

FERENC TÓTH

THE THOUGHTS OF AN ENLIGHTENED RULER BEFORE
THE ENLIGHTENMENTTHE POLITICAL TESTAMENT OF DUKE CHARLES OF LORRAINE, A FORGOTTEN SOURCE
OF HUNGARIAN HISTORY

The political testament of Duke Charles V of Lorraine (*Testament politique de Charles duc de Lorraine et de Bar*), a collection of thoughts and recommendations for the domestic and international administration of the Habsburg Empire was published in 1696, six years after the death of the Duke. This work, closely associated with the reign of Leopold I, was reprinted and translated profusely. Tradition holds that this work was handed over to the Emperor by Charles V, Duke of Lorraine in 1687, on the occasion of the coronation of his son Joseph as King of Hungary. Regarding the author's identity as well as the circumstances surrounding the creation of the work there has been much speculation. The work presents a general survey of European countries, including the Habsburg Monarchy, and highlights for the Emperor and his successors possible avenues for reform. One of these proposals recommends to the House of Habsburg to turn away from Spanish ambitions and focus more on Central Europe and Italy. The Duke suggests reforms for almost all aspects of the state, the economy, finance, religion, foreign and military policy. Some of these suggestions and ideas are quite similar to those which would appear during the enlightened reigns of Maria Theresia and Joseph II. The text garnered widespread popularity specifically in the French historiography, which saw in it guidelines for Habsburg economic, political, diplomatic and military policy.