

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **What made the seventeenth century an “age of crisis” and achievement?**
- **Why did France rise and Spain fall during the late seventeenth century?**
- **What explains the rise of absolutism in Prussia and Austria?**
- **What were the distinctive features of Russian and Ottoman absolutism?**
- **Why and how did the constitutional state triumph in the Dutch Republic and England?**

Life at the French Royal Court

This painting shows King Louis XIV receiving foreign ambassadors to celebrate a peace treaty. The king grandly occupied the center of his court, which in turn served as the pinnacle for the French people and, at the height of his glory, for all of Europe. (By Charles Le Brun [1619–1690], 1678/Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary/Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

What made the seventeenth century an “age of crisis” and achievement?

Historians often refer to the seventeenth century as an “age of crisis” because Europe was challenged by population losses, economic decline, and social and political unrest. This was partially due to climate changes that reduced agricultural productivity, but it also resulted from bitter religious divides, war, and increased governmental pressures. Peasants and the urban poor were especially hard hit by the economic problems, and they frequently rioted against high food prices.

The atmosphere of crisis encouraged governments to take emergency measures to restore order, measures that they successfully turned into long-term reforms that strengthened the power of the state. These included a spectacular growth in army size as well as increased taxation, the expansion of government bureaucracies, and the acquisition of land or maritime empires. In the long run, European states proved increasingly able to impose their will on the populace. This period also saw the flourishing of art and music with the drama and emotional intensity of the baroque style.

The Social Order and Peasant Life

In the seventeenth century, society was organized in hierarchical levels. In much of Europe, the monarch occupied the summit and was celebrated as a semidivine being, chosen by God to embody the state. The clergy generally occupied the second level because of its sacred role in interceding with God and the saints on behalf of its flocks. Next came nobles, whose privileged status derived from their ancient bloodlines and centuries of leadership in battle. Many prosperous mercantile families constituted a second tier of nobles, having bought their way into the nobility through service to the rising monarchies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Those lower on the social scale, the peasants and artisans who constituted the vast majority of the population, were expected to show deference to their betters. This was the “Great Chain of Being” that linked God to his creation in a series of ranked social groups.

In addition to being rigidly hierarchical, European societies were patriarchal in nature, with men assuming authority over women as a God-given prerogative. The family thus represented a microcosm of the social order. The father ruled his family like a king ruled his domains. Religious and secular law commanded a man’s wife, children, servants, and apprentices to defer to his will. Fathers were entitled to use physical violence, imprisonment, and other forceful measures to impose their authority. These powers were balanced

by expectations that a good father would provide and care for his dependents.

In the seventeenth century most Europeans lived in the countryside. The hub of the rural world was the small peasant village centered on a church and a manor. In western Europe, a small number of peasants in each village owned enough land to feed themselves and possessed the livestock and plows necessary to work their land. These independent farmers were leaders of the peasant village. They employed the landless poor, rented out livestock and tools, and served as agents for the noble lord. Below them were small landowners and tenant farmers who did not have enough land to be self-sufficient. These families sold their best produce on the market to earn cash for taxes, rent, and food. At the bottom were villagers who worked as dependent laborers and servants. In central and eastern Europe, the vast majority of peasants toiled as serfs for noble landowners and did not own land in their own right, while in the Ottoman Empire (the vast empire comprising modern-day Turkey, southeastern Europe, North Africa, and large portions of the Middle East) all land belonged to the sultan.

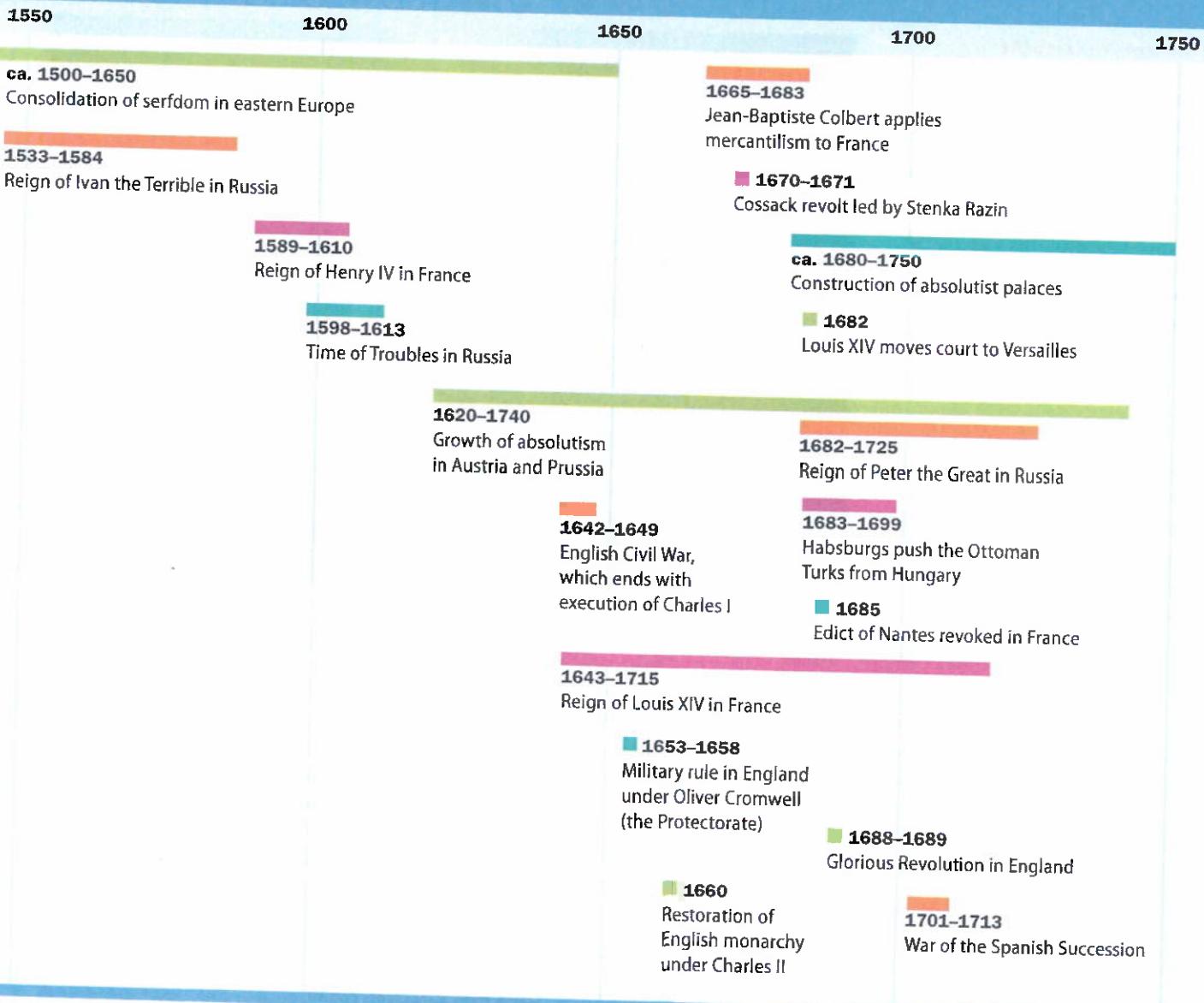
Economic Crisis and Popular Revolts

European rural society lived on the edge of subsistence. Because of crude agricultural technology and low crop yield, peasants were constantly threatened by scarcity and famine. In the seventeenth century a period of colder and wetter climate throughout Europe, dubbed a “little ice age” by historians, meant a shorter farming season with lower yields. A bad harvest created food shortages; a series of bad harvests could lead to famine. Recurrent famines significantly reduced the population of early modern Europe, through reduced fertility and increased susceptibility to disease, as well as outright starvation.

Industry also suffered. The output of woolen textiles, one of the most important European manufactures, declined sharply in the first half of the seventeenth century. Food prices were high, wages stagnated, and unemployment soared. This economic crisis was not universal: it struck various regions at different times and to different degrees. In the middle decades of the century, for example, Spain, France, Germany, and the British Isles all experienced great economic difficulties, but these years were the golden age of the Netherlands because of wealth derived from foreign trade.

The urban poor and peasants were the hardest hit. When the price of bread rose beyond their capacity

TIMELINE



to pay, they frequently expressed their anger by rioting. Women often led these actions, since their role as mothers gave them some impunity in authorities' eyes. Historians have used the term *moral economy* for this vision of a world in which community needs predominate over competition and profit.

During the middle years of the seventeenth century, harsh conditions transformed neighborhood bread riots into armed uprisings across much of Europe. Popular revolts were common in England, France, and throughout the Spanish Empire, particularly during the 1640s. At the same time that Spanish king Philip IV struggled to put down an uprising in Catalonia, the economic center of the realm, he faced revolt in Portugal and in Spanish-held territories in the northern Netherlands and Sicily. France suffered an uprising in the same period that won enthusiastic support

from both nobles and peasants, while the English monarch was tried and executed by his subjects and Russia experienced an explosive rebellion.

Municipal and royal authorities struggled to overcome popular revolt. They feared that stern repressive measures, such as sending in troops to fire on crowds, would create martyrs and further inflame the situation, while full-scale occupation of a city would be very expensive and detract from military efforts elsewhere. The limitations of royal authority gave some leverage to rebels. To quell riots, royal edicts were sometimes suspended, prisoners released, and discussions initiated. By the beginning of the eighteenth century rulers had gained much greater control over their populations as a result of various achievements in state-building (see "State-Building and the Growth of Armies" later in this chapter).

Peasants Working the Land

Land Working the land was harsh toil for seventeenth-century peasants, but strong family and community bonds gave life meaning and made survival possible. The rich and colorful clothing of the peasants shown here reflects an idealized vision of the peasants' material circumstances. ("The Month of March" by the studio of Pieter de Witte [ca. 1548–1628]/photo © Sotheby's/akg-images)



The Thirty Years' War

Harsh economic conditions were greatly exacerbated by the decades-long conflict known as the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), a war that drew in almost every European state. The Holy Roman Empire was a confederation of hundreds of principalities, independent cities, duchies, and other polities loosely united under an elected emperor. The uneasy truce between Catholics and Protestants created by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 (see "Religious Wars in Switzerland and Germany" in Chapter 13) deteriorated as the faiths of various areas shifted. Lutheran princes felt compelled to form the Protestant Union (1608), and Catholics retaliated with the Catholic League (1609). Each alliance was determined that the other should make no religious or territorial advance. Dynastic interests were also involved; the Spanish Habsburgs strongly supported the goals of their Austrian relatives, which was to preserve the unity of the empire and Catholicism within it.

The war began with a conflict in Bohemia (part of the present-day Czech Republic) between the Catholic League and the Protestant Union but soon spread through the Holy Roman Empire, drawing in combatants from across Europe. After a series of initial Catholic victories, the tide of the conflict turned because of the intervention of Sweden, under its king Gustavus Adolphus (r. 1594–1632), and then France, whose prime minister, Cardinal Richelieu (REESH-uh-lyuh),

intervened on the side of the Protestants to undermine Habsburg power.

The 1648 **Peace of Westphalia** that ended the Thirty Years' War marked a turning point in European history. The treaties that established the peace not only ended conflicts fought over religious faith but also recognized the independent authority of more than three hundred German princes (Map 15.1), reconfirming the emperor's severely limited authority. The Augsburg agreement of 1555 became permanent, adding Calvinism to Catholicism and Lutheranism as legally permissible creeds. The United Provinces of the Netherlands, known as the Dutch Republic, won official freedom from Spain.

The Thirty Years' War was the most destructive event in central Europe prior to the world wars of the twentieth century. Perhaps one-third of urban residents and two-fifths of the rural population died, and agriculture and industry withered. Across Europe, states increased taxes to meet the cost of war, further increasing the suffering of a traumatized population.

State-Building and the Growth of Armies

In the context of warfare, economic crisis, and demographic decline, rulers took urgent measures to restore order and rebuild their states. Traditionally, historians have distinguished between the absolutist governments of France, Spain, central Europe, and Russia and the constitutionalist governments of England and the Dutch Republic. Whereas absolutist monarchs gathered all power under their personal control,

■ **Peace of Westphalia** The name of a series of treaties that concluded the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and marked the end of large-scale religious violence in Europe.



