

3 – The Growth of European Nation-States and the Birth of Science: Europe in the 1500s and Early 1600s

Overview

By the start of the sixteenth century, centralization of governments had led to the rise of powerful nation-states, to concomitant European exploration of the globe, and to regional wars on the Continent. Spain, following the Portuguese lead, explored the Atlantic and soon surpassed its Iberian neighbor in colonies, wealth, and military power. Gold and silver from the New World helped shift the balance of power from the Mediterranean basin to the Atlantic coast of Europe. The search for wealth helped to usher in an age of scientific discovery that began to reshape European thinking. The wealth from mines in the Spanish colonies created a financial and commercial center in the Netherlands, brought about rampant inflation in Europe, and eventually led to the decline of Spain as a major power.

Feudalism died gradually. The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), which devastated France and exhausted its nobility, indirectly led to a strong monarchy. Peace encouraged commerce, which gave rise to a taxable middle class that could support a national army independent of the nobility. From the middle of the fifteenth century to the second decade of the sixteenth, the monarchs of France centralized the state, recruited bourgeois administrators into government, and strengthened the army. Through most of the sixteenth century, the foreign adventures of two strong kings and the upheaval caused by the Reformation weakened the monarchy. Under the intelligent guidance of Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), prime minister to Louis XIII (r. 1601-1643), the central government brought peace, prosperity, and stability to the realm during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The strong government that developed in France contrasted with the constitutional system that evolved in England. The powers of the English kings had been checked by the nobility as far back as the thirteenth century; with the Magna Carta. The Tudors took the English throne in the fifteenth

century as a compromise among the claimants who battled over it in the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487). Having only a tenuous hereditary right to the monarchy, the Tudors were forced to work through Parliament, which gradually represented a greater and greater portion of English society and, therefore, avoided the class distinctions that divided France. The Reformation had its effects on English government: The independence of the Anglican Church from the papacy strengthened the monarchy and Parliament; the Puritan Revolution established the supremacy of Parliament over the king and nurtured the tradition of constitutionalism.

A strong tradition of absolutism developed in Eastern Europe, especially in the rising states of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and the Austrians emerged . over control of southeastern Europe because of Austrian territorial expansion. Social reform was sporadic and largely ineffectual and serfdom was widespread in the region. The baroque style of architecture was favored by the absolute monarchs of these states as a manifestation of the power and glory of their reigns.

Exploration and Colonization: 1400s to 1600s

The Portuguese, from the middle to the end of the fifteenth century, supported by their able leader, **Prince Henry the Navigator** (1394-1460), explored the South Atlantic. Explorers from several states on the Atlantic set out on their journeys of discovery. They were spurred by missionary zeal, personal gain, national pride, and Renaissance curiosity, and aided by the development of the magnetic compass, the astrolabe, the sextant, quadrant, cannons mounted on ships, and more seaworthy craft such as the caravel, galleon, lateen, and carrack, which gave Europeans the ability to sail more confidently across large bodies of water, far from shores. They also created maps called *portolani*, that ship captains used as charts to find their way at sea

- Expeditions led by **Diaz, da Gama** (c. 1469-1524), and **Cabral** (1467-1520) explored the coast of Africa and eventually established trading posts in India.
 - **Christopher Columbus** (1451-1506), for the Spanish crown to find a direct route to Asia, discovered the Western Hemisphere.
 - Despite opening the “New World,” he laid the foundations for Europeans’ oppression and exploitation of native peoples.
 - **Ferdinand Magellan** (1480-1521) his expedition circumnavigated the globe for Spain.
 - **Cortés** (1485-1547) and **Pizarro** (1475-1541), respectively, conquered the great American empires of the Aztecs and Incas.
 - Gold and silver flowed from the New World mines into the coffers of the Spanish monarchs and to the merchants and manufacturers of the Netherlands.
- These explorers opened up trade routes on three continents for new products that would bring large profits to Europeans for centuries to come.
 - This exchange of valuable goods and resources from each continent was known as the **Columbian Exchange**.
 - This trade brought European manufactured goods and alcohol to Africa and the Americas, and products such as lumber, fur, gold, sugar, peanuts, beans, potatoes, tobacco, chocolate, vanilla, and corn to Europe.

- It was the largest redistribution of biological organisms between regions of the globe that the world had ever seen.
- It included diseases, people, and ideas as well as trade in goods and services.
- The Europeans introduced grains, such as wheat, rice, and barley to the New World, along with many other species, such as honey bees, cows, pigs, goats, horses, oxen, multiple types of trees and decorative plants, and many infectious diseases that they spread as they traveled.
- See the map below for more detail.



European rule in the Americas resulted in the Spanish and Portuguese raping the land and the people of all resources and wealth.

- Within 50 years, 90 percent of all natives were killed by the germs, guns, steel weapons, and armor that Europeans brought with them.
- Guns and gunpowder, along with horses and armor, gave the Europeans a huge advantage over the natives, who were slaughtered or else surrendered to the military superiority of the Europeans.

