

eighteen pregnancies. At Anne's death, the crown passed, with Parliament's approval, to Anne's distant cousin George, the ruler of the small German principality of Hanover. Groups in Scotland favoring James, the son of James II, who had grown to be a young man in France, revolted. This uprising in favor of the Stuarts – termed "Jacobite" from the Latin form of James's name – was suppressed, as was a similar uprising in 1745 which sought to bring back James's son Charles ("Bonnie Prince Charlie").

The Hanoverians, almost all of whom were named George, ruled Britain into the nineteenth century, with more and more executive power moving into the hands of their chief officials, who came to be called Prime Ministers; in this the model was set by the brilliant Robert Walpole (1676–1745) who was the Prime Minister for both George I and George II. George I (ruled 1714–27) and his son George II (ruled 1727–60) were more interested in Hanoverian interests than British ones, and spent much of their time in military campaigns on the continent. They had difficult relations with one another, though both were competent and pragmatic, allowing the further development of political structures, including rival political parties, the Whigs and the Tories. Toward the end of George II's reign, national policy was directed by William Pitt the Elder (1708–78) who managed British successes in the Seven Years War. Under Pitt's leadership, Britain became the dominant European power in North America and south Asia. Part of British North American holdings were lost in the American War of Independence, but British sea power remained formidable.

The Dutch Republic

The tumultuous nature of England's path to a limited monarchy sometimes benefited its neighbor – and often rival – across the Channel, the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands that had won their independence from the Spanish Habsburgs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. (This long official name is shortened in various ways: the United Provinces, the Netherlands – which means "low countries" – and the Dutch Republic all refer to the same political entity; "Dutch" is a variant of the word "Deutsch," meaning German. This area is also sometimes called "Holland," the name of its westernmost province, whose provincial capital, The Hague, became the capital of the country.) Individuals and groups who opposed Stuart or Cromwellian rule were welcome in the tolerant Netherlands, as were those fleeing religious or political persecution in other parts of Europe. The French philosopher René Descartes lived most of his adult life in the Netherlands, where he felt freer to write and publish than he did in France. The English philosopher John Locke published many of his important works while living in the Netherlands during the 1680s, where he shared the streets of Dutch cities with French Protestants who had left France after Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Thousands of Jews from the Iberian peninsula, especially from Portugal, emigrated to

Amsterdam, where in the 1670s they built what is still the largest synagogue in the world outside Israel, a beautiful building that is still in use today. All of this immigration dramatically increased the size of Dutch cities – Amsterdam's population grew from 30,000 in 1570 to 200,000 in 1700 – and provided a basis for economic prosperity that was the envy of the world.

Politically, the successful war with Spain left the United Provinces without a clear monarch, and the representative assemblies, called Estates, in each of the seven provinces determined that they liked things this way. They sent representatives to a centralized assembly, the Estates General, which met in The Hague and decided matters of foreign policy and war, though its decisions had to be ratified by each provincial Estate. The Estates General appointed an administrator, called the *stadholder*, for each province. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the same individual was generally chosen as the *stadholder* in all seven provinces, all of them descendants of William the Silent from the house of Orange-Nassau, the nobleman who had led Dutch armies against the Spanish and been assassinated in 1584. This situation might have led to the establishment of a centralized monarchy, but it did not, as real power in both the Estates General and the provincial Estates was held by wealthy merchants and financiers called “regents.” The regents resisted any move that would have turned their confederation into a unified state or made the office of *stadholder* more like that of a king. One of these *stadholders*, William III (held office 1672-1702) was the man invited to take over the English throne in 1688, together with his wife Mary, but this brought no major changes in the Dutch political system. William did end a series of commercial wars between the Netherlands and England – instead uniting England and the Netherlands against France – but on his death (with no heirs) the Netherlands simply operated without a *stadholder* for nearly fifty years, with the Estates General making all political decisions.

