Henri’s Succession and the death of Henry III

Henri IV’s Origins and Family;

Henri was born on December 13th 1553 to Henry and Jeanne of Navarre. His mother was a staunch Huguenot who had expressed her wishes that her son should remain Huguenot. He was raised with common people and thus had more empathy towards them.

Causes of the Massacre;

Divided Court

Civil unrest

Taxes and bad harvests

Regency – a weak monarch

Coligny reportedly assassinated a Guise member

Catherine’s Policies – Marriage of Henri and Margaret, Peace of St Germain

Huguenots involving France into Netherland conflict

Large number of protestant nobles had gathered in France

His claim to the throne;

Henri was a descendent of Louis IX and through primogeniture he was next in line to the throne.

- Death of Anjou meant Henri de Bourbon was legal (however disputed) heir to the throne
- Conversion would cost him Huguenot and foreign support and possible further backlash from the League
- The Guise were isolated from Henry III due to his reliance on mignons, they allied with Spain and chose Cardinal Bourbon as heir who was a degree higher than Henri in consanguinity.
- Henry III repeatedly asked Henri Bourbon to convert
- Henri Navarre challenged Henri de Guise to a duel to resolve France’s differences
- Treaty of Nemours 1585 signed between Henry III and the Guise which granted the league money and offices and declared Huguenots as criminals (Henri Bourbon declared his moustache turning white)
- Pope Sixtus V excommunicated Henri Bourbon in September 1585 calling them heretics and depriving him of rank, possessions and right to the throne. Henry III did not like the Pope’s meddling.
- Defeated Joyeuse and his royal troops in 1587 Battle of Coutras, but did not attack Paris (instead visited Corisande). Henri did not want to directly fight Henry III, only the league.
- The Sixteen attempted to take control of Paris but failed due to Henry III’s spies. Guise was banned from entering Paris but illegally entered anyway prompting the day of the barricades and forcing Henry III out of Paris. This shows that religion was only a pretext for control as Henry III was catholic.
Religious Unity was no stronger at the end compared to the beginning of the reign;

Royal Debt and Economy:

- Prices of foodstuffs went up rapidly (as much as 50%) as a result.
- Inflation occurred due to the influx of wealth from the New World.
- Trade was in decline from the 1550’s onwards due to Pirates.
- Spain dominated the Mediterranean trade routes.
- Population increases stalled after 1550 and there were labour shortages and therefore supply could not meet demand in some markets.
- The Wars of Religion disrupted the French cloth trade and wine trade.
- The fighting and lawlessness terribly affected the economic productivity and performance.
- Henry inherited a debt of between 200 and 300 million livres of debt.
- Henry III had mortgaged the crown jewels.
- Only the third estate paid the taille (income tax) and the Pays d’etats only paid 1/10 of tax despite making up a third of the country.
- A Pays d’etats was a province that negotiated and controlled their taxes.
- 1559 the Crown was near bankruptcy due to court expenditure and the cost of the Italian wars.
- There were interrupted systems of tax collection due to the Wars of religion, Nobles were diverting fund during this time for their own use.
- Governors were misusing their financial powers.
Henry III began the Pont Neuf (The Bridge crossing the seine linking the commercial and aristocratic neighbourhoods with the older part of the city) but was forced to stop due to the Wars of Religion. In 1598, Henri IV resumed work on the Pont Neuf and it followed Roman archway design precedents. Initially, homes were going to be built on the bridge but Henri IV decided that houses would impede the view of the Louvre. The bridge crossed through the île de la Cité (one of the islands in the Seine). An equestrian statue was built on the Pont Neuf by Marie de Medici after Henri's death. The original statue was torn down during the revolution and was rebuilt in 1818.

In 1607, the building of the Place Dauphine was initiated. This was a public square built at the end of the île de la Cité dedicated to his son (The Dauphine was the name given to the heir apparent). The Place Dauphine was built on the Palais de la Cité which was the place where the Capetian palace once stood.

In 1603, work began on a canal between the Seine and Porte St Antoine. This was intended for the distribution of merchandise and the removal of sewage.

