) Franz Carl is once implicated in a conversation with a naive native of the Salzkammergut: „Do you have children?“ – „Yes!“ – „A boy also?“ – „Yes!“ – „What does he do?“ – „He's Emperor!“ – „Do you have a second boy?“ – „Yes!“ – „And what is he?“ – „Emperor!“ – „But, aren't you then also Emperor?“ – Franz Carl answered: „No, my wife would not allow it!“¹⁶³



Franz Joseph playing with his brothers Ferdinand-Max and Karl Ludwig as well as sister Maria Pia and Archduke Josef, 1834.

„GOD IN HEAVEN, THERE IS THE PAINTER“

And she has high-flying plans for Franz Joseph, whom she wants on the throne and to be formed to her political ideas. As a result of his special dynastic standing, he is already forced to pose for artists in childhood. His Aja (nanny), Baroness Louise von Sturmfeder, remembers the tiresome portrait sessions of the small fidgety archduke: „God in Heaven, there is the painter, who measures every limb of the child [...] while Herr Seibold tries to curl his thick hair and two women try to humour him. I am desperate and don't know if I'm coming or going. This portrait [...] worries me endlessly.“¹⁶⁴



Emperor Franz I. doesn't just let his grandchildren look inside the birdcage, he lets them play with the canaries.

The emperor really has a bird

THE EARLY DAYS OF CHILDHOOD

The ten-month-old toddler, who is indulged by everyone, gets his money's worth when he – as in June 1831 – visits his affable 63-year-old grandfather Emperor Franz I. (II.) in the Wiener Hofburg

accompanied by his nanny: „Before the little one had his visit with the emperor, we were with the archduchess and the whole family was around him. They found him well-behaved and nice, while I stood beside him in fear

of the different needs, on whose account I sometimes had to leave these high gatherings. [...] We almost missed seeing the emperor, as the archduchess had decreed not to stay out too long, but finally he came, took the little one to his rooms and let him play with his canary.“¹⁶⁵ Emperor Franz I. (II.) held two tame canary birds named Bibi and Büberl in a cage in his office at the Wiener Hofburg until his death in 1835. They can still be admired as stuffed animals in their cage – with the inscription: „Büberl and Bibi – [...] It was sometimes granted that you rest on his holy head“¹⁶⁶ at the former Wiener Hofmobilien-depot.

„NO PRECAUTIONS!“

Only two months later – in August 1831 – Vienna is in uproar: The Cholera is in the city! Franz Joseph's mother is firmly determined to defy this epidemic: No-one and nothing is to take from her the most important prerequisite of future power, her son Franz Joseph. However, as his nanny Louise von Sturmfeder reports in August 1831, the Viennese court is in disagreement as to the strategy against this dangerous disease: „Yesterday, their majesties were very



Imperial idyll in the palace park of Laxenburg with Franz Joseph and his younger brother Ferdinand Maximilian. After Peter Fendi.

worried because of the little one, as several little children have died in Vienna! The empress and I had a lengthy conference about the precautionary measures to be taken. I have no trust in these, so I remained intent on not taking any measures, as I think they will rather do harm and their efficacy is dubious. When I could no longer fight back, I asked the emperor for rules of conduct. He said: „No Precautions! - Keine Präservative! -

One can do more harm than good. He will not be harmed, he is a strong child."¹⁶⁷ This refers to general cures and remedies, from the Latin „*praeservativum*“, which were often administered as „*Elixir praeservativum*“.¹⁶⁸



The „Preservativ-Mann = Precaution man“ against Cholera. Caricature regarding the fear of Cholera, Lithography around 1831.

„BOY WITH A HEARTY LAUGH“

In such times of crisis one feels safer in the summer retreat of Ischl, where the small archduke is also allowed more child-appropriate freedom. If we are to believe the anecdotes, he here shows the grounding and grip on reality in this rural everyday life, which he seemed to lose later due to his pronounced need for adherence to class distinction: „So it was in *Weißbach am Attersee*, the minister *Doppelbauer*, who was blessed with *Franzi's* special friendship, and whom *Archduchess Sophie* also liked meeting despite his coarse autochthony. On a lovely summer morning in the year 1840, the small archduke stepped unexpectedly into the garden of the minister, who was at work with his flowers, and who apologised for not being able to shake the visitor's hand, as he was afraid of soiling the delicate fingers. The boy stuck his right hand deep into the damp earth while laughing heartily and then held it out to the minister triumphantly, who now was no longer able to refuse.“¹⁶⁹ Louise von Sturmfeder, Aja of Franz Joseph and his siblings, therefore wishes to keep the small Franz Joseph from court society as much as possible, as she is of the

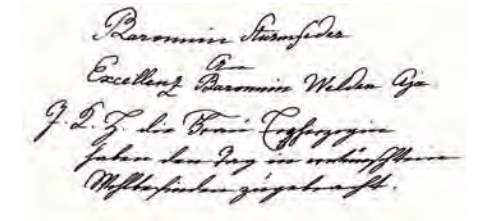
unswerving opinion that too much attention, too many visits and disturbances to the strictly regulated daily routine will confuse the child and impact negatively on his development; she does not even exempt the mother of the child, *Archduchess Sophie*, which took a lot of courage.¹⁷⁰

