Bring the Glory of a Dynasty to Your Students

*Habsburg Splendor* gathers almost one hundred objects representing nearly five hundred years of Habsburg family collecting. In your classroom, this unprecedented grouping of objects will prove to be invaluable as you consider the objects’ owners, their makers, their subjects, and the powerful dynasty that amassed them. With this resource, our goal is to equip and inspire you to introduce these objects to your students and achieve a wide range of curricular aims.

The [Kunsthistorisches Museum](https://www.khm.at), established in Vienna by Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916), has assembled this traveling exhibition, with some of these objects leaving Austria for the very first time. The oldest objects in this exhibition date from the first and second centuries, connecting the Roman Empire of the second millennium to that of the first. In addition to sculpture and painting, the exhibition includes military effects, such as uniforms, weapons, and suits of armor, along with clothing, jewelry, tablewares, religious objects, and even a carriage and sleigh.

*Unknown Austrian Artist, The Princes’ Carriage*, ca. 1750–1755, wood, bronze, glass, iron, velvet, silk, and gold, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria
The Habsburg rulers represented in the exhibition begin with Frederick III (1415–1493) and span five centuries to Crown Prince Otto (1912–2011). Several groupings of objects highlight specific figures such as Emperor Charles V (1500–1558), Emperor Leopold I (1640–1705), and Queen Maria Theresa (1717–1780). Crucial to this exhibition is Rudolph II (1552–1612), who was a chief patron of the arts and one of the greatest Habsburg collectors in history. As exhibition curator Franz Pichorner notes, “Emperor Rudolph II’s art collection was one of the largest of his time, and he expended enormous sums on enlarging it. With perseverance, dedication, and the help of numerous envoys, he pursued individual works of art until he succeeded in adding them to his collection.” In addition to collecting, Rudolph commissioned original works of art and divided his collection into three sub-collections that were shown only to privileged guests at his Prague residence.

You and your students now have the rare opportunity to be such privileged guests. You can see the armor of emperors and gowns of empresses, the swords of kings, and the carriage of a prince. Paintings, sculpture, and tapestries unparalleled await you. To see and study such objects will bring the past to the present and bridge the royal with the everyday. While the entirety of Habsburg Splendor presents myriad artists, rulers, and centuries, each object carries personal, individual significance, inviting student inquiry in an intimate and up-close way that no book or map could ever equal.

In this resource, we highlight objects from Habsburg Splendor that carry great historical and artistic significance, and yet we hope educators will see their even wider educational scope. These fantastic objects can teach your students about science, reading and writing, and speaking and listening. The collection even addresses mathematics and technology. Many of the images and objects in the exhibition are accessible to the youngest of learners and can also be enlightening to our most advanced students. Please accept our invitation to bring Habsburg Splendor into your classroom to enrich and extend your students’ experience.
Special Imagery You’ll Find in the Exhibition:
Look closely and you’ll find that several symbols recur throughout Habsburg Splendor. One is the double-headed eagle (see below left). The eagle signified the Roman emperor beginning in antiquity and by the sixteenth century was still recognized as the Holy Roman Emperor’s symbol. Now with two heads—one to represent the emperor’s authority through election and the other for that ordained by God through the church—the eagle often appeared in black on a yellow or gold field holding a shield or crest that bears flags or symbols of the territories governed by the emperor at that time. Once the empire dissolved, the Habsburgs retained the double-headed eagle in their family crest.

Also look for the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece (see below right) throughout the exhibition: a wide golden chain with a golden lamb pendant. Established in the fifteenth century in Burgundy and brought to the Habsburgs with Mary of Burgundy’s marriage to Maximilian I, the knightly Order of the Golden Fleece had the emperor at its head and allowed only fifty members of noble birth and Catholic christening, hand-selected by the emperor himself. These Knights of the Order were charged with protecting Christendom in chivalrous loyalty to the emperor. While many of its rites remain secret, the order’s fleece is likely a reference both to Jason of the Argonauts from antiquity as well as Gideon’s fleece from the Book of Judges. Upon the dissolution of the Empire, the Order eventually split into Spanish and Austrian branches, which continue today.
Maximilian I

Under Maximilian I’s reign, the Austrian Empire grew exponentially. Through inheritance, his own marriage to Mary of Burgundy, and the marriages of his children and grandchildren, Maximilian I saw the Habsburg footprint extend to Tyrol, Burgundy, Bohemia, Hungary, Spain, and beyond. Some of the earliest works in the Kunsthistorisches collection date from Maximilian I’s collection.

This portrait of Maximilian I is one of several versions that remain of an older original painted by German artist Bernhard Strigel. It bears many hallmarks of Renaissance portraiture: the figure in profile, the parapet in the fore, the tapestry in the background, and the open space. This space could represent an open view as through a window or might have been left open to be filled later with an inscription about the sitter, a practice common at the time. Strigel also painted Maximilian with his family.

