



ARTY STORIES

Book 3

THE FOUR PRINCES
War, Terror & Religion



Art and life
across the centuries

Ian Matsuda, FCA, BA (Hons)

for
Noko

Copyright © Ian Matsuda, FCA, BA (Hons), 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, transmitted or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher or licence holder

<https://www.artystories.org> email: info@artystories.org

The Procureess, Gerrit van Honthorst, 1625

St. Bartholomew Massacre, Paris, 1572

'ARTY STORIES'

Art & Life across the centuries

'Seeing people's lives brings their art to life'

An introduction for art lovers and students alike into the stories behind individual works of art and their evolution over centuries. This series of six books tells the stories of events and lives and the influence of art on these changing societies. How art evolved from primarily a tool to shape society, into a purely artistic expression.

Together they provide a sweeping framework in which to follow and understand the struggles and triumphs of people in the evolving changes through peace and war from 3,000BC until today. Produced in a new and accessible introduction celebrating the myriad lives and wonderful art over the centuries.

This holistic approach is also designed for younger students to create an interest for complementary studies in both art and history and contributes to the UK Educational targets of Key Stage 3:

'know how art and design both reflect and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation'.

This also contributes to the educational debates in the USA on the benefits of art to the health of society.

Supported by the Arts Council, England as: *'creative and engaging for young people' - 'the opportunities to stimulate young people's interest and imagination are evident'.*

Centuries of great art are a gift to us all

Books in this Series

Book 1	Egypt - Greece - Rome	Empires & Games
2	The Renaissance in Italy	The Patron & The Artist
3	The Four Princes	War, Terror & Religion
4	Northern Europe	Revolution & Evolution
5	The American Dream	Depression to Optimism
6	The Modern World	The '...isms' of Art

All free e-book download

<https://www.artystories.org>

Book 3

THE FOUR PRINCES

War, Terror & Religion

CONTENTS

- Four Great Princes who forged modern Europe
- Religion leads to division and wars
- The Princes go to war – and bring terror
- Diplomacy brings peace
- Palaces, chateaux and wives
- Thirty years war of terror and death
- The Dutch Golden Age of Art
- Summary
- Sources of information

Four Great Princes who forged modern Europe

Four giants who shaped the societies of a Europe we know today and so the art and history that was to follow. As the golden time of Renaissance Art reached its peak, (Book 2), Europe plunged into a time of terror where armies of mercenaries roamed across the Continent. Emperors, Kings and Princes waged wars for kingdoms and power, under the banner of religion. The first decades of the 16th century (1500's) saw the deaths of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and then an uprising against the Pope and rigid Catholicism.

Europe was in for a time of great change and terrible wars, big and small, as four great rulers - all born in the last decade of the 15th century - were to change the face of Europe and of the Americas. As autocratic rulers, they wielded power across western Europe and would wage war between themselves, switching alliances as their personal ambitions dictated. They rode on the wings of religious fervour, but death and destruction followed in their wake as towns and cities were ransacked and put to the sword.



Henry VIII, King of England
Born 1491, had six wives
Rich from the monasteries
Avoided European wars
Spent vast monies on status
Died age 55



Francis I, King of France
Born 1494, dashing and rich
Fought for French Territory
Explored North America
Renaissance art patron
Died age 52



Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor
Born 1500, serious, stammered
Ruled vast areas of Europe
Explored South America
Religious Catholic
Died age 58



Suleiman the Magnificent
Born 1494, Ottoman
Ruler of Eastern Europe
Intelligent and cultivated
Swept Islam into the West
Died aged 71

Unlike previous dynasties where art was used to shape culture and so society, these rulers used war to reshape Europe. People were crushed for religious belief or for just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. These rulers used art for personal ends and specifically architecture, to underline their authority and power. Great palaces, chateaux and mosques were built from the great wealth flowing into their coffers. A wealth kept from the rural poor who had no voice and lived under the heel of their masters – in fear.

Far from the democracy of Ancient Greece. But where did all this start?

