

Empires: Administrations

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth: for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods.

—King James I (1566–1625)

Essential Question: How did rulers in land-based empires legitimize and consolidate their power from 1450 to 1750?

By the end of the 16th century, centralization of power by controlling taxes, the army, and some aspects of religion coalesced into a system of government that led to a powerful monarch in England and absolute monarchy in France. In other states, different methods were used to solidify authority: building temples, as with the Inca; paying the military elite a salary, as with the samurai in Japan; and forcibly establishing a captive governmental bureaucracy, as with the Ottoman devshirme system.

Rulers of empires in the years 1450 to 1750 developed methods for assuring they maintained control of all the regions of their empires. Some of the successful methods included using bureaucratic elites to oversee sections of the empire and developing a professional military.

Centralizing Control in Europe

England's King James I believed in the **divine right of kings**, a common claim from the Middle Ages that the right to rule was given to a king by God. Under this belief, a king was a political and religious authority. As seen in the quote above, James believed himself outside of the law and any earthly authority and saw any challenge toward him as a challenge to God.

England's Gentry Officials In England, the Tudors (ruled 1485–1603) relied on **justices of the peace**, officials selected by the landed gentry to “swear that as Justices of the Peace . . . in all articles in the King's Commission to you directed, ye shall do equal right to the poor and to the rich after your cunning wit, and power, and after the laws and customs of the realm and statutes thereof made,” according to their oath of office. In other words, their job was to maintain peace in the counties of England, even settling some legal matters, and to carry out the monarch's laws. The number and responsibilities



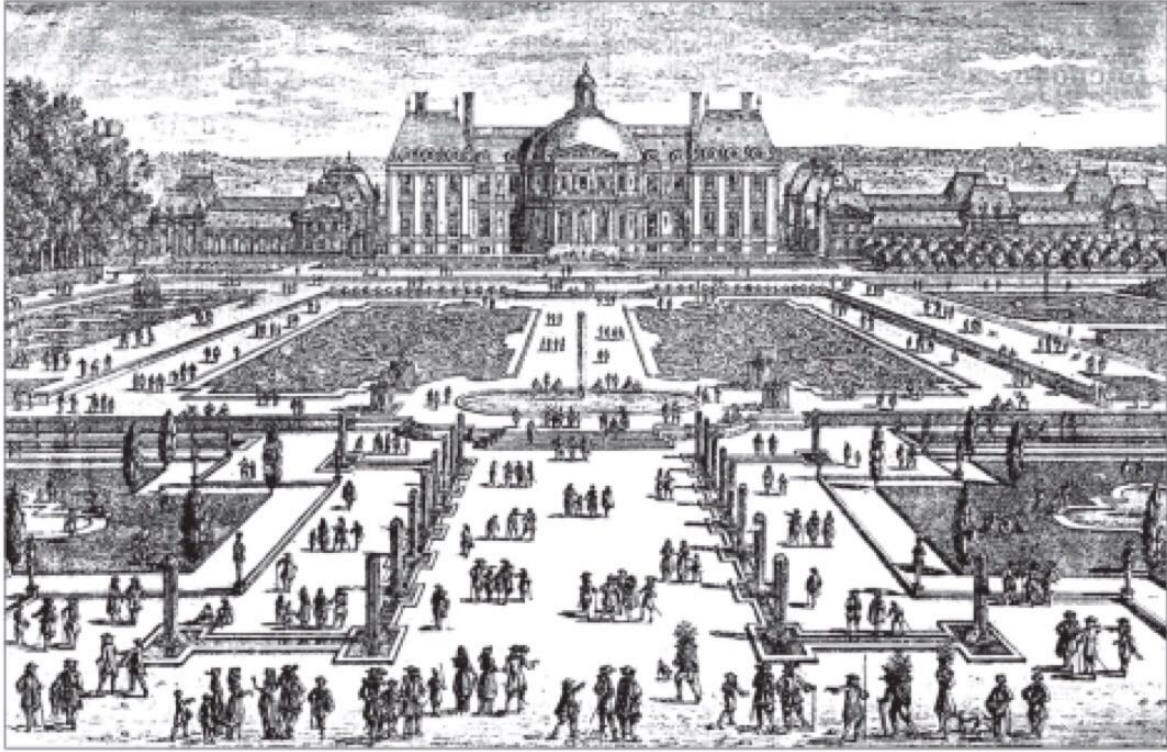
of the justices of the peace increased through the years of Tudor rule, and they became among the most important and powerful groups in the kingdom. Under Tudor rule, the power of feudal lords weakened. Many seats in the House of Commons in Parliament were occupied by justices of the peace. The justices of the peace as well as the Parliament, which had been established in 1265, gave legitimacy to the monarch’s claim to authority.