Many details included in the painting point to Maximilian’s royalty. Note the scepter, sword, and crown. This particular crown is that of a king, not an emperor, as Maximilian I did not assume that title until 1508. Also note the chain around his neck, which indicates the Order of the Golden Fleece. While Maximilian was leader of this knightly and chivalrous order, the golden suit of armor in this portrait is more likely for tournaments than for battle, as his love of the joust led to his title “the last knight.” Note the lance rest on the right side of his breastplate.
Like those of his Habsburg successors, many of Maximilian I’s commissions and acquisitions were strategic portrayals of his monarchy. If his shining armor and festive tournaments were one method of glorifying Maximilian’s reign, artwork was another. Carved by sculptor Hans Daucher, this limestone relief portrays the emperor as St. George, the dragon slayer. Maximilian was fond of St. George, and many other works depict him in the same way—armor-clad astride a horse above a slain dragon—symbolically illustrating good defeating evil. The detail and power of the image are remarkable for the sculpture’s relatively small size—not even a foot high. Maximilian’s posture, his facial expression, the horse’s confident trot are not lost in the medium. Note Maximilian’s prominent lower lip, also somewhat evident in the portrait above. This is in part due to a lower jaw malformation common among the Habsburg generations and caused Maximilian to have speech problems as a young child. This speech difficulty greatly concerned Maximilian’s father and led him to fear that his son might not be able to lead, that he might be seen as feeble-minded. History has proven those fears to be unfounded, as Maximilian I’s uniting power ushered in almost six centuries of Habsburg rule over Europe.

Allow these works to introduce Maximilian I to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the below ideas as a jumping-off point for teaching and learning in your classroom:

- Using a looking strategy such as See/Think/Wonder, study one or both of these works of art. What do your students learn from them about Maximilian I? Make a list of what you learn about him and what questions you still have. The questions can launch student-driven research.
• What will be the props in your portrait? Maximilian’s scepter, sword, and crown were carefully chosen to include in his portrait. They tell the viewers just who he is. If you could have three props to tell about you, what would you include? Allow students to bring in their props and sit for photographic portraits. Allow each prop to be the subject of a paragraph in an expository autobiographical essay. Alternatively, students can interview each other about their chosen props and write biographies of their classmates.

• Who might represent you? Maximilian admired St. George, and as in the relief, liked to be depicted in a way that resembled him. Allow your students to choose figures or characters with whom they identify and create self-portraits representing these connections. Students might choose book characters, historical figures, superheroes, or fairytale characters. Self-portraits can be drawings or collages. Expository paragraphs might accompany their artwork, with Venn diagrams comparing themselves with their chosen figures as pre-writing.

The Knightly Tournament
The origins of the knightly tournament date as far back as the eleventh century, with mock battles serving as combat practice. By 1500, these exhibitions of knightly prowess were festive affairs that accompanied royal occasions such as coronations and weddings. Often the festivities had a theme or storyline running throughout. Four different sporting events were part of a tournament. First was the tournament proper, a crowded, chaotic fight in which teams of knights fought to knock opponents from their horses and destroy the crests of their helmets. Next were two types of jousts. The Rennen, or joust of war, was fought with pointed lances, and the Stechen, or joust of peace, was conducted with blunt lances. The fourth contest was foot combat with a variety of weapons. While courtlier than tournaments of the past, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century tournaments remained quite dangerous, and serious injury was
not uncommon. By the sixteenth century, elaborate banquets, theatrical performances, and hunts accompanied the tournament, making the festivities span several days or even weeks.

Maximilian I was one of the greatest patrons and proponents of the tournament. On display in this exhibition is his Königs-Garnitur (king’s complete set of armor and accessories). While many of the seventy-two exchangeable pieces in the set have been lost over time, all pieces of this assembly in *Habsburg Splendor* (with the exception of the breastplate) are original. Note the brass trim and lines along the edges of the pieces and lack of engraving or ornamentation on the plates themselves. This sleekness shows the up-to-date nature of the suit. That this armor would be of the latest fashion is not surprising as it was made by Lorenz Helmschmid, one of the greatest masters of armor-making. The Helmschmid family produced armor for the Habsburgs for several generations, including this jousting armor for Maximilian I’s son Philip I (Charles V’s father) when he was just a boy.

Compare it to Archduke Sigmund’s armor, produced by another notable armorer, Kaspar Rieder. Both are jousting armors. The small shields at chest level protected against the opponent’s lance, which could range from nine to sixteen feet in length. The lance is braced against a lance rest on the front of the breastplate and balanced on a locking hook on the knight’s back plate. The cone-shaped shield around the lance, which protects the knight’s right arm, is called a vamplate. The helmet’s shape is specific to the joust, as well. The neckpiece protrudes farther than the headpiece, slanting smoothly and leading the opponent’s lance to glance upward without entering the helmet. This clever design impeded the knight’s range of vision, however. He would tilt his head downward just at the precise moment of aiming and then immediately upward to protect himself.
All three suits of armor are made of iron, brass, and leather and, while heavy, would have permitted their wearers to walk and move surprisingly freely.