Religion leads to division and wars

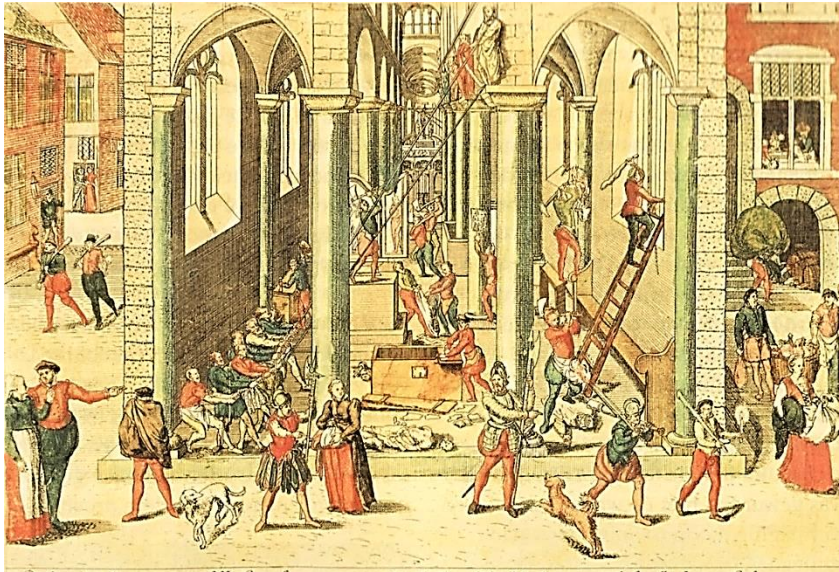
This was a time of great change as Europe emerged from medieval times with a great wealth accumulated in Spain and Portugal from the New World in South America. This fuelled new opportunities for rulers and merchants alike. A cluster of national states developed with all the rivalry that comes between them. Merchants and bankers fed on the feuding princes, accumulating new wealth from wars and new trade. The Catholic church looked to strengthen its hold across Europe, building a vast new St Peters in Rome – displaying their wealth and power in artistic commissions, with the Sistine Chapel.



But the vast majority suffered poverty. Any voice they had was ignored by the church who controlled their spiritual life, which formed such a large part of the common man's world. But the church controlled any prayer to God, setting themselves up as the doorway to heaven and imposing strict rules as to the word of God in peoples' lives. They portrayed a dead fate that awaits those that go astray. Prayers to God were made only through the priest and they demanded money to pray on behalf the people, effectively paying their way into heaven. (termed 'indulgences')

A Catholic sale of indulgencies, c.1530, Jorg Breu, the Elder of Ausburg

This corrupt and even debauched church grew rich and the people grew poor. A recipe for discontent and revolution and in 1517 a German monk – Martin Luther – gave a focus to their call and challenged the monopoly of the Catholic Church with a new Protestant Church. Rather than accept the mystery of Latin, Luther had the bible translated into German and by means of the newly invented printing presses, distributed bibles and leaflets to his fellow citizens. The resulting civil uprising ignited wars across Europe, that were to change the face of the Continent and bring devastating suffering to village and town alike. Revolution in the name of God.



Engraving: Destruction, The First of our Lady, Antwerp, 1566, Frans Hogenberg

Catholic churches were taken over, allowing the people the freedom to pray directly to God. But their anger was also directed at the corruption in the priesthood.

People broke free smashing the rich religious images and the renaissance art, often throwing out the priest and converting the church for Protestants. With this new power people then looked to overthrow their rulers and a 'Peasants Revolution' swept through Germany, Holland and Switzerland, where Protestantism is dominant to this day.

But the price of freedom was to prove costly.

The peasants lacked combat experience or even a unifying structure and were beaten down by the armies of the local Princes. These local princes then saw the opportunity to take over the collection of monies by the Church and raise taxes themselves with which to field armies and grab territory from their neighbours. The age of mercenary armies had begun, recruited from a mix of nationalities across Europe. They were soon to grow into conflict between empires – the empires of the four great princes. Much of the carnage to come was waged in the name of religion as a new Protestant Church struggled to break away from the dominant Catholic Church.

These armies; fighting under the banner of religion; often went unpaid and unfed, resulting in roving bands of starving mercenaries across Europe, pillaging and killing wherever they went in the most dreadful ways.

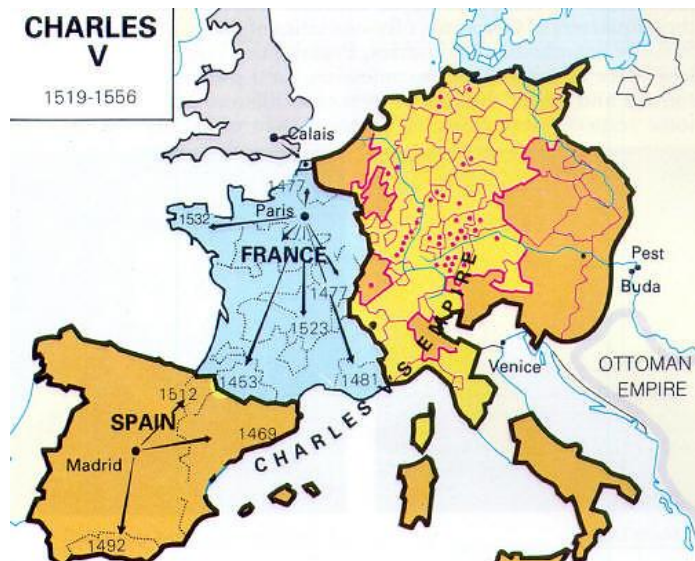
Undefended villages and towns fell to their sword, unable to defend themselves against a professional army, who in turn were regarded by their leaders as 'the scum of the earth'. (1) They destroyed everything in their path.