MAP 15.1 Europe After the Thirty Years' War This map shows the political division of Europe after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the war. France expanded its borders to the east and Sweden gained territory on the northern German coastline. The Dutch Republic formally won its independence after a long struggle against Spain, but Spain retained territory in the southern Netherlands and Italy.

English and Dutch rulers were obliged to respect laws passed by representative institutions. More recently, historians have emphasized commonalities among these powers. Despite their political differences, all these states shared common projects of protecting and expanding their frontiers, raising new taxes, consolidating central control, and competing for the new colonies opening up in the New and Old Worlds.

Rulers who wished to increase their authority encountered formidable obstacles, including poor communications, entrenched local power structures, and ethnic and linguistic diversity. Nonetheless, over the course of the seventeenth century both absolutist

and constitutional governments achieved new levels of power and national unity. They did so by transforming emergency measures of wartime into permanent structures of government and by subduing privileged groups through the use of force and through economic and social incentives. Increased state authority could be seen in four areas in particular: greater taxation, growth in armed forces, larger and more efficient bureaucracies, and territorial expansion, both within Europe and overseas.

Over time, centralized power added up to something close to sovereignty. A state may be termed sovereign when it possesses a monopoly over the



Seventeenth-Century Artillery Mobile light artillery, consisting of bronze or iron cannon mounted on wheeled carriages, played a crucial role in seventeenth-century warfare. In contrast to earlier heavy artillery used in siege operations to breach fortifications, light artillery could be deployed to support troops during battle. This image is from an early seventeenth-century military manual. (Science History Images/Alamy)

instruments of justice and the use of force within clearly defined boundaries. In a sovereign state, no system of courts, such as church tribunals, competes with state courts in the dispensation of justice; and private armies, such as those of feudal lords, present no threat to central authority. While seventeenth-century states did not acquire total sovereignty, they made important strides toward that goal.

The driving force of seventeenth-century state-building was warfare. In medieval times, feudal lords had raised armies only for particular wars or campaigns; now monarchs began to recruit their own forces and maintain permanent standing armies. Instead of serving their own interests, army officers were required to be loyal and obedient to state officials. New techniques for training and deploying soldiers meant a rise in the professional standards of the army.

Along with professionalization came an explosive growth in army size. The French took the lead, with the army growing from roughly 125,000 men in the Thirty Years' War to 340,000 at the end of the seventeenth century.¹ Other European powers were quick to follow the French example. The rise of absolutism in central and eastern Europe led to a vast expansion in the size of armies. England followed a similar, albeit

distinctive pattern. Instead of building a land army, the island nation focused on naval forces and eventually built the largest navy in the world.

Baroque Art and Music

State-building and the growth of armies were not the only achievements of the seventeenth century; the arts flourished as well. Rome and the revitalized Catholic Church of the late sixteenth century spurred the early development of the **baroque style** in art and music. The papacy and the Jesuits encouraged the growth of an intensely emotional, exuberant art. They wanted artists to appeal to the senses and thereby touch the souls and kindle the faith of ordinary churchgoers while proclaiming the power and confidence of the reformed Catholic Church. In addition to this underlying religious emotionalism, the baroque drew its sense of drama, motion, and ceaseless striving from the Catholic Reformation.

Taking definite shape in Italy after 1600, the baroque style in the visual arts developed with exceptional vigor



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa of Avila*, 1647–1652 In 1647, Italian sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini accepted a commission to build a chapel in honor of the family of a Catholic cardinal and the newly canonized Spanish Carmelite nun and mystic, Teresa of Avila. Bernini's sculpture depicts the saint at the moment of her rapturous union with the divine, symbolized by an angel standing poised to pierce her heart with a golden arrow. In its heightened emotionalism and the drama of its composition, the sculpture is one of the masterpieces of baroque art. (Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, Italy / De Agostini Picture Library/G. Nimatallah/Bridgeman Images)

■ **baroque style** A style in art and music lasting from roughly 1600 to 1750 characterized by the use of drama and motion to create heightened emotion, especially prevalent in Catholic countries.

in Catholic countries—in Spain and Latin America, Austria, southern Germany, and Poland. Yet baroque art was more than just “Catholic art” in the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth. It had broad appeal, and Protestants accounted for some of the finest examples of baroque style, especially in music. The baroque style spread partly because its tension and bombast spoke to an agitated age that was experiencing great violence and controversy in politics and religion.

In painting, the baroque reached maturity early with Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), the most outstanding and most representative of baroque painters. Studying in his native Flanders and in Italy, where he was influenced by masters of the High Renaissance such as Michelangelo, Rubens developed his own rich,

sensuous, colorful style, which was characterized by animated figures, melodramatic contrasts, and monumental size.

In music, the baroque style reached its culmination almost a century later in the dynamic, soaring lines of the endlessly inventive Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Organist and choirmaster of several Lutheran churches across Germany, Bach was equally at home writing secular concertos and sublime religious cantatas. Bach’s organ music combined the baroque spirit of invention, tension, and emotion in an unforgettable striving toward the infinite. Unlike Rubens, Bach was not fully appreciated in his lifetime, but since the early nineteenth century his reputation has grown steadily.

Why did France rise and Spain fall during the late seventeenth century?

Kings in absolutist states asserted that, because they were chosen by God, they were responsible to God alone. They claimed exclusive, or absolute, power to make and enforce laws, denying any other institution or group the authority to check their power. In France the founder of the Bourbon monarchy, Henry IV, established foundations upon which his successors Louis XIII and Louis XIV built a stronger, more centralized French state. Louis XIV is often seen as the epitome of an “absolute” monarch, with his endless wars, increased taxes and economic regulation, and glorious palace at Versailles. In truth, his success relied on collaboration with nobles, and thus his example illustrates both the achievements and the compromises of absolutist rule.

As French power rose in the seventeenth century, the glory of Spain faded. Once the fabulous revenue from American silver declined, Spain’s economic stagnation could no longer be disguised, and the country faltered under weak leadership.

The Foundations of French Absolutism

Louis XIV’s absolutism had long roots. In 1589, his grandfather Henry IV (r. 1589–1610), the founder of the Bourbon dynasty, acquired a devastated country. Civil wars between Protestants and Catholics had wracked France since 1561. Poor harvests had reduced peasants to starvation, and commercial activity had declined drastically. Henri le Grand (Henry the Great), as the king was called, inaugurated a remarkable recovery by defusing religious tensions and rebuilding France’s economy. He issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598, allowing Huguenots (French Protestants) the right to worship in 150 traditionally Protestant towns

throughout France. He sharply lowered taxes and instead charged royal officials an annual fee to guarantee the right to pass their positions down to their heirs. He also improved the infrastructure of the country, building new roads and canals and repairing the ravages of years of civil war. Despite his efforts at peace, Henry was murdered in 1610 by a Catholic zealot.

Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) became first minister of the French crown on behalf of Henry’s young son, Louis XIII (r. 1610–1643). Richelieu designed his domestic policies to strengthen royal control. He extended the use of intendants, commissioners for each of France’s thirty-two districts who were appointed directly by the monarch and whose responsibilities included army recruitment, tax collection, and enforcement of royal law. As the intendants’ power increased under Richelieu, so did the power of the centralized French state.

Richelieu also viewed France’s Huguenots as potential rebels, and he laid seige to La Rochelle, a Protestant stronghold, to preserve control within France. Richelieu’s anti-Protestant measures took second place, however, to his most important policy goal, which was to secure French pre-eminence in European power politics. This meant doing everything within his means to weaken the Habsburgs and prevent them from controlling territories that surrounded France. Consequently, Richelieu supported Habsburg enemies, including the Protestant nation of Sweden, during the Thirty Years’ War.

Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602–1661) succeeded Richelieu as chief minister for the next child-king, the four-year-old Louis XIV, who inherited the throne from his father in 1643. Along with the regent, Queen Mother Anne of Austria, Mazarin continued Richelieu’s centralizing policies. However, his struggle to

increase royal revenues to meet the costs of the Thirty Years' War led to the uprisings of 1648–1653 known as the **Fronde**. In Paris, magistrates of the Parlement of Paris, the nation's most important law court, were outraged by the Crown's autocratic measures. These so-called robe nobles (named for the robes they wore in court) encouraged violent protest by the common people. As rebellion spread outside Paris and to the sword nobles (the traditional warrior nobility), civil order broke down completely. In 1651, Anne's regency ended with the declaration of Louis as king in his own right. Much of the rebellion died away, and its leaders came to terms with the government.

The French people were desperate for peace and stability after the disorders of the Fronde and were willing to accept a strong monarch who could restore order. Louis pledged to be such a monarch, insisting that only his absolute authority stood between the French people and a renewed descent into chaos.

Louis XIV and Absolutism

In the reign of Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715), who was known as the “Sun King” in reference to his central role in the divine order, France overcame weakness and division to become the most powerful nation in western Europe. Louis based his authority on the divine right of kings: God had established kings as his rulers on earth, and they were answerable ultimately to him alone. However, Louis also recognized that kings could not simply do as they pleased. They had to obey God's laws and rule for the good of the people.

Louis worked very hard at the business of governing, refusing to delegate power to a first minister. He ruled his realm through several councils of state and insisted on taking a personal role in many of their decisions. Despite increasing financial problems, Louis never called a meeting of the Estates General, the traditional French representative assembly composed of the three estates of clergy, nobility, and commoners. The nobility, therefore, had no means of united expression or action. To further restrict nobles' political power, Louis chose his ministers from capable men of modest origins.

Although personally tolerant, Louis hated division within the realm and insisted that religious unity was essential to his royal dignity and to the security of the state. He thus pursued the policy of Protestant repression launched by Richelieu. In 1685 Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes. The new law ordered the Catholic baptism of Huguenots (French Calvinists), the destruction of Huguenot churches, the closing of schools, and the exile of Huguenot pastors who refused to renounce their faith. Around two hundred

thousand Protestants, including some of the king's most highly skilled artisans, fled into exile.

Despite his claims to absolute authority, multiple constraints existed on Louis's power. As a representative of divine power, he was obliged to rule in a manner consistent with virtue and benevolence. (See “Thinking Like a Historian: What Was Absolutism?” on page 434.) He had to uphold the laws issued by his royal predecessors. He also relied on the collaboration of nobles, who maintained tremendous prestige and authority in their ancestral lands. Without their cooperation, it would have been impossible to extend his power throughout France or wage his many foreign wars. Louis's efforts to elicit noble cooperation led him to revolutionize court life at his spectacular palace at Versailles.

