



Protestant caricature of Louis XIV.
Les héros de la Ligue, Paris, 1691.

Protestantism, issued the Edict of Nantes. Amongst other provisions this allowed the members of the Eglise Reformée, known as the Huguenots, to continue to have churches in towns where they already existed and to garrison certain towns at the King's expense. These concessions were renewed after an unsuccessful revolt in the 1620s when the Huguenots lost their military forces. Discriminatory pressures increased during the 1680s, culminating in the Edict of Fontainebleau in October 1685 which revoked the Edict of Nantes and forbade any public worship by members of the Eglise Reformée. Despite a prohibition on emigration, up to 200,000 left France, settling in the Netherlands, England, Ireland and Switzerland.

Official patronage was important for science and the arts. A number of academies were established



Abraham Bosse, *L'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, [Paris, ca 1633-1634].

to further branches of knowledge. The Académie des Sciences was founded in 1666, mirroring developments in England and Italy. The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres was founded to supervise designs and to devise inscriptions for royal monuments. Theatre was a popular entertainment. Companies were established in Paris early in the seventeenth century and strolling players toured the provinces. The giants of the theatre, Pierre Corneille, Molière, and Jean Racine, had their works performed at court in the 1660s and 1670s. Opera became a favoured medium, particularly the works of Jean-Baptiste Lully.

This exhibition reflects some of the aspects of French culture which continue to have influence on European thought and values.

Front cover:
 Foreground: Nicolas Arnould, *Femme de qualité au bain de la Saussaye*, Paris, [ca 1695].
 Background: Abraham de Wicquefort, *Advis fidelle aux véritables Hollandois*, [n.p.], 1673.



TROUBLED *Magnificence* FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XIV



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The Long Room,
Trinity College Library Dublin



Louis XIV. François Eudes de Mézeray, *Abrégé chronologique ou Extrait de l'histoire de France*, Paris, 1668.

From the time that he took personal charge of the government after the death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661, Louis dominated the state. His long reign from 1643 to 1715 was characterised by a succession of wars. In each, except for the last, the War of the Spanish Succession, France managed to expand her territory, becoming the major land power in Western Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century. This was achieved at a huge cost in men and money. The French army numbered 150,000 men in the 1650s but was reduced to about 50,000 following the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659. In the course of the Dutch war in the 1670s the forces grew to nearly 280,000 men. Casualties were huge; wounds often proved fatal as military medicine was still fairly primitive. Disease was almost as big a danger. The cost of providing for armies put great strains on



Allain Manesson Mallet, *Les travaux de Mars, ou L'art de la guerre*, Amsterdam, 1685.

the nation's finances and all sorts of expedients were employed in order to raise money, including the establishment and sale of state offices, the cutting of salaries and payments on bonds, and devaluation of the currency. Campaigning generally occurred from spring to autumn and Louis personally led his troops on several occasions.

As a law-maker, Louis reduced the Parlement de Paris and the provincial parlements to mere assenters to his will whereas in earlier reigns they had enjoyed a role in criticising proposed legislation. Having lived through the civil war of the Fronde as a boy, he took care to reduce the political importance of the grandee families in the state. Above all he was concerned with the projection of his own image in representing the sovereignty and majesty of the state.



Almanach pour l'année de grâce M.DCC.IX, Paris, [1708].

In modern times that image is particularly associated with the Palace of Versailles. The original building there was a hunting lodge constructed for his father which Louis used in the early 1660s before commissioning the architect Le Vau to extend it. The building project became enormous, outlasting Le Vau, who died in 1670, and took four decades to complete. Much of the interior decoration, including the tapestries, was designed by the painter Charles Le Brun. The art ranged from direct representations of the King, his family and his heroic deeds and virtues to suitable representations of classical imagery.

The King's desire for order in his realm extended to religion. The sixteenth century had been marked by bitter religious wars, which reached an uneasy compromise when Henri IV, himself a convert from