A Landscape with Travellers Ambushed, Sebastian Vrancx

But worse was yet to follow.

The Princes go to war – and bring terror



These four great rulers pushed at each other's borders and none more than Francis I. France was surrounded by the global empire of Charles V that stretched from Spain and Portugal, through the Netherlands and Germany and on into Austria, in the vast and strong Austro-Hungarian empire. (shown in orange in the map) Battles were won and lost, but Charles gained the upper hand, not just from his vast territories, but also from the wealth of gold that he brought from the New World of the South Americas. In contrast Francis called on his noblemen to fight these wars, in a long running dispute over territories in an Italy that was dominated by Charles. Henry and Suleiman pushed at the edges.

Milan was a key centre of power and both Francis and Charles had both ruled the city at one time or another. In 1525 Francis despatched an army of 40,000 to seize back the area. Poor strategy left his army surrounded and cut to pieces by the smaller Imperial forces, whose muskets and cannon overwhelmed the pike-staffs wielded by the French. A new era in warfare had arrived. Francis was captured and taken for ransom, signing a peace treaty that he had no intention of observing and leaving his two sons as hostages, for four long hard years.

At this point Charles, with no money left to pay his troops, seems to have diverted his attention elsewhere. This left a huge army of men seeking to obtain revenge and booty and they chose to plunder the nearest richest city – Rome. Rome's defences were weak and only the Pope's personal Swiss Guard fought bravely, but were slaughtered to a man on the very steps of St. Peters. (even now this tradition of support is held with the Swiss Guard still standing in costume at St Peters) The hungry and angry soldiers burst in on panicked families and began an orgy of killing in a bloodbath described as 'one of the most horrible in recorded history'. (2)

Hospital patients, orphans - even nuns were taken and sold or killed and the city destroyed, with streets strewn with corpses in a boiling sun. Some 12,000 were buried or thrown into the Tiber river where an epidemic of plague broke out on their rotting bodies and starvation reduced the population by half.



St. Bartholomew
Massacre, Paris, 1572
François Dubois

When cities were sacked, soldiers ran wild as in this engraving of a massacre in Paris. This destruction to the centre of the Catholic religion inspired retaliation by the church with the Catholic 'Jesuits'. They brought a passion and further terror with their 'Inquisition', wielding 'prayer book and sword'. In Spain the inquisition was to lead to death and torture of 'heretics'. The Jesuit passion inspired Catholics to squash protestants at home and establish themselves in the New World of South America, where Spain dominated. (3)

In Rome the Pope was now a prisoner of the Imperialists and Charles demanded monies and lands to release him, all to further reduce the power and authority of The Pope. It was then that Henry V111 sought to obtain the Pope's permission to divorce his wife Catherine, against Catholic law. But the Pope was under the power of Charles who was both a devout catholic and nephew to Catherine. Henry was way down on the Pope's list whose concern was to placate and crown Charles as Holy Roman Emperor with dominion over Northern Europe.

So inadvertently the sack of Rome was to lead to Henry VIII breaking from Rome and reforming England to the Protestant Church. Henry went on to dissolve of the monasteries, so that he could confiscate their huge wealth to lavish on war, architecture and art. All this would sow the seed for the persecution and execution of Catholics in England for years to come. So, a band of frustrated and hungry soldiers were to ultimately lead to the English Reformation and to the Church of England: Consequences.



Soldier and his Wife, Daniel Hopfer, 1470-1536

Soldiers, as mercenaries from various countries, had no uniforms and wore any clothing, only being distinguished by something like a coloured sash. People at that time tended to wear layers of clothing against the winter cold and women and children joined these caravans.

But hunger could render these fine men destitute, as portrayed in this imaginary etching by Durer of 'Death Riding' from 1505.