**These suits of armor can introduce the tournament to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the ideas below to spark dialogue in your classroom:**

• Closely examine one or more of these suits of armor using Parts/Purposes/Complexities. If time permits, research armor further to answer questions that will arise about the different pieces and their purposes. Next, prompt groups of students to create their own suits of armor using cardboard and duct tape. How will your new armor be like these? How will it be different? Why? Try it on! What does it feel like to move in it? Read Tomie dePaola’s *The Knight and the Dragon* or Mercer Mayer’s *The Bravest Knight* in conjunction with your armor building. Another fun title to consider is *Do Knights Take Naps*?

• In the spirit of the knightly tournament, consider holding a multi-event “physical science tournament” in your classroom. Prompt your students to employ their Twenty-First-Century Learning Skills to invent contests using materials readily at hand and agree upon rules, judging, and prizes. Students should use their best measurement skills to judge the competitions.

• Let one or more of these suits of armor inspire student writing. Close study of one of them for a vivid descriptive writing exercise. Encourage students to find synonyms for common describing words such as shiny or hard. For narrative works, prompt students to write about a fictional knight who might wear the suit.
Charles V
Grandson of Maximilian I, Charles V ruled the Holy Roman Empire from 1519 to his resignation in 1556. By this time, the empire was so vast that it was said that the sun never set over it. Even surpassing that of his grandfather, the empire under Charles V included the majority of the existing territories plus Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and territories in the Americas as well as a unified Spain. His mother was Joanna of Castile, the daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. While Charles V’s ancestors on his father’s side were Austrian Habsburgs, his mother’s parents were the rulers of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, who financed Columbus’s voyage to America. Charles’s parents’ marriage and his birth strategically brought all of Spain under Habsburg rule. A pivotal figure in Western history, Charles ruled over Spanish colonization of the New World as well as the Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation and the Empire’s halting the Ottoman advance into Europe.

Coin designer and sculptor Leone Leoni created this bronze bust in the mid-sixteenth century, depicting Charles at the height of his power. The breastplate reproduces exactly the one Charles wore during the Battle of Mühlberg in 1547. This was a very important victory for Charles as the Catholic emperor during the Protestant Reformation because it secured the German territories as Catholic and allied to Rome under his authority, at least for a time. Also note the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece that hangs around his neck and the sash across his chest indicating him to be a military commander.

Now examine the fantastic pediment that supports the bust. An eagle, along with the figures of Mars and Bellona, lifts Charles V into position. The bust’s foundation imitates those of ancient emperors and conveys a bold message about Charles V’s power and authority.
Tapestry

Willem de Pannemaker (Dutch, active ca. 1536–1581), *Tapestry with the Coat of Arms of Emperor Charles V*, ca. 1540, wool, silk, and metal thread, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

Charles V—raised near Brussels, a major European tapestry center—greatly appreciated the art of tapestry. Woven of wool, silk, and metal-wrapped threads, this tapestry was one of a series of four that Charles most likely commissioned. Curators have identified the weaver’s mark of Willem de Pannemaker, one of the most popular weavers. Among the tangled leaves and vines (or *verdure*, as this background style is known) are two double-headed eagles, the Habsburg emblem. Each eagle bears a coat of arms with flags representing the empire’s territories. The top left quarter of the shield (or *escutcheon*) contains the flag of Castile and Leon; the top right depicts that of Aragon and Sicily. The bottom left represents Austria and Old Burgundy and the bottom right New Burgundy and Brabant. In the center lies a smaller, inset shield (an inescutcheon) depicting Flanders and Tyrol. Atop sits a pomegranate (called the apple of Grenada), a common symbol for the Spanish city of Granada.

Allow the bust of Charles V and the tapestry to introduce Charles V to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the ideas below as a jumping-off point for discussion in your classroom:

- Closely study the *Bust of Charles V*. Allow your students time to investigate and research the detail in his armor, facial expression, and the supporting pediment. *See/Think/Wonder* provides a helpful looking strategy. With Charles’s depiction in mind, imagine what *Emperor Hirohito*’s bust would look like. Or *Tomochichi*’s? *James Oglethorpe*’s? *Margaret Thatcher*’s? *Tutankhamun*’s? President Obama’s? Allow students to sketch their busts on paper or cut and paste digital images to create virtual ones. Students should explain their choices of clothing, accessories, facial expressions, and pediments. If students work digitally, *prezi.com* offers a great way for students to give a “tour” of their busts to their classmates, explaining what each element signifies.
• Let this tapestry inspire an exploration of weaving technique. Allow students to choose yarn and other fibers that represent places they’ve been or things they like. Students can express their individuality with patterns and beads or charms. You can make your “looms” from recycled cardboard and introduce students to the terms “warp” and “weft”.