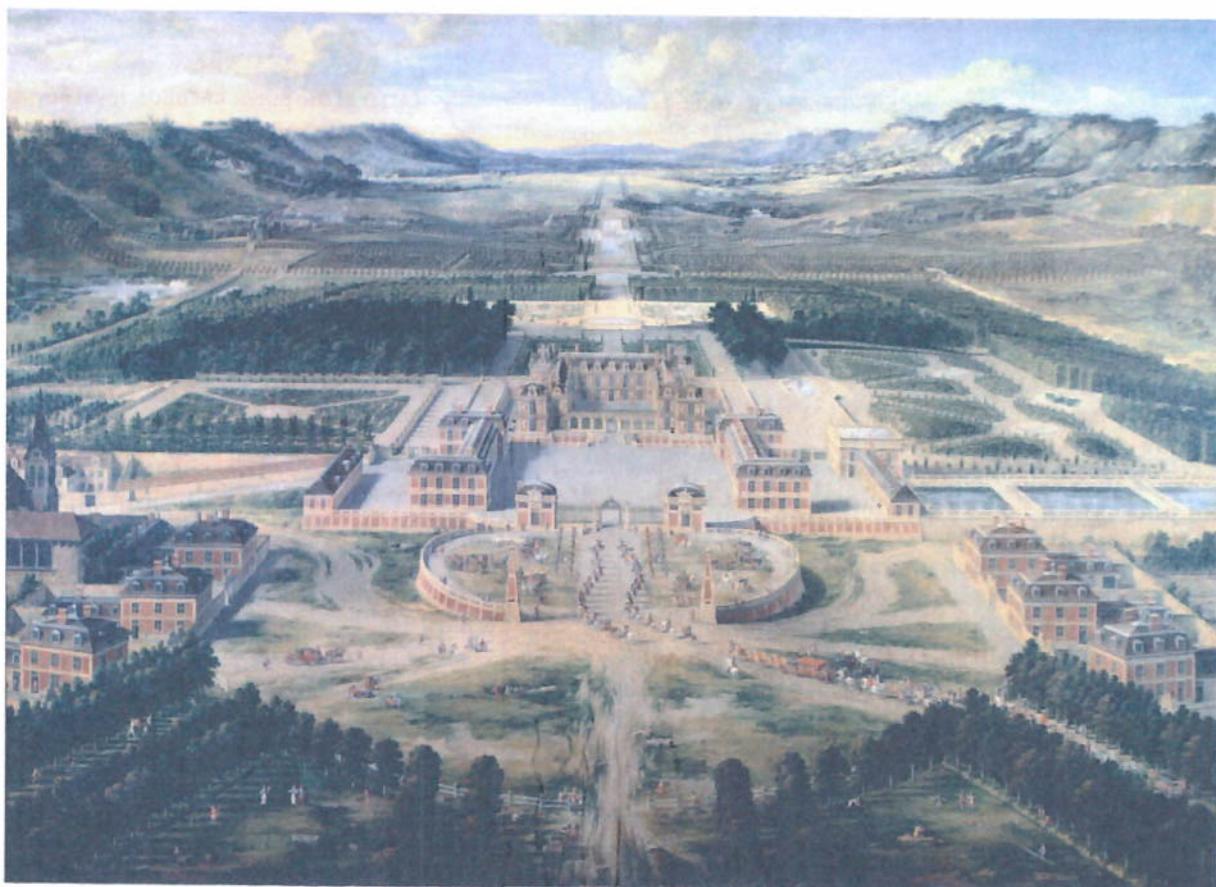
Life at Versailles

Through most of the seventeenth century the French court had no fixed home and instead followed the monarch to his numerous palaces and country residences. In 1682 Louis moved his court and government to the newly renovated palace at Versailles, a former hunting lodge. He then required all great nobles to spend at least part of the year in attendance on him there, so he could keep an eye on their activities. Because Louis controlled the distribution of state power and wealth, nobles had no choice but to obey and compete with each other for his favor at Versailles. The glorious palace, with its sumptuous interiors and extensive formal gardens, was a mirror to the world of French glory and was soon copied by would-be absolutist monarchs across Europe.

Louis further revolutionized court life by establishing an elaborate set of etiquette rituals to mark every moment of his day, from waking up and dressing in the morning to removing his clothing and retiring at night. Courtiers vied for the honor of participating in these ceremonies, with the highest in rank claiming the privilege of handing the king his shirt. These rituals may seem absurd, but they were far from trivial. The king controlled immense resources and privileges; access to him meant favored treatment for government offices, military and religious posts, state pensions, honorary titles, and a host of other benefits. Courtiers sought these rewards for themselves and their family members and followers. A system of patronage—in which a higher-ranked individual protected a lower-ranked one in return for loyalty and services—flowed from the court to the provinces. Through this mechanism Louis gained cooperation from powerful nobles.

Although they could not hold public offices or posts, women played a central role in the patronage system. At court the king's wife, mistresses, and other female relatives recommended individuals for honors,

■ **Fronde** A series of violent uprisings during the early reign of Louis XIV triggered by growing royal control and increased taxation.



View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles, 1668 Located ten miles southwest of Paris, Versailles began as a modest hunting lodge. Louis XIV spent decades enlarging and decorating the structure with the help of architect Louis Le Vau and gardener André Le Nôtre. In 1682, the new palace became the official residence of the Sun King and his court and an inspiration to absolutist palace builders across Europe. (Leemage/Corbis Historical/Getty Images)

advocated policy decisions, and brokered alliances between factions. Noblewomen played a similar role, bringing their family connections to marriage to form powerful social networks.

Louis XIV was also an enthusiastic patron of the arts, commissioning many sculptures and paintings for Versailles as well as performances of dance and music. He also loved the stage, and in the plays of Molière and Racine his court witnessed the finest achievements in the history of French theater. Some of Molière's targets in this period were the aristocratic ladies who wrote many genres of literature and held receptions, called salons, in their Parisian mansions, where they engaged in witty and cultured discussions of poetry, art, theater, and the latest worldly events. Their refined conversational style led Molière and other observers to mock them as "*précieuses*" (PREH-see-ooz; literally "precious"), or affected and pretentious. Despite this mockery, the *précieuses* represented an important cultural force ruled by elite women.

With Versailles as the center of European politics, French culture grew in international prestige. French

became the language of polite society and international diplomacy, gradually replacing Latin as the language of scholarship and learning. Royal courts across Europe spoke French, and the great aristocrats of Russia, Sweden, Germany, and elsewhere were often more fluent in French than in the tongues of their homelands. France inspired a cosmopolitan European culture in the late seventeenth century that looked to Versailles as its center.

Louis XIV's Wars

In pursuit of dynastic glory, Louis kept France at war for thirty-three of the fifty-four years of his personal rule. Under the leadership of François le Tellier, marquis de Louvois, Louis's secretary of state for war, France acquired a huge professional army that was employed by the French state rather than by private nobles. He standardized uniforms and weapons and devised a rational system of training and promotion. As in so many other matters, the French model influenced the rest of Europe.

THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

What Was Absolutism?

Historians have long debated the nature of “absolutism” in seventeenth-century Europe. While many historians have emphasized the growth of state power in this period, especially under Louis XIV of France, others have questioned whether such a thing as “absolutism” ever existed. The following documents will allow you to draw your own conclusions about absolutism.

1 Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, political treatise, 1709. In 1670 Louis XIV appointed Bishop Bossuet tutor to his son and heir, known as the dauphin. In *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, Bossuet argued that royal power was divine and absolute, but not without limits.

It appears from all this that the person of the king is sacred, and that to attack him in any way is sacrilege. God has the kings anointed by his prophets with the holy unction in like manner as he has bishops and altars anointed. But even without the external application in thus being anointed, they are by their very office the representatives of the divine majesty depputed by Providence for the execution of his purposes. Accordingly God calls Cyrus his anointed. “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him.” Kings should be guarded as holy things, and whosoever neglects to protect them is worthy of death. . . . There is something religious in the respect accorded to a prince. The service of God and the respect for kings are bound together. St. Peter unites these two duties when he says, “Fear God. Honour the king.”. . . . But kings, although their power comes from on high, as has been said, should not regard themselves as masters of that power to use it at their pleasure; . . . they must employ it with fear and self-restraint, as a thing coming from God and of which God will demand an account.

2 Letter of the prince of Condé, royal governor of the province of Burgundy, to Controller General Jean-Baptiste Colbert, June 18, 1662. In this letter, the king’s representative in the province of Burgundy reports on his efforts to compel the leaders of the province to pay taxes levied by the royal government. The Estates of Burgundy comprised representatives of the three orders, or estates, of society: the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners.

Since then the Estates have deliberated every day, persuaded that the extreme misery in this province—caused by the great levies it has suffered, the sterility [of the land] in recent years, and the disorders that have recently occurred—would induce the king to give them some relief. That is why they offered only 500,000 for the free gift. Then, after I had protested this in the appropriate manner, they raised it to 600,000, then 800,000, and finally 900,000 livres. Until then I had stood firm at 1.5 million, but when I saw that they were on the verge of deciding not to give any more. . . . I finally came down to the 1.2 million livres contained in my instructions and invited them to deliberate again, declaring that I could not agree to present any other proposition to the king and that I believed that there was no better way to serve their interests than to obey the king blindly. They agreed with good grace and came this morning to offer me a million. They begged me to leave it at that and not to demand more from them for the free gift; and since I told them they would have to do a little better to satisfy the king completely on this occasion, they again exaggerated their poverty and begged me to inform the king of it, but said that, rather than not please him, they preferred to make a new effort, and they would leave it up to me to declare what they had to do. I told them that I believed His Majesty would have the goodness to be satisfied with 1.05 million livres for the free gift, and they agreed. . . . So Monsieur, there is the deed done.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What elements of royal authority does the portrait of Louis XIV in Source 4 present to viewers? How would you compare this depiction of political power with images from modern-day politicians? How would you explain the differences?
2. What justification do the sources offer for Louis’s claim to exercise “absolute” political authority? Based on his own words in Source 3, how do you think Louis would have viewed the constitutional governments of England and the Dutch Republic?
3. Compare and contrast the evidence for Louis’s power given in these sources with evidence for limitations on it. What resources would a king have to muster to enlarge his army drastically (Source 5)? What insight do the negotiations over taxation (Source 2) give you into the ways the royal government acquired those resources?

3 **Louis XIV, *Memoir for the Instruction of the Dauphin*.** In 1670 Louis XIV finished a memoir he had compiled for the education of his son and heir. Presented in the king's voice — although cowritten with several royal aides — the memoir recounts the early years of Louis's reign and explains his approach to absolute rule.

For however it be held as a maxim that in every thing a Prince should employ the most mild measures and first, and that it is more to his advantage to govern his subjects by persuasive than coercive means, it is nevertheless certain that whenever he meets with impediments or rebellion, the interest of his crown and the welfare of his people demand that he should cause himself to be indispensably obeyed; for it must be acknowledged there is nothing can so securely establish the happiness and tranquility of a country as the perfect combination of all authority in the single person of the Sovereign. The least division in this respect often produces the greatest calamities; and whether it be detached into the hands of individuals or those of corporate bodies, it always is there in a state of fermentation.

. . . [B]esides the insurrections and the intestine commotions which the ambition of power infallibly produces when it is not repressed, there are still a thousand other evils created by the inactivity of the Sovereign. Those who are nearest his person are the first to observe his weakness, and are also the first who are desirous of profiting by it. Every one of those persons have necessarily others who are subservient to their avaricious views, and to whom they at the same time give the privilege of imitating them. Thus, from the highest to the lowest is a systematic corruption communicated, and it becomes general in all classes.



(Musée du Louvre, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)

4 **Hyacinthe Rigaud, portrait of Louis XIV, 1701.** This was one of Louis XIV's favorite portraits of himself. He liked it so much that he had many copies of the portrait made; his successors had their own portraits painted in the same posture with the same clothing and accoutrements.

5 Growth of the French Army.

Time Period	Size of Army
Middle Ages	10,000 men
1635 (Louis XIII and Richelieu enter Thirty Years' War)	125,000 men
1670s (Louis XIV wages Dutch War)	280,000 men
1690s (Louis XIV wages Nine Years' War)	340,000 men

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the sources above, along with what you have learned in class and in this chapter, what was "absolutism"? Write a brief essay explaining what contemporaries thought absolute power entailed and the extent to which Louis XIV achieved such power.

During this long period of warfare, Louis's goal was to expand France to what he considered its natural borders and to win glory for the Bourbon dynasty. The results were mixed. During the 1660s and 1670s, French armies managed to extend French borders to include important commercial centers in the Spanish Netherlands and Flanders as well as the entire province of Franche-Comté between 1667 and 1678, formerly held by Spain. In 1681 Louis seized the city of Strasbourg, and three years later he sent his armies into the province of Lorraine. At that moment the king seemed invincible, but in reality Louis had reached the limit of his expansion. The wars of the 1680s and 1690s brought no additional territories and strained French resources to the limit.

Louis's last war, the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1713), was endured by a French people suffering from high taxes, crop failure, and widespread malnutrition and death.



The Acquisitions of Louis XIV, 1668–1713

This war was the result of Louis's unwillingness to abide by a previous agreement to divide Spanish possessions between France and the Holy Roman emperor upon the death of the childless Spanish king Charles II (r. 1665–1700). Instead, he succeeded in having his own grandson, Philip of Anjou, placed on the Spanish throne. (Louis's wife, Maria-Theresa, was Charles's sister.) In 1701 the English, Dutch, Austrians, and Prussians formed the Grand Alliance to prevent this expansion of Bourbon power.

War dragged on until 1713. The **Peace of Utrecht**, which ended the war, allowed Louis's grandson Philip to remain king of Spain on the understanding that the French and Spanish crowns would never be united. France surrendered Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson Bay territory to England, which also acquired Gibraltar, Minorca, and control of the African slave trade from Spain (Map 15.2).