- Old methods of agriculture, writing, and worship were forcibly changed; land was taken from natives and distributed to Europeans.
- Although Columbus thought he had sailed to India, explorer **Amerigo Vespucci** realized that Columbus had found two continents previously unknown to Europeans and dubbed them a “Mundus Novus,” or “New World.”
 - These were later named the “Americas” after Vespucci. Spain reorganized territory in the New World into four viceroyalties:
 - New Spain
 - Peru
 - New Granada
 - La Plata
 - Justice in Spanish territories was enforced by an *audiencia*, a panel of 12 judges with the viceroy as head judge.
 - *Intendants* were local officials, who received authority directly from the crown to enforce laws and impose taxes.
 - The *quinto*, a tax on all precious metals found in the New World, was payable to the Spanish king.
 - This tax made up one-quarter of Spain’s income during this era.
 - Local officials called *corregidores* enforced mercantilist laws banning trade between the Spanish colonies and other European powers

Mercantilism emerged as a new economic system in which the mother country trades with the colonies, and the colonies are not allowed to trade directly with other nations. It was intended to lessen financial dependence on other European countries.

- The incredible influx of gold and silver in the 1500s led inflation to spread from Spain throughout Europe because the mines at Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Potosi in Mexico and Peru flooded the gold and silver markets.
 - The availability of gold in the New World lured many entrepreneurs there, damaging domestic industry in Spain.
 - Slavery, although it had existed since the dawn of time, increased and changed drastically in character – in large part because of exploration.

- Plantation agriculture was practiced by the conquering Europeans in the New World.
 - At first they exploited the natives, who died in the millions as a result of disease and harsh treatment.
 - Soon after, Europeans resorted to importing African slaves, and race would be linked to slavery in the Americas from this point onward.
- Between 1453 and 1865 over 200 million Africans and their descendants were enslaved or killed in the slave trade.
- In 1790 Africans made up about 20 percent of the U.S. population.
- Africans were seen as beastly and were feared for their potent sexuality.
- Many tried to justify slavery by stating that sub-Saharan Africans were subhuman and had no original culture of their own.

The Commercial Revolution (1500-1700) helped to bring about and intensify the “Age of Discovery” and exploration. It had its roots in the invention of banking by the Medici in Florence and the Fuggers in Antwerp and Amsterdam, as well as in the tremendous population growth in Europe.

- The huge profits from exploration and shipping, and the high risks associated with these endeavors, spurred the creation of the first joint-stock companies, such as the Dutch East India Company in 1602 and the British East India Company shortly thereafter.
 - Once companies could sell themselves to investors, stock markets were born, first in the Netherlands, and then they spread.
 - New accounting methods, such as double entry bookkeeping, allowed businesses and nations to assign revenues to specific expenses.
 - New banks, such as the Bank of Amsterdam, emerged as a result of the commercial revolution and the appearance of stock markets.
- The emergence of banking and stock markets led to a rapid revolution in the way the economies of Western Europe worked.
 - Prices rose in part because of the influx of precious metals, rising population, and enclosure, but also because a new wealthy middle class began to emerge.
 - often called a “price revolution.”
 - Further stimulated by the rise of the “putting-out” industry, sometimes known as the domestic system (in which people

manufactured goods in their homes for sale to a capitalist who provided raw materials), those with capital to invest found great opportunities for profits, and the new stock markets presented greater opportunities to invest.

- This combination of factors led to the beginning of the modern capitalist system that is now referred to as the **Commercial Revolution**.
- Merchants and bankers, a new elite class, were the top of society in many towns.
- A new elite class emerged in Spain and its colonies, led by Spanish-speaking gentlemen termed *caballeros* and *hidalgos*.
- The **gentry**, or landed classes, in England emerged there as the elites.
- In France, those who gained wealth could buy their way into the untaxed class of the nobility, and such people were termed the **nobility of the robe** as opposed to families that had been noble for centuries and were called the **nobility of the sword**.

The Dutch, the Spanish, and Eastern Europe

Chafing under the oppressive rule of the Spanish Catholic King Philip II (r. 1556-1598), the Protestants of the prosperous Low Countries, whose leaders were Calvinist, revolted against Spanish rule in the years 1556 to 1587. The bitter and bloody conflict led to the division of the Low Countries into the mainly Catholic Spanish Netherlands in the south (which eventually became Belgium) and the mainly Protestant United Provinces of the Netherlands in the north (unofficially termed “Holland”).

- The defeat in 1588 of Philip II’s powerful Spanish Armada in its attempt to invade England, an ally of the Netherlands, marked the beginning of the decline of Spain’s hegemony in Western Europe.
- The **Thirty Years’ War** (1618-1648) began as a religious conflict, evolved into a national struggle for dominance of central Europe, and led to the destruction of vast areas in Germany and the decline of the regional hegemony of the Holy Roman Empire.
- The Austrian Habsburgs confronted the powerful Muslim Ottoman Turks who were attempting to expand their control of Eastern Europe.
- The 1683 attack on Austria by the forces of **Suleiman the Magnificent** was beaten back, and the Austrians eventually gained control of Bohemia,

Hungary, and Transylvania.

