The Thirty Years War is a largely factitious conception which has, nevertheless, become an indestructible myth. The myth has distorted the subject-matter, arrested historical thinking, and created otherwise avoidable problems. In attempting to trace the origins of the Thirty Years War — so called — it is mistaken to assume, because the topic is familiar, that the subject is clearly defined. One cannot determine either origins or participation without first clearing the hurdle: origins of what; participation in what? Yet the moment one starts to examine the subject, it becomes elusive. Conventionally, we are dealing with a European war during the thirty years 1618-48. But it is well known that war — or should one say the war — did not end in 1648, and less well known that it did not begin in 1618. By what criteria does conflict in Europe become European war? The problem is largely one of nomenclature, technical yet vital.

No historian of the Thirty Years War has paid systematic attention to its origins. Most have contented themselves with taking the imperial civil war as the real starting-point. This approach confines the search for origins to the causes of that particular conflict, and enables the author to move swiftly to the reasons for its continuation.1 This understandable failure to think back into the antecedents of the subject has resulted in the crystallization of various dubious assumptions about the nature of the seventeenth-century wars. While historians have embraced the conception and the myth, some have, nevertheless, been concerned about its interpretation. The original, standard version of the Thirty Years War was of a German-centred, predominantly religious conflict, albeit containing other elements. To German historians, past and contemporary, the Thirty Years War was and remains a unity, and in terms of German history this probably has to be accepted.2 C. V. Wedgwood, writing in 1938, initiated an important change by moving towards a more European conception. Displacing religion as the basic issue, she identified the Franco-Habsburg enmity as the most important factor in the structure of European politics; and there is no doubt that she was right. As a corollary, she saw the Austro-Spanish connection as the final disaster for Germany.3 Disaffected princes, she said, were bound to appeal

1. This point has been made by Myron P. Gutmann, ‘The Origins of the Thirty Years’ War’, Journal of Interdisciplinary History, xvii. 4 (1988), 749-50.
to the enemies of Spain. Although the boot was often on the other foot, the point is important, above all because the phenomenon dated, not from the seventeenth century, but from the 1530s. A year later, Georges Pages clearly placed the Thirty Years War in a wider European setting, also emphasizing the importance of the Austro-Spanish connection. But he did so without rejecting the German description and time-scale. Indeed, he also tended to give importance to religion, stressing the causal significance of the manner in which the peace of Augsburg was concluded, the continuing growth of the Reformed [Calvinist] faith, and the combative preaching and teaching of the Capuchin and Jesuit orders.1

It was not until 1947 that S. H. Steinberg attacked what he called ‘the entire structure of traditional interpretations’, deprecating the label ‘Thirty Years War’ which imparts to the conflicts a ‘fictitious unity’.2 Steinberg traced the influential thirty-year formulation – Bohemian Revolt to peace of Westphalia – to a pamphlet by the Saxon publicist, Samuel Pufendorf, *De Statu Imperii Germanici*, of 1667. While Pufendorf may well have influenced subsequent German historians by stabilizing the German conception, Konrad Repgen has shown that in fact the ‘thirty-year’ expression was first used at the Westphalian peace conference.3 Thus one can readily imagine its adoption – there in Germany in 1648 – as a roughly descriptive term of convenience, before the story was complete. Steinberg still saw the Thirty Years War in terms of a duality comprising general European and particular German aspects. Indeed, he even asserted that, against the European background, German affairs were of minor importance. In partially displacing the German conception, Steinberg went so far as to propose a different time-scale: 1609–48 for Germany, and 1609–60 for Europe.4 In short, by 1939 there existed a German and religious approach, together with a wider European and political view, but no synthesis of the two. Steinberg apparently perceived the problem, but without pursuing it. The limited, ‘thirty-year’ conception should never have been transposed to the European sphere; therein lies the confusion.

War, as it flared in 1620 with (be it noted) the participation of Spain, initially focused on Germany, strongly echoing the wars of the 1550s; and its immediate cause lay in the imperial election of the ultra-Catholic Ferdinand II in 1619. One could, therefore, postulate that the so-called Thirty Years War represented the superimposition of a German civil war upon the long-term, evolving struggles and rivalries of western Euro-

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pean politics. To a greater or lesser degree, those issues involved the fundamental Franco-Habsburg rivalry. If this harmonizing definition is a net improvement, it still does not provide an adequate solution, depending, as it does, upon an over-simplification of the nature of that German civil war. It was never a self-contained, German conflict, without extra-German dimensions; nor could it have been, precisely because of the Austro-Spanish connection, as well as the underlying religious elements. Indeed, Spanish support for the threatened Emperor Ferdinand II, already deposed by rebels from the throne of Bohemia, is precisely, if not exclusively, what, in 1620, the war was about. Ferdinand's mainly Protestant opponents, in Bohemia and in Germany, also had significant, if insufficiently powerful, foreign connections with the United Provinces, England and Denmark.

