

# Causes of War

## The Emergence of the Territorial State

January 27, 2015

# What does it mean for a country to possess a piece of territory?

# Sovereign States

"... a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory."

— Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" (1919)

# Political Organization before Sovereignty

## Feudalism: A Simplified Model<sup>1</sup>

- **Lords: promise protection**
- **Vassals: pledge military forces**
- **Fiefs: land granted by lords to vassals**

<sup>1</sup> Medieval historians now would say this is *far* too simple. If nothing else, think of feudalism as a political and social system with overlapping obligations and authority.



# Feudalism and Territorial Control

- Effective control ≠ ultimate authority
- Ultimate authority can change by a shift in local allegiances
- Inhabitants must worry about internal and external predation

# Political Organization and Territorial Change

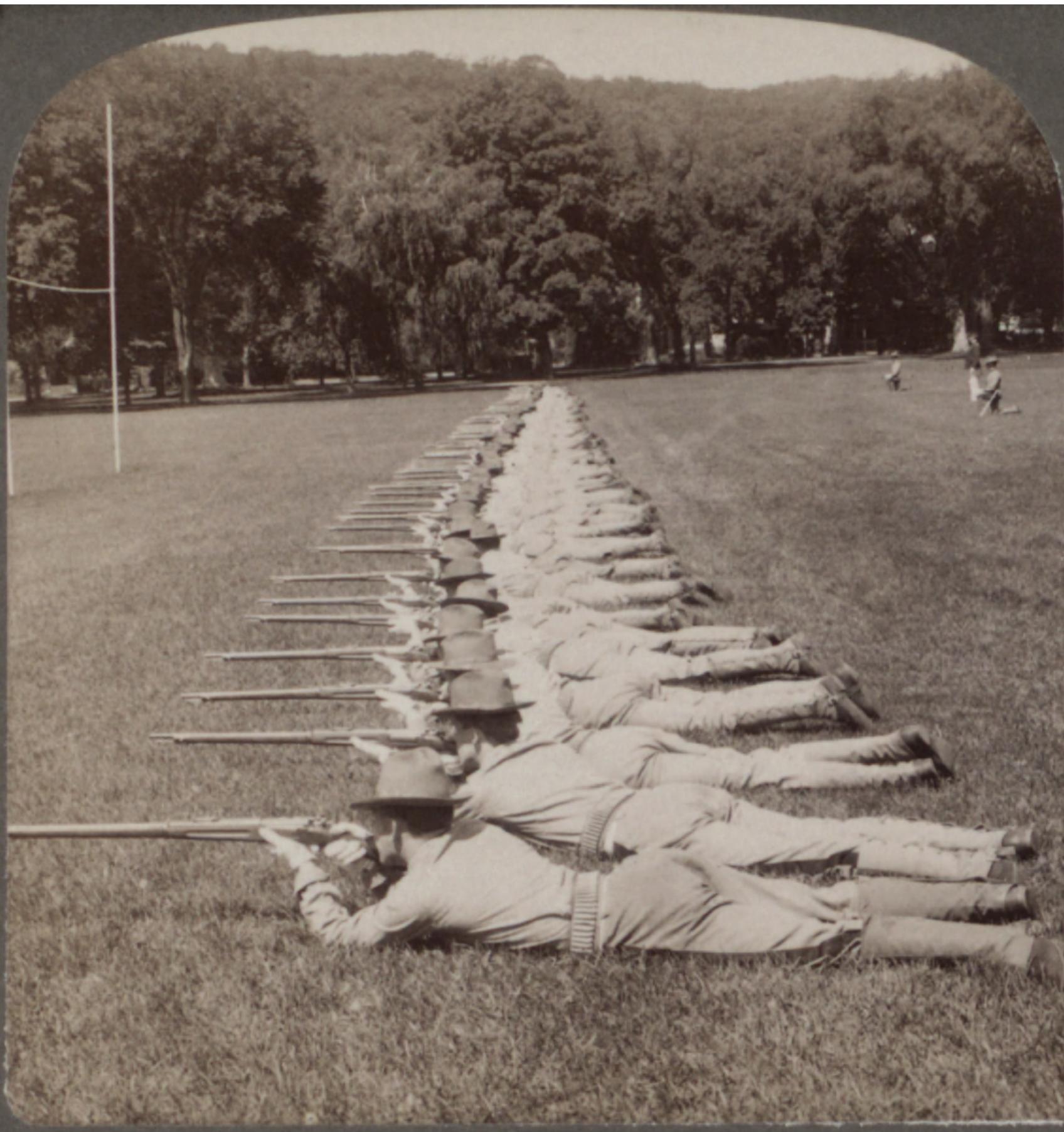
- Feudalism
  - Territory may change hands without war
  - Predation is not always an act of war
- Sovereignty
  - Territorial changes are the result of war (directly or indirectly)
  - Predation is almost always an act of war

# Characteristics of a Sovereign State

- Professional military
- Regular tax revenue
- Bureaucracy

# **Knights versus Professionals**

- Recruitment**
- Time of service**
- Discipline**
- Tactics**
- Battlefield expectations**