Parliament also checked the monarch’s powers. In 1689, England’s rulers William and Mary signed the **English Bill of Rights**, which assured individual civil liberties. For example, legal process was required before someone could be arrested and detained. The Bill of Rights also guaranteed protection against tyranny of the monarchy by requiring the agreement of Parliament on matters of taxation and raising an army.

Absolutism in France In contrast to developments in England, the French government became more **absolute**—directed by one source of power, the king, with complete authority—in the 17th and 18th centuries. Henry IV (ruled 1589–1610) of the House of Valois listened to his advisor Jean Bodin, who advocated the divine right of the monarchy. Building on these ideas, Louis XIII (ruled 1610–1643) and his minister **Cardinal Richelieu** moved to even greater centralization of the government and development of the system of intendants. These **intendants** were royal officials—bureaucratic elites—sent out to the provinces to execute the orders of the central government. The intendants themselves were sometimes called **tax farmers** because they oversaw the collection of various taxes in support of the royal governments.

The Sun King, **Louis XIV** (ruled 1643–1715), espoused a theory of divine right and was a virtual dictator. His aims were twofold, just as those of Richelieu had been: He wanted to hold absolute power and expand French borders. Louis declared that he was the state: “L’etat, c’est moi.” He combined the lawmaking and the justice system in his own person—he was absolute. He kept nobles close to him in his palace at **Versailles**, making it difficult for them to act independently or plot against him. Louis and his successors’ refusal to share power eventually weakened the French government.

Kangxi and Louis XIV		
Emperor Kangxi	Both	King Louis XIV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled Qing Dynasty China for 61 years • Encouraged introduction of Western education • Opened ports to foreign trade • Extended control over Tibet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became ruler during childhood • Spoke multiple languages • Supported the arts • Promoted study of sciences • Loved landscape gardens • Ruled during golden age of their empire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled France for 72 years • Known as the Sun King or Louis the Great • Built palace at Versailles • Extended France’s eastern borders • Known as a symbol of absolute monarchy



Source: Getty Images

Every aspect of the Palace at Versailles was built to glorify King Louis XIV, including more than 700 rooms, 60 staircases, and gardens that cover more than 30,000 acres and are decorated with 400 sculptures and 1,400 fountains. The Sun King moved the French government to Versailles in 1682.

Reigning in Control of the Russian Empire

Social hierarchy in Moscow was almost static—much as it had been in Kievan Russia earlier. The noble landowning class, the **boyars**, stood at the top of the social pyramid. Below them were the merchants. Last and most numerous were the peasants, who would gradually sink more and more deeply into debt and, as a result, into **serfdom**. Serfs were peasants who received a plot of land and protection from a noble. In return, the serfs were bound to that land and had little personal freedom. Transfers of land ownership to another noble included control over the serfs on that land.

The Efforts of Ivan IV The boyar class experienced tensions with the rulers similar to the tensions between nobles and rulers in Western Europe. Boyars of Novgorod had opposed the expansionist policies of **Ivan IV**, so Ivan punished them after his forces defeated Novgorod. Ivan IV confiscated the lands of his boyar opponents and forced them and their families to move to Moscow. Like Louis XIV, he wanted to keep an eye on the nobility.