Clearly, therefore, and at the outset, the dichotomy between Germany and Europe is absurd. Remove the dichotomy, and one removes the need to determine what changed warfare in Europe into European war - the European war of the myth. Contemporaries did not distinguish clearly between peace and war, and most hostilities were undeclared. They rather perceived continuous, evolving, fluctuating conflicts, within shifting foci and theatres of activity. These fluctuating conflicts were pursued in different ways and by different means according to the circumstances; arms was only one of them. Subversion, conspiracy, privateering, piracy, or even, upon occasion, alliance were also common adversarial expedients.\(^1\) Thus the so-called Thirty Years War - an expression properly limited to the German perception of an episode in German history - needs to be placed within a much wider context; that of long-term conflict and continuity. The nature of the continuity between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries - wherein lie the origins of the seventeenth-century wars - is not something that every schoolboy knows; yet the same conflicts simmered on. These later wars did not suddenly erupt of their own volition in 1618 or 1620. They represented the failures of the past, qualified by the ambitions of the present, and may therefore be seen as arising from the unfinished business of the sixteenth century. Obviously there can be no definitive account of the origins of these wars; there could be as many versions as there were participants, each one valid but incomplete. Nevertheless, all versions would have to converge on the great anti-Habsburg struggle, spanning at least three centuries.

Seen in this way, the so-called Thirty Years War of the seventeenth century may be subsumed within the third of four periods, or phases, of struggle against the power of the House of Austria or, from the Spanish point of view, of struggle to establish and sustain her supremacy in Europe. Obviously there could be variations on the theme, but the first period

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\(^1\) For example, the Franco-Spanish alliance of 1627.
is conventional and well known as that of the Italian wars, 1494-1559. The focus of activity switched between Italy, the Burgundian lands and Germany. The second period, 1559-98, is distinguished from the first by the fact that, from 1555, Germany was largely passive, with anti-Habsburg enmity being directed against Spain. The focus was primarily on the Netherlands, as well as on England and France – albeit a France torn by faction and civil war. The death of Philip II of Spain in 1598 marked the end of an era. The third phase, 1598-1659, embraced the ‘Thirty Years War’, together with the declared Franco-Spanish war of 1635-59. This third period was, and became even more strongly, reminiscent of the first, with the Empire and France both playing a significant international role. Germany re-emerged at the outset as a focus and theatre of anti-Habsburg conflict, this time directed against the emperor. France, however, did not re-emerge to play a clear or decisive role before about 1629: hence much of the complexity and, conceivably, that traditional, misleading dichotomy between ‘German’ and ‘European’. As the anti-Habsburg struggle became more than previously widespread, directed – as in Period One – against both the Empire and Spain, so almost any area from the eastern confines of the Empire to the Atlantic, or from the Baltic to Italy was, actually or potentially, a theatre of activity. The fourth and final phase, 1659-1715, is marvellously interesting in terms of continuity. After the wars of Louis XIV, the structure of European politics was definitively changed, both by the emergence of new powers and, not least, by the transference of the Spanish Netherlands to Austria. This dissolved a complex of problems arising from Charles V’s division of his empire in 1555-6.

Periods One and Two already contained the basic ingredients of the seventeenth-century wars, and the first of them was fundamental. Both the Austro-German and the wider European origins of the seventeenth-century wars date from the reign of Emperor Maximilian I and, more particularly, from the Reformation and the election of Charles V, King of Spain, to the imperial throne in 1519. Maximilian began, and Charles V continued, to arouse unquenchable fears of Habsburg universalism, and Germany’s normal, late medieval conflicts became convulsed by diversity of religion, which was to confound her politics until about 1648. Demands and claims for freedom of religion became entangled with the defence of constitutional liberties, a rather esoteric cause which France was wont to champion – when it suited her. The historic claims of France to the Germanic Empire, or to some limited vicariate, were deeply ingrained in the French psyche and were sustained into the reign of Louis XIV. The presence of France, poised in the wings, could never be ignored.¹

This first period also witnessed the origins and growth of the French

obsession with Italy - dating from the first invasion of Italy in 1494 - a basic ingredient in the Franco-Habsburg rivalry. Charles reconquered Milan from France in 1535, and held it definitively. France was effectively surrounded by Habsburg territories, some of which she claimed: Flanders, Artois, Franche-Comté and Milan. France also sought to defend the northern and eastern invasion routes into France and to preserve links with Switzerland and Venice, and a route down into central Italy. While the Italian theme was largely dormant in the second period, it recurred around 1600 and became prominent again in the third period, in the seventeenth century. The formal entry of France into war with Spain - and in effect with the Empire - in 1635 may be traced from the second Mantuan succession crisis. The duke died on 26 December 1627. Milan and the all-important papal alliance were considered essential for the domination of Europe, and Francis I possessed both when he contested the imperial election in 1519. Charles however, disposed of more money. Consequently the Spanish Habsburgs became established in the west while, in 1521, the Austro-Hungarian branch was founded by Charles' brother Ferdinand. This early division of power and territory became a source of conflict within the Habsburg family, while the reunification of the inheritance under Ferdinand II in the seventeenth century became a source of conflict with other powers.

