

Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)

The Protestant Reformation began in the German territories with the spread of Lutheranism.

Rebellions and wars followed throughout the Holy Roman Empire, France, the Netherlands, and Spain.

The “Age of Religious Wars” ends where it all began: The HRE.

In the end, it wasn't about religion...

It was the Habsburgs vs. the French.

Holy Roman Empire

The population was equally divided between Catholics and Protestants.

Protestantism was divided between Lutherans and Calvinists.

Lutheranism was divided between liberals and conservatives.

Heidelberg was the intellectual center of Calvinism within the German territories and Calvinism gradually spread within the Holy Roman Empire.

The Calvinists competed with the Lutherans, and the both of them competed with the Catholics (like rival political parties)

Holy Roman Empire

The initial civil war between Catholic and Lutheran princes ended with the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which instituted the settlement of “*cuius regio, eius religio*” (whose realm, his religion).

The Peace of Augsburg ended the hopes of Charles V to establish a united Habsburg empire that included the German territories, Spain, and the Netherlands.

A series of emperors following Charles V gradually weakened the religious settlement and political peace. In response, Catholic princes formed the Catholic League in 1609 and Protestant princes followed with the Protestant Union. Defensive alliances now existed, that if triggered, would result in widespread conflict.

Bohemian Period

1618: Ferdinand II, a Catholic and a Habsburg, becomes the King of Bohemia and revokes the religious freedoms of Protestants.

Response: The “Defenestration of Prague,” which was an event involving Ferdinand’s regents being thrown out of windows 50 feet above the ground (they didn’t die).

1619: Ferdinand II becomes the Holy Roman Emperor!

Frederick V, a Calvinist and ruler of the Palatinate, is declared the new King of Bohemia in defiance of Ferdinand II’s rule. War breaks out between the Catholic League and Protestant Union.

1620: Ferdinand II conquered Protestant forces at Battle of White Mountain with help from Spain and forced Catholicism on Bohemia.

Danish Period

Fear that the entire Holy Roman Empire would become Catholic again loomed in Protestant minds, but James I of England and the Protestants in the Netherlands were unable or unwilling to send troops.

1625: Christian IV, the Lutheran King of Denmark, invaded the Holy Roman Empire in opposition to Ferdinand II.

1626: Ferdinand II sent Albrecht of Wallenstein to defeat Christian IV and Catholic forces invaded Denmark after driving Christian IV from the German states.

1629: Ferdinand II attempted to reclaim all church lands taken by Lutherans since 1552 with the Edict of Restitution!

Swedish Period

1630: Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden, a Lutheran, led the Protestant resistance against Wallenstein and Ferdinand II.

1632: The French enter the war in support of Sweden with the goal of weakening the Habsburgs. Adolphus II leads an army of 175,000 against Wallenstein, but dies in the battle.

1635: The German Protestant territories reach a compromise with Ferdinand II that guarantees Catholicism will not become the official religion within the Holy Roman Empire, but France and the Dutch Republic become concerned about Habsburg re-consolidating within the Holy Roman Empire.

French Period

1635: Louis XIII of France declares war against Spain and engages Spanish troops aiding the Austrian Habsburgs. French, Dutch, and Swedish forces continue to fight Spanish and Austrian forces within the German states.

1642: English Civil War begins.

The German states wanted the war to end, but had no real power to end the Bourbon vs. Habsburg dynastic rivalry and foreign armies continued to pillage the country (sort of like the Italian Wars during the Renaissance).

1645: Peace talks begin between emperor Ferdinand III and German princes to re-establish a religious settlement. By this time an estimated 1/3 of the German population has died in the Thirty Years' War, which was the largest loss of life since the Black Death.

1648: Louis XIV ends French involvement after noble revolt.

Treaty of Westphalia (1648)

Treaty of Westphalia included more than two hundred rulers and diplomats and produced a territorial settlement that would last until the French Revolution.

The treaty affirmed the principle of religious toleration and reinstated the religious settlement from the Peace of Augsburg, now the *Calvinists receive legal recognition* within the Holy Roman Empire.

The treaty formally recognized the independence of the Dutch Republic and Switzerland.

The treaty was opposed by the pope because it broadened the legal status of Protestantism, but southern Germany remained largely Catholic.

The treaty perpetuated the political decentralization of the German territories, which is just what France wanted!

Austria and Prussia become most powerful German states.



MAP 15.1 The Thirty Years' War. The conflict began in the German states as Europe's major powers backed either the northern Protestant Union or the southern Catholic League. As the war progressed, religion receded in importance, replaced by a dynastic struggle between the French Bourbons and the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs. **?** Compare this map with Map 13.2. Which countries engaged in the war were predominantly Protestant, which were predominantly Catholic, and which were mixed?

View an animated version of this map or related maps at <http://history.wadsworth.com/spielvogel06/>