To further control the boyars, Ivan established a paramilitary force loyal to him called the *oprichnina*. Dressed in black and traveling quickly on horseback, the members showed fierce loyalty to Ivan. They were drawn from lower-level bureaucrats and merchants to assure their loyalty to Ivan rather than to the boyars. The oprichnina's methods would be reflected later in the development of the Russian secret police. (Connect: Create a table comparing Ivan IV and Sundiata. See Topic 2.4.)

Peter the Great The **Romanov Dynasty** took control of Russia in 1613 after a period of turmoil following Ivan's death in 1584. Under the autocratic control of the Romanovs, three main groups in Russia had conflicting desires and agendas: the Church, bent on conserving traditional values and beliefs; the boyars, desiring to gain and hold power; and members of the tsar's royal family. The rise to power of **Peter I**, also known as Peter the Great (ruled 1682–1725), illustrates these conflicting ambitions. First, to gain full control of the throne, Peter had to defeat his half-sister Sophia and her supporters, a boyar-led elite military corps called the Streltsy. He consolidated power by forcing Sophia into a convent. Later, the Streltsy rebelled against Peter's reign, so he temporarily disbanded them and then integrated them into Russia's regular army.

Peter the Great was known as the Defender of Orthodoxy, participating closely in ecclesiastical [church] affairs. However, Peter would eventually lose the support of the Russian clergy over his reforms. Later in his reign, Peter reorganized the Russian government by creating provinces (first 8 and later 50 administrative divisions). Provincial officials received a salary, replacing the old system of local officials "feeding off the land" (getting money through bribes, fees, and taxes). Another government reform was the creation of a senate, a council to advise government officials when Peter was away.

Centralizing Control in the Ottoman Empire

To ensure their control over large areas, the Ottoman sultans used a selection system called **devshirme** to staff their military and their government. This system began in the late 14th century and expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries. Through this system, Christian boys who were subjects of the empire were recruited by force to serve in the Ottoman government. Boys ages 8 to 20 were taken each year from conquered Christian lands in Europe.

The system of devshirme developed from an earlier system of slavery in the Ottoman Empire. In both systems, slaves were considered tribute owed to the empire after conquest, which was typically one-fifth of the conquered land's wealth. Since Islamic law prohibited enslavement of "people of the book"—Muslims and Jews—Christian boys were forcibly removed from their families, especially from Balkan territories.

The Christian boys were taught various skills in politics, the arts, and the military and received a very high level of education. The most famous group, called **Janissaries**, formed elite forces in the Ottoman army. Other boys were groomed to become administrators of the newly conquered territories; some were scribes, tax collectors, and even diplomats. They were indoctrinated to be fiercely loyal to the sultan—some served as bodyguards. In some ways, becoming a Janissary provided a path of upward mobility in the Ottoman Empire, even though the Janissaries continued to be called "slaves of the state." Some parents even wanted their sons to be recruited into the service.

Centralizing Control in East and South Asia

Following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty, the Ming ruled in China from 1368–1644. The Ming Dynasty in China wanted to erase the influence of Mongol rulers of the Yuan Dynasty. To help accomplish this goal, the Ming brought back the traditional civil service exam, improved education by establishing a national school system, and reestablished the bureaucracy, which had fallen into disuse under the Mongols. (See Topic 2.2.) During the Qing Dynasty, in the later part of Qianlong’s reign, the traditionally efficient Chinese bureaucracy became corrupt, levying high taxes on the people. The Qing government used harsh military control to put down a rebellion against these developments and maintain its authority.