# **Professionalism and the State**

**Professional armies made large-scale warfare possible.**

**They also allowed military force to be an instrument of policy.**

# **War Makes the State and the State Makes War**

- Professional military**
- Regular tax revenue**
- Bureaucracy**

**How do these enhance war-making?**

**And how does warfare support them?**

# The Peace of Westphalia

- Marks the beginning of widespread sovereignty
- End of the Thirty Years' War in 1648
- Each state controls policy within its own territory, including religion

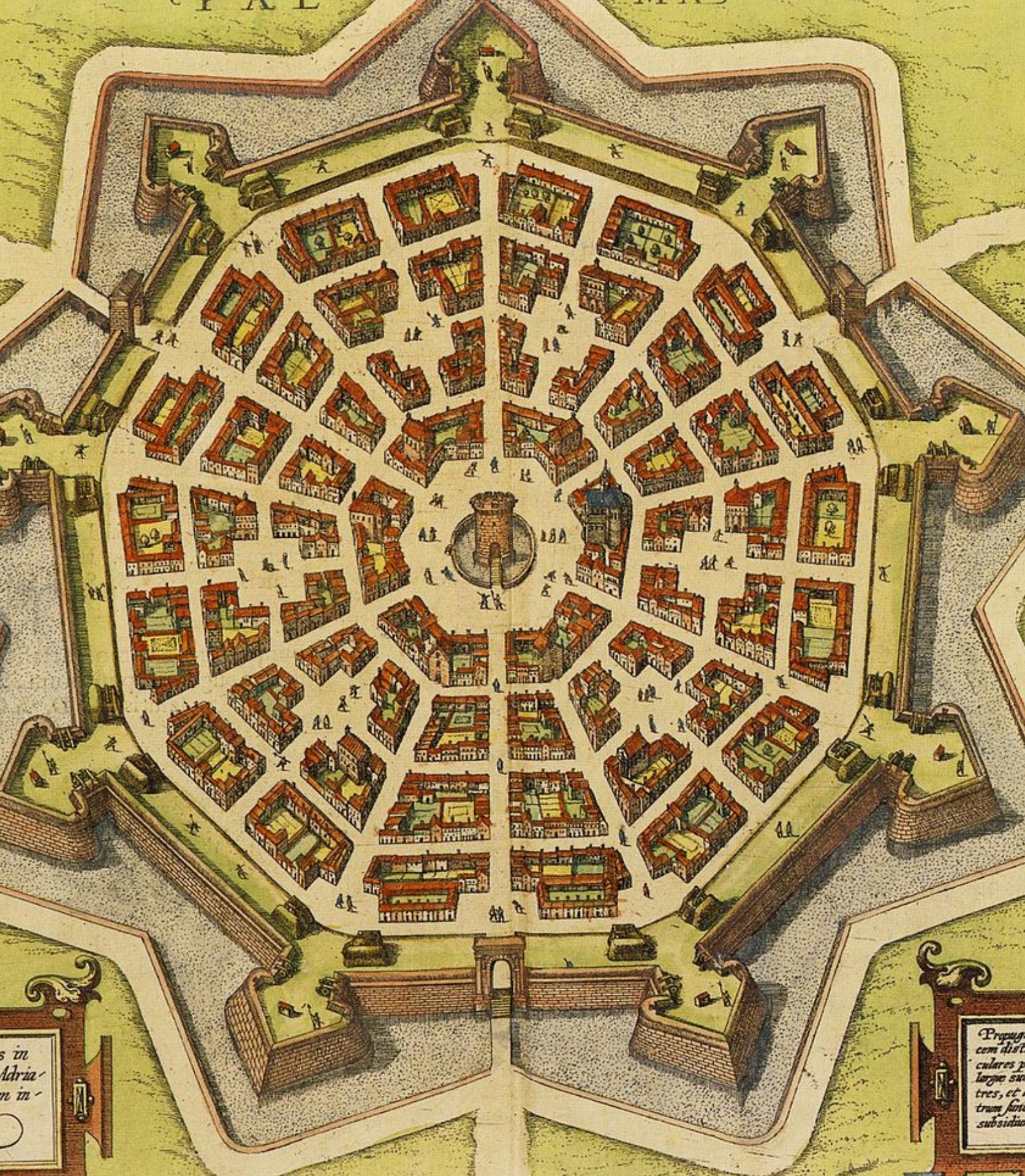
# The Historical Constant

**Territorial predation was rampant long before the 16th and 17th centuries.**

**So why did the sovereign state only start to arise then?**

# The Military Revolution, 1560–1660

- New fortifications, the *trace italienne*
- Nullified artillery advantages
- Sieges became longer
- Pitched battles lost importance
- Progress required large armies



# Summary

- The territorial, sovereign state is relatively new
- Territorial *predation* was common under feudalism, but not necessarily war in Clausewitz's sense
- War made the state and the state made war
- Military Revolution helped spark the process

# Further Reading

- R. Harrison Wagner, *War and the State*
- Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*
- Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution*
- Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*
- John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*

# For Next Time

- Read Kaiser, "The Age of Louis XIV" (on Blackboard)
- Student presentation on Walter, "Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict"

# Image Sources

- César-François Cassini, "Carte du pays d'Olne": [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- Map of feudal France: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- *Trace italienne*: [Wikimedia Commons](#)