

NGCSU HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

HISTORY 1112: World Civilizations Since 1500

E-Textbook

Section One: 1500-1750



This photograph shows a structure at Fatehpur Sikri, a planned city created by Mughal Emperor **Akbar the Great** (reigned 1556-1605) that served as his capital and private residence from 1569 to 1585. Image located at <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=533587&page=2>)

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What is World History and How Does History Work?

Welcome to the NGCSU EText for HIST 1112, World Civilizations Since 1500. For many of you, this will be the first and the last time that you take a History course in college. As such, it is worth your while to engage with key concepts and ideas that are prevalent within the academic discipline of history in general, and the sub-discipline of World History in particular, at least for the rest of the semester, and hopefully for a lot longer.

Despite – or perhaps because of - what you have seen so far in your academic career, it is important to understand what academic, or professional history is. **It is an academic discipline concerned with reconstructing, analyzing, understanding, and writing about the past, and using a variety of methods to ask questions of the past, rather than just a series of dry, pre-assembled and accepted historical facts.** All historical facts begin as elements of **historical interpretations**, or arguments about the historical past based on **historical evidence**, materials from past eras (books, letters, documents, photographs, artifacts, structures, cultural practices, digital files and many more) that have survived into our present. These forms of historical evidence are then interrogated by historians to validate their authenticity, usually through forensic source analysis, and then incorporated into historical arguments to generate evidentially-based historical interpretations. In other words, history is an *argumentative rather than a consensual discipline*, and is *bound by the historical evidence that it employs*. As such, understand that the content you will encounter in these modules is interpretive, and reflects the methods and perspectives of its authors, rather than any claims to absolute “truth.” History is an ongoing scholarly conversation, in which you, as an 1112 student, are a participant. This in no way detracts from its primary purpose: to introduce HIST 1112 students to many of the ideas, themes and processes of modern world history, and to act as a supplement to in-class content and assessment exercises.

Historians are trained through a rigorous graduate curriculum that emphasizes the importance of strong research skills, writing skills, analytical skills, and critical thinking skills – this is where you come in. Use your time in HIST 1112 as an opportunity to develop and hone your own critical thinking abilities; you will be surprised with the results. Historians always ask a series of questions when considering the past: **what happened, why did things happen, who benefited, and what were the outcomes?** Seen in this context, history is not a series of dry dead facts, but rather a kaleidoscope of competing, dynamic interpretive arguments about the past. In other words, it is a universe all of its own, with each generation asking its own questions. What questions do you bring? How are you an historical actor? Begin thinking of yourself in these terms to better acquaint yourself with the materials you will encounter here and in class.

This narrative and the supporting essay modules focus on **World History**, a sub-field of history that has been alive since ancient times, but which has also grown considerably over the last twenty years. World historians attempt to weave a myriad of individual, local, communal, regional, national, and international historical narratives together, usually with overarching comparative themes – state building, decolonization, etc. - emphasized as reference points and for coherence; in other words, to provide structure to what otherwise would be an impossible

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cacophony. The Etext narrative includes these themes as bolded headings. For example, in this first section of the text, the term “Paradigm Shifts” is employed to explain the transformative effects of several intersecting historical processes in early modern Europe between 1450 and 1750 that led to changes in the ways Europeans perceived and thought about the world. While this text makes no claims to originality, it asserts the importance of **understanding the development of the global commercial network since 1500** as a crucial element in modern world history. How that network evolved, who benefited from it, and what it looks like today are also important themes embedded within the narrative.

In addition to the three general narrative sections, the Etext includes many specialized essay modules, which are linked to the main text and focus more narrowly on specific regions, developments, and historical events. These essays were written by several different authors, and include expertise from the disciplines of Philosophy and Anthropology as well as History. The purpose of collaborative authorship is to provide students with the expertise and experiences of many scholars across more than a dozen historical sub-fields.

The Etext also differs from conventional texts or their digital equivalents in an important way. The embedded links that appear throughout the text are designed both to enhance the written content with maps, images, or documents, and also to provide portals for further study. Please feel free to mine them deeply, as many contain massive amounts of useful and relevant content not immediately seen on their splash pages. If you find online content you feel would be a useful addition to the text, please inform your instructor, and your suggestions may appear in a future version of the Etext. Happy Hunting.

