

early Ottoman practice, many of these royal princes had been given administrative or military positions with real duties, but by the seventeenth century most of them were also more or less imprisoned in the palace, so that they were not prepared for the challenges of rule. The death of every sultan was followed by intrigue and often warfare among claimants to the throne, with each faction backed by powerful Janissaries and officials. The huge bureaucracy needed to run the enormous empire became increasingly corrupt, with local officials regarding the provinces under their authority as territories to be exploited rather than parts of a whole.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ottomans developed the most effective army in Europe in terms of both weaponry and supply systems, along with a huge war fleet of armed galleys that controlled the Mediterranean. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, other European powers built on Ottoman advances, and developed lighter and more mobile field artillery, as well as sailing ships that were faster and sturdier than rowed galleys. Much of the Ottoman fleet was destroyed by a combined fleet of European powers at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Though the fleet was rebuilt within a year, and the Ottomans took Tunis in North Africa from the Spanish in 1574, they no longer dominated trade in the Mediterranean, but shared it with Venetian and later Dutch and English merchants.

On land, Ottoman armies were split between fighting the Safavid Empire in Persia to the east and maintaining their hold in Europe. The collapse of the Safavids in the seventeenth century allowed the Ottomans to turn their attention fully to Europe, and they mounted a huge campaign against the Habsburgs, making an alliance with two other Habsburg enemies, Protestant nobles in Hungary and Louis XIV. The Ottomans besieged Vienna in 1683, but German and Polish armies rescued the city, and then continued to push the Ottomans out of most of Hungary and Transylvania (part of present-day Romania). Despite these losses, Janissaries and other officials who dominated the Ottoman court blocked political, military, or economic reforms; tax revenues declined, agricultural and technological innovations developed elsewhere were not adopted, and Ottoman society stagnated.

Habsburg lands

The main beneficiary of the decline of Ottoman power was the Austrian Habsburg dynasty, which controlled a complex group of territories in central and eastern Europe, some of them within the Holy Roman Empire and some outside it: the German-speaking provinces of Austria, Tyrol, Styria, and several smaller territories, along with Czech-speaking Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungarian-speaking Hungary. The Thirty Years War, much of which was fought on Habsburg lands, left these territories depopulated and impoverished, and made it clear that the Empire would not be united in religion or transformed into a strong state. It also left the Habsburgs in clearer control of many of their holdings, and though they continued to be regularly elected as Holy Roman

Emperors, they concentrated on their own family lands. They expanded their power by imposing new taxes, organizing permanent standing armies, and reducing the power of local nobles or representative institutions. In Bohemia, for example, the native nobility, most of whom were Protestant, were defeated militarily in the Thirty Years War, and the victorious Habsburg rulers gave much of their land to the few Catholic nobles or foreign mercenary commanders. This new nobility helped the Habsburgs centralize their rule, impose harsher controls on peasants, and wipe out Protestantism, the latter with the assistance of Jesuits brought in to open schools. The Habsburgs carried out similar measures in their German-speaking holdings, and then turned to Hungary, the largest of their territories.

Hungary had been divided between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs after the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, but before then it had been an independent state for several centuries. Throughout the period of foreign rule, it maintained a sense of national identity largely centered on its distinctive language. Many Hungarians living under the relatively tolerant Ottomans became Protestant, or even Unitarian, or members of other more radical religious groups. In the late seventeenth century, Habsburg forces drove the Ottomans out of most of Hungary, and attempted to re-Catholicize the whole country and consolidate their rule. Hungarian nobles revolted several times, and in 1703, when the Habsburgs were engaged in the War of the Spanish Succession, they organized a major patriotic uprising under the leadership of Prince Francis Rákóczy II (1676–1735). The rebellion was defeated, but the Habsburgs were forced to allow the Hungarian nobility to retain their traditional privileges, and Hungary did not simply become part of a unified Habsburg state. Except for this, the War of the Spanish Succession was a great boon for the Austrian Habsburgs, who gained the southern part of the Netherlands, along with Spanish Habsburg holdings in Italy, though the latter proved to be temporary.

The Austrian Habsburgs had their own succession problems, however. The Habsburg Emperor Charles VI (ruled 1711–40) had no sons, and imperial law officially prohibited the emperorship passing to a woman. (This law was based on the Salic Law – which also excluded women from the throne of France – believed in the eighteenth century to be an ancient law of the Franks dating from the seventh century. Historians have recently demonstrated that it was concocted much later, when French lawyers sought to exclude both women and heirs who had inherited through the female line during a succession controversy.) Charles issued a Pragmatic Sanction, or imperial decree, allowing his eldest daughter to inherit, and got a number of states within the Empire and most other European countries to agree to this. At his death, however, several of these reneged on their promises and attacked Austria, claiming parts of the territories of his eldest daughter Maria Theresa (ruled 1740–80) in what became known as the War of the Austrian Succession. She was forced to give up the province of Silesia to a new power on the scene, Prussia, but was recognized as the legitimate ruler of Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary. Her husband, Francis I of Lorraine, became the emperor, an office that later passed to their son, who became Emperor Joseph II (ruled 1765–90). Maria Theresa and Joseph II further

Sweden	Denmark/ Norway	Poland	Austrian Habsburgs	Russia	Ottoman Empire
1604–11 Charles IX	1588–1648 Christian IV	1587–1632 Sigismund III	1576–1612 Rudolf II	1598–1605 Boris Godunov	1595–1603 Mehmet III
1611–32 Gustavus Adolphus		1632–48 Vladislav VII	1612–19 Matthias	1605–13 Time of Troubles	1603–17 Ahmed I
1632–54 Christina			1619–37 Ferdinand II	1613–45 Michael Romanov	1617–18 1622–23 Mustapha I
1654–60 Charles X	1648–70 Frederick III	1648–68 John II Casimir	1637–57 Ferdinand III	1645–76 Alexis I	1618–22 Osman II 1623–40 Murad IV
1660–97 Charles XI	1670–99 Christian V	1669–76 Michael Wisniowiecki	1658–1705 Leopold I	1676–82 Theodore III	1640–8 Ibrahim I 1648–87 Mohamed IV
1697–1718 Charles XII		1674–96 John III Sobieski		1682–9 Ivan V	1687–91 Suleiman I 1691–5 Ahmed II
1718–20 Ulrika	1699–1730 Frederick IV	1697–1733 Augustus II	1705–11 Joseph I	1689–1725 Peter I	1695–1703 Mustapha II
1720–51 Frederick			1711–40 Charles VI	1725–27 Catherine I 1727–30 Peter II 1730–40 Anna	1703–30 Ahmed III 1730–54 Mahmud I 1754–57 Osman III
1730–46 Christian VI	1730–46 Christian VI	1734–63 Augustus III		1741–62 Elizabeth	1757–74 Mustapha III
1751–71 Adolphus Frederick	1746–66 Frederick V		1740–80 Maria Theresa		
1771–92 Gustavus III	1766–1808 Christian VII	1764–95 Stanislas Poniatowski	1765–90 Joseph II	1762–96 Catherine II	1774–89 Abdul Hamid I

Fig. 23. Rulers of northern, eastern, and central Europe, 1600–1789.

strengthened the centralized bureaucracy, reformed the tax system so that even nobles had to pay some taxes, and limited the independent power of the papacy in Austria.

Brandenburg-Prussia

The combatants in the War of Austrian Succession, and the subsequent Seven Years War in which Austria tried unsuccessfully to regain Silesia, involved some countries that had been major powers in Europe for centuries, but also one that