This political independence was facilitated by amazing commercial prosperity. Even during the Thirty Years War, the Dutch acted as middlemen for trade, especially in raw materials such as grain, metals, and timber from the Baltic, and fish from the Atlantic and Scandinavia. As we saw in chapter 6, the Dutch invented and then mass-produced new types of boats to carry merchandise, developed new types of processes to transform raw materials into finished products, and created new types of financial institutions to handle the money pouring in. All of these ventures could be extremely profitable for merchants, and created a higher standard of living for peasants and artisans in the Netherlands than anywhere else in Europe. Dutch success was often regarded as an enviable mystery by merchants in other parts of the world. By the middle of the seventeenth century, many countries in Europe attempted to exclude Dutch merchants with policies favoring their own ships and traders, including restrictive tariffs, subsidies, prohibitions, and at times outright commercial warfare. Such measures were not initially successful, but gradually Dutch prosperity lessened, particularly with losses of men and money in the War of the Spanish Succession in the early eighteenth century.



Fig. 22. Jan Vermeer's (1632–75) painting of a young woman sipping a glass of wine captures the elegance of a well-to-do Dutch household, with a tapestry tablecloth, a landscape painting in a gilt frame, a stringed cittern on a carved chair, and printed song books. The artist may be providing a bit of social commentary by including the allegorical figure of Temperance – an emblem of moderation – in the ornate stained-glass window.

Dutch achievements were a mystery to contemporaries in other parts of Europe, but historians differ in their explanations of Dutch success. Because the majority of leading regent families were Calvinist, the original explanations linked Dutch successes to Calvinist theology and principles of thrift and frugality. The problem is that the Dutch were hardly thrifty, but spent money on elaborate dinners, imported carpets, brass chandeliers, oil paintings of their families and houses, and (most famously) ever more exotic types of cultivated tulips. Such luxuries were paid for by hard work, however, and accompanied by a sense of social responsibility. The Dutch supported orphanages, hospitals, old-age homes, and almshouses, all directed by boards of men and women from regent families. Spending money on luxuries made in the Netherlands or imported in Dutch ships just returned wealth back into the economy, so that their own willingness to spend explains some of Dutch prosperity. Religious toleration – unique in the Europe of the seventeenth century – explains more

of it, as this attracted people and capital to Dutch cities. What we might call “social toleration” also played a role, for it was far easier for successful and intelligent artisans or lesser merchants to rise in stature, gaining local or even provincial offices and marrying into regent families, than it was for commoners in countries of Europe dominated by aristocracies to move into the highest circles of power.

The Ottoman Empire

While Dutch successes provided luxury for some, and decent food, clothing, and housing for most, in eastern Europe only the elites flourished. Most states in eastern Europe were ruled by dynasties that considered their realms as simply large estates to be exploited and expanded, and which were dependent on the higher nobility for money and troops. As we saw in chapter 6, noble landowners reintroduced serfdom in much of eastern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, passed laws that hindered the growth of cities or the development of new forms of production, and maintained their own freedom from taxation and other privileges. Their economic and legal privileges were generally enhanced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by rulers who depended on the nobles to be officers in their growing armies and officials in their expanding bureaucracies. These rulers created absolutist states – most of which lasted until World War I – not by limiting the power of nobles, but co-opting it.

The largest state in eastern Europe in 1600 was the Ottoman Empire, with Istanbul by far the largest city in Europe. (Historical demographers estimate that the two largest cities in the world in 1600 and 1700 were Beijing and Istanbul, both with populations of about 700,000.) Ottoman holdings stretched around the eastern Mediterranean to North Africa and down the Tigris and Euphrates to the Persian Gulf; all of the area around the Black Sea was controlled directly by the Ottomans or by states that paid tribute to the sultan. In theory, Ottoman sultans were absolute monarchs, appointing local leaders, making political decisions, and directing the army and navy. In practice, as the empire grew, more of the day-to-day administration was handled by officials, under the leadership of a grand vizier, a position that became heritable. The sultans themselves rarely left their extensive palaces, where they were surrounded by wives, concubines, servants, and officials who followed elaborate rituals in their interactions with the ruler. Complex protocol also marked Louis XIV’s court at Versailles, but Louis personally oversaw political and military affairs, whereas most sultans did not, growing ever more distant from the realities of their subjects’ lives.

The Ottoman Empire was built through military expansion, and the Janissaries – troops forcibly conscripted from Christian or Muslim families – became increasingly important politically as well as on the battlefield. There was no clear line of succession in Islamic law, so that various sons, nephews, and other male relatives of the ruling sultan might all claim the throne. In