Unit Goals

After reading this section, students should be able to:

Identify the major centers of power in the global system between 1500-1750 C.E., and explain why shifts in power occurred between regions.

Outline key features of the process of European maritime outreach and colonization.

Identify and discuss important aspects of processes such as the Columbian Exchange, the Triangular Trade, and other important historical developments.

Explain the process of modern state formation, and compare its evolution across regions and cultures.

Summary: The World, 1500-1750

The world in c.1500 C.E. (*Common Era*, a term equivalent to A.D.) looked quite different than the world of the twenty-first century. Major, or “core” centers of power included East Asia (Ming China), the Islamic World, and the Mongol khanates of central Eurasia. “Peripheral”

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areas, or areas of lesser influence included most of Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, which remained cut off from the rest of the world.

(In-Class Exercise: Maps are important historical documents that show the significant expansion of global cartographic and geographical knowledge during the early modern era—compare the Fra Mauro map from the 1450s, at <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/archive/2/26/20090530202143!FraMauroMap.jpg> , with Captain James Cook’s maps by the 1770s—<http://www.history-map.com/picture/005/projection-Mercator-world-the.htm>, and the interactive global population maps, as well as other contemporary maps located at <http://www.worldmapper.org/> and the amazing National Geographic interactive map “EarthPulse: State of the Earth 2010” located at <http://earthpulse.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/earthpulse-map>. Consider how this knowledge, and access to it, has influenced the creation of the twenty-first century world. Consider also how maps make arguments for particular worldviews and ways of seeing.)

(For Discussion: Go to <https://qed.princeton.edu/main/Category:Trade>—click through the first two pages and look at the “Ancient Trade Systems of the Old World” and “Ancient Trade Systems of the New World” maps. What are the key commodities, commercial centers, and regions within these trade networks?)

In 1500, the Old World dominated most global trade, commerce, and culture, and was linked primarily over land-based trade routes such as the Silk Roads. These routes, guaranteed by the *Pax Mongolica*, or Mongolian control of Eurasia, allowed goods, ideas, and people to travel east-west from Africa and Europe to south and east Asia. Most of the world’s highest quality commercial goods were produced in these regions – Ming China operated as the world’s factory and warehouse. For more on the Ming Dynasty, read the essay module located [here](#).

(For a comparison of the network’s importance then and now, consider the following maps— one historical, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/maps/mongols2map.jpg>, and one contemporary, from a global logistics provider—http://www.vls-group.com/page/26/language/1/media/silk_left.jpg)

A thriving sea-based network centered on the Indian Ocean basin, and linked sub-Saharan Africa with the Islamic world, south Asia, and east Asia through the efforts of Islamic and south-east Asian sailors, merchants and traders. (Read more about early modern Africa [here](#).) By the early modern era, nautical technologies from east and south Asia — such as the compass, astrolabe, triangular sails, and shallow-displacement hulls — would transit this basin and pass through the Islamic world into Europe, enabling European maritime expansion.

(There is an excellent discussion on the role of the Indian Ocean in world history, with several interactive maps, at <http://www.indianoceanhistory.org/>.)

(See the results of this technology transfer at the following website:
<http://nautarch.tamu.edu/shiplab/01George/index.htm>.)

New World peoples, although they had established thousands of complex societies, including large imperial systems—such as the Aztec Empire of the Mexica, based in Mesoamerica, and that of the Inca, in the Andean highlands—remained isolated from the Old World system. This was also true of other human communities present in other isolated regions, such as Oceania and Siberia. (For more on New World empires, read the essay modules on the [Aztec](#) and [Inca](#) civilizations.)

Other peripheral regions, such as northwestern Europe and Atlantic Africa, were disadvantaged by geographic location, small population base, and religious and linguistic barriers. They were characterized as “backward and barbaric” by their more advanced Eurasian counterparts in China and the Islamic world. Ironically, these prevailing circumstances would provide the catalyst for one group of “barbarians,” the European Christian kingdoms of Iberia (Portugal, and later Spain) and later northwestern Europe (primarily England, France, and Holland), to begin expanding outward. Soon, they incorporated regional communities throughout the “Atlantic World,” New World peoples, and even Polynesians into a new, sea-based global system of exchange that had no historical precedent. By 1750, few humans across the globe remained isolated from this global network. The first phase of globalization was underway.