The Peace of Utrecht marked the end of French expansion. Thirty-five years of war had given France the rights to all of Alsace and some commercial centers in the north. But at what price? At the time of Louis's death in 1715, an exhausted France hovered on the brink of bankruptcy.

The French Economic Policy of Mercantilism

France's ability to build armies and fight wars depended on a strong economy. Fortunately for Louis, his controller general, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), proved to be a financial genius. Colbert's central principle was that the wealth and the economy of France should serve the state. To this end, from 1665 to his death in 1683, Colbert rigorously applied mercantilist policies to France.

Mercantilism was a collection of governmental policies for the regulation of economic activities by and for the state. It derived from the idea that a nation's

Charles II, King of Spain, and His Wife Kneeling Before the Eucharist From the royal family to the common peasant, fervent Catholic religious faith permeated seventeenth-century Spanish society, serving as a binding force for the newly unified nation. (Gianni Dagli Orti/Shutterstock)



MAPPING THE PAST

MAP 15.2 Europe After the Peace of Utrecht, 1715

The series of treaties commonly called the Peace of Utrecht ended the War of the Spanish Succession and redrew the map of Europe. A French Bourbon king succeeded to the Spanish throne. France surrendered the Spanish Netherlands (later Belgium), then in French hands, to Austria, and recognized the Hohenzollern rulers of Prussia. Spain ceded Gibraltar to Great Britain, for which it has been a strategic naval station ever since. Spain also granted Britain the *asiento*, the contract for supplying African slaves to the Americas.

ANALYZING THE MAP Comparing this map to Map 15.1, identify the areas on the map that changed hands between the Peace of Westphalia and the Peace of Utrecht. How did these changes affect the balance of power in Europe?

CONNECTIONS How and why did so many European countries possess scattered or noncontiguous territories? What does this suggest about European politics in this period? Does this map suggest potential for future conflict?

international power is based on its wealth, specifically its supply of gold and silver. To accumulate wealth, a country always had to sell more goods abroad than it bought.

To increase exports, Colbert supported old industries and created new ones, focusing especially on textiles, which were the most important sector of manufacturing. He enacted new production regulations, created guilds to boost quality standards,

and encouraged foreign craftsmen to immigrate to France. To encourage the purchase of French goods, he abolished many domestic tariffs and raised tariffs

■ Peace of Utrecht A series of treaties, from 1713 to 1715, that ended the War of the Spanish Succession, ended French expansion in Europe, and marked the rise of the British Empire.

■ mercantilism A system of economic regulations aimed at increasing the power of the state based on the belief that a nation's international power was based on its wealth, specifically its supply of gold and silver.

on foreign products. In 1664 Colbert founded the Company of the East Indies with (unfulfilled) hopes of competing with the Dutch for Asian trade.

Colbert also hoped to make Canada—rich in untapped minerals and some of the best agricultural land in the world—part of a vast French empire. He sent four thousand colonists to Quebec, whose capital had been founded in 1608 under Henry IV. Subsequently, the Jesuit Jacques Marquette and the merchant Louis Joliet sailed down the Mississippi River, which they named Colbert in honor of their sponsor (the name soon reverted to the original Native American one). Marquette and Joliet claimed possession of the land on both sides of the river as far south as present-day Arkansas. In 1684 French explorers continued down the Mississippi to its mouth and claimed vast territories for Louis XIV. The area was called, naturally, “Louisiana.”

During Colbert’s tenure as controller general, Louis was able to pursue his goals without massive tax increases and without creating a stream of new offices. The constant pressure of warfare after Colbert’s death, however, undid many of his economic achievements.

The Decline of Absolutist Spain in the Seventeenth Century

At the beginning of the seventeenth century France’s position appeared extremely weak. Struggling to recover from decades of religious civil war that had destroyed its infrastructure and economy, France could not dare to compete with Spain’s empire or its powerful army. Yet by the end of the century their positions were reversed, and France had attained European dominance.

The discovery of silver at Potosí in 1545 had produced momentous wealth for Spain, allowing it to dominate Europe militarily (see “Spanish Silver and Its Economic Effects” in Chapter 14). Yet Spain had inherent weaknesses that the wealth of empire had hidden. When Philip IV took the throne in 1621, he inherited a vast and overstretched empire that combined different kingdoms with their own traditions and loyalties. Spanish silver had generated great wealth, but also dependency. While Creoles—people of European ancestry born in the colonies—undertook

new industries and European nations targeted Spanish colonial trade, industry and finance in Spain itself did not develop.

Between 1610 and 1650 Spanish trade with the colonies in the New World fell 60 percent because of competition from local industries in the colonies and from Dutch and English traders. At the same time epidemic disease decimated the enslaved workforce in the South American silver mines. Moreover, the mines themselves started to run dry, and the quantity of metal produced steadily declined after 1620.

In Madrid, the expenses of war and imperial rule constantly exceeded income. Despite the efforts of Philip’s able chief minister, Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares, it proved impossible to force the kingdoms of the empire to shoulder the cost of its defense. To meet mountainous state debt, the Crown repeatedly devalued the coinage and declared bankruptcy, which resulted in the collapse of national credit and steep inflation.

Spanish aristocrats, attempting to maintain an extravagant lifestyle they could no longer afford, increased the rents on their estates. High rents and heavy taxes in turn drove the peasants from the land, leading to a decline in agricultural productivity. In cities, wages and production stagnated. Steep inflation forced textile manufacturers out of business by increasing their production costs to the point where they could not compete in colonial and international markets.² Spain also ignored new scientific methods that might have improved agricultural or manufacturing techniques because they came from the heretical nations of Holland and England.

Spain’s situation worsened with internal rebellions and military defeats during the Thirty Years’ War and through the remainder of the seventeenth century. In 1640 Spain faced serious revolts in Catalonia and Portugal. In 1643 the French inflicted a crushing defeat on a Spanish army at Rocroi in what is now Belgium. The Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years’ War, compelled Spain to recognize the independence of the Dutch Republic, and another treaty in 1659 granted extensive territories to France. Finally, in 1688 the Spanish crown reluctantly recognized the independence of Portugal. With these losses, the era of Spanish dominance in Europe ended.

What explains the rise of absolutism in Prussia and Austria?

The rulers of central and eastern Europe also labored to build strong absolutist states in the seventeenth century. But they built on social and economic foundations far different from those in western Europe, namely, serfdom and the strong nobility who benefited from it. The constant warfare of the seventeenth

century allowed monarchs to increase their power by building large armies, increasing taxation, and suppressing representative institutions. In exchange for their growing political authority, monarchs allowed nobles to remain as unchallenged masters of their peasants, a deal that appeased both king and nobility but left serfs at

the mercy of the lords. The most successful states were Austria and Prussia, which witnessed the rise of absolutism between 1620 and 1740.

The Return of Serfdom

While economic and social hardship was common across Europe, important differences existed between east and west. In the west the demographic losses of the Black Death allowed peasants to escape from serfdom as they acquired enough land to feed themselves. In central and eastern Europe seventeenth-century peasants had largely lost their ability to own land independently. Their lords dealt with the labor shortages caused by the Black Death by restricting the right of their peasants to move to take advantage of better opportunities elsewhere. In Prussian territories by 1500 the law required that runaway peasants be hunted down and returned to their lords. Moreover, lords steadily took more and more of their peasants' land and arbitrarily imposed heavier labor obligations.

The gradual erosion of the peasantry's economic position was bound up with manipulation of the legal system. The local lord was also the local prosecutor, judge, and jailer. There were no independent royal officials to provide justice or uphold the common law. The power of the lord reached far into serfs' everyday lives. Not only was their freedom of movement restricted, but they also required permission to marry or could be forced to marry. Lords could reallocate the lands worked by their serfs at will or sell serfs apart from their families.

Between 1500 and 1650 the consolidation of serfdom was accompanied by the growth of commercial agriculture, particularly in Poland and eastern Germany. As economic expansion and population growth resumed after 1500, lords increased the production of their estates by squeezing sizable surpluses out of the impoverished peasants. They then sold these surpluses to foreign merchants, who exported them to the growing cities of western Europe.

It was not only the peasants who suffered. With the approval of kings, landlords systematically undermined the medieval privileges of the towns and the power of the urban classes. Instead of selling products to local merchants, landlords sold directly to foreigners, bypassing local towns. Eastern towns also lost their medieval right of refuge and were compelled to return runaways to their lords. The population of the towns and the urban middle classes declined greatly.

The Austrian Habsburgs

Like all of central Europe, the Habsburgs emerged from the Thirty Years' War impoverished and exhausted. Their efforts to destroy Protestantism in the German lands and to turn the weak Holy Roman

Empire into a real state had failed. Although the Habsburgs remained the hereditary emperors, real power lay in the hands of a bewildering variety of separate political jurisdictions. Defeat in central Europe encouraged the Habsburgs to turn away from a quest for imperial dominance and to focus inward and eastward in an attempt to unify their diverse holdings.

Habsburg victory over Bohemia during the Thirty Years' War was an important step in this direction. Ferdinand II (r. 1619–1637) drastically reduced the power of the Bohemian Estates, the largely Protestant representative assembly. He also confiscated the landholdings of Protestant nobles and gave them to loyal Catholic nobles and to the foreign aristocratic mercenaries who led his armies. After 1650 a large portion of the Bohemian nobility was of recent origin and owed its success to the Habsburgs.

With the support of this new nobility, the Habsburgs established direct rule over Bohemia. Under their rule the condition of the enserfed peasantry worsened substantially: three days per week of unpaid labor became the norm. Protestantism was also stamped out. These changes were significant advances in creating absolutist rule in Bohemia.

Ferdinand III (r. 1637–1657) continued to build state power. He centralized the government in the empire's German-speaking provinces, which formed the core Habsburg holdings. For the first time, a permanent standing army was ready to put down any internal opposition. The Habsburg monarchy then turned east toward the plains of Hungary, which had been divided between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in the early sixteenth century. Between 1683 and 1699 the Habsburgs pushed the Ottomans from most of Hungary and Transylvania. The recovery of all of the former kingdom of Hungary was completed in 1718.

The Hungarian nobility, despite its reduced strength, effectively thwarted the full development of Habsburg absolutism. Throughout the seventeenth century Hungarian nobles rose in revolt against attempts to impose absolute rule. They never triumphed decisively, but neither were they crushed the way the nobility in Bohemia had been in 1620. In 1703, with the Habsburgs bogged down in the War of the Spanish Succession, the Hungarians rose in one last patriotic rebellion under Prince Francis Rákóczi. The prince and his forces were eventually defeated, but the Habsburgs agreed to restore many of the traditional privileges of the aristocracy in return for Hungarian acceptance of hereditary Habsburg rule. Thus Hungary, unlike Austria and Bohemia, was never fully integrated into a centralized, absolute Habsburg state.

Despite checks on their ambitions in Hungary, the Habsburgs made significant achievements in state-building elsewhere by forging consensus with the church and the nobility. A sense of common identity and loyalty to the monarchy grew among elites in



MAP 15.3 The Growth of Austria and Brandenburg-Prussia to 1748 Austria expanded to the southwest into Hungary and Transylvania at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. It was unable to hold the rich German province of Silesia, however, which was conquered by Brandenburg-Prussia.

Habsburg lands, even to a certain extent in Hungary. German became the language of the state, and zealous Catholicism helped fuse a collective identity.

Vienna became the political and cultural center of the empire. By 1700 it was a thriving city with a population of one hundred thousand and its own version of Versailles, the royal palace of Schönbrunn.

Prussia in the Seventeenth Century

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Hohenzollern family had ruled parts of eastern Germany as the imperial electors of Brandenburg and the dukes of Prussia. The title of *elector* gave its holder the privilege of being one of only seven princes or archbishops entitled to elect the Holy Roman emperor, but the electors had little real power. When he came to power in 1640, the twenty-year-old Frederick William, later known as the “Great Elector,” was determined to unify his three provinces and enlarge his holdings. These provinces

were Brandenburg; Prussia, inherited in 1618; and scattered territories along the Rhine inherited in 1614 (Map 15.3). Each had its own estates. Although the estates had not met regularly during the chaotic Thirty Years’ War, taxes could not be levied without their consent. The estates of Brandenburg and Prussia were dominated by the nobility and the landowning classes, known as the **Junkers**.