- Russia and Western Europe experienced radically different paths of development until the eighteenth century.
 - For centuries, the princes of Moscow had been retainers of the Mongol conquerors, and the **czars** (emperors) were able to use their influence with the Mongols to consolidate their power over the Russian people and to establish the hereditary role of czar.
 - Ivan the Terrible (r. 1547-1584) was an autocratic expansionist who limited the power of the nobles (**boyars**), expanded the realm, and solidified the role of czar.
 - A “Time of Troubles” ensued after Ivan’s death, marked by civil war because of the lack of an heir.
 - The **Romanov** dynasty was established by the nobles in 1613, and the family ruled with an iron hand, reinstituting serfdom and gaining virtual control over the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Expansion of Europe

(More information is found in Chapter 4.)

- The **open field system**, used during the Middle Ages, divided the arable land available to a farming community into narrow strips that were assigned to the individual families of the community. Because of a lack of effective fertilizers and ignorance about nitrogen fixing crops, a large portion of the community's land lay fallow.
- A “mini ice age” had hit Europe at the end of the medieval era, and the advent of better weather led to more food and a population explosion, which then resulted in a cycle of famine and feast, depending upon harvests.
- For centuries the need for fallow lands had left most of Europe practicing subsistence agriculture by which they survived but created no surplus.
- New ideas, such as crop rotation to nitrogen-providing crops such as clover and turnips, allowed significantly higher output.
- A **price revolution** occurred as a result of the accumulation of capital and the expansion of the free-market economy and the commercialization of agriculture, which enriched the landowners in Western Europe.
- The **enclosure movement** in England, during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, fenced off the open fields to enable large landowners to employ crop rotation.
 - Crop rotation was the planting of nitrogen-fixing crops, such as beans and certain grasses, in soil that had been used for other crops.
 - The idea spread with a two-crop rotation near the Mediterranean, and a three-crop rotation in the north
 - The soil remained fertile and little land lay fallow.
 - Many small or inefficient farmers were displaced, moving to the towns and cities but, ultimately, food production rose dramatically.
 - These small farmers were said to have freehold tenure on their land.
 - Other farmers paid rent to landowners to farm their land or provided labor services in return for the right to farm on it.
 - The village commons was closed and villagers lost the ability to

graze their own animals there.

- A greater variety of foods, and the introduction of foods from the New World, specifically the potato, improved general nutrition and contributed, along with the disappearance of the plague, to a dramatic increase in population.
 - Better sanitation, introduction of quarantine methods, and the elimination of the black rat, whose fleas carried the plague microorganisms, eliminated the plague.
 - Except for the development of the smallpox vaccine in the late eighteenth century, the crude and often dangerous medical practices of the day contributed little to the health and longevity of the people.
 - **Mercantilism** was a system developed by various European states to guarantee a favorable balance of trade with other European nations or with their American colonies.
 - By creating an imbalance of exports over imports, the difference was made up in gold or silver payments.
 - Pursued policy to get precious metals from trading partners to pay for the costs of maintaining standing armies and government bureaucracies.

The Development of “Natural Philosophy” or Science

The idea of studying the universe through scientific experimentation and observation emerged as the ultimate form of gathering knowledge. The great thinkers of the day turned away from their artistic pursuits, which had been so profitable, and began to try to explain the mysteries of the universe or even the multiverse: The term science would have to wait until the nineteenth century but, for the time being, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the study of natural phenomena was labeled “natural philosophy.”

The Philosophers of Modern Science

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an English thinker who advocated the inductive or experimental method: observation of natural phenomena, accumulating data, experimenting to refine the data; drawing conclusions; formulating principles that are subject to continuing observation and experimentation. He is generally credited as an original empiricist.

René Descartes (1596-1650) was a French philosopher whose *Discourse on Method* (1637) argued that everything that is not validated by observation should be doubted, but that his own existence was proven by the proposition: “I think, therefore I am” (*cogito ergo sum*). God exists, he argued, because a perfect being would have existence as part of its nature. Cartesian Dualism divided all existence into the spiritual and the material-the former can be examined only through deductive reasoning; the latter is subject to the experimental method. His goal to reconcile religion with science was short-circuited by the very method of skepticism that subsequent philosophers inherited from his writings. He is generally credited as an original rationalist.

The Revolutionary Thinkers of Science

- **Nicolaus Copernicus** (1473-1543), a Polish astronomer, upset the comfortable assumptions of the geocentric (earth-centered) universe of Ptolemy (the second century Egyptian) with his heliocentric (sun-centered) conception of the universe.
 - Although his work, *Concerning the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*, was not published until after his death, his theories were proven by **Johannes Kepler** (1571-1630), a German who plotted the elliptical orbits of the planets, thereby predicting their movements.