Such was the contempt for these soldiers that one French General, finding a bridge blocked by a slow-moving train of 800 camp followers of women and children, ordered that they all be thrown off the bridge so that his army could move forward more rapidly. (3) They were just 'canon fodder' and 'the scum of the earth'.

Most were to die of disease and hunger, rather than in battle. Ironically, these men had joined the army due to famine at home and although some were forced or 'pressed' into service, they were deemed to be 'the excrement of the land'. To be a peasant in the 16th century was to live in fear, hunger and poverty.



But there were times of peace when villagers could enjoy themselves. Beer or cider was often safer to drink than water and drink it they did!

'Peasants Making Merry', (detail), Brueghel the Younger, 16th C

Medieval villagers were keen dancers, be it a celebration or just a Saturday night. By this time the range of instruments that we know today, was available but cost could limit a village to a lute (a 'fat' guitar), flute and perhaps a drum.

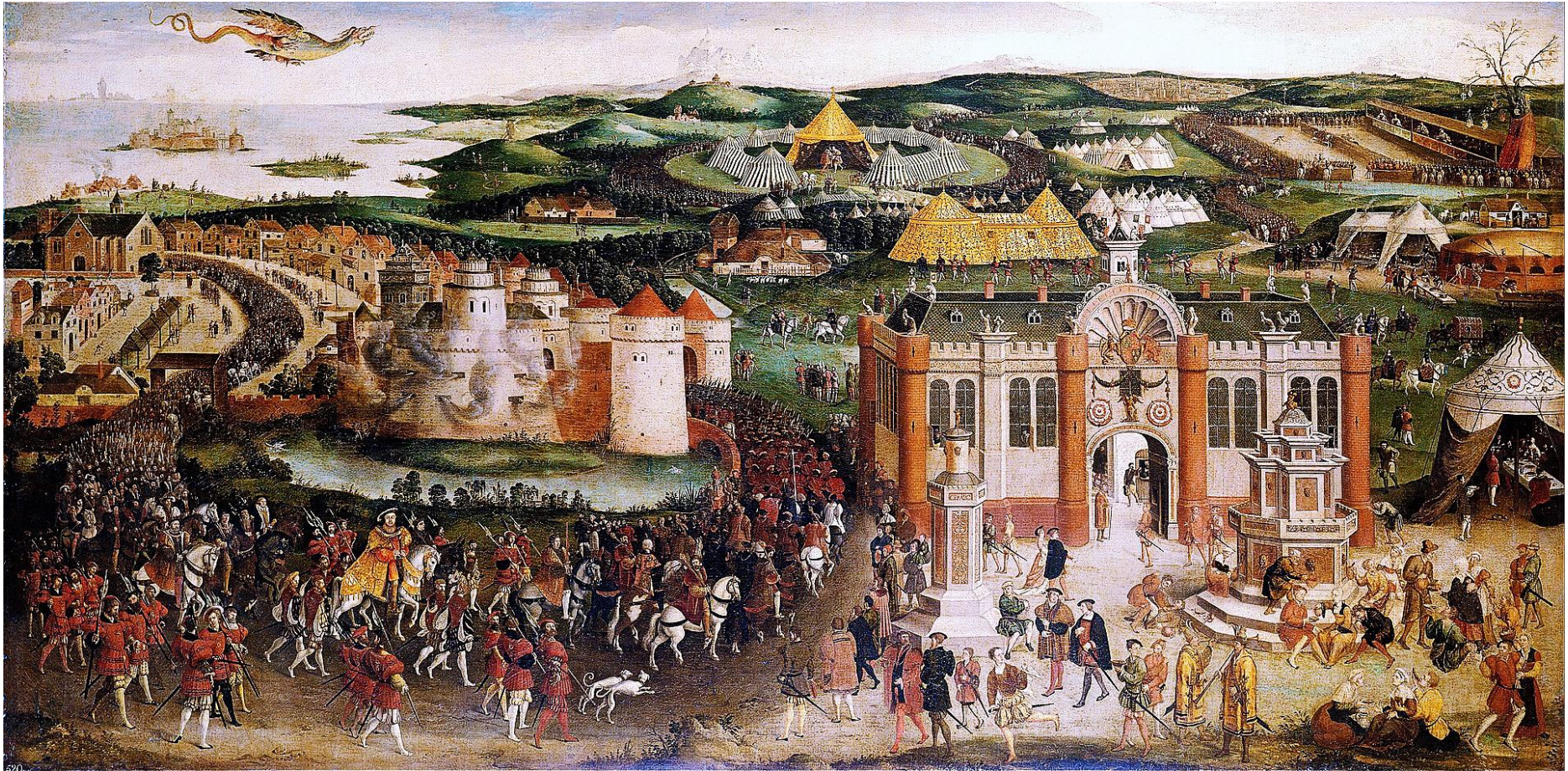
Pieter Brueghel the Elder, 'Wedding Dance', 1566



Peace could sometimes come with diplomacy when one Prince needed the other, as with Francis and Henry.