Frederick William profited from ongoing European war and the threat of invasion from Russia when he argued for the need for a permanent standing army. In 1660 he persuaded Junkers in the estates to accept taxation without consent in order to fund an army. They agreed to do so in exchange for reconfirmation of their own privileges, including authority over the serfs. Having won over the Junkers, the king crushed potential opposition to his power from the towns. One by one, Prussian cities were eliminated from the estates and subjected to new taxes on goods and services. Thereafter, the estates’ power declined rapidly, for the Great Elector had both financial independence and superior force. During his reign, Frederick William tripled state revenue and

Junkers The nobility of Brandenburg and Prussia, who were reluctant allies of Frederick William in his consolidation of the Prussian state.

expanded the army drastically. In 1688 a population of 1 million supported a peacetime standing army of 30,000. In 1701 the elector's son, Frederick I, received the elevated title of *king of Prussia* (instead of *elector*) as a reward for aiding the Holy Roman emperor in the War of the Spanish Succession.

The Consolidation of Prussian Absolutism

Frederick William I, "the Soldiers' King" (r. 1713–1740), completed his grandfather's work, eliminating the last traces of parliamentary estates and local self-government. It was he who truly established Prussian absolutism and transformed Prussia into a military state. Frederick William was intensely attached to military life. He always wore an army uniform, and he lived the highly disciplined life of the professional soldier. Years later he followed the family tradition by leaving his own written instructions to his son: "A formidable army and a war chest large enough to make this army mobile in times of need can create great respect for you in the world, so that you can speak a word like the other powers."³

Penny-pinching, ruthless, and hard-working, Frederick William achieved results. The king and his ministers built an exceptionally efficient bureaucracy to administer the country and foster economic development. Twelfth in Europe in population, Prussia had the fourth-largest army by 1740. The Prussian army was the best in Europe, astonishing foreign observers with its precision, skill, and discipline.

Nevertheless, Prussians paid a heavy and lasting price for the obsessions of their royal drillmaster. Army expansion was achieved in part through forced conscription, which was declared lifelong in 1713. Desperate draftees fled the country or injured themselves to avoid service. Finally, in 1733 Frederick William I ordered that all Prussian men undergo military training and serve as reservists in the army, allowing him to preserve both agricultural production and army size. To appease the Junkers, the king enlisted them to lead his growing army. The proud nobility thus commanded the peasantry in the army as well as on the estates.



A Prussian Giant

Grenadier Frederick William I wanted tall, handsome soldiers. He dressed them in tight, bright uniforms to distinguish them from the peasant population from which most soldiers came. He also ordered several portraits of his favorites, such as this one, from his court painter, J. C. Merk. Grenadiers (greh-nuh-DEERZ) wore the miter cap instead of an ordinary hat so that they could hurl their heavy grenades unimpeded by a broad brim. (Grenadier James Kirkland, Irish member of the Potsdamer Riesengarde [giant guards of Potsdam], ca. 1718/Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, Germany/© DHM/Bridgeman Images)

With all men harnessed to the war machine, Prussian civil society became rigid and highly disciplined. As a Prussian minister later summed up, "To keep quiet is the first civic duty."⁴ Thus the policies of Frederick William I, combined with harsh peasant bondage and Junker tyranny, laid the foundations for a highly militaristic country.

What were the distinctive features of Russian and Ottoman absolutism?

Russia occupied a unique position among Eurasian states. With borders straddling eastern Europe and northwestern Asia, its development into a strong imperial state drew on elements from both continents. Like the growth of the Muslim empires in Central and South Asia and the Ming Dynasty in China, the expansion of Russia was a result of the weakening of the great Mongol Empire. After declaring

independence from the Mongols, the Russian tsars conquered a vast empire, extending through North Asia all the way to the Pacific Ocean. State-building and territorial expansion culminated during the reign of Peter the Great, who forcibly introduced elements of Western culture and society.

While Europeans debated, and continued to debate, whether or not Russia was a Western society,

there was no question in their minds that the Ottomans were outsiders. Even absolutist rulers disdained Ottoman sultans as cruel and tyrannical despots. Despite stereotypes, however, the Ottoman Empire was in many ways more tolerant than its Western counterparts, providing protection and security to other religions while maintaining the Muslim faith. Flexibility and openness to other ideas and practices were sources of strength for the empire.

Mongol Rule in Russia and the Rise of Moscow

The two-hundred-year period of rule by the Mongol khan (king) set the stage for the rise of absolutist Russia. The Mongols, a group of nomadic tribes from present-day Mongolia, established an empire that, at its height, stretched from Korea to eastern Europe. In the thirteenth century the Mongols had conquered Kievan Rus, the medieval Slavic state that included most of present-day Ukraine, Belarus, and part of northwest Russia. The princes of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, a principality within Kievan Rus, became particularly adept at serving the Mongols. Eventually the Muscovite princes were able to destroy the other princes who were their rivals for power. Ivan III (r. 1462–1505), known as Ivan the Great, successfully

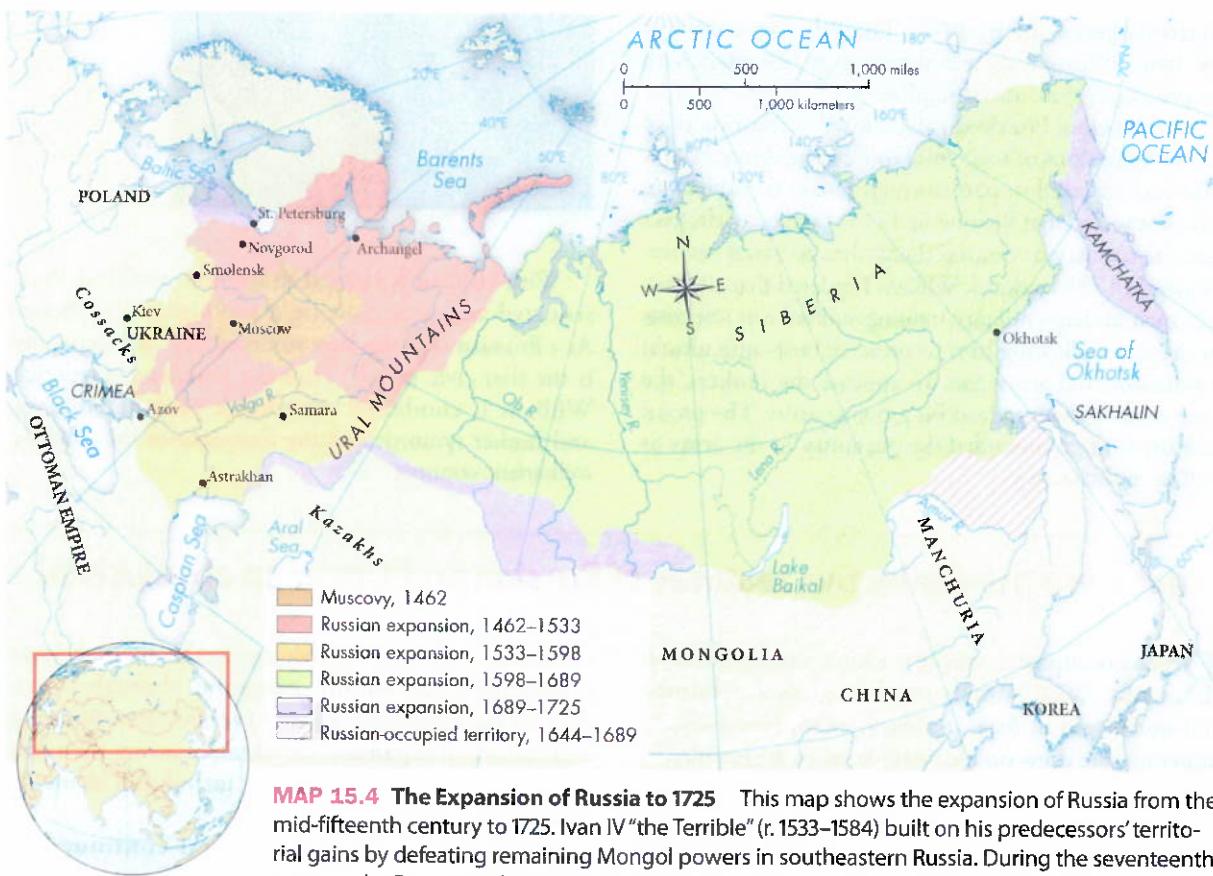
expanded the principality of Moscow eastward toward the Baltic Sea and westward to the Ural Mountains and the Siberian frontier (Map 15.4).

By 1480 Ivan III was strong enough to declare the autonomy of Moscow. To legitimize their new position, Ivan and his successors borrowed elements of Mongol rule. They forced weaker Slavic principalities to render tribute and borrowed Mongol institutions such as the tax system, postal routes, and census. Loyalty from the highest-ranking nobles, or **boyars**, helped the Muscovite princes consolidate their power.

Another source of legitimacy for Moscow was its claim to the political and religious legacy of the Byzantine Empire. After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, the princes of Moscow saw themselves as the heirs of both the Byzantine caesars (or emperors) and the empire's Orthodox Christianity. The marriage of Ivan III to the daughter of the last Byzantine emperor further enhanced Moscow's assertion of imperial authority.

Building the Russian Empire

Developments in Russia took a chaotic turn with the reign of Ivan IV (r. 1533–1584), the famous “Ivan the Terrible,” who ascended to the throne at age three. His





Peter the Great This compelling portrait by Grigory Musikiysky captures the strength and determination of the warrior-tsar in 1723, after more than three decades of personal rule. In his hand Peter holds the scepter, symbol of royal sovereignty, and across his breastplate is draped an ermine fur, a mark of honor. In the background are the battleships of Russia's new Baltic fleet and the famous St. Peter and St. Paul Fortress that Peter built in St. Petersburg. (State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia/Bridgeman Images)

mother died when he was eight, leaving Ivan to suffer insults and neglect from the boyars at court. At age sixteen Ivan pushed aside his advisers and crowned himself tsar.

After the sudden death of his wife, Ivan began a campaign of persecution against those he suspected of opposing him. He executed members of leading boyar families, along with their families, friends, servants, and peasants. To replace them, Ivan created a new service nobility, whose loyalty was guaranteed by their dependence on the state for land and titles.

As landlords demanded more from the serfs who survived the persecutions, growing numbers of peasants fled toward recently conquered territories to the east and south. There they joined free groups and warrior bands known as **Cossacks**. Ivan responded by tying peasants ever more firmly to the land. Simultaneously, so that he could tax them more heavily, he ordered that urban dwellers be bound to their towns and jobs. These restrictions checked the growth of the Russian middle classes and stood in sharp contrast to economic and social developments in western Europe.

Ivan's reign was successful in defeating the remnants of Mongol power and in laying the foundations for the huge, multiethnic Russian Empire. In the 1550s, strengthened by an alliance with Cossack bands, Ivan conquered the Muslim khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan and brought the fertile steppe region around the Volga River under Russian control. In the 1580s Cossacks fighting for the Russian state crossed the Ural Mountains and began the long conquest of Siberia. Because of the size of the new territories and their distance from Moscow, the Russian state did not

initially seek to impose the Orthodox religion and maintained local elites in positions of honor and leadership, buying their loyalty with grants of land.

Following Ivan's death, Russia entered a chaotic period known as the "Time of Troubles" (1598–1613). While Ivan's relatives struggled for power, Cossacks and peasants rebelled against nobles and officials. This social explosion from below brought the nobles together. They crushed the Cossack rebellion and brought Ivan's sixteen-year-old grandnephew, Michael Romanov, to the throne (r. 1613–1645).

Despite the turbulence of the period, the Romanov tsars, like their Western counterparts, made several important achievements in territorial expansion and state-building. After a long war, Russia gained land to the west in Ukraine in 1667. By the end of the century, it had completed the conquest of Siberia (see Map 15.4). This vast territorial expansion brought Russian power to the Sea of Okhotsk in the Pacific Ocean and was only checked by the powerful Qing Dynasty of China. As with the French in Canada, the basis of Russian wealth in Siberia was furs, which the state collected by forced annual tribute payments from local peoples. Profits from furs and other natural resources, especially mining in the eighteenth century, funded expansion of the Russian imperial bureaucracy and the army.

■ **boyars** The highest-ranking members of the Russian nobility.