- **Galileo Galilei** (1564-1642) made telescopic observations that validated Copernican theory, and his spirited advocacy of Copernicus earned him condemnation by the Inquisition.
- The Copernican heliocentric view seemed to contradict the primacy of humanity in God's creation and thereby to deny the teachings of the Church.
 - Supported in Protestant northern Europe, where the Reformation had questioned all orthodoxy.
 - The theory and the scientific method that had formulated it symbolized Europe's new intellectual freedom.
 - The Roman Catholic Church tried to suppress the Copernican revolution by banning writings of the charismatic Galileo and putting him under lifelong house arrest for possible heresy.
 - Galileo had observed the moons of Jupiter as support for Copernicus, which earned him a lasting reputation for rigidity.
 - (It took nearly 350 years for the papacy to exonerate Galileo.)
- The field of medicine began to advance with the rising practice of human dissection, allowing medical knowledge to grow. New advances in anatomy, the study of human systems such as circulation, and toxicology occurred during this period. The practice of Rome's Greek-born physician and philosopher, Galen, who had healed through adjusting bodily humors, was challenged on many fronts.
 - **Andreas Vesalius** (1514-1564) was the father of modern anatomy. His anatomy book, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, revolutionized the study of the human body. He is often credited with the discovery of our skeletal, nervous, and other systems.
 - **Paracelsus** (1493-1541), was a German physician, botanist, and astronomer who invented toxicology. He rejected Galen and wanted to perform medical research based purely on observations in nature rather than by studying what others had written. He served as a physician in the Venetian wars.
 - **William Harvey** (1578-1657) explained the circulatory system in detail for the first time in his work, *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood*.

Results of the Scientific Revolution

- **Deism** emerged from the discovery of the natural sciences as the religious ideal of an era in which God was a kind of cosmic clockmaker who created a perfect universe that He does not have to intervene in.
- **Rationalism**: the conviction that the laws of nature are fathomable by human reason, and that humanity is perfectible-as an assumption and an achievable goal.
- The **scientific revolution** of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries redefined astronomy and physics.
- Less dramatic but still-significant advances took place in *mathematics*, especially with the development of probability and calculus, and in *medicine* through advances in surgery, anatomy, drug therapy, and with the discovery of microorganisms.
- Creation of learned societies dedicated to the advance of science, such as the **French Academy of Sciences** and the **Royal Society of London**.
- The development of science transformed the intellectual life of Europe by convincing people that human reason could understand the secrets of the universe and transform life without the help of organized religion.

The eighteenth century marked the end of the *Age of Religion*, which had governed European thought for over a millennium. Skepticism and rationalism became offshoots of the development of science, which encouraged the growth of secularism.

The Development of Absolutism in France

- Francis I (r. 1515-1547), a Valois rival of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, battled unsuccessfully to weaken the Habsburgs as Europe's most powerful family.
 - Managed to consolidate absolutism in France by instituting the **taille** (a direct tax on land and property).
 - With the **Concordat of Bologna**, he granted the pope the right to collect *annates* (the first year's revenue from Church offices) in return for the power to nominate high officials in the French Church.
 - Effectively nationalized the Church in France and increased the power of the monarchy.
- His successor, **Henry II** (r. 1547-1559), expanded his father's policy and actively persecuted the **Huguenots** (French Calvinists).
 - Continued persecution under **Francis II**, and **Charles IX** provoked civil war, which was halted by an edict of toleration issued by **Catherine de Medici**, mother of, and regent for, Charles IX.
- The **Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day** renewed the brutal civil war when Catholic mobs slaughtered Huguenot leaders who had gathered in Paris to celebrate a royal wedding.
 - During the **War of the Three Henrys**, King Henry III was murdered, and Henry of Guise, the Catholic leader was assassinated.
 - Although the Huguenots were never more than 10 percent of the French population, they wielded great influence since they came from the nobility and the bourgeoisie.
- Persecution, civil war, and dynastic rivalry left **Henry of Navarre**, a Huguenot, as the only legitimate claimant to the French throne.
 - He ascended, after an expedient conversion to Catholicism ("Paris is worth a mass"), as **Henry IV** (r. 1589-1610).
 - Issued the **Edict of Nantes**, a remarkable expression of religious tolerance that guaranteed civil and religious freedom to the Huguenot minority.
 - Finance minister, the Duke of Sully, reformed the tax collection

system to make it more equitable and efficient, improved transportation, stimulated trade and industry, and fostered prosperity.