Exploration and Migration - Globalization Part 1

Scholars remain divided over precise periodizations of modern global history. Many contest the notion and meanings of “globalization” and when it began. What is clear is that global interconnectivity and interdependence gathered pace after 1500 C.E., led through state-supported maritime exploration by several European maritime monarchies. First, the Iberian kingdoms of Portugal and Spain led the way between 1450 and 1600, and later Holland, England, and France overtook their Iberian rivals between 1650 and 1780. Although other civilizations, most notably Ming China under Emperor Yunglo, with the dramatic but short-lived maritime expeditions led by the Muslim eunuch admiral **Zheng He** between 1405-1427, possessed the technology and the means to engage in global maritime exploration and expansion, only the northern and western European kingdoms possessed the *motivations* to do so over the longer term.¹

(For more on the comparative geographical scope of these exploration efforts, see the map at https://qed.princeton.edu/main/Image:Voyages_of_Zheng_He_1405-33.jpg, and “Zheng He’s Voyages of Discovery,” located at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=10387>).

¹ For more on Zheng He (1371-1435) and his amazing voyages, see the UCLA International Institute site, “Zheng He’s Voyages of Discovery,” located at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=10387>.
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(For discussion: With your instructor, identify and contrast as many Chinese and European motives for global maritime expansion in the early modern period as you can; for example, consider contrasting commercial, fiscal, and political priorities for the Ming Empire, the early modern European monarchies, and their respective commercial actors.)

This process of global European outreach forms the larger historical backdrop behind modern world history, and explains why Europe, or the “West” as it and its offshoots are known, dominates global trade and politics throughout much of the last five hundred years of world history.

Why Europe and not elsewhere?

Many reasons help explain why Europeans expanded outward during this era. They form a complex web of historical causation.

Several long-term causes deserve attention. **Commercial disadvantages between northwestern Europe and other regions of the Old World trade system** is one. Because of its outlying location relative to other regions, northern and western Europe occupied a disadvantageous position in the Old World trade network. Coupled with its relative lack of desirable commodities and resources, this created a **negative balance of trade** between Europe, the Islamic world, and Asia, resulting in low availability and high costs in Europe for non-local products and commodities, particularly luxury items, which were increasingly in demand after the demographic recovery from several plague pandemics between 1300-1500. **Resource scarcity** was also an issue. European kingdoms suffered from a lack of bullion, both gold and silver, due to exhaustion of local supply. **Lack of unity** was another problem. Although united religiously under Catholic (universal) Christianity in 1500, the European monarchs fought fiercely among themselves, and only rarely united against larger regional forces, particularly the Islamic commercial and military networks in civilizations such as the Ottoman Empire. (For more on the history of Catholic Christian Europe, read the Etext Essay Module, “The Holy Roman Empire,” located [here](#).) **Economic motivations to find alternative routes to Asia** other than land routes also played a role, particularly as demand for Asian commodities (spices) and luxury goods (silks, porcelain) rose after 1500, enhanced by a regional commercial revival. (See the discussion below on the commercial revolution, in the Paradigm Shifts 1 section) **Cultural forces** also played a role. European elites, influenced by the Renaissance, became more open and interested in exploration and expansion as part of a process of increased intellectual and cultural outreach. **Technology** also was important. New nautical and navigational technologies - such as the compass and triangular sails - developed in Asia and the Islamic World, and were transferred to Europe and combined with increased cartographic knowledge to produce new, innovative and durable ship designs that could transport Europeans throughout the world’s open oceans. Elite supporters, such as Prince Henry, “the Navigator,” of Portugal, provided funds and resources for these exciting and daring ventures. World history had taken a new and nautical turn.