Consolidating Power in Japan Military leaders called shoguns ruled Japan in the emperor’s name from the 12th to the 15th centuries. Yet conflict between landholding aristocrats called **daimyo** left Japan in disarray. Each daimyo had an army of warriors (known as samurai); ambition to conquer more territory; and power to rule his fiefdoms as he saw fit. The samurai were salaried, paid first in rice and later in gold, which gave them significant economic power. Finally, just as gunpowder weapons enabled the rise of new empires in Turkey, Persia, and India, gunpowder weapons helped a series of three powerful daimyo to gradually unify Japan. (Connect: Write a paragraph connecting shogun rule with the rule of the daimyo. See Topic 1.1.)

The first of these powerful daimyo was Oda Nobunaga. Armed with muskets purchased from Portuguese traders, Nobunaga and his samurai took over Kyoto in 1568. He then began to extend his power, forcing daimyo in the lands around Kyoto to submit. Nobunaga had unified about one-third of what is today Japan when he was assassinated in 1582.

Nobunaga’s successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, continued expanding the territory until most of what we now know as Japan was under his control. After his death in 1598, the center of power shifted to the city of **Edo** (Tokyo), controlled by the daimyo **Tokugawa Ieyasu** (ruled 1600–1616), who was declared shogun in 1603. His successors would continue to rule Japan into the mid-19th century, in an era known as the **Period of Great Peace**.

The **Tokugawa shogunate** set about reorganizing the governance of Japan in order to centralize control over what was essentially a feudal system. Japan was divided into 250 hans, or territories, each of which was controlled by a daimyo who had his own army and was fairly independent. However, the Tokugawa government required that daimyo maintain residences both in their home territory and also in the capital; if the daimyo himself was visiting his home territory, his family had to stay in Tokyo, essentially as hostages. This kept the daimyo under the control of the shogunate, reducing them to landlords who managed the hans, rather than independent leaders.

Consolidating Mughal Power in South Asia Ruling from 1556 to 1605, **Akbar** proved to be the most capable of the Mughal rulers. For the first 40 years of his rule, he defeated Hindu armies and extended his empire

southward and westward. From his capital in **Delhi**, Akbar established an efficient government and a system of fairly administered laws. For example, all his people had the right to appeal to him for final judgment in any lawsuit. As Akbar's fame spread, capable men from many parts of Central Asia came to serve him. They helped Akbar create a strong, centralized government and an effective civil service. Paid government officials called **zamindars** were in charge of specific duties, such as taxation, construction, and the water supply.

Later, they were given grants of land rather than salaries but were permitted to keep a portion of the taxes paid by local peasants, who contributed one-third of their produce to the government. The system worked well under Akbar. Under the rulers who came after him, though, the zamindars began to keep more of the taxes that they collected. With this money, they built personal armies of soldiers and civilians loyal to them.

Legitimizing Power through Religion and Art

European governments sought to legitimize the authority of the monarch through the idea of the divine right of monarchy. (For more information about the divine right of monarchy, see Topic 3.3.) They also built impressive structures, such as the Palace of Versailles in France, to demonstrate their power and glory. Governments in other parts of the world followed similar patterns to consolidate and legitimize their authority. (See Topic 1.4 for links among religion, grand temples and pyramids, human sacrifice, and political power in the Mexica and Incan cultures.)

Peter and St. Petersburg When Peter the Great seized lands on the Baltic Sea from Sweden, the conquest gave Russia its own warm-water port on the Baltic—St. Petersburg. Peter moved the Russian capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg so he could keep watch on the boyars there, who were doing their required state service by working in his government.

The new city became a testament to Peter's determination to have his own capital. Architects laid out streets in a rectangular grid, unlike the irregular pattern of Moscow and other cities. Peasants and Swedish prisoners of war were forced to work, draining marshes and building streets and government structures. In the mid-18th century, workers built the famous Winter Palace. It was designed in a European rather than a Byzantine style to show Peter's admiration of Europe and its rulers.