- Resulted in an increase in the prestige and power of the monarchy.
- The divine right to rule theory gained ground under the support of philosopher and jurist, Jean Bodin, who wrote in support of indivisible power in the hands of the monarch.
- After the death of Henry IV, the government suffered from corruption and mismanagement during the regency of **Louis XIII**.
 - In 1624, Louis appointed **Cardinal Richelieu** as prime minister, a post he held from 1624 to 1642.
 - Richelieu further centralized the government by:
 - Encouraging the commerce and industry that increased the tax base.
 - Strengthening the military.
 - Instituting the **intendant system**, in which bourgeois officials, answerable only to the king, who:
 - Supervised the provinces.
 - Diminished the power of the nobility.
 - Richelieu's domestic policies strengthened absolutism in France and prepared the way for its supreme embodiment in the **Sun King, Louis XIV**.
- **Louis XIV** (r. 1643-1715) was four when he ascended the throne of France.
 - His mother was his regent.
 - She chose the Italian, **Cardinal Mazarin** (1602-1661), as prime minister.
 - Scared by the **Fronde** revolt as a youth.
 - His finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, extended the administrative, financial, military, and religious control of the central state over the French population.
 - Like Richelieu, Cardinal Mazarin was a capable administrator, but not a religious man, and he was not even a priest when he was made a cardinal.

The Development of Constitutionalism in England

Henry VII (r. 1485-1509), the first of the **Tudor** monarchs, established a strong central government even though many regarded the family as usurpers, invited to the throne as an expedient compromise to end the Wars of the Roses. By regulating trade and internal commerce through monopolies, charters, and licenses, Henry raised revenue from the prosperous middle class. This money enabled him to finance a standing army and keep the nobility in check. The **Court of the Star Chamber** administered central justice and further subdued rebellious nobles. Since the Tudors were beholden to Parliament for inviting them to the throne, Henry and his successors, including his son **Henry VIII** (r. 1509-1547), consulted Parliament on significant issues.

- Unlike his father, who was levelheaded and tightfisted, **Henry VIII** was an impetuous, extravagant, and passionate man whose temper, ambitions, and appetites were legendary.
 - The need to maintain legitimacy by having a male heir led Henry VIII to make the decisions, with Parliament's support, that led to the **English Reformation**. (See pages 97-98.)
- **Edward VI** (r. 1547-1553) assumed the throne upon the death of his father, Henry VIII.
 - Since Edward was only ten and of fragile health, the government was headed by a regent, the Duke of Somerset.
 - The basic tenets of the English Reformation were restated, and the **Anglican Book of Common Prayer** was made the basis for all church services.
 - Edward died at the young age of 16.
- **Mary I of England** (r. 1553-1558), the daughter of Henry VIII by his first wife, the Catholic Catherine of Aragon, became queen when Edward died.
 - Unpopular, not only because she was Roman Catholic but because she was married to **Philip II** of Spain.
 - Had to suppress a rebellion against her rule and her marriage alliance with Spain.
 - "Bloody Mary" earned her name when she burned hundreds of

Protestants at the stake for dissenting against her attempt to reinstitute Catholicism in England.

- When she died, she was succeeded by her half-sister, **Elizabeth**, Henry's daughter by his second wife, Anne Boleyn.
- **Elizabeth I** (r. 1558-1603), last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs.
 - Elizabeth reigned when the population of England and Wales was between 3 and 4 million, while that of France was over 16 million and that of Spain nearly 9 million.
 - Enriched by its conquests and colonies in the New World, Spain was the predominant power of Europe.
 - England, part of the British Isles, was at the geographic and political fringe of the powerful nations, vying for respect from the major powers, such as France, Russia, and Austria.
 - The Church of England was independent from Rome but close to Roman Catholic theology.
 - Elizabeth's government balanced power between the monarchy and Parliament.
 - England's wealth came from rich arable land and an energetic populace that excelled in commerce and trade.
 - England's social system was unique.
 - The gentry, lesser nobles whose original wealth came from ownership of land, expanded their wealth by entering the world of commerce and by intermarrying with the middle class.
 - There were no glaring distinctions between the upper and middle classes in England, as there were on the Continent, and the interests of nobles, gentry, and bourgeoisie were represented in Parliament
 - Since the Tudors had been invited to the throne of England to settle the rival claims of the Houses of York and Lancaster during the Wars of the Roses, Elizabeth, her charismatic father, and her capable grandfather had lived under the shadow of being considered "dynastic pretenders":
 - The child of Anne Boleyn, whose marriage to Henry VIII was considered scandalous;
 - The **Virgin Queen** (a euphemism for Elizabeth's having never married, considering her notorious love affairs) had to

prove her mettle in the face of the prejudices against her line, her parentage, and her gender;

- Her natural intelligence had been honed by substantial education; her powerful personality had been toughened by living as a family “outcast” at the courts of her father, half-brother, and her half-sister;
- Adored by her people and feared by her enemies, both at home and abroad;
- She reigned for nearly a half-century as one of Europe’s greatest monarchs and one of the world’s greatest women.

The Elizabethan Age

Religion

Upon assuming the throne, Elizabeth repealed Mary’s pro-Catholic legislation and reinstated the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity that had established the English Reformation during her father’s reign.

