

WC 457-474 PP 486-494: Bodin, *On Sovereignty*

1572	St. Bartholomew's Day massacre
1576	Bodin writes <i>On Sovereignty</i>
1600s	British and French establish colonies around the world
1618-48	Thirty Years War
1635-42	Cardinal Richelieu ascends to great political power
1643-1715	Louis XIV of France
1713	Treaty of Utrecht

<p>Star Terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolutism • Divine Right of Kings • "Sun King" 	<p>Geog. Terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paris • Versailles
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A. Rigaud, *Portrait of Louis XIV* (1701) oil on canvas, currently at the Louvre, Paris



This famous portrait is regarded as the very epitome of the absolutist ruler portrait. Yet it represents more than just power, pomp and circumstance. The sumptuous red and gold drapery is not only a motif of dignity, but also creates a framework that echoes the drapes of the ornate, ermine-lined robe. The blue velvet brocade ornamented with the golden fleurs-de-lis of the house of Bourbon is repeated in the upholstery of the chair, the cushion and the cloth draped over the table below it: the king quite clearly "sets the tone". A monumental marble column on a high plinth is draped in such a way that it does not detract from the height of the figure. Louis is presented in an elegantly angled pose, situated well above the standpoint of the spectator to whom he seems to turn his attention graciously, but without reducing the stability of his stance. Rigaud's consummate mastery of portraiture is particularly evident in the way he depicts the king's facial expression: his distanced unapproachability are not founded in Neoclassicist idealization, but in the candor of an ageing, impenetrable physiognomy. The lips are closed decisively and with a hint of irony, the eyes have a harsh, dark sheen, while the narrow nose suggests intolerance. This is a ruler who is neither good nor evil, but beyond all moral categories.

B. Palace at Versailles, France

King Louis XIV used visual arts within the palace of Versailles to establish the primacy of the French monarch. Louis XIV wanted to legitimize his form of strict absolutism through art. The pinnacle of this propaganda campaign was the remodeling of the chateau of Versailles into a palace. He and his artists made specific choices to flaunt his wealth and give the king credibility. The gardens, grand staircase, hall of mirrors and salons parade with grandeur and thick allegorical comparisons between the Gods and Louis. The propaganda was effective in targeting its three intended audiences to the degree that later monarchs and artists mimicked it.