■ **Cossacks** Free groups and outlaw armies originally comprising runaway peasants living on the borders of Russian territory from the fourteenth century onward. By the end of the sixteenth century they had formed an alliance with the Russian state.

Peter the Great and Foreign Experts

John Deane, an eminent shipbuilder, was one of the many foreign artisans and experts brought to Russia by Peter the Great after the latter's foreign tour of 1697. Several months after his arrival in Russia, Deane sent a glowing account of the tsar's technical prowess to his patron in England, the marquess of Carmarthen, admiral of the English fleet.

At my arrival in Moscow, I fell very ill of the Bloody-Flux, which made me be in Moscow when his Majesty came home: About the latter end of October I was somewhat recovered, his Majesty then carried me down to Voronize* with him. Voronize is about 400 English Miles South-East from Moscow. There the Czar immediately set up a ship of 60 guns, where he is both Foreman and Master-BUILDER; and not to flatter him, I'll assure your Lordship it will be the best ship among them, and 'tis all from his own Draught; How he fram'd her together and how he made the Mould, and in so short a time as he did is really wonderful: But he is able at this day to put his own notions into practice, and laugh at his Dutch and Italian builders for their ignorance. There are several pieces of workmanship, as in the keel, stem, and post, which are all purely his own invention, and sound good work, and would be approved of by all the shipwrights of England if they saw it. . . .

After some time [I] fell sick again; and at Christmas, when his Majesty came to Moscow, he brought me back

The growth of state power did nothing to improve the lot of the common people. In 1649 a new law code extended serfdom to all peasants in the realm, giving lords unrestricted rights over their serfs and establishing penalties for harboring runaways. The new code also removed the privileges that non-Russian elites had enjoyed within the empire and required conversion to Russian Orthodoxy. Henceforth, Moscow maintained strict control of trade and administration throughout the empire.

The peace imposed by harsh Russian rule was disrupted in 1670 by a failed rebellion led by the Cossack Stenka Razin, who attracted a great army of urban poor and peasants. The ease with which Moscow crushed the rebellion testifies to the success of the Russian state in unifying and consolidating its empire.

The Reforms of Peter the Great

Heir to the Romanovs, Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725) embarked on a tremendous campaign to accelerate and complete their efforts at state-building. Peter built on the service obligations of Ivan the Terrible and his successors and continued their tradition of territorial

again for recovery of my health, where I am at present. . . . The whole place is inhabited by the Dutch; I believe there may be 400 families. Last Sunday and Monday the strangers were invited to the consecration of General La Fort's house, which is the noblest building in Russia, and finely furnish't. There were all the envoys, and as near as I could guess 200 gentlemen, English, French, and Dutch, and about as many ladies; each day were dancing and musick. All the envoys, and all the lords (but three in Moscow) are going to Voronize to see the fleet, I suppose. His majesty went last Sunday to Voronize with Prince Alexander and I am to go down (being something recovered) with the Vice-Admiral about six days hence.

EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

- According to Deane, what evidence did Peter give of his skills in shipbuilding? Based on this document, how would you characterize the relationship between Peter the Great and his foreign experts?
- What other evidence does Deane provide of the impact of foreigners on life in Russia?

Source: John Deane, *A Letter from Moscow to the Marquess of Carmarthen, Relating to the Czar of Muscovy's Forwardness in His Great Navy, &c. Since His Return Home*, London, 1699.

*Site of the naval shipyard.

expansion. In particular, he was determined to gain access to the sea for his virtually landlocked state, by extending Russia's borders first to the Black Sea (controlled by the Ottomans) and then to the Baltic Sea (dominated by Sweden).

Peter moved toward the first goal by conquering the Ottoman fort of Azov near the Black Sea in 1696, and quickly built Russia's first navy base. In 1697 the tsar embarked on an eighteen-month tour of western European capitals. Peter was fascinated by foreign technology, and he hoped to forge an anti-Ottoman alliance to strengthen his claims on the Black Sea. Peter failed to secure a military alliance, but he did learn his lessons from the growing power of the Dutch and the English. He also engaged more than a hundred foreign experts to return with him to Russia to help build the navy and improve Russian infrastructure. (See "Evaluating Written Evidence: Peter the Great and Foreign Experts," above.)

To gain access to the Baltic Sea, Peter allied with Denmark and Poland to wage a sudden war of aggression against Sweden. Eighteen-year-old Charles XII of Sweden (1697–1718), however, surprised Peter. He

defeated Denmark quickly in 1700 and then turned on Russia. His well-trained professional army attacked and routed unsuspecting Russians besieging the Swedish fortress of Narva on the Baltic coast. It was, for the Russians, a grim beginning to the long and brutal Great Northern War, which lasted from 1700 to 1721.

Peter responded to this defeat with new measures to increase state power, strengthen his military forces, and gain victory. He required all nobles to serve in the army or in the civil administration—for life. Peter also created schools of navigation and mathematics, medicine, engineering, and finance to produce skilled technicians and experts. He established an interlocking military-civilian bureaucracy with fourteen ranks, and he decreed that everyone had to start at the bottom and work toward the top. These measures gradually combined to make the army and government more powerful and efficient.

Peter also greatly increased the service requirements of commoners. In the wake of the Narva disaster, he established a regular standing army of more than two hundred thousand peasant-soldiers, drafted for life and commanded by noble officers. He added an additional hundred thousand men in special regiments of

Cossacks and foreign mercenaries. To fund the army, taxes on peasants increased threefold during Peter's reign. Serfs were also arbitrarily assigned to work in the growing number of factories and mines that supplied the military.

In 1709 Peter's new war machine was able to crush the much smaller army of Sweden in Ukraine at Poltava, one of the most significant battles in Russian history. Russia's victory against Sweden was conclusive in 1721, and Estonia and present-day Latvia came under Russian rule for the first time. The cost was high: warfare consumed 80 to 85 percent of all revenues. But Russia became the dominant power in the Baltic and very much a great European power.

After his victory at Poltava, Peter channeled enormous resources into building a new Western-style capital on the Baltic to rival the great cities of Europe. Each summer, 25,000 to 40,000 peasants were sent to provide construction labor in St. Petersburg without pay. Many of these laborers died from hunger, sickness, and accidents. In order to populate his new capital, Peter ordered nobles to build costly palaces in St. Petersburg and to live in them most of the year. He also required merchants and artisans to settle and

Peter the Great Cutting a Boyar's Beard

As part of his westernization program, Peter the Great obliged Russian men to shave their long beards, a shock to traditional Orthodox notions of masculinity. Like many of his reforms, these were aimed primarily at the noble boyars; many peasants continued to wear beards in the countryside. (Universal Images Group/Getty Images)





MAP 15.5 The Ottoman Empire at Its Height, 1566 The Ottomans, like their great rivals the Habsburgs, rose to rule a vast dynastic empire encompassing many different peoples and ethnic groups. The army and the bureaucracy served to unite the disparate territories into a single state under an absolutist ruler.

build in the new capital. The building of St. Petersburg was, in truth, an enormous direct tax levied on the wealthy, with the peasantry forced to do the work.

There were other important consequences of Peter's reign. For Peter, modernization meant westernization, and he encouraged the spread of Western culture along with technology and urban planning. Peter required nobles to shave their heavy beards and wear Western clothing, previously banned in Russia. He also ordered them to attend parties where young men and women would mix together and freely choose their own spouses. From these efforts a new elite class of Western-oriented Russians began to emerge.

Peter's reforms were unpopular with many Russians. For nobles, one of Peter's most detested reforms was the imposition of unigeniture—inheritance of land by one son alone—cutting daughters and other sons from

family property. For peasants, the reign of the tsar saw a significant increase in the bonds of serfdom, and the gulf between the enslaved peasantry and the educated nobility increased. Despite the unpopularity of Peter's reforms, his modernizing and westernizing of Russia paved the way for it to move somewhat closer to the European mainstream in its thought and institutions during the Enlightenment, especially under Catherine the Great.

The Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans came out of Central Asia as conquering warriors, settled in Anatolia (present-day Turkey), and, at their peak in the mid-sixteenth century, ruled one of the most powerful empires in the world. Their possessions stretched from western Persia across North Africa and into the heart of central Europe (Map 15.5).

The Ottoman Empire was built on a unique model of state and society. Agricultural land was the personal hereditary property of the **sultan**, and peasants paid taxes to use the land. Thus there was an almost complete absence of private landed property and no hereditary nobility.

The Ottomans also employed a distinctive form of government administration. The top ranks of the bureaucracy were staffed by the sultan's slave corps. Because Muslim law prohibited enslaving other Muslims, the sultan's agents purchased slaves along the borders of the empire. Within the realm, the sultan levied a "tax" of one thousand to three thousand male children on the conquered Christian populations in the Balkans every year. These young slaves were raised

in Turkey as Muslims and were trained as soldiers and government administrators. The most talented Ottoman slaves rose to the top of the bureaucracy, where they might acquire wealth and power. The less fortunate formed the core of the sultan's army, the **janissary corps**. These highly organized and efficient troops gave the Ottomans a formidable advantage in war with western Europeans. By 1683 service in the janissary corps had become so prestigious that the sultan ceased recruitment by force, and it became a volunteer army open to Christians and Muslims.

The Ottomans divided their subjects into religious communities, and each **millet**, or "nation," enjoyed autonomous self-government under its religious leaders. The Ottoman Empire recognized Orthodox Christians, Jews, Armenian Christians, and Muslims as distinct millets. The **millet system** created a powerful bond between the Ottoman ruling class and religious leaders, who supported the sultan's rule in return for extensive authority over their own communities. Each millet collected taxes for the state, regulated collective behavior, and maintained law courts, schools, houses of worship, and hospitals for its people.

Istanbul (known outside the empire by its original name, Constantinople) was the capital of the empire. The "old palace" was for the sultan's female family members, who lived in isolation under the care of eunuchs, men who were castrated to prevent sexual relations with women. The newer Topkapi palace was where officials worked and young slaves were trained for future administrative or military careers. Sultans married women of the highest social standing, while keeping many concubines of low rank. To prevent the elite families into which they married from acquiring influence over the government, sultans had children only with their concubines and not with official wives. They also adopted a policy of allowing each concubine to produce only one male heir. At a young age, each son went to govern a province of the empire accompanied by his mother. These practices were intended to stabilize power and prevent a recurrence of the civil wars of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

Sultan Suleiman undid these policies when he boldly married his concubine, a former slave of Polish origin named Hürrem, and had several children with her. (See "Individuals in Society: Hürrem," page 448.) Starting with Suleiman, imperial wives began to



Entertainment at the Court of Ottoman Sultan Ahmet III

Ahmet III Imitating the palace building of French monarchs, Sultan Ahmet III (r. 1703–1730) built a summer palace with extensive gardens, where he hosted extravagant parties featuring music, dancing, poetry recitations, and fine food. His courtiers quickly followed his example and built their own pleasure palaces nearby. ("A Dance for the Pleasure of Sultan Ahmet III" [1673–1736] from the "Surname," 1720/Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, Turkey/Bridgeman Images)

sultan The ruler of the Ottoman Empire; he owned all the agricultural land of the empire and was served by an army and bureaucracy composed of highly trained slaves.

janissary corps The core of the sultan's army, composed of slave conscripts from non-Muslim parts of the empire; after 1683 it became a volunteer force.

millet system A system used by the Ottomans whereby subjects were divided into religious communities, with each millet (nation) enjoying autonomous self-government under its religious leaders.

INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETY

Hürrem

In Muslim culture, *harem* means a sacred place or a sanctuary. The term was applied to the part of the household occupied by women and children and forbidden to men outside the family. The most famous harem member in Ottoman history was Hürrem, wife of Suleiman the Magnificent.

Like many of the sultan's concubines, Hürrem (1505?–1558) was of foreign birth. Tradition holds that she was born Aleksandra Lisowska in the kingdom of Poland (present-day Ukraine). Captured during a Tartar raid and enslaved, she entered the imperial harem between 1517 and 1520, when she was about fifteen years old. Reports from Venetian visitors claimed that she was not outstandingly beautiful, but was possessed of wonderful grace, charm, and good humor, earning her the Turkish nickname Hürrem, or "joyful one." Soon after her arrival, Hürrem became the imperial favorite.