• Look at the Habsburg coat of arms as it is depicted in the tapestry. Study the flags and explore the imagery of the crowned and haloed double-headed eagle. Let this imagery inspire new coats of arms. If your school or your class had a coat of arms, what would it include? Why? Would it include a fantastic animal? Would the shield indicate territories, cultures, or perhaps subjects in school? Encourage your students to collaborate and arrive at a design that encompasses as many ideas and symbols as possible. Could you put your new school or class crest on your classroom door, website, or t-shirts?

**Fire**

Earth, wind, water, and fire—the universe’s most basic elements. Painted by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Fire* is one of four portraits in a cycle depicting Emperor Maximilian II in elemental terms. (Maximilian II is Maximilian I’s great grandson, Charles V’s nephew, and Rudolph II’s father.) As in *Fire*, each of the paintings assembles various objects associated with the element to compose the head. Look closely: how many different fire-related items can you find? Also note the **collar** and **double-headed eagle** hanging below; these undeniably indicate this to be a portrait of Maximilian, for whom this cycle was painted. The Kunsthistorisches also holds the companion painting **Water**. A private collector holds **Earth**. **Air** has been lost.

While *Fire* and Arcimboldo’s other composite heads stand out quite distinctly from other works of their time, we can find in them aspects of Mannerism, which explored the natural world in a stylized, sophisticated way. Sandwiched between the Renaissance and Baroque periods, we see this painting as well as other Mannerist works connecting the natural and the spiritual, the literal and the symbolic.
Allow this work to introduce Maximilian II and his portraitist Arcimboldo to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the below ideas as a jumping-off point for teaching and learning in your classroom:

• Strengthen your students’ observation skills by closely reading *Fire* with a looking routine such as Looking: Ten Times Two.

• Encourage students to make composite images based on scientific concepts such as the basic needs of plants and animals. Via drawing or collage, create an animal composed of items representing air, water, food, or shelter. Composites might serve as a culminating or evaluative exercise after you’ve studied classification of organisms. Students can compose an alligator from many reptiles or a deer from many mammals.

• Let *Fire* begin a discussion of literal and figurative meaning. If Maximilian is made of “fiery things,” what might that tell us about him as a leader, father, and person? See more examples of Arcimboldo’s composites in the Kunsthistorisches online image library and the Google Art Project. Use the composite for character analysis: Which objects might represent main characters in your novel study? Or for personal reflection: Which items would depict me? My best friend? Sketches, essays, or collages could ensue.

• Choose a historical figure in the CCGPS and encourage students to make composite heads—drawn, sculptural, or digital collage. Which objects might compose Benjamin Franklin, Susan B. Anthony, or Christopher Columbus?

**Language Arts:**

• Arcimbolodo’s cycle that included *Fire* was accompanied by poetry. Italian poet Giovanni Battista Fonteo collaborated with Arcimboldo and composed poems that explicated these and other works. As a prewriting exercise, play the Elaboration Game to closely read *Fire* along with Fonteo’s poem. As your students make connections between the painting and poem, record their words and phrases. Once discussion is complete, post those words and phrases so students can use them in their own original poems.

For unless summer continues with golden crops,
It forces bare farmers to anger at harvest time.
You hardly think anything whatsoever about the hot, dry weather of labor that Consumes your lame father, whom you see wielding fire in all parts.
 Everywhere warming and coaxing the flame with kindling;
Thus surrounding the golden hills with shining rings,
Fires that are certainly most suitable for uniting iron with fire,
Shining just like great Caesar with a cloak of golden fleece.
Nevertheless, the autumn harvest, which is the great common good—fruit—is announced by the sounds of the father.*

• In the sixteenth century, many believed that the four elements accompanied the four humors of the body and contributed to one’s temperament. References to the humors abound in Shakespeare’s works. An investigation of Fire and other images in the cycle will enhance your Shakespearean study. Consider Brutus’s address to Cassius in Act IV of Julius Caesar: “Go show your slaves how choleric you are…. Must I stand and crouch/Under your testy humour?” Rosalind addresses Jaques in Act IV of As You Like It: “They say you are a melancholy fellow.” Even less direct references to hot and cold or wet and dry, when considered in the elemental context, will illuminate your students’ understanding of a Shakespearean text in its time.

• Stylistically, the metaphysical poets share much in common with Mannerist artists. Both examine and exaggerate the natural, merging and stretching it into the supernatural. What might John Donne’s “The Flea” or “The Sun Rising” look like if it were a composite painting in Arcimboldo’s style?

