

CHWNE Module 5 Lesson 2

Henry IV and the Duc de Sully

(1560-1641)



Picture of The Duke of Sully



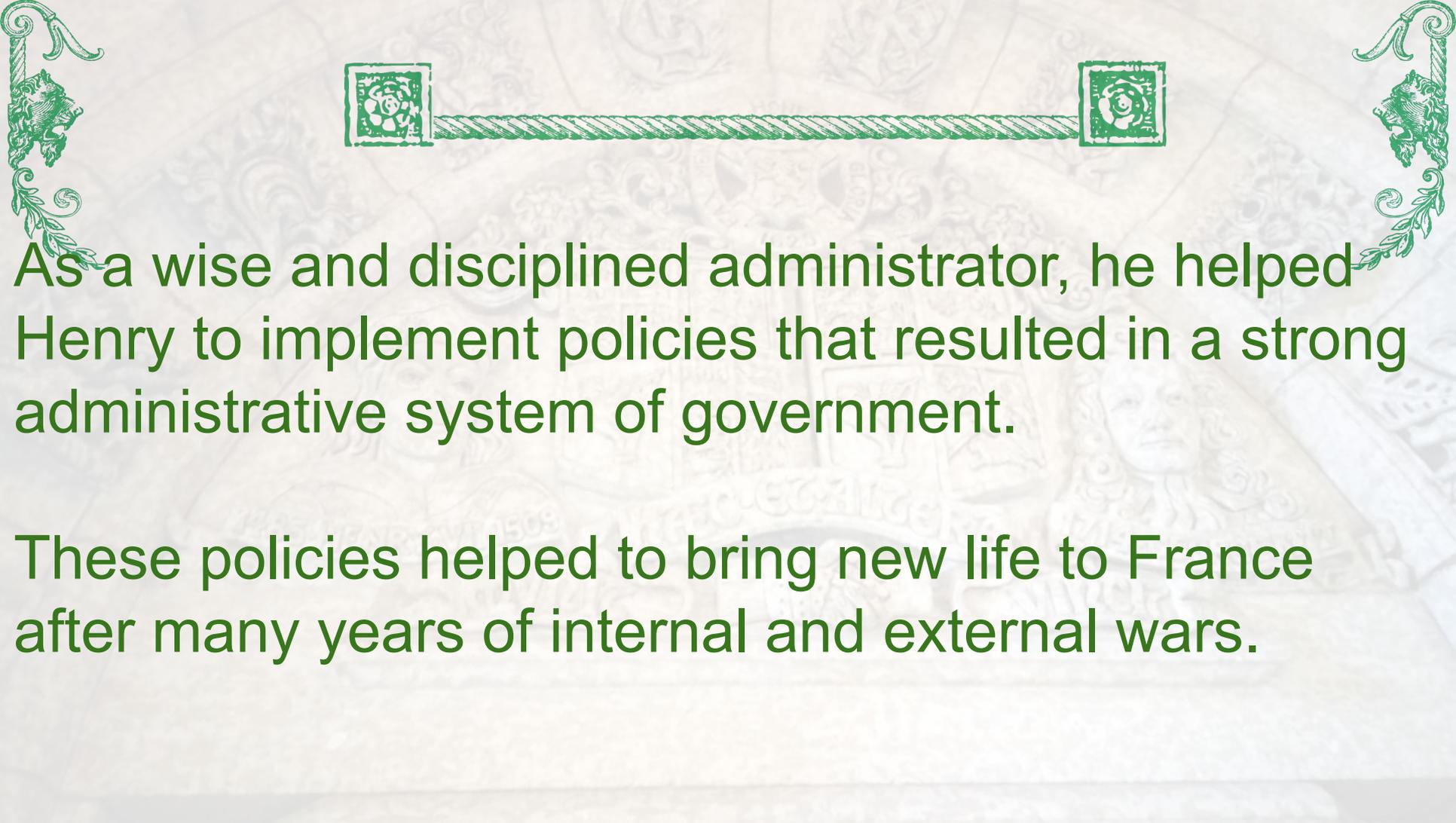
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The **Duke of Sully** was born **Maximilien de Bethune** and lived from **1560 to 1641**.

He was a nobleman and soldier, holding titles to the estates of **Rosny, Nogent, Muret, Villebon, and Meaux**.

He was considered to be the right-hand man of King **Henry IV** in ruling France.



As a wise and disciplined administrator, he helped Henry to implement policies that resulted in a strong administrative system of government.

These policies helped to bring new life to France after many years of internal and external wars.



Maximilien's family were **Protestants** who came from **Artois**. In **1571 at 11 years old**, he was presented to Henry of Navarre as the **Baron of Rosny**, becoming one of Henry's closest supporters and friends.

Henry was 18 years old at the time.



He was taken to Paris by Henry and was enrolled in studies at the Collège de Bourgogne.

In 1572, he escaped death at the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre by carrying a Catholic Book of Hours under his arm.

He continued his studies in Mathematics and History in the court of Henry of Navarre.

The Book Of Hours



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He fought with the Protestants in the war of **1575**. In **1576**, he accompanied **Francois Duke of Alencon** to the Netherlands to regain the **Rosny estates** but was unsuccessful.