Suleiman's love for Hürrem led him to set aside all precedents for the role of a concubine, including the rule that concubines must cease having children once they gave birth to a male heir. By 1531 Hürrem had given Suleiman one daughter and five sons. In 1533 or 1534 Suleiman entered formal marriage with his consort—an unprecedented and scandalous honor for a concubine. Suleiman reportedly lavished attention on his wife and defied convention by allowing her to remain in the palace throughout her life instead of accompanying her son to a provincial governorship.

Contemporaries were shocked by Hürrem's influence over the sultan and resentful of the apparent role she played in politics and diplomacy. The Venetian ambassador Bassano wrote that "the Janissaries and the entire court hate her and her children likewise, but because the Sultan loves her, no one dares to speak."^{**} Court rumors circulated that Hürrem used witchcraft to control the sultan and ordered the sultan's execution of his first-born son by another mother.

The correspondence between Suleiman and Hürrem, unavailable until the nineteenth century, along with Suleiman's own diaries, confirms her status as the sultan's most trusted confidant and adviser. During his frequent absences, the pair exchanged passionate love letters. Hürrem included political information and warned of potential uprisings. She also intervened in affairs between the empire and her former home, apparently helping Poland attain its privileged diplomatic status. She brought a feminine touch to diplomatic relations, sending personally embroidered articles to foreign leaders.

Hürrem used her enormous pension to contribute a mosque, two schools, a hospital, a fountain, and two public baths to Istanbul. In Jerusalem, Mecca, and Istanbul, she provided soup kitchens and hospices for pilgrims and the poor. She died in 1558, eight years before her husband. Her son Selim II (r. 1566–1574) inherited the throne.

* Quoted in Galina Yermolenko, "Roxolana: The Greatest Empresse of the East," *The Muslim World* 95 (2005): 235.



This portrait emphasizes the beauty and sensual allure of Hürrem, who journeyed from slave to harem favorite to wife of the sultan and mother of his successor. (Pictures from History/akg-images)

Relying on Western observers' reports, historians traditionally depicted Hürrem as a manipulative and power-hungry social climber. They portrayed her career as the beginning of a "sultunate of women" in which strong imperial leadership gave way to court intrigue and debauchery. More recent historians have emphasized the intelligence and courage Hürrem demonstrated in navigating the ruthlessly competitive world of the harem.

Hürrem's journey from Ukrainian maiden to concubine to sultan's wife captured enormous public attention. She is the subject of numerous paintings, plays, and novels, as well as an opera, a ballet, and a symphony by the composer Haydn. Interest in and suspicion of Hürrem continues. In 2003 a Turkish miniseries once more depicted her as a scheming intriguer.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

- What types of power did Hürrem exercise during her lifetime? How did her gender enable her to attain certain kinds of power and also constrain her ability to exercise it?
- What can an exceptional woman like Hürrem reveal about the broader political and social world in which she lived?

Source: Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

take on more power. Marriages were arranged between sultans' daughters and high-ranking servants, creating powerful new members of the imperial household. Over time, the sultan's exclusive authority waned in favor of a more bureaucratic administration.

Like European states, the Ottoman Empire suffered significant crises in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Raised in the harem rather than taking on provincial governorships, the sultans who followed Suleiman were inexperienced and faced numerous political revolts. Ottoman finances suffered from the loss of international trade to the

Portuguese and the Dutch, and the empire—like Spain—suffered from rising prices and a shrinking population. While the Bourbon monarchy was modernizing and enlarging the French army, the Ottomans failed to adopt new military technologies and training methods. As a result, the empire's military strength, long feared throughout Europe, declined, leading ultimately to the ceding of Hungary and Transylvania to the Austrian Habsburgs in 1699. The Ottoman state adapted to these challenges with some measure of success, but it did not recover the glory it held under Suleiman.

Why and how did the constitutional state triumph in the Dutch Republic and England?

While France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia developed absolutist states, England and the Netherlands evolved toward **constitutionalism**, which is the limitation of government by law. Constitutionalism also implies a balance between the authority and power of the government, on the one hand, and the rights and liberties of the subjects, on the other. By definition, all constitutionalist governments have a constitution, be it written or unwritten.

Despite their common commitment to constitutional government, England and the Dutch Republic represented significantly different alternatives to absolute rule. After decades of civil war and an experiment with **republicanism**, the English opted for a constitutional monarchy in 1688. This settlement, which has endured to this day, retained a monarch as the titular head of government but vested sovereignty in an elected parliament. Upon gaining independence from Spain in 1648, the Dutch rejected monarchical rule and adopted a republican form of government in which elected estates held supreme power. Neither the English nor Dutch government was democratic by any standard, but to frustrated inhabitants of absolutist states they were shining examples of the restraint of arbitrary power and the rule of law.

Religious Divides and Civil War

In 1588 Queen Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558–1603) exercised very great personal power; by 1689 the English monarchy was severely circumscribed. A rare female monarch, Elizabeth was able to maintain control over her realm in part by refusing to marry and submit to a husband. She was immensely popular with her people but left no immediate heir to continue her legacy.

In 1603 Elizabeth's Scottish cousin James Stuart succeeded her as James I (r. 1603–1625). Like Louis

XIV, James believed that a monarch had a divine right to his authority and is responsible only to God. James went so far as to lecture the House of Commons: "There are no privileges and immunities which can stand against a divinely appointed King." Such a view ran directly counter to English traditions that a person's property could not be taken away without due process of law. James I and his son Charles I (r. 1625–1649) considered such constraints intolerable and a threat to their divine-right prerogative. Consequently, bitter squabbles erupted between the Crown and the House of Commons. (See "Viewpoints: Stuart Claims to Absolutism and the Parliamentary Response," page 450.) The expenses of England's intervention in the Thirty Years' War only exacerbated tensions. Charles I's response was to refuse to summon Parliament to convene from 1629 onward.

Religious issues also embittered relations between the king and the House of Commons. In the early seventeenth century many English people felt dissatisfied with the Church of England established by Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547). Calvinist **Puritans** wanted to take the Reformation further by "purifying" the Anglican Church of Roman Catholic elements, including crown-appointed bishops.

constitutionalism A form of government in which power is limited by law and balanced between the authority and power of the government, on the one hand, and the rights and liberties of the subjects or citizens on the other hand; could include constitutional monarchies or republics.

republicanism A form of government in which there is no monarch and power rests in the hands of the people as exercised through elected representatives.

Puritans Members of a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reform movement within the Church of England that advocated purifying it of Roman Catholic elements such as bishops, elaborate ceremonials, and wedding rings.



VIEWPOINTS

Stuart Claims to Absolutism and the Parliamentary Response

James I (r. 1603–1625), king of England, fervently believed in the divine right of kings, a doctrine he expounded in a speech to Parliament in 1609. The efforts of James I and his son and successor Charles I (r. 1625–1649) to impose absolute rule in England led to conflict with Parliament. In the 1628 Petition of Right, Parliament rebuked Charles I for disregarding the existing laws of the kingdom, which limited royal power.

James I, Address to Parliament, 1609

Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth: For if you will consider the Attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a King. God hath power to create, or destroy, or unmake at his pleasure, to give life, or send death, to judge all, and to be judged nor accountable to none: To raise low things, and to make high things low at his pleasure, and to God are both soul and body due. And the like power have Kings: they make and unmake their subjects: they have power of raising, and casting down: of life, and of death: Judges over all their subjects, and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only. They have power to exalt low things, and abase high things, . . . and to cry up, or down [praise or criticize] any of their subjects, as they do their money. And to the King is due both the affection of the soul and the service of the body of his subjects. . . .

. . . So is it sedition in Subjects, to dispute what a King may do in the height of his power: But just Kings will ever be willing to declare what they will do, if they will not incur the curse of God. I will not be content that my power be disputed upon: but I shall ever be willing to make the reason appear of all my doings, and rule my actions according to my Laws.

Petition of Right, 1628

By . . . the good laws and statutes of this realm, your subjects have inherited this freedom, that they should not be compelled to contribute to any tax, tallage,* aid, or other like charge nor set by common consent, in parliament.

* Tallage was a tax formerly imposed by kings on town citizens.

James I responded to such ideas by declaring, “No bishop, no king.” His son and successor, Charles I, further antagonized religious sentiments by marrying a French Catholic princess and supporting the heavy-handed policies of the archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573–1645). Laud attempted to impose two new elements on church organization in Scotland: a new prayer book, modeled on the Anglican *Book*

. . . Yet nevertheless, of late . . . your people have been in divers places assembled, and required to lend certain sums of money unto your Majesty, and many of them, upon their refusal so to do . . . have been therefore imprisoned, confined, and sundry other ways molested and disquieted. . . .

. . . And whereas also, by the statute called, *The Great Charter of the Liberties of England* [i.e., Magna Carta], it is declared and enacted, That no freeman may be taken or imprisoned, or be disseized [dispossessed] of his freehold or liberties, or of his free customs, or be outlawed or exiled, or in any manner destroyed, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. . . .

. . . Nevertheless, against the tenor of . . . the good laws and statutes of your realm . . . divers of your subjects have of late been imprisoned without any cause showed. . . .

. . . They do therefore humbly pray your most excellent Majesty; that no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like charge, without common consent, by Act of Parliament: . . . And that no freemen, in any such manner as is before mentioned, be imprisoned or detained. . . .

. . . All which they most humbly pray of your most excellent Majesty as their rights and liberties, according to the laws and statutes of this realm. . . .

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In what ways does James I believe royal power resembles divine power? Why does he believe kings possess such extensive powers? Does he see any limits to his powers?
2. What rights and liberties do English subjects believe they possess, and how has Charles violated them? Why do they believe it is Parliament’s role to defend these freedoms?
3. Do you see any common ground and possibility for compromise between James’s understanding of royal power and the rights of English subjects outlined by Parliament?

Sources: *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), pp. 307–308, 310. Spellings have been modernized; *Magna Charta, The Bill of Rights; with the Petition of Right, Presented to Charles I* (London: J. Bailey, 1820), pp. 18–20.

of Common Prayer, and bishoprics. Charles avoided addressing grievances against him by refusing to call Parliament into session from 1629 to 1640. Instead, he financed his government through extraordinary stopgap levies considered illegal by most English people. However, when Scottish Calvinists revolted against his religious policies, Charles was forced to summon Parliament to obtain funds for an army to put down

**Van Dyck, Charles I at the Hunt, ca. 1635**

Anthony Van Dyck was the greatest of Rubens's many students. In 1633 he became court painter to Charles I. This portrait of Charles just dismounted from a horse emphasizes the aristocratic bearing, elegance, and innate authority of the king. Van Dyck's success led to innumerable commissions by members of the court and aristocratic society. He had a profound influence on portraiture in England and beyond; some scholars believe that this portrait influenced Rigaud's 1701 portrayal of Louis XIV (see "Thinking Like a Historian" on page 434). (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images)

the revolt. Angry with his behavior and sympathetic with the Scots' religious beliefs, in 1641 the House of Commons passed the Triennial Act, which compelled the king to summon Parliament every three years. The Commons also impeached Archbishop Laud and then threatened to abolish bishops. King Charles, fearful of a Scottish invasion, reluctantly accepted these measures. The next act in the conflict was precipitated by the outbreak of rebellion in Ireland, where English governors and landlords had long exploited the people. In 1641 the Catholic gentry of Ireland led an uprising in response to a feared invasion by English anti-Catholic forces.

Without an army, Charles I could neither come to terms with the Scots nor respond to the Irish rebellion. After a failed attempt to arrest parliamentary leaders, Charles left London for the north of England and began to raise an army. In response, Parliament formed its own army, the New Model Army, composed of the militia of the city of London and country squires with business connections.

The English Civil War (1642–1649) that erupted pitted the power of the king against that of the Parliament. After three years of fighting, Parliament's army defeated the king's forces at the Battles of Naseby and Langport in the summer of 1645. Charles refused to concede defeat, and both sides waited for a decisive event. This arrived in the form of the army under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, a member of the House of Commons and a devout Puritan. In 1647 Cromwell's forces captured the king and dismissed anti-Cromwell members of the Parliament. In 1649 the remaining representatives, known as the "Rump Parliament," put

**The English Civil War, 1642–1649**



Puritan Occupations

These twelve engravings depict typical Puritan occupations and show that the Puritans came primarily from the artisan and lower middle classes. The governing classes and peasants made up a much smaller percentage of the Puritans and generally adhered to the traditions of the Church of England. (Private Collection/Look and Learn/Peter Jackson Collection/Bridgeman Images)

Charles on trial for high treason. Charles was found guilty and beheaded on January 30, 1649, an act that sent shock waves around Europe.