*Translated by Kiersten Falcetti, Jim Falcetti, and Tim McCauley
Curiosity

Madeleine Gonzalez is likely to be as interesting to your students as she was to the European royalty of the sixteenth century. Along with others depicting her family members, this portrait comes to us from the Chamber of Art and Curiosities at Ambras Castle, the palace in Innsbruck built by Ferdinand II, now part of the Kunsthistorisches Museum. In their day, Madeleine and her family attracted much attention as “hairy people,” who had the genetic condition congenital hypertrichosis universalis, also known as Ambras syndrome or werewolf syndrome. Her father, Pedro, and some of her siblings also had the condition, whereas her mother and other siblings did not. Madeleine’s regal dress and jewelry indicate her beloved status among the European courts, while the cave from which she emerges suggests a more primitive view of the condition.

The unknown artist likely did not paint Madeleine in person but from depictions of her face only, as her hands have been rendered inaccurately. They were covered in hair as well. Her family originated from the Canary Islands, whose terrain is depicted in the cavernous background. Madeleine wed in 1593, and her husband is believed to have been Giovan Maria Avinato, master of the ducal dogs. While the “hairy people” were found to be fascinating among the wealthy and learned, it is most likely that Madeleine’s marriage was arranged, as she and people like her weren’t often considered equals but more as curiosities or even animal-like. An exhibition curator has noted that her arranged marriage to a dog handler is a “curious coincidence.”
Allow this painting to introduce Madeleine to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the below ideas as a jumping-off point for teaching and learning in your classroom:

• Before telling your students anything about Madeleine, guide a close reading of this portrait via a looking strategy such as I See/I Think/I Wonder. What can they learn about her just from this portrait? What can they imagine about her family? Her way of life? Her feelings? Let this close reading generate journal writing. Students can write descriptively about her in an expository way from her point of view or create a narrative with her as a character.

• In this portrait, Madeleine is five years old, just a little girl with a big difference in her appearance that sets her apart. Such figures are prominent in children’s literature—The Ugly Duckling, The Rainbow Fish, and Chrysanthemum, for example. Allow Madeleine and these fictional characters to spark discussion of differences and diversity, inclusion and exclusion, appearance and self-worth. Such discussion could culminate in poetry, prose, PowerPoint presentation, or video.

• While Madeleine is extremely distinctive, her portrait really isn’t. It is formally composed like other portraits of the day. Allow Madeleine to introduce portraiture to your students and spark original portraits of their own. Students could create portraits of friends, family members, or historical figures.

Drawing Perspective
Invented and created by mathematician, astronomer, and clockmaker Jost Bürgi, this device aids its user in creating exact perspectival representations of far-away objects and spaces. Note the bar atop the instrument that forms the diameter of the semi-circle. An artist or astronomer could place his eye at one end of this bar and focus on an object at the other end. Then with that eye, he traces along the outline of the object, while the stylus below simultaneously marks the movement on a plotting board, creating an accurate depiction in realistic, three-dimensional perspective. Composed of copper alloy and partially plated in gold, this device entered Emperor Rudolph II’s Kunstkammer inventory as “Jobst Bürgis perspective device mounted on
a small wooden chest,” under the heading “astronomical and geometric instruments” (Runtscheiner et al., 128). While we no longer have the original wooden chest, this—the mechanical portion of the device—has survived over 400 years. The science behind it lives on as well, as the device works similarly to a theodolite, the tool used by surveyors even now.

Rudolph, quite likely the most significant of Habsburg collectors, “went to great lengths to bring to his court not only outstanding artists but also scientists and scholars from around Europe” (Runtscheiner et al., 128). Though primarily self-taught, Bürgi was indeed an important figure to hire as imperial clockmaker. Sometimes called the “Swiss Archimedes,” Bürgi is one of two men who simultaneously invented the algorithm.

At the time this device was made, Bürgi was not yet employed by Rudolph II. He worked for the Landgraf of Hesse-Kassel as his watchmaker and later as astronomer and official mathematician in his observatory. An accomplished astronomer and scientist himself, the Landgraf invested a great amount of money in the observatory and its staff, enabling them to research, learn, and invent. It was during this time at Kassel that Bürgi built the first clock to have a minute hand and also measure seconds. He also built an astronomical clock following his Copernican understanding of celestial movement. Bürgi traveled to Prague more than once and met with Tycho Brahe (Rudolph’s imperial mathematician) and Johannes Kepler, his assistant. Upon Brahe’s death and Kepler’s promotion, Bürgi moved to Prague to serve the emperor. By that point, he had already constructed a mechanical globe for Ruldolph as well as this device.