Short-term causes also played important roles in Europe’s “nautical turn.” The

Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to Ottoman sultan Mehmed II, “the Conqueror,” removed the largest, and the most significant, Christian-controlled commercial **entrepôt**, or emporia trade port, in the eastern Mediterranean basin. With Constantinople’s fall—and Istanbul’s rise—Venetian and Genoese merchants now found themselves at a crucial disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their Muslim counterparts within the Mediterranean trade economy. European politics also played a role. By 1500, after more than three centuries of bloody ideological and religious warfare, the Iberian Peninsula was politically and religiously unified due to the culmination of the *Reconquista* (c. 1100-1492), a centuries-long series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims for control of the region.

(To understand the Reconquista’s gradual development, see the map located at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd_1911/shepherd-c-082-083.jpg)

The new kingdoms of Portugal, Castile, and Aragon (the last two later united as Spain after marriage between Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469), short of funds and facing the challenge of “nation-building” a civil society from a highly-militarized population, solved their dilemmas by continuing the religious war externally. These monarchs cleverly encouraged a series of raiding expeditions by now victorious “conquistadores” against Muslim coastal cities in North Africa.

Profits and information gained from these raids, effectively state-sanctioned piracy, encouraged further exploration of the West African coast. The Portuguese took the lead. By 1498 **Bartolome Dias** had rounded the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean basin. Six years earlier, acting on erroneous knowledge of the earth’s size and geography, Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus), a Genoese sailor, accidentally “discovered” the Americas on a voyage westward across the Atlantic to Asia. His arrival in the Caribbean began the momentous series of processes known as the **Columbian Exchange** that would transform human history.

(For more, see the essay by Alfred Crosby, creator of the term “Columbian Exchange,” at <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/columbian.htm>; for more on the specific flora, fauna and commodities that are part of it, see this chart: http://faculty.smu.edu/rkemper/cf_3333/columbian_exchange.JPG)

By the 1600s, Europeans had established small but sustainable colonial enclaves across the Americas, coastal Africa, and throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans, leading to a series of exchanges of people, foods, technologies, plants, animals and ideas that continues today. Initially tiny outposts, after a century these territories, and the commodities they provided such as silver, furs, maize, and potatoes, played a vital role in expanding European global trade, generated a global consumer economy, ended the “feast/famine” cycle across Europe, and provided a foundation for long-term global population growth. Some of these imperial possessions, such as the massive Spanish American empire, were many times larger than the kingdoms that controlled them.

(See a map of New Spain’s massive size and diversity, which posed many challenges, located at http://www.reisenett.no/map_collection/historical/shepherd/Explorer_Map_Shepherd.jpg.)

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Soon, plantation agriculture flourished in the New World, particularly the Caribbean, and acute labor needs of plantation crops such as tobacco and sugar cane drove the development of a transatlantic commercial system known as the **Triangular Trade** that linked Europe, Africa, and the Americas, resulting in both untold wealth for Europeans, the chief beneficiaries, and unimaginable misery for Africans, who as slaves provided the labor for the Atlantic plantation economies. This forced migration of millions of Africans, mostly young and male, is part of a larger process of global migration that sees the development of new civilizations across the Old and New Worlds, such as Latin America (see section below), and also ushers in what many scholars call the “Atlantic World,” which linked the coastal areas and inhabitants of Europe, Africa, the Americas, and others from all parts of the world.

(See Triangular Trade links here—a map of the Atlantic Slave Trade, located at <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/intro-maps/09.jsp>, and the Triangular Trade map at http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/distance_arc/images/triangular.jpg. For more on the Atlantic World, see the Smithsonian National Museum of American History’s “On the Water” online exhibition, located at http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/1_1.html.)

Paradigm Shifts 1- Religion/Science/Trade Networks

The term “**paradigm shift**” was coined by the twentieth century philosopher Thomas Kuhn to describe a collection or set of beliefs that are challenged and transformed by a process of revolution. Although Kuhn’s ideas have been challenged by later scholars, his concept remains useful as a way of understanding the dramatic changes that occur within modern world history between 1450 and 1800.² In the early modern period, a number of interrelated and interdependent “paradigm shifts” occur first in Europe, then elsewhere, that exert enormous influence on the minds of individuals, and through this influence profoundly alter and reshape world history. Three areas are important; religion, science, and trade.