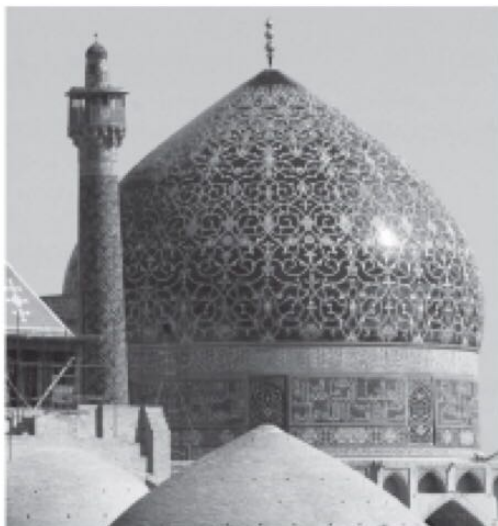
Askia the Great of Songhai Askia Mohammad I, or **Askia the Great**, came to power in 1493. He claimed his predecessor, Sunni Ali, was not a faithful Muslim. Like Mansa Musa of Mali, Askia the Great promoted Islam throughout his kingdom and made an elaborate pilgrimage to Mecca. Under his leadership, Songhai became the largest kingdom in its day in West Africa. Askia made Islam Songhai's official religion in an attempt to unite his empire. In addition to legitimizing his rule through promoting Islam, he also supported an efficient bureaucracy to bring the empire together.

Shah Jahan Mughal India produced a number of magnificent architectural accomplishments, including the **Taj Mahal**, built by **Shah Jahan** (ruled 1628–1658) as a tomb for his wife. Mughal rulers also beautified Delhi and had forts built. The craftspeople and builders of Mughal India combined the arts of Islam (calligraphy, illumination of manuscripts, and ceramics) with local arts to create magnificent, airy structures with decorative geometric designs. All these accomplishments showed the power of the rulers.

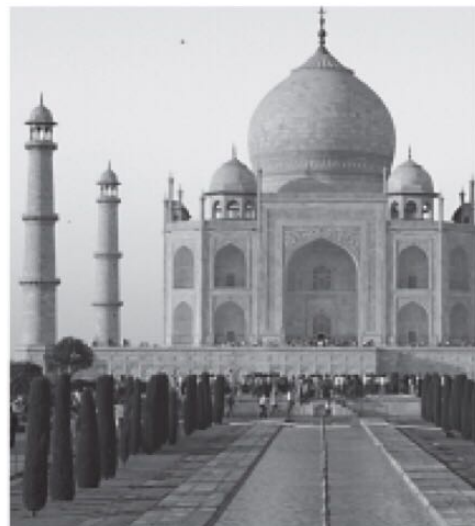
Ottoman Architectural and Artistic Achievements Tremendous changes in government and religion took place in Ottoman territory. However, the arts, the culture, and the economy showed continuities, though they now legitimized the rule of the Ottomans. Constantinople, renamed Istanbul, remained the western end of the overland Silk Roads, and the Grand Bazaar there continued to be full of foreign imports. Coffeehouses, although banned by Islamic law, continued to do a thriving business throughout the towns of the empire.



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The Islamic Gunpowder Empires built monumental architecture with spiritual significance. The Ottomans built the Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul (top). The Safavids built the Mosque of Isfahan (lower left). The Mughals built the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum, in Agra. (lower right).

Istanbul grew more beautiful and expanded across both sides of the Strait of Bosphorus. One famous landmark is the royal residence of the sultans, *Topkapi Palace*. Mehmed II (lived 1432–1481) began construction on this landmark. Suleiman I (lived 1494–1566) ordered many mosques, forts, and other great buildings constructed in the cities under his control. For example, he ordered the construction in Istanbul of the magnificent Suleymaniye Mosque.

Istanbul remained a center of arts and learning. Poets and scholars from across Asia met in coffeehouses and gardens. They discussed works by Aristotle and other Greek writers, as well as the works of many Arabic scholars. Cultural contributions of the Ottomans included the restoration of some of the glorious buildings of Constantinople, most notably the cathedral of Saint Sophia (which the Ottomans turned into a grand mosque). From the time of Mehmed II, who established a workshop for their production, Ottoman miniature paintings and illuminated manuscripts became famous.