Allow this work to introduce technology of the time to your students in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Use the below ideas as a jumping-off point for teaching and learning in your classroom:

- Let Bürgi and Grover introduce your students to perspective. How do we make our drawings have depth when the paper is flat? Explain that Jost Bürgi used math and science to invent his drawing device to help solve this problem. Watch Grover demonstrate near and far. Ask a lot of questions: How big is his nose when he’s near? How big is it when he’s far? Is it changing size? What’s happening? Let your students discover this basic idea: objects appear larger when they are close and smaller when they are far away. Let students’ sketches of Grover demonstrate understanding.

- Present Bürgi as an inventor. Investigate his device with See/Think/Wonder. Explain how his device worked and the problem it solves: drawing in accurate perspective. Now let your students brainstorm problems they’d like to solve and inventions to solve them. This would be a great time to hold an Invention Convention!

Sleigh Ride

This sleigh of an emperor—or emperor-to-be—is intricately carved, covered in gold, and upholstered in velvet. On February 7, 1765, Roman King Joseph II, heir to the imperial throne, drove this sleigh in an elaborate public ride to celebrate his wedding to Maria Josepha of Bavaria. A favorite event of his mother’s, Empress Maria Theresa, such parades (or carousels) were grand and ceremonial and followed a strict code of conduct as to who rode how and where, according to royalty and rank. In warmer months, carriages were the vehicles of such processions, while sleighs carried the rulers and their entourages over the snow in winter. Harkening back to antiquity and the triumphal processions following military victories, these eighteenth-century parades were often held for courtly, ceremonial celebrations such as coronations and weddings. The rides often lasted many hours and displayed the grandeur of the Habsburgs for the crowds who gathered to watch them pass.

Attributed to sculptor Balthasar Moll, this particular sleigh displays the “magnificent culmination” of Baroque racing sleighs made exclusively for the Vienna Habsburg court (Runtscheiner et al., 220). The ornate, curvy shells, scrolls, and vines (called rocailles) are hand carved from wood and covered in gold. They completely consume and disguise the skids and supports for the shell-shaped passenger’s seat, giving the appearance that

Unknown Austrian Artist, Harness for Imperial Sleigh, remade 1814–1815 with eighteenth-century elements: leather, silk velvet, gold, brass, and ostrich feathers, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria
Attributed to Balthazar Moll (Austrian, 1717–1785), Carousel Sleigh, ca. 1740–1750, wood, gold, and velvet, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

the box is floating above the sleigh’s frame. At the rear, the velvet-covered platform is for the driver. Look closely and you can see the driver’s foot resting on the skid below it. Moll’s best-known works include nearly twenty highly intricate and detailed sarcophagi (the vehicles that have carried many Habsburgs into the afterlife), including those of Maria Theresa and Franz Stephan and Karl IV in the Imperial Crypt, the Habsburgs’ burial site in Vienna since 1617.

Along with the sleigh, an elaborate harness for its horse was made for Joseph II’s wedding ride. Over time, the harness’s original red velvet became brittle, and around 1814 the embroidery, gold braiding, and bells were removed and reworked into the new green harness we see here. In fact, there was enough ornamentation on the original harness to cover two of these. The new harnesses adorned the horses that pulled the imperial sleighs for the great sleigh ride that marked the Congress of Vienna in 1815, a significant event during Franz II’s reign.

The harness and sleigh can spark a variety of lessons across the curriculum. Use the below ideas as a jumping-off point for teaching and learning in your classroom:

- Present your students with the harness and sleigh and invite them to imagine who might have ridden in it. Who might have bought it? What would it feel like to ride in it? Use Circle of Viewpoints and explore the possible feelings of the sleigh’s maker, owner, rider, or even the horse. Or your students might Step Inside the sleigh as its rider or driver. Only fill in as much historical information as needed. Next, pass out sketch paper and prompt your students to imagine their own personal fantastic vehicles. Will they be sleighs? Skateboards? Trains? Rocketships? Sketches can serve as prewriting for descriptive paragraphs or essays.

- Explore the sleigh’s rocailles as a repeating, tangled design and compare their intricacy to that of a zentangle. What do the two styles or forms have in common? Create a new style—rocatangle—and allow students to draw detailed repeating patterns of various scrolls and leaves. Keep the patterns in their sketchbooks for later. Could the new patterns ornament another creation? Serve as the background for a larger design? Encourage students to integrate their rocatangles into at least one composition.
Maria Theresa

In Andreas Møller’s portrait, we see a young Maria Theresa, daughter of Emperor Charles VI, the only woman in the line of Habsburg succession. In the portrait, her hair is pulled back, revealing her pierced ears, while a few curls cascade to her iridescent blue gown adorned with golden embroidery and pearls. She holds her skirt in her left hand and a flower in her right, behind which the archducal hat rests upon a velvet cushion.

As Maria Theresa had no brothers, her father issued in 1713 the Pragmatic Sanction, which declared that daughters could carry on the dynasty if there were no male heirs. Before Charles VI’s death, most of Europe seemed to accept his decree, and Maria Theresa was next in the line for the throne.