Religion

The Reformation (1517-1648), which began as a desire by the German university professor Martin Luther (1483-1546) to reform Catholic Christianity, turned into a movement known as Protestantism that permanently fragmented Western Christianity and led to decades of brutal religious warfare across central and northern Europe. (For more on Luther and the Reformation, see Stephen Kreis’s lecture essay, “The Protestant Reformation,” located at <http://www.historyguide.org/earlymod/lecture3c.html>.)

(See the maps of Europe’s religious development, located at <http://westciv2.umwblogs.org/2010/01/26/religious-maps-of-europe/>.)

² For More on Kuhn and his ideas see the following sites, <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/Kuhnsnap.html>, and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/thomas-kuhn/>.

The **Treaty of Westphalia** (1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War, recognized the political reality of the Reformation. Because of the Reformation, state power increased at the Church's expense and also led to other paradigm shifts, such as a sustained increase in literacy, by undermining two ecclesiastical monopolies—education and truth. (See the image of the Treaty at <http://i34.tinypic.com/11qrgci.jpg>.) The Treaty of Westphalia also recognized the emergence of the **sovereign states system** that established the foundations of modern international law and international relations.

Science

Several circumstance and processes converged in early modern scientific thought. As part of the knowledge upheaval generated by the Reformation, and also due to the rediscovery of classical scientific knowledge due to the **Renaissance** and the revival of commerce, new ideas about knowledge generation and the structure of the physical world began to appear. Centered on a methodological approach known as the **scientific method**—which involved direct observation and repeatable experimentation—and involving new technologies, particularly in the field of **optics**, new knowledge appeared that led to the modern scientific disciplines, such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology. This knowledge was produced incrementally and communally—the most famous of the early “scientists,” Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), expressed this perspective in a letter to another pioneer, Robert Hooke, by noting that “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”—and transformed our understanding of the physical world and the universe.³ Much of this early work was done by amateurs with little formal education, such as Benjamin Franklin, whose kite experiments in the 1700s led to discoveries related to electricity. By the 1700s, this “scientific revolution” of secular, empirical and rational thought had replaced religion as the dominant form of intellectual and cultural expression in the European “West,” and continues to dominate our understanding of our own reality. Modern sciences and the critical application of reason gradually became standard European, and later global, frames of reference.

Trade

A commercial revival occurs across Europe between 1300 and 1650—the most significant increase in trade, commercial activity since the decline of the Western Roman Empire nearly one thousand years before. This process was connected to the **rise of towns, urban areas, and a commercial revival, led by Italian cities such as Venice and Genoa**. Banking separated from money-changing for the first time, allowing for mobile and transferable creditor/debtor obligations to develop and expand. Also, coinage returned as an important, quantifiably

³ For a fascinating view of the origins of this phrase, and Newton's use of it, see the discussion at <http://www.aerospaceweb.org/question/history/q0162b.shtml>. **Robert Hooke** (1635-1703) was one of the most important English contributors to the rise of science in world civilization. He first coined the term *cell* to describe organisms' appearance. Allan Chapman's excellent essay on Hooke's life and work can be found at the following website: <http://home.clara.net/rod.beavon/leonardo.htm>; additional materials and links appear at <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/hooke.html>.

abstract form of economic exchange. The **rise of the merchant class** is critical— merchants were usually concentrated in urban communities as associations of free men. Examples include the Hanseatic League of northern Europe (see the map of the league at http://www.klitzfamily.com/files/hanseatic_league.jpg).

Soon, what had begun as a regional revival became a global revolution. Commercial activity of all kinds intensified, displacing—but not destroying—local and regional trade networks and enmeshing the global population within its web. In short, commercial activity became more important, and more pervasive, than ever before. The European revival allowed for re-establishment of links with the Indian Ocean and East Asian economies, initially through local patrons and intermediaries; then later on increasingly favorable and direct terms. Dutch sailors, traders and financiers led the way. After fighting a successful war of independence with the Spanish, Dutch elites established innovative new credit and banking systems, including the world's first stock exchange. These new devices revolutionized credit financing throughout Europe and the Atlantic World, and many of these innovations spread across the North Sea to England after William of Orange became the English King in 1688. Soon, English and Dutch ships wrested control of much the world's oceanic transit routes and their coastal settlements from the Spanish, the Portuguese and other naval powers such as the Ottomans and Ming Chinese.