French Architecture The spacious and elegant palace at Versailles became a political instrument. Louis XIV entertained the nobles there and kept them from conducting business elsewhere, such as fomenting rebellion in their home provinces. Louis XIV's grand buildings at Versailles helped legitimize his power. The palace at Versailles, for example, could accommodate hundreds of guests. During the rule of Louis XIV, some 1,000 employees worked in the palace or on the grounds.

Financing Empires

As in other matters of building and maintaining empires, different methods of raising money worked—or fell short—in different empires. In all of the world's empires, raising money to fund the goals of imperial expansion and extend state power was a key endeavor.

Taxation in Russia Peter established new industries owned by the state, especially shipyards in St. Petersburg and iron mines in the Ural Mountains. He also encouraged private industries such as metallurgy [technology of metal products], woodwork, gunpowder, leather, paper, and mining. He brought in Western European naval engineers to build ships according to Western models.

When industrialization failed to bring in the revenue Peter needed for his military ventures, he raised taxes and began to compel workers to work in the shipyards—a sort of urban extension of serfdom. In 1718, the tax on land in Russia was replaced by a tax on heads (individuals), and peasants became more oppressed than ever.

Ottoman and Mughal Taxation To finance an economy backed by a powerful military, the Ottomans levied taxes on the peasants and used **tax farming** to collect it. The tax farmers—local officials and private tax collectors distant from the central government—grew wealthy and corrupt from skimming money from the taxes in their areas, as some of the zamindars did in the Mughal Empire. Agricultural villages continued to be burdened with



the upkeep of officers and troops. This burden of taxes and the military would eventually contribute to the economic decline of the empire.

Tax Collection in the Ming Dynasty In Ming China as well as in the Ottoman Empire, tax collection was the responsibility of private citizens, in this case wealthy families, each seeing to the collection of land taxes in their area of the countryside. Land taxes made up the bulk of the taxes collected, and the rates tended to be low. Taxes were collected in the form of grains and, later, silver. Some grains were stored in local facilities. Others were sent on the Grand Canal to military locations. The state also collected taxes on salt, wine, and other goods. For many years, the vaults stored a surplus of grains. However, after about 1580, wars, extravagant imperial spending, and the repression of rebellions left the dynasty in bankruptcy.

Tributes Empires, including China, also collected **tributes** from other states as a way to demand recognition of their power and authority. Typically as a form of wealth, tributes were given as a sign of respect, submission, or allegiance. For example, Korea was a tributary state for China. The Mexica had extensive tributary arrangements from the people they conquered, although most Aztec citizens, merchants, and artisans paid taxes. An Aztec official was stationed in each capital to collect tributes from local officials.

The Songhai Empire also had tributary states. Askia the Great assigned governors and officials to preside over tributary states in the Niger Valley. As long as local officials obeyed Songhai policies, they could rule their districts.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p>GOVERNMENT: Europe divine right of kings</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: England justices of the peace English Bill of Rights</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: France absolute Cardinal Richelieu intendants Louis XIV</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Russia Ivan IV Romanov Dynasty Peter I</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT: Ottoman Empire devshirme Janissaries</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Japan daimyo Edo Tokugawa Iyasu Period of Great Peace Tokugawa shogunate</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Songhai Askia the Great</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Mughal Empire Akbar Delhi Shah Jahan</p>	<p>ECONOMY: France tax farmers</p> <p>ECONOMY: Ottoman Empire tax farming</p> <p>ECONOMY: China tributes</p> <p>ECONOMY: Mughal Empire zamindars</p> <p>CULTURE: Mughal Empire Taj Mahal</p> <p>CULTURE: France Versailles</p> <p>SOCIETY: Russia boyars serfdom</p>