Upon her father’s death, resistance to Maria Theresa’s succession arose, and what has become known as the War of Austrian Succession ensued. By 1745 her succession was secure, yet Maria Theresa was never crowned empress. Her husband became Emperor Franz Stephan, yet most consider Maria Theresa to have been the true head of the empire. During her four-decade reign, she mothered sixteen children (one of whom was Marie Antoinette) and brought about vast economic, educational, military, political, and labor reforms that strengthened both the populace and her power, making her one of the most extraordinary European rulers of the eighteenth century.

Maria Theresa stood fast, never ceding power to her husband or son. She was an absolute monarch. More than many of her male predecessors, she effected great change across her lands, promoting commerce; reorganizing the military; and instituting financial, bureaucratic, and educational reform.
Schönbrunn Palace remains a substantial reminder of Maria Theresa’s reign. Depicted here in Bernardo Bellotto’s painting, the palace became the Habsburgs’ summer residence following her complete refurbishment of it in the mid-1700s. Schönbrunn served as the site of important state events and carousels, and Maria Theresa opened the surrounding gardens to the public. Maria Theresa commissioned thirteen paintings of the palace, but this is the only one that depicts a historic event: the empress receiving news of victory over Frederick II of Prussia at the Battle of Kunersdorf in 1759. Look closely and you can find her in the painting, on the balcony in the pavilion to the rear left as Count Joseph Kinsky crosses the courtyard to bring the news. Schönbrunn remained a Habsburg residence for over a century.

The portrait and palace can introduce Maria Theresa to your students. Lesson ideas below can spark teaching and learning across the curriculum.

- Maria Theresa is about ten years old in this portrait. Her father commissioned it. After reading it closely using Step Inside, help your students make connections. Have students consider a more contemporary form of portraiture: selfies. Ask students to take selfies where they consider their attire, the background, and objects in the photo. Students then reflect upon what these various decisions tell about their identities and personalities.
• Write a biography of Maria Theresa with art objects representing three different stages in her life. Plot artworks on a timeline, creating sections around them. As students learn more about Maria Theresa, they should add them to their respective sections as pre-writing. Facts available before her ten-year-old portrait might become the introduction, and facts after the Schönbrunn section could be in the conclusion.

**Table Centerpiece for Sorbets**

As a testament to the Habsburg family’s allegiance and the opulence of their reign stands the *Table Center Piece for Sorbet*. Its six curved arms display six cameos—two men and four women—most likely depicting the emperor and his wife, their three daughters, and Maria Theresa’s husband, Franz Stephan. We know from documentation in the Kunsthistorisches that this centerpiece for serving sorbet was owned by Maria Theresa’s mother, Elisabeth Christine of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (Runtscheiner et al., 212). The cameos are carved into the shells of bonnet snails, while the six dishes and their ornate stand are rimmed in gold. Because it depicts both Charles VI and Franz Stephan, it must have been produced sometime between the latter’s marriage in 1736 and the former’s death in 1740.

• Build a dish! As this ornate dish holds sorbet, allow students to design custom dishes for their favorite treats. What would a special dish for serving peanut butter sandwiches look like? Or one for grape tomatoes? Or Gummi worms? Might they include pictures of people, places, or things? Student drawings or prototypes might be accompanied by artist statements or oral presentations explaining their dishes’ unique features.

The pale-blue tunic with golden embroidery seen here was worn by Emperor Franz Joseph I. All officers of the Austro-Hungarian army had uniforms in two styles: the casual German style or this more ornamented Hungarian style. The tunic is heavily braided and embroidered in gold; the embroidery pattern indicates the emperor’s rank as Field Marshall of his army. Look closely at the left side of the chest; there you can see small, pale-blue loops for attaching medals and stars. A stiff, heavy fabric called buckram is sewn inside the jacket tails to keep it crisp and straight. The red piping and stripes on the trousers complement the red trim at the tunic’s cuffs and collar.

Empress Elisabeth was a fashion trendsetter. This velvet and silk dress, in the style of designer Charles Frederick Worth, accentuates what was called a “Viennese wasp waist,” designed to make the wearer’s waist appear thinner from the front than from the side. The dress’s off-the-shoulder neckline, pouf sleeves, and skirt with integrated train are all indicative of fashion of the time. Elisabeth owned other dresses made by Worth, and this example’s heavy, ruffled trim made of the dress fabric is typical of his style of the 1860s, suggesting that the dress might have been made by someone in his studio.
Affectionately called Sisi, Elisabeth was adored by her husband and admired by fashion-conscious women across Europe. Her father was quite eccentric, and Elisabeth’s upbringing was somewhat unconventional, which revealed itself in her own eccentricities. She exercised regularly and had a fitness room installed in the imperial palace in Vienna. She was a prolific poet, even in Greek. She was an accomplished par force hunting rider, a sport dominated by cross-country chase, which required great athleticism. She carefully watched her weight, practiced special beauty regimens, and spent hours having her long hair styled. Despite her beauty, fame, and fortune, her poetry reveals Empress Elisabeth to be quite discontented with her life in royal society. She was devastated by the mysterious suicide of her son, Crown Prince Rudolph, in 1889. Some report that she wore only black in her remaining days until her assassination in 1898. Consequently, Rudolph’s suicide made his cousin, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne, and it was his 1914 assassination that is widely believed to have sparked World War I.

