

Absolutism

Absolutism is a form of government in which the emperor exercises ultimate authority. The absolutist monarch holds the title "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire", but there are two other key aspects of absolutism: the centralism of power and the rights of the common people. The rights of the people allowed towns and cities to grow into centres for politics, trade and the arts, which in turn, resulted both in new urban concepts within cities and the proliferation of provincial residences built in the countryside for the nobility. In addition to the building boom, power was demonstrated by self-representation in the form of portraiture, depicting the apotheosis of family history and the diversity of state festivities. Especially valued were representations of the Turkish Wars, which demonstrated the supremacy of Christianity and European culture in general, as well as extolling personal virtues using symbolism borrowed from mythology and antiquity, particularly of Rome. The force of Fundamental Law had pragmatic sanction, which in the late history of the Holy Roman Empire referred more specifically to an edict issued by the Emperor, but in 1713 Emperor Charles VI issued such a Law to stabilise the power of the Habsburg dynasty in Europe. One outcome of the centralist power was a unified style, which in Europe is known as the art of pragmatic sanction. This expression is found not only in the residences of royalty and the nobility but is seen especially in the architecture of administrative buildings and in urban planning. This is also the period in which "globalisation" is introduced for the first time, seen not only in the proliferation of travel, diplomacy and trade, but also in the migration of artists who were responsible for the spread of the "Official style". The Official style found expression both in court life and in popular state festivities; the latter providing pleasure and also seen as a demonstration of loyalty to the emperor.



National Palace of Mafra
22 October 1730
Mafra, Lisbon, Portugal



Portrait of the Marquis of Pombal
1766
Oeiras Town Hall
Oeiras, Lisbon, Portugal



**Francesco Antonio Simonini,
Battle between the Turks and
Christians**
First half of the 18th century
Pinacoteca Comunale Foresiana
Portoferraio, Isola d'Elba, Italy



**Portrait of Emperor Joseph II and
His Second Wife Marie Josepha
of Bavaria and Counts Esterházy,
Bathiany and Liechtenstein**
1768
State Chateau
Valtice, Moravia, Czech Republic



Palace of the Sugar Refinery
1752; 1780; 1789
Rijeka, Kvarner, Croatia



**Triumphal Procession of Charles
V Duke of Lorraine**
1694
Budapest History Museum
Budapest, Közép-Magyarország /
Central Hungary, Hungary