Formation of new “hybrid” civilizations

Another crucial feature of the early modern world was the formation of new societies and cultures as a result of European maritime expansion. Although many examples exist, the quintessential example of this process of social and cultural development occurs in what becomes known as Latin America, where a “hybrid” culture that shares American, African and European origins emerges.

This process of formation begins through the **Columbian Exchange**, which sets off a series of dramatic transformations across the Old World (Europe, Asia, and Africa), the New World (the Americas), and Oceania. For the first time in over 15,000 years, all of the world's human population came together in intimate proximity, leading to the development of a series of new mixed or “hybrid” civilizations that reflected the collision of many different cultures, traditions and ethnicities. Latin American society, composed of a fusion of European, American, and African elements, fits this pattern. Beginning with the voyages of exploration and later the conquests of the *conquistadores*, and sustained by the increased involvement of the Americas and Oceania in the European-directed global sea-based system, Latin American society, after recovering from a devastating series of Old World diseases and pandemics, soon became a kaleidoscopic blend of peoples and cultures. (For more detailed information, see the Etext Essay Modules, [“The Conquest of Mexico”](#) and [“Colonial Latin America”](#))

As most early European colonists were men—more than 80% between 1500-1650 — intermarriage and sexual relations between European men and American and African women soon led to American societies characterized by mixed-descent populations. New hierarchies and categories known as *castas* appeared to codify and regulate these “hybrids,” for example

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mestizos, people of mixed European and American descent, or **mulattos**, those of mixed European and African descent.

(See an image of *casta* classifications here, at <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dd/CastaSystemVirreinato.JPG>.)

Although discriminated against in comparison to those of European origin, the **peninsulares** (those born in Europe) and **creoles/criollos** (born in the Americas), mixed-descent peoples, both individually and collectively, found ways to achieve success and exert influence within the larger society. These processes of migration, intermarriage, and codification also occurred in the Philippines, Spain's key Pacific Rim colony, which completed the global chain that linked Spain, the Americas, and Asia.

(See the route of the Spanish galleon trade from Mexico across the Pacific to the Philippines here, at http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/pubs/garcia2001/map_pacific.jpg.)

Similar developments occurred elsewhere across the world during this period, notably in Eurasia, as the newly-minted Russian Empire expanded across the Ural Mountains into central and eastern Siberia, southward into the Black Sea region, and in the Indian Ocean basin, as European and Muslim traders, both of Arab and Indian origin, expanded their trade networks and intermarried with indigenous elites. Similar motivations encouraged Chinese merchants to intermarry with local elites across Southeast Asia. Across coastal West and Southwest Africa similar hybrid communities also developed, as European slave traders intermarried with their counterparts in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and the West African coastal regions.

Centralization of Authority - Rise of the Modern State

Governmental transformation and improvement also marked the early modern period. Like the other changes, it was complex, and linked to every aspect of life, but **gradual**.

Throughout many imperial and feudal states, a centrifugal series of political and constitutional reforms and policies greatly enhanced the ability of rulers to train and pay large armies, and organize bureaucracies of officials through taxation. These reforms also involved an extension of monopoly use of armed force within the realm by the sovereign, as private and local forms of criminal justice were absorbed by the realm. Historian J.M. Roberts argues that this era's institutional reforms also involved a shift in authority's perspective over those it ruled, and "marked a change in emphasis within government, from a claim to control persons who had a particular relationship to the ruler, to one to control people who lived in a certain area."⁴

Control of space, rather than subjects, now became the principal issue for a host of centralizing leaders from China to England.

⁴ J.M. Roberts, *A History of the Modern World* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), 503.