**Start with these garments to introduce the emperor and empress to your classroom and use the following lesson ideas to launch a variety of teaching and learning experiences across the curriculum.**

- Closely read one of the garments using an Artful Thinking Routine such as Claim/Support/Question. What inferences will your students be able to make about the emperor or empress from just the clothing? Keep a running list of students’ questions to use as independent research prompts.

- Franz Joseph’s uniform can introduce Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” Challenge students’ listening skills by simply telling them the story, or follow the Whole Book Approach and read Virginia Lee Burton’s picture-book version. Ask students to define the moral of the story. Students might demonstrate understanding with sketches and/or expository paragraphs.
The End of the Monarchy

The central figure in Gyula Éder’s elaborate painting is four-year-old Crown Prince Otto as he descends the imperial carriage to the coronation of his father, Karl I, as King of Hungary. Behind him is his mother, Zita. In a spectacular ceremony largely to win Hungarian confidence, the family rode in on the finest imperial carriage, which had been shipped to Budapest from Vienna, and little Otto and his mother wore regal attire in the Hungarian style.

Also in the exhibition are the coat, cap, and shoes Otto wore that day, which we see in the painting. Like his mother’s robe, Otto’s heavy gold brocade coat and cap are trimmed in ermine along with the white leather shoes, which also feature appliqué in gold lace. The cap originally had a clasp attaching a plume of white feathers, visible in the painting, which no longer remains. The diamond crown of Austrian empresses that we see Zita wearing has also been lost.
At the moment of the painting, a footman has just opened the carriage for the pair, and two members of Hungarian nobility, called magnates, stand to greet them. As was custom, Karl has ridden on horseback to the Matthias Church and is likely inside the carriage. On this day, he is only twenty-nine years old. As third in line for the crown (cousin Rudolph I committed suicide, father Karl Ludwig died, and Franz Ferdinand was assassinated), he has had no training to become a ruler. Having served on the front lines, he was loyal to his country and optimistic about his ability to unify the empire, but this very coronation proved counter to such purposes. While Karl’s regal ceremony pleased many Hungarians, its oath of respect to the Hungarian constitution further alienated many Germans and Slavs.

As World War I came to a close, food and coal rations, the ravages of war, and rumblings of independence had fractured the empire. By the end of 1918, Karl abdicated his power and was exiled ultimately to Madeira, where he died in 1922.

Otto lived out his days a king in name only but did wield influence in Europe and worked with Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. Much of the Habsburg riches became property of the Austrian state.

The painting and coronation attire can launch teaching and learning across the curriculum. Consider the lesson ideas below.

- Look closely at the ermine skin on Otto’s coat and hat. What color is it? How would you describe its texture? By Otto’s time, ermine skin had been long regarded as the fur of royalty. In some places and times, it was illegal for anyone other than a royal person to wear it. Using books from your school’s media center or selected websites, go on a hunt for images of other royals wearing it. How many can you find? What might you learn about the ermine?
• Starting with Otto in his coronation attire at the center of the painting, use the **Circle of Viewpoints** to imagine what it must have felt like to be him in that moment. Encourage students to record thoughts in Otto’s voice. Next, imagine the scene from Zita’s or the footman’s or one of the magnate’s points of view. Even consider Karl as he is “off screen.” This exercise might culminate in an entry in students’ writer’s notebooks or scripts between the figures that students act out for their classmates.

• Explore these works as historical artifacts and learn the terms “primary” and “secondary source” from them. Construct your lesson using **I used to think….. Now I think….** allowing students first to hypothesize which (the painting or the attire) is primary and which is secondary. Then **watch this short video** defining primary and secondary sources. Following the “I used to think….. Now I think …” format, encourage students to revisit their original ideas, revising if necessary. Answer students’ specific questions about the works; such questions will be a great sign that they’re really thinking it through. Some questions you might hear: Did Otto really wear this coat, or is this a copy of it? (This is not a copy. He really wore this one.) Who painted this painting? When did he paint it? Was he there? (Gyula Éder painted it in 1929. We don’t know if he was there.) Allow for conflicting answers if they are adequately supported. Students might also demonstrate their understanding in a moderated debate.