In the Netherlands, **he served for a short time with William of Orange**. Next he joined Henry of Navarre in Bordeaux where he bravely served as a **military engineer**.



In 1583, he became Henry's special agent in Paris.

When the civil war resumed with the Catholic League, he joined Henry and was wounded at the Battle of Ivry.

Even though he advised Henry to convert to Catholicism **in 1593**, he remained steadfastly Protestant.



Because he was faithful to Henry and a trusted friend and advisor, Henry endowed him with lands and titles.

In 1596, he was appointed to Henry's **Finance Commission** where he brought some order to France's economy.

By 1601, he became the sole Superintendent of Finances.



Personality and Character

It was said that he implemented honest and rigorous measures for conducting the country's financial affairs.

It is said that he was an unpopular person because he was seen as Henry's favourite.

Personality and Character



People were jealous of him because he had acquired a vast personal fortune.

Catholics hated him because he was a Protestant and Protestants hated him because he was the King's favourite.



Reportedly, he was also jealous of all other ministers and favourites of the King.

(petty?) He was criticized as being selfish, stubborn and rude (maybe arrogant?)



However, his business practices were above reproach. He was **relentless in punishing dishonesty** and corruption of public officials.



He strongly opposed expenditures which he thought would harm the court, which was the opposite of the practice in the courts of European monarchs of the time.



He was admired for his administrative gifts and abilities.

Carrying out his duties with confidence and resoluteness, he was deeply devoted to his work and his master.



Henry IV trusted Sully implicitly.

He proved to be the most qualified and competent person to help the king transition from the chaos of religious and civil wars to a transformed, prosperous France between **1598 and 1610**.



During those years, France prospered in agriculture and commerce, while internal and external peace was established.



Between **1601 and 1610**, France **was able to save almost 1 million livres annually**, thereby enriching the coffers and bringing prosperity after many wars.

Some of the measures Sully implemented included:



- Free export of wine and grain
- Reduction of legal interest
- Trials by a new court for cases of embezzlement
- Forbidding provincial governors to raise money on their own authority
- Removed opportunities for the abuse of tax collection
- Elimination of offices which promoted dishonesty



Sully aided Henry not just in financial matters, but also in other administrative departments.

He held a variety of positions in Henry's government, including:

- Grand Commissioner of Highways and Public Works (1599)
- Superintendent of Fortifications



- Grand Master of Artillery
- Governor of Nantes and Jargeau (1602)
- Captain General of the Queen's Gens d'Armes (the feared armoured cavalry with lances)
- Governor of the Bastille
- Governor of Poitou (1604)



- **First Duke of Sully-sur Loire (1606)**, which was a medieval fortress.

This chateau played an important part in the **revolt of the nobles under Louis XIV in 1652.**





- **Pair de France (1606)**. This rank was an extraordinary honour given to a small number of people considered to be the greatest and highest ranking of the nobility. It was reserved for dukes, counts or princes of the Catholic church.
- He refused the title of the **Constable of France** because he would not become a Catholic.



Agricultural accomplishments include:

- Free trade of products
- Promotion of animal husbandry
- Forest preservation
- Draining of swamps



Public Works accomplishments include:

- Building many roads and bridges
- Began the construction of the **Canal de Barre** to *develop the French grain trade and reduce food shortages.*

This was a **35 mile-long** canal system of locks (écluses) to link the **Loire and Seine Rivers.**



Public Works accomplishments include:

- Building many roads and bridges
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The highest lock system rose through **the first 12 locks at 135 feet**, then **fell off** through the remaining **24 locks, at a stunning 279 feet.**

Construction, which began in **1604**, screeched to a halt in **1611** with Henry's assassination, and was **completed in 1642 under Louis XIII.**



Military accomplishments include:

- Built defences at the French border.
- Helped to shut down nobles' insurrections, both Protestant and Catholic.

Manufacturing accomplishment include

- Silk production



He also arranged the marriage between **Henry IV** and **Marie de Medici in 1600.**

From **1600 to 1601**, he fought with Henry in **Savoy** and negotiated a **peace treaty in 1602.**

In **1603**, he represented the King in the court of **James I of England.**



Sully did not support the colonisation of Canada.

His political role ended abruptly with Henry's assassination.

It is said that Henry was on his way to see Sully who lay sick in the Arsenal.



They were finalizing military intervention in Germany on behalf of a Calvinist candidate with respect to a succession to the territory which straddled Germany and Holland.

Sully continued to serve in the **Queen's Council of Regency until January 1611.**



He resigned as **Superintendent of Finances**, retreating into private life.

It is said that his driven personality had conflicted with the others on the council.

Marie de Medici allowed him to maintain possession of his estates and rewarded him with **300,000 livres** for his long and faithful service.



In **1614** he attended the Estates General.

It is said that his sympathies lay with the policy and government of Richelieu, but he did not support the blockade of **La Rochelle in 1621.**



In **1634**, he was conferred with the baton of **‘Marshal of France’**, a title given to generals of exceptional achievements.

He died in **1641** at the age of **81** years old, in his **Château de Sully-sur-Loire**.