These developments also facilitated the **rise of the prince/monarch** as a political (rather than symbolic or feudal) leader, and, importantly, as a guarantor of justice. Sovereigns “appeared to promise more independent, less expensive justice than local lords.”⁵ To ensure these reforms developed strong roots among their subject populations, centralizers encouraged the growth of **national narratives** and other popular myths that enhanced popular support for the state. These narratives and myths were linked to the cultural invention of the **nation** as a discrete concept—as the appearance of national patron saints, national histories, and other representative institutions such as parliaments suggests. Soon these developments intersected with other changes that spurred further improvements, such as the rise of towns and urban areas, and a commercial revival, led by Italian cities such as Venice and Genoa. Banking separated from money-changing for first time across most global trade networks. In Europe, these changes are most recognizable in **Portugal, France, Spain and England**.

More frequent external contact with other powerful, well-organized state systems, such as **Ming China** and the **Ottoman Empire**, particularly the Ottoman court structure established under **Suleyman I** (1520-1561), also played an important role, as Europeans admired, and then emulated, features of the state systems of their rivals.

(For a map of the Ottoman empire’s historical expansion, see <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/06/OttomanEmpireIn1683.png>.)

These improvements and reforms led to significant growth in the size and reach of governmental systems by 1750, creating both a new “**service nobility**,” aristocrats without independent wealth and land ownership. These changes also increased opportunities for new actors, such as the professional “middle” classes with educational and vocational experience, to take on powerful administrative and managerial responsibilities.

In 1500, Western European states lagged behind their international counterparts in power, strength, and organization. By 1750, they matched or surpassed all of their global rivals in organizational capacity, development of revenue-raising systems, and effective contact with and control over their peoples. A great example of this process can be seen in the court and governmental system created by **Louis XIV of France** (1638-1715). From his new palace at Versailles, south of Paris, the “Sun King”—most famous for his statement, “*l’etat, c’est moi* (I am the state)” —combined new levels of royal power, bureaucratic efficiency and cultural splendor to form a governmental structure unlike any Europe had seen before: absolute monarchy supported by divine right theory, or **absolutism**.⁶ (On Louis XIV and Versailles, explore the site at <http://en.chateauversailles.fr/history/court-people/louis-xiv-time/louis-xiv->)

⁵ Ibid., 504.

⁶ Louis XIV’s use of the sun as his royal symbol played on both traditional and contemporary ideas about the sun’s role in the universe. At the time of his coronation, European elite opinion remained fascinated by Nicolas Copernicus’ (1473-1543) theory of **heliocentrism**, which implied that the sun regulated the movements of other heavenly bodies. Louis’ elaborately-structured court life at Versailles, with its carefully choreographed displays of power and discipline, echoed the Copernican solar system’s order.

This new institutional power and efficiency directly aided European efforts at overseas expansion, in the forms of royal or state patronage, and financial and military support. It also contributed to the creation of a state-directed, export-oriented economic structure known as **mercantilism**, whose purpose was to maximize state revenue holdings by encouraging exports and discouraging imports. Moreover, it greatly increased state intervention in the economy. (On mercantilism, see the following: <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Mercantilism.html>.) For the next two hundred years, large areas of the rest of the world increasingly fell under European control or influence.

Similar “state-building” exercises took place in both Russia, which emerged from Mongol control in the late 1400s and expanded under energetic leaders such as Ivan III, Ivan IV and Peter I “the Great,” and across the Muslim world in Southwest and South Asia, where the “**Gunpowder Empires**”—the Ottomans under their greatest leader **Suleyman I** (1494-1561), the Safavids of Persia under **Abbas I** (1571-1629) and the Mughals of India under **Akbar the Great** (1542-1605)—sought to impose similar processes on their diverse, and much larger, subject populations. (See an extended discussion of early modern Russia [here](#), and an extended discussion of these magnificent and innovative Islamic civilizations [here](#).) In East Asia, the Ming, or “brilliant”, emperors **Hongwu** (1328-1398) and **Yunglo** (1360-1424) revitalized the Chinese Empire, while rulers in Korea and Japan such as **Toyotomi Hideyoshi** (1536-1598) built new state structures that proved remarkably resilient to external pressures. (Read the Etext Essay Module on Ming China [here](#), and also consult the EText Essay Module that examines the development of early modern Japan [here](#).) Indeed, it is important to understand the emergence of the modern state as a global development that occurred in many places between 1400 and 1750.