The Puritan Protectorate

With the execution of Charles, kingship was abolished. The question remained of how the country would be governed. One answer was provided by philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Hobbes held a pessimistic view of human nature and believed that, left to themselves, humans would compete violently for power and wealth. The only solution, as he outlined in his 1651 treatise *Leviathan*, was a social contract in which all members of society placed themselves under the absolute rule of the sovereign, who would

maintain peace and order. Hobbes imagined society as a human body in which the monarch served as head and individual subjects together made up the body. Just as the body cannot sever its own head, so Hobbes believed that society could not, having accepted the contract, rise up against its king.

Hobbes's longing for a benevolent absolute monarch was not widely shared in England. Instead, Oliver Cromwell and his supporters enshrined a commonwealth, or republican government, known as the **Protectorate**. Theoretically, legislative power rested in the surviving members of Parliament, and executive power was lodged in a council of state. In fact, the army controlled the government, and Oliver Cromwell controlled the army. Though called the Protectorate, the rule of Cromwell (1653–1658) was a form of military dictatorship.

The fiction of republican government was maintained until 1655, when, after repeated disputes, Cromwell dismissed Parliament. Cromwell continued the standing army and proclaimed quasi-martial law.

■ Protectorate The English military dictatorship (1653–1658) established by Oliver Cromwell following the execution of Charles I.

■ Test Act Legislation passed by the English Parliament in 1673 to secure the position of the Anglican Church by stripping Puritans, Catholics, and other dissenters of the right to vote, preach, assemble, hold public office, and teach at or attend the universities.

Reflecting Puritan ideas of morality, Cromwell's state forbade sports, closed the theaters, and rigorously censored the press.

On the issue of religion, Cromwell favored some degree of toleration, and all Christians except Roman Catholics held the right to practice their faiths. Cromwell had long associated Catholicism in Ireland with sedition and heresy, and he led an army there to reconquer the country in August 1649. One month later, his forces crushed a rebellion at Drogheda and massacred the garrison. After Cromwell's departure for England, atrocities worsened. The English banned Catholicism in Ireland, executed priests, and confiscated land from Catholics for English and Scottish settlers.

Cromwell adopted mercantilist policies similar to those of absolutist France. He enforced a Navigation Act (1651) requiring that English goods be transported on English ships. The act was a great boost to the development of an English merchant marine and brought about a short but successful war with the commercially threatened Dutch over trade with the Atlantic colonies. While mercantilist legislation ultimately benefited English commerce, for ordinary people the turmoil of foreign war only added to the harsh conditions of life induced by years of civil war. Cromwell also welcomed the immigration of Jews because of their experience in finance and trade, and they began to return to England four centuries after the expulsion of Jews by King Edward I in 1290.

The Protectorate collapsed when Cromwell died in 1658 and his ineffectual son succeeded him. Fed

up with military rule, the English longed for a return to civilian government and, with it, common law and social stability. By 1660 they were ready to restore the monarchy.

The Restoration of the English Monarchy

The Restoration of 1660 brought to the throne Charles II (r. 1660–1685), eldest son of Charles I, who had been living on the continent. Both houses of Parliament were also restored, together with the established Anglican Church. The Restoration failed to resolve two serious problems, however. What was to be the attitude of the state toward Puritans, Catholics, and dissenters from the established church? And what was to be the relationship between the king and Parliament?

To answer the first question, Parliament enacted the **Test Act** of 1673 against those outside the Church of England, denying them the right to vote, hold public office, preach, teach, attend the universities, or even assemble for meetings. But these restrictions could not be enforced. When the Quaker William Penn held a meeting of his Friends and was arrested, the jury refused to convict him.

In politics, Charles II's initial determination to work well with Parliament did not last long. Finding that Parliament did not grant him an adequate income, Charles entered into a secret agreement with his cousin Louis XIV in 1679. The French king would give Charles £200,000 annually, and in return Charles



The Family of Henry Chorley, Haberdasher of Preston, ca. 1680 This painting celebrates the Puritan family values of order, discipline, and self-restraint. The wife is surrounded by her young children, emphasizing her motherly duties, while her husband is flanked by their grown sons. Nevertheless, the woman's expression suggests she is a strong-minded partner to her husband, not meekly subservient. The couple probably worked side by side in the family business of selling men's clothing and accessories.
(Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, Lancashire, UK/Bridgeman Images)

would relax the laws against Catholics, gradually re-Catholicize England, and convert to Catholicism himself. When the details of this treaty leaked out, a great wave of anti-Catholic sentiment swept England.

When Charles died and his Catholic brother James became king, the worst English anti-Catholic fears were realized. In violation of the Test Act, James II (r. 1685–1688) appointed Roman Catholics to positions in the army, the universities, and local government. He also supported the opening of new Catholic churches and schools.

James's opponents, a powerful coalition of eminent persons in Parliament and the Church of England, bitterly resisted James's ambitions. They offered the English throne to James's heir, his Protestant daughter Mary, and her Dutch husband, Prince William of Orange. In December 1688 James II, his queen, and their infant son fled to France and became pensioners of Louis XIV. Early in 1689 William and Mary were crowned king and queen of England.

The English call the events of 1688 and 1689 the "Glorious Revolution" because they believe it replaced one king with another with barely any bloodshed. In truth, William's arrival sparked revolutionary riots and violence across the British Isles and in North American cities such as Boston and New York. Uprisings by supporters of James, known as Jacobites, occurred in 1689 in Scotland. In Ireland, the two sides waged outright war from 1689 to 1691. But William's victory at the Battle of the Boyne (1690) and the subsequent Treaty of Limerick (1691) sealed his accession to power.

Constitutional Monarchy

In England, the Glorious Revolution represented the final destruction of the idea of divine-right monarchy. The men who brought about the revolution framed their intentions in the Bill of Rights, which was formulated in direct response to Stuart absolutism. Law was to be made in Parliament; once made, it could not be suspended by the Crown. Parliament had to be called at least once every three years. The independence of the judiciary was established, and there was to be no standing army in peacetime. Protestants could possess arms, but the Catholic minority could not. A Catholic could not inherit the throne. Additional legislation granted freedom of worship to Protestant dissenters, but not to Catholics. William and Mary accepted these principles when they took the throne, and the House of Parliament passed the Bill of Rights in December 1689.

The Glorious Revolution and the concept of representative government found its best defense in political

philosopher John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690). Locke (1632–1704) maintained that a government that oversteps its proper function—protecting the natural rights of life, liberty, and property—becomes a tyranny. Under a tyrannical government, the people have the natural right to rebellion.

Although the events of 1688 and 1689 brought England closer to Locke's ideal, they did not constitute a democratic revolution. The revolution placed sovereignty in Parliament, and Parliament represented the upper classes.

The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century

In the late sixteenth century the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands fought for and won their independence from Spain. The independence of the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was recognized in 1648 in the treaty that ended the Thirty Years' War. In this period, often called the "golden age" of the Netherlands, Dutch ideas and attitudes played a profound role in shaping a new and modern worldview. At the same time, the United Provinces developed its own distinctive model of a constitutional state.

Rejecting the rule of a monarch, the Dutch established a republic, a state in which power rested in the hands of the people and was exercised through elected representatives. Other examples of republics in early modern Europe included the Swiss Confederation and several autonomous city-states of Italy and the Holy Roman Empire. Among the Dutch, an oligarchy of wealthy businessmen called regents handled domestic affairs in each province's Estates (assemblies). The provincial Estates held virtually all the power. A federal assembly, or States General, handled foreign affairs and war, but it did not possess sovereign authority. All issues had to be referred back to the local Estates for approval, and each of the seven provinces could veto any proposed legislation. Holland, the province with the largest navy and the most wealth, usually dominated the republic and the States General.

In each province, the Estates appointed an executive officer, known as the **stadholder**, who carried out ceremonial functions and was responsible for military defense. Although in theory the stadholder was freely chosen by the Estates and was answerable to them, in practice the strong and influential House of Orange usually held the office of stadholder in several of the seven provinces of the republic. Tensions persisted between supporters of the House of Orange and those of the staunchly republican Estates, who suspected that the princes of Orange harbored monarchical ambitions. (See "Evaluating Visual Evidence: Gonzales Coques, *The Young Scholar and His Wife*, 1640," page 455.)

stadholder The executive officer in each of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, a position often held by the princes of Orange.

Gonzales Coques, *The Young Scholar and His Wife*, 1640

During the seventeenth century much of Europe was gripped by economic, social, and political crisis. A long period of cold, wet weather destroyed crops, while religious divides contributed to the outbreak of the highly destructive Thirty Years' War. A shining exception to this grim picture was the Netherlands, which saw increased agricultural productivity, growing involvement in world trade, and a thriving urban culture. The bustling cities of the Dutch Republic and Flanders gave birth in this period to a new style of painting, now known as "genre painting," that celebrated the virtues of everyday life, family, and the domestic sphere.

Although earlier generations of artists had reserved their highest praise for paintings that imaginatively re-created great historical and mythological events, genre painters depicted realistic scenes set in family homes, taverns, and other prosaic locales. They eschewed idealized heroes and dramatic imagery in favor of the earthly pleasures of eating, drinking, socializing, and spending time with friends and family in cozy interiors, often furnished with the exotic wares pouring in from the East. Genre paintings thus reflected the values and pastimes of the wealthy bourgeois merchants and other urban elites who commissioned them. This

painting style of the Dutch golden age became extremely popular and spread to the rest of northern Europe.

Gonzales Coques, the painter of this image, was born in Antwerp (part of modern Belgium) around 1615. He apprenticed with the Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel the Younger and became a master of the Antwerp painters' guild in 1640. Specializing in portraits of individuals and families—such as this fine rendition of an affluent young scholar and his wife—Coques contributed to the development of genre painting.

EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

1. What social and cultural values does this painting seem to celebrate? List the details in the painting that provide evidence for your answer.
2. What insight does the painter offer into the roles of men and women in this society and the attributes of masculinity and femininity? Why do you think the husband and wife are standing separately and not together, as they probably would in a modern family portrait?
3. How does the artist's use of color help convey meaning in the painting?



(Gemaeldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel, Germany/© Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel/Bridgeman Images)



Jan Steen, *The Merry Family*, 1668 In this painting from the Dutch golden age, a happy family enjoys a boisterous song while seated around the dining table. Despite its carefree appearance, the painting was intended to teach a moral lesson. The children are shown drinking wine and smoking, bad habits they have learned from their parents. The inscription hanging over the mantelpiece (upper right) spells out the message clearly: "As the Old Sing, so Pipe the Young." (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/The Netherlands/Album/Art Resource, NY)

The political success of the Dutch rested on their phenomenal commercial prosperity. The Dutch originally came to dominate European shipping by putting profits from their original industry—herring fishing—into shipbuilding. They boasted the lowest shipping rates and largest merchant marine in Europe, which allowed them to undersell foreign competitors. In the seventeenth century global trade and commerce brought the Dutch the highest standard of living in Europe, perhaps in the world. Salaries were high, and all classes of society ate well. A scholar has described the Netherlands as “an island of plenty in a sea of want.” Consequently, the Netherlands experienced very few of the food riots that characterized the rest of Europe.⁵

The moral and ethical bases of Dutch commercial wealth were thrift, social discipline, and religious toleration. Although there is scattered evidence of anti-Semitism, Jews enjoyed a level of acceptance and

assimilation in business and general culture unique in early modern Europe. Anti-Catholic laws existed through the eighteenth century, but they were only partly enforced. In the Dutch Republic, toleration paid off: it attracted a great deal of foreign capital and investment. After Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, many Huguenots fled France for the Dutch Republic. They brought with them a high level of artisanal skill and business experience as well as a loathing for state repression that would inspire the political views of the Enlightenment (see “The Early Enlightenment” in Chapter 16).

NOTES

1. John A. Lynn, “Recalculating French Army Growth,” in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), p. 125.