The **Thirty-Nine Articles** (1563) followed Protestant doctrine and was vague enough to accommodate the majority of the English population, except the **Puritans** (English Calvinists). Puritans believed that the *liturgy* (prescribed ritual) and the *hierarchy* (the order of rank within the organization) needed “purification” from Catholic influence. Militant Puritans challenged royal authority and, while they were suppressed for a time, they grew stronger during the reigns of Elizabeth’s successors and would influence the development of constitutionalism.

Diplomacy

When the Netherlands, a Habsburg possession that had adopted Protestantism, revolted against Spanish rule, Elizabeth entered into an alliance with the Dutch in 1577, because both nations had strong traditions of democracy and a Protestant majority among their populations as well as from fear that Holland would provide a base from which Spain could invade England. Both England and Holland sent *privateers* (warships not commissioned by the state, but covertly supported by them) to prey on the Spanish treasure ships from her colonies in the New World.

- Outraged, Philip II, Spanish king and Holy Roman Emperor, conspired with English Catholics to overthrow Elizabeth and put her cousin, the Catholic Mary Stuart, queen of the Scots, on the throne.

- In 1587, Elizabeth ordered the execution of Mary for treason, and Philip declared war on England.
- *La Grande y Felicisima Armada*, or “great and most fortunate fleet,” of 132 heavily armed warships loaded with troops, was defeated in 1588 by the superior naval tactics of the smaller, more maneuverable English fleet led by Sir Francis Drake (1540-1596).
- The superior navigational skills and tactics of the English were aided by winds that drove the Armada into the North Sea, eventually to suffer from severe storms that sank many Spanish ships.
- The failure of the Spanish Armada marks the beginning of the decline of Spanish naval dominance and the rise of the British.

Culture

This was the Golden Age of English literature, the era of Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, Marlowe, More, and Francis Bacon, when a brilliant national literature was developed that instilled pride in the uniqueness of English culture.

The Stuart Kings and Parliament (1603-1688)

James I (r. 1603-1625), king of Scotland and son of Mary, Queen of Scots, took the throne upon Elizabeth’s death, since she had no direct heirs. A believer in the divine right of kings, James failed to understand the importance of Parliament in governing England. A conference at **Hampton Court** in 1604 failed to reconcile the Puritans, who opposed the Anglican hierarchy as the Church of England. The **Gunpowder Plot**, 1605, was uncovered before disgruntled Catholics (led by Guy Fawkes) objecting to James’s enforcement of laws that required participation in Anglican services, could blow up the king and Parliament. The years 1610 to 1611 saw Parliament enmeshed in the issue of its role in financing government.

- The “**Addled**” **Parliament** met in 1614, so-called by James because it spent its entire session arguing that taxes could be levied only with its consent and that rule was by king and Parliament in conjunction.
 - Dissolving Parliament, James tried to rule without it until England’s involvement in the Thirty Years’ War necessitated his reconvening it.
 - In 1621, after a rancorous session in which Parliament criticized James’s foreign policy, Parliament passed the **Great Protestation**, claiming free speech and authority in conducting governmental

affairs. James dissolved the body and arrested its leaders.

- **Charles I** (r. 1625-1649) was, like his father, devoted to the divine right theory and, unlike his father, woefully inept at dealing with Parliament.
 - Embroiled in wars on the Continent, he called for Parliament to vote funds to carry them through.
 - Parliament refused to do so until Charles signed the **Petition of Right**.
 - It guaranteed:
 - Parliament alone can levy taxes.
 - Martial law cannot be declared in peacetime.
 - Soldiers may not be quartered in private homes.
 - Imprisonment required a specific charge.
 - The Bishops' War of 1639-1640, after Archbishop Laud persecuted Puritans and tried to force Anglican worship upon the Presbyterian Scots, led Charles to reconvene Parliament in order to pay war debts from his loss.
 - **The Long Parliament** (1640-1660) demanded the following in return for paying for Charles's defeat:
 - Impeach his top advisers.
 - Allow Parliament to meet every three years without his summons.
 - Promise not to dissolve Parliament without its consent.
 - When Charles attempted, in early 1642, to arrest opposition members, Parliament seized control of the army.
 - Charles gathered his forces.
 - The **English Civil War** (1642-1649) began.

The Course of the Conflict

The Civil War in England was caused by a conflict between the king and the Parliament about where sovereignty lies and what are its limits. In the end, the hostilities would leave Parliament as the sovereign power of England, with the monarch to be reduced to more of a ceremonial role from the 1650s onward. The rising middle class, many of whom were members of Parliament, wanted to gain political power, so this civil war is often viewed by economic historians as a conflict between the monarchy and nobility on one side, and the bourgeoisie on the other. The middle class, the merchants, the major

cities, and a small segment of the nobility supported Parliament and were called Roundheads. The Anglican clergy, the majority of the nobility, and the peasants backed the king and were referred to as Royalists or Cavaliers.

1643 – The Roundheads allied with Presbyterian Scotland, promising to impose Presbyterianism on England in exchange for military assistance.