In 1605, the crown began to enlarge the port St. Paul and reconstructing port de la Tournelle.

In 1605, the king instructed the municipality to complete the building and construction of the Hotel de Ville.

In 1605, Henri built the Place Royales (also called the Place des Vosges) and it was built on the site of Hotel Tournelles (where Henry II died). This was initially dedicated to the production of silk and thus many silk investors were granted land adjacent to the site.

In 1607, work began on a large plague hospital (Hospital Saint Louis) to quarantine plague victims. This building was built quickly and in a secluded spot and the responsibility was given to Harlay and Bellievre.

Public squares were useful trading centres (for both goods and ideas) and were sometimes used for processions and ceremonies. It seems that Henri IV wanted to increase the amount of ceremonies and processions in France to induce more loyalty and support from the people and as a useful propaganda tool.

Walls and Gates were also repaired and (at the end of his reign), Henri planned to build a large square and a city gate that would have provided a new and spectacular entrance to the city.

Parisians would have benefited thanks to improvement of facilities and access and increase in economy, the Monarchy have gained control and security as well as their own luxuries such as art and palaces and visitors would have had easier access due to roads as well as foreigners feeling that Paris is not to be attacked.

**Propaganda**

Henry was one of the few contemporary military commanders who attempted to prevent pillage, rape and destruction by his troops. This seems like a calculated move to make him seem merciful.

Circulars were sent from Paris (Royalist Propaganda and Letters from Henri himself) to convince other towns to submit to his rule.
limiting the financial independence of provinces, increasing revenues, investigating municipal debts, and listing the tax farms. They operated in regions called the Pays d’election (This included Guyenne, Bresse, Bugey and Gex) and in some cases had to negotiate the setting of taxes in other areas called pays d’état. Each pays d’election contained 10 elus who directed the people responsible for collecting the taille (which was set by the Estate) in each parish. Sully stopped paying the wages of any elus member who did not obey orders.

**Taxation:**

The main method of taxation was through the Taille which was set annually by the king and other forms of indirect taxes were also prominent. Many noblemen, churchmen and favourites were exempt from the Taille and thus the third estate was burdened with the majority of the Taille. Collection varied between the Pays d’états and the Pays d’election. In the pays d’election (like Guyenne and Bresse), the crown would assign the sum to be collected (This differed between provinces) and was assessed at the level of individual households. The actual collection was carried out by royal official like the elus. Comparatively, the pays d’états (like Brittany, Burgundy, Provence and Dauphine) had a larger amount of independence and would negotiate with the crown as to the level of taxation. These pays d’états were headed by an assembly who were in charge of the negotiation and collection of taxation in the province.

An indirect sales tax was imposed called the Pancarte and it added 5% to purchases in towns and cities, taxed items included wine and wheat. Other forms of indirect taxes included the gabelle (salt tax) which taxed consumption and required a minimum household purchase of salt at government controlled warehouses. Tolls and custom duties were also used.

Tax revenue was transported periodically from the provincial treasuries to the central treasury but whenever possible, tax revenue was used for local expenditures. This is because transporting vast sums of money was risky and expensive. Details of collection and transportation of tax revenue was meant to be kept secret, provincial treasurers had to submit their accounts which were (under Sully) thoroughly scrutinised.

Tax farms transferred the responsibility of the collection of taxes from the crown to a tax farmer; this saved time for the crown but also increased corruption and a reduction in income. The farmers had to meet a crown-set quota and any further income was kept by the farmer, this often resulted in extortion and abuses of power. Tax farms were sold to the highest bidder and some powerful syndicates of financiers would illegally monopolise these farms. Tax farms were set at a 6 year lease term.

The Paulette was an annual payment of 1/16th of the value of an office; this was directly targeting the richer members of society. To appease the office holders, in return they were given the right to designate their successors. Before the introduction of the Paulette, officeholders would have to make a substantial up-front payment for the transfer of the office and this could still be refused. Another limiting factor of the old method was that the person had to survive for forty days before the decision was made.