Diplomacy brings peace

There were times when diplomacy was used to settle differences and to enhance the status of Kings, as in the case of Henry and Francis in 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold', when each sought to outdo the other. (4)



The Field of the Cloth of Gold, the arrival of Henry VIII in 1520 painted c.1545

The English and French noblemen traditionally hated each other and this was not helped by Henry's wife being the aunt of Charles II, the sworn enemy of Francis. So, whilst Francis sought a treaty with Henry to protect his border, Charles sought a treaty with Henry to prevent him supporting France, whose lands he surrounded. But Henry wanted to keep his territories in France of Calais and Bordeaux, so preferred an agreement with Francis.

Henry and Francis agreed to meet and each looked to impress the other with their power and wealth. Henry arrived with 5,000 men and three thousand horses and also 6,000 craftsmen who were to build his temporary campsite. They built a fantastic 'fairy tale' castle and a Great Tent made literally from a cloth of gold. Not to be outdone Francis also had a tent with cloth of gold and 400 other tents, all sumptuously decorated.

They met in June 1520, each attended by 500 horsemen and 3,000 infantry. At the sound of a great gong, the whole company stood still and Henry and Francis charged at each other, reining in at the very last moment and leaping off to heartily embrace to rousing cheers.

For two weeks they feasted, jousted and 'made merry', each offering valuable gifts. Both monarchs returned to their treasury impoverished, with a need to rebuild the wealth which was effectively wasted as no treaty was to be signed until five years later. But both returned to countries rich from their taxation systems.

Palaces, chateaux and wives

The population of France was growing rapidly to 20 million, twice that of England. Francis had great sources of income from taxes which he was to lavish on his chateaux and on art of the Renaissance, convincing Leonardo da Vinci to retire to France. He transformed the Louvre from a medieval fortress into a vast palace. He issued a decree that one copy of every book published in France should be held centrally, that still functions today.

Henry also had a vibrant economy which was augmented by seizing the lands and wealth of the monasteries, although destroying their treasures of art in the process. He was a collector of tapestries amassing some 2,000, many of which equated to the cost of a battleship. (5) Henry would commission tapestries to portray himself in great battles or hunting scenes, all to impress when taken around the country to warm cold walls. But much of his wealth was to go on the navy with 50 new ships and like Francis, on great palaces used as hunting lodges.



Francis I, Chateau de Chambord, The Loire, France, 1519



Henry VIII, Nonsuch Palace, Cheam, England, 1538

Chambord in the Loire valley still exists in splendour to day, whilst Nonsuch palace in Surrey was later given by Charles II to his mistress, who in 1682 had it pulled down for the building materials to pay off her gambling debts. Not one stone remains. However, the greatest of the Tudor palaces remains – Hampton Court. Housing a thousand courtiers requiring two vast kitchens, a thousand cooks, servants, laundry and cleaners, were all needed. Henry had built a toilet block with 28 seats for courtiers by the river called 'The Great House of Easement'.



Hampton Court, taken by Henry from his Catholic cardinal in 1529



Tapestry, Life at the Tudor Court, Hampton Palace

Henry is remembered for introducing the protestant Church of England and for his wives. Francis is loved by the French today for his swagger, multi coloured silks and velvets and for his charm.



Neither found love in marriage with Henry's six wives and then Francis' with two, both political marrying Eleanor, sister of Charles V.

Anne Boleyn, 6th wife of Henry, VIII 1533-36, executed

Eleanor of Austria, Queen of France 1530-1547



Charles V was concerned with holding his vast empire together and with Protestants in the North and Catholics in the South, he spent one third of his life travelling between. But he loved his frail wife Isabella to distraction, although she died aged just 35. Towards the end of his reign he abdicated his throne for a monastery, to quietly end his days.

Isabella of Portugal, Holy Roman Empress 1530-1539



In the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Suleiman's love life was one of romance as he raised his wife 'Roxelana' (the Russian woman) from slavery to a 'Sultan' of his Empire, after her capture in infancy. She was known as 'the merry woman' with good humour and playfulness, playing haunting love songs on her guitar. (6)

Roxelana, Hurrem Sultan 1533-1558

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