„THE EMPEROR SAID ‚PFUI!‘“

She also has her hands full with him, when the small *Franzi* plays his games with the imperial grandfather, who knows how to entertain him greatly. Emperor *Franz I. (II.)* in turn leaves out no opportunity to amuse himself greatly with his grandson. As every other child, the boisterous „*Franzi*“ plays on his grandfather's good nature, as a scene retold by Louise Sturmfeder about the four-year-old at the table demonstrates: „At mealtimes he is not at his most agreeable and he usually prefers to talk instead of eating, and so it was a little troublesome to concentrate his attention on his soup, when with his grandparents, where he found hundreds of distractions. Finally, at the end of the evening meal, he was naughty. The emperor said ‚*Pfui!*‘, and lifted his finger threateningly. But the little one did the same and started



Archduchess Sophie. Photograph by Ludwig Angerer around 1861. Franz Joseph's Aja Louise von Sturmfeder has the courage to contradict her in matters of upbringing.



Louise von Sturmfeder's handwriting. From her we get an impression of the tense atmosphere during the birth.

laughing uncontrollably. [...] When I look at him, how he spends time with the little one, this man who decides the fates of thousands and thousands more? how he just seems to be there just for the little one, then I often find him quite great.“¹⁷¹



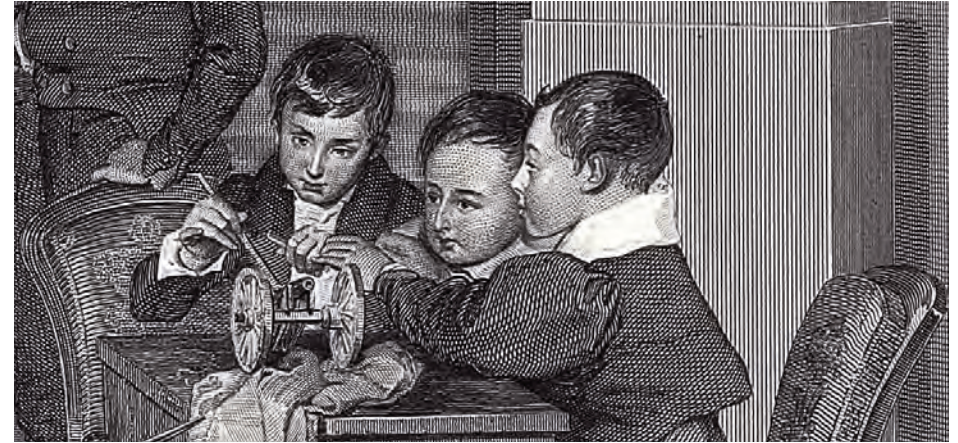
Graf Heinrich Franz von Bombelles becomes Franz Joseph's first educator. Lithography by Josef Kriehuber, 1851.



Johann Coronini-Cronberg within a short time makes of the young Franz Joseph an earnest and introverted youth. Lithography by Josef Kriehuber, 1853.

„YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE LACK OF OCCUPATION“

For the small Archduke Franz Joseph, Emperor Franz is not only the kind grandfather but also an influential personality, who takes an interest in the upbringing of his grandson: In his search for a suitable educator, the so-called „Primo Ajo“, he chooses Count Heinrich Bombelles, who „combines chivalrous gentility and admirable character traits in education“, and appoints Count Johann Baptist Coronini-Cronberg, „who hardly ever leaves the archduke from his sixth to his eighteenth year even for a day“ as his deputy.¹⁷² Bombelles comes from a very conservative and therefore much esteemed family, especially by state chancellor Metternich, Coronini-Cronberg is from a military background, becomes chamberlain to Archduke Franz Carl in 1836, and is considered to be liberal but also rigid and aloof.¹⁷³ Perhaps it is Coronini-Cronberg's nature that contributes to the fact that the ingenious and cheerful archduke within a short time becomes a serious and introverted young man? Franz Joseph estimates him greatly, as shown in a letter which he writes to Coronini-Cronberg four days after his



The imperial world of toys is supposed to strengthen role models – such as tin soldiers, military uniforms and miniatures of current weapons. When he is given a dragoon uniform for his 13th birthday, this is no longer a toy, he is at the same time given a cavalry regiment.

accession to the throne in Olmütz: „You will surely keep giving me such good advice as your emperor, this I wish from you, you can be sure that I will be very grateful to you. Your concerns about the lack of occupation is now removed, I suffer no such lack, and that is also the fault for my not writing to you sooner. It is one of the few pleasures, that I now have certain tasks and engagements, as I had missed this in recent times.“¹⁷⁴ The mentioned „lack of occupation“ in the daily routine of the adolescent archduke and future regent is easy to counteract: Early on, his general

education is honed, the languages of the monarchy are taught to him – Hungarian, Czech and Italian.¹⁷⁵ According to the strict parenting rules of the Habsburgs, the small archdukes are placed in the custody of male educators from their sixth birthday on: This also means the end of the loving relationship between Franz and his nanny Louise von Sturmfeder as well as the end of spoiling and embraces.¹⁷⁶