The election of Charles V in 1519 combined the entire Spanish and Habsburg inheritance, fusing Franco-Spanish and Franco-Habsburg quarrels into a new form of Franco-Habsburg rivalry. Since France and Spain were the only great powers, their rivalry had to be the central aspect of the widespread antipathy to the House of Austria, as it was called. The desperate need to resist Habsburg tyranny, power and ambition and to impede the dynasty's supposed aspirations to universal monarchy was a common incantation. Just what was meant by universal monarchy was never clear; it simply represented fear of something which menaced the status quo and prescriptive liberties. Charles V's chancellor, Gattinara, blustered about universal monarchy, and Charles himself became the hated Spanish emperor, the very prototype of an over-powerful king of Spain. Consequently the king of Spain must never again be allowed to obtain the imperial crown, or to exercise excessive influence in the Empire. This apprehension was a major ingredient in the German causes of the seventeenth-century wars, and the 'Charles V situation' was to become a recurrent French nightmare.

The idea was conceived, if rather arcane, of actually deposing Charles. Some, including the king of France, even wished, at various times, to

1. In 1600 Henry IV went to war with Savoy over the marquisate of Saluces, but accepted Bugey, Bresse and Gex in exchange. He continued to show an acute interest in Italian affairs. See E. Rott, Henri IV, les Suisse et la Haute Italie. La Lutte pour les Alpes, 1598-1610 (Paris, 1882).
2. On Ferdinand I, see P. Sutter Fichtner, Ferdinand I of Austria. The Politics of Dynasticism in the Age of the Reformation (New York, 1982).
3. In particular, this fear lay behind much of the warfare of Louis XIV.
depose the House of Austria altogether. Thus the imperial policy of
France was normally an aspect of her enmity for Spain. German oppo-
sition to Charles V centred on administrative and juridical matters and,
above all, on his religious policy. At least twice in his reign, a major
war appeared to be imminent, with the ultimate objective of overthrow-
ing the Emperor. This was in 1547 and 1552 when Henry II, as dauphin and
king, aspired to the imperial crown - or at least the idea was seriously
exploited. If the House of Austria could be deposed, with the help
of a German coalition, then, in theory at least, the grateful princes would
enter the orbit of France and thereby facilitate her domination of Europe.
In the first period that was a principal conflict - aggressive and expansio-
nist. Again, in the seventeenth century, the deposition of the emperor
in favour of Louis XIII was mooted, if not perhaps realistically envisaged.
If Charles V was not precisely deposed by a Franco-German coalition,
evertheless by 1553 he retained no alternative but to leave Germany
for ever. Remarkably direct parallels exist between the imperial civil
wars of the reign of Charles V and those of the reign of Ferdinand II
(1619-37). In each case the wars were closely related to the imperial suc-
cession and efforts to render it hereditary, as well as to conflicts leading
up to, and proceeding from, the religious peace of Augsburg of 1555.2
Charles' departure and abdication made way for the religious peace
because he refused to sign this recognition of Lutheranism which quie-
tened Germany, more or less, for half a century. The peace was, however,
inadequate and juridically defective, and it evaded problems which sim-
ered on, only to explode in the seventeenth century under the threat,
and reality, of an ultra-Catholic emperor, Ferdinand II. After the peace
of Augsburg - a central factor in German history until 1648 - German
quarrels ceased to be an exploitable force by which to facilitate French
conquests. With the abdication of Charles V in 1555-6, and the division
of his empire between his brother Ferdinand I and his son Philip II
of Spain, the overthrow of the emperor ceased to be a French objective,
since it would no longer topple the king of Spain. However, France's
imperial policy always included a steady desire to dominate Lorraine,
an imperial fief and the eastern gateway to France, and to oppose the
increase of Habsburg influence on the Rhine, where Henry II had made
an imaginative, if fleeting, attempt to establish a French protectorate.
In the area of the Meuse and the Rhine, on the crumbly edges of the
Empire, frontiers and jurisdictions were very ill-defined. Conflicts of inter-
est and succession disputes were commonplace, complicated and embit-

1. This subject is studied in scholarly detail by Jean-Daniel Pariset, Les Relations entre la France
et l'Allemagne au milieu du XVIe siècle (Strasbourg, 1981); Jean-Yves Mariotte, 'Francois I et la ligue
de Schmalkalde, 1538-1544', Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte, xvi (1966), 106 ff; Stephan Skalweit,
'Le Roi très chrétien et les princes protestants allemands', in Charles Quint, le Rhin et la France
(