Charles called on Irish Catholics for help.

1644 – Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), a Puritan leader of Parliament, led his New Model Army of Puritans against the Cavaliers at Marston Moor and defeated them decisively.

1645 – Charles surrendered to the Scots.

1647 – The Scots turned Charles over to Parliament, which was led by Cromwell's Independents, who favored religious toleration. The Scots turned about and allied with Charles, who promised that he would impose Presbyterianism on the English.

1648 – Cromwell defeated the Scots at the Battle of Preston and helped purge the Presbyterians from Parliament, thereby creating the Rump Parliament, which voted to behead Charles for treason.

1649 – With the execution of Charles, England became a republic, the Commonwealth, and Cromwell and his army wielded power. In suppressing Irish supporters of the Crown, the Puritans committed terrible atrocities and imposed injustices that would exacerbate the Irish Question for centuries.

1653-1660 – Cromwell was designated Lord Protector by a puppet Parliament and ruled with its support until his death in 1658. His son Richard, a far less capable ruler, was deposed in 1660, and Charles II (r. 1661-1685) was proclaimed king.

The Stuart Restoration (1660-1688)

The **Cavalier Parliament** (1660-1679) marked the development of the first political parties, the Tory and Whig parties.

- The **Tories**, made up of nobles, gentry, and the Anglicans, were conservatives who supported the monarchy over Parliament and who wanted Anglicanism to be the state religion.
- The **Whigs**, mainly middle class and Puritan, favored Parliament and religious toleration.
 - Since the Tories prevailed in the Cavalier Parliament, Anglicanism was restored by a series of laws that forbade dissenters to worship publicly, required government officials and military personnel to practice Anglicanism, and discriminated against other faiths.

- The Whig Parliament, elected in 1679, was suspicious of Charles II's absolutist and pro-Catholic tendencies and enacted the **Habeas Corpus Act**, which limited royal power by:
 - Enabling judges to demand that prisoners be in court.
 - Requiring just cause for continued imprisonment.
 - Providing for speedy trials.
 - Forbidding *double jeopardy* (being charged for a crime that one had already been

The Glorious Revolution

The **Glorious Revolution** was actually the culmination of an evolutionary process over centuries which, through historical accident, outright conflict, and painstaking design, increased the power of Parliament over the monarchy. **James II** (r. 1685-1688) was unpopular from the moment he took the throne. A devout Roman Catholic, he appointed Catholic ministers to important posts and gave the appearance of trying to impose Catholicism upon the English.

- In 1688, important nobles invited **William of Orange**, a Hollander, and Mary, the wife of James's oldest child, to rule England conditional upon their granting a bill of rights.
- When **William and Mary** (r. 1688-1704) arrived in England, James fled to exile in France.
- The new monarchs accepted from Parliament, as a condition of their reign, the **Declaration of Rights** (enacted into law as the **Bill of Rights** in 1689).
- The **Habeas Corpus Act**, the **Petition of Right**, and the Bill of Rights have all become part of the **English Constitution**.
- In the centuries that followed, monarchs in England came to reign, while Parliament came to rule.

Although, at the time of the Glorious Revolution, Parliament served the interests of the wellborn or the wealthy, it came to represent "the people" as government came to be viewed as existing and functioning according to **John Locke's** Enlightenment concept of **consent of the governed**. The English, and those who inherited their political traditions, would guarantee individual rights and would create modern democracy.

The Dutch Revolt and the Golden Age of the Netherlands

When the Spanish under King Philip II tried to consolidate power in the Low Countries (the 17 provinces of the Netherlands, today's Belgium and the Netherlands), they met stiff resistance. Here, Philip II ignored two of Machiavelli's basic instructions: do not change the religion of newly conquered people and do not raise their taxes. His policies and the policies of his representatives in the Low Countries united both religious and economic powers against his rule.

- The Netherlands was the commercial hub of the developing capitalist world at the time.
 - The people had known a significant degree of self-governance.
 - Philip II tried to tighten the reins by sending his sister, Margaret, who had been personally educated by Ignatius Loyola, there to rule.
 - She introduced the Dutch Inquisition and raised taxes.
 - The Protestants (Calvinists) united with those who resisted the tax hikes and with peasants who suffered from high prices for grain.
 - Protestants began to smash Catholic churches all over Antwerp and the surrounding area.
 - This was mostly a middle-class revolt.
 - The Netherlands had the largest middle class by percentage of population in all of Europe.
 - Philip sent the Duke of Alva with 20,000 troops to pacify the rebellion in 1567.
 - Established the “Council of Blood.”
 - Ruthlessly “purified” the Netherlands of Protestant opposition.
 - Added a 10 percent tax to all transactions, crippling the best economy in Europe and under Spain's dominion.
 - Margaret resigned her regency after Alva killed 1,500 people on one day in 1568.
- Prince William (“The Silent”) of Orange united the 17 provinces against the rule of Spain in 1576.

- Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma, was sent by Philip II to put down the rebellion in 1578 once and for all.
- A good general with a great plan.
 - He laid siege to one city at a time and avoided pitched battles.
 - Slowly took the ten lower (southernmost) provinces and forced the Protestant forces out of those areas.
- The repercussions of this war were to affect the political and military events in Europe over the next few decades:
 - The ten lower provinces became the Spanish Netherlands and, later, Belgium.
 - The seven northern provinces of the Netherlands formed the Union of Utrecht and declared their independence from Spain (1581) as the United Provinces of the Netherlands.
 - The Dutch dikes were broken to repel invaders so many times that the tactic hurt the economy by destroying agricultural production.
 - The Dutch kept their land free.
 - English support of the Dutch Protestants in part led to the Spanish Armada campaign, which the Dutch helped to win by successful early engagements with Spanish forces along their own coast.
 - The United Provinces of the Netherlands developed as a commercial powerhouse because of :
 - Independence
 - religious tolerance
 - the Protestant work ethic

The Golden Age of the Netherlands

The United Provinces of the Netherlands saw a “Golden Age” during the seventeenth century. The Netherlands was a confederation of seven provinces. Each province was autonomous with its leader, a *stadtholder*, who was a representative to a ruling council that ran the confederation. It was the wealthiest and most civilized country in Europe, ruled by an oligarchy of merchants called regents.

- It was the model for Europe of a republican form of government based on

economic prosperity.

- Religious tolerance and trading with all religions (always buying and selling in bulk) led to massive profits and prosperity.
 - Amsterdam became the regional center of commerce, replacing Antwerp.
 - Industry shifted from fishing to shipping.
 - The **Dutch East India Company** was formed in 1602.
 - The Dutch were able to corner the maritime shipping market by charging the lowest rates in Europe.
 - They perfected the joint-stock company and created the first stock markets where stocks, or ownership of a part of a company, could be traded.
 - Society was able to share in the profits.
 - In 1630 stock in the East India Company was returning a 35 percent profit annually.
 - Holland had accidentally created the investment industry.
 - Became the center of a bustling new industry.
 - Because of its thriving economy, the Netherlands became “an island of plenty in a sea of want,” as the rest of Europe still saw crippling poverty among many of its citizens.
- Dutch economic prosperity brought on a Golden Age of Dutch art that may still be unrivaled to this day.
- Superb artists revolutionized the visual arts by painting detailed domestic interiors, focusing on the lives of commoners, and by providing amazing mathematical detail in their work.
 - **Albrecht Dürer**
 - **Jan van Eyck**
 - **Rembrandt van Rijn**
 - **Johannes Vermeer**
 - Their art captured the emotion and milieu of the lives of the people who lived there as opposed to the overawing prosperity and power of the patron communicated by the baroque art of such as **Peter Paul Rubens**.

Art Analysis Tip

The difference in the patrons was that the Roman Catholic Church and

monarchs patronized most Baroque art, while mainly Protestant merchants and princelings patronized art of the “Dutch Masters.” This explains the different subject matter, emotional content, and even why the Baroque pieces were much larger than most of the works by the Dutch Masters.

Women During the Age of Absolutism

There were a few female monarchs, such as Elizabeth I and Catherine de' Medici, who showed by example how powerful a woman could be. When Elizabeth I visited her troops, gathered for an expected land battle during the Spanish Armada campaign, her speech was a rousing testament to what a woman can accomplish. Her rule was perhaps one of the greatest periods in the history of her nation and laid the foundation for the creation of the British Empire. Catherine ruled France as regent with the aid of Cardinal Richelieu and used Machiavellian tactics to empower her son and his successors to rule France.

Absolutism in the Ottoman Empire

Although Suleiman the Magnificent's push into central Europe came to a halt in Austria in 1529, he was still able to capture Belgrade (Serbia) and nearly half of Eastern Europe, including the Balkan territories, most of Hungary, and part of southern Russia. He collected slaves instead of taxes from the conquered territories.

- Many young male slaves collected from the Christian areas were converted to Islam and trained as soldiers loyal to the Sultan, called *janissaries*.
- The Ottoman Empire practiced some religious toleration, with communities of non-Muslims called *millet*s and containing people of the same religious minority, such as Christian or Jewish.
 - Similar to the ghettos that Europeans forced their religious minorities such as Jews or Muslims to live in until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- After Suleiman the Magnificent's death in 1566, the Ottoman Empire began to decline.
- During the late 1600s there was a strong revival of Ottoman power.
 - Laid siege to Vienna in 1683.
 - Vienna saved from the Turkish attackers by Habsburg and Polish troops.
 - Russians and Venetians attacked during the retreat of the Turks.
 - The Ottoman Empire's territorial designs on Eastern Europe began to decline again and deteriorated until the late 1800s.
 - The Ottoman conflicts with Russia over these areas led them to side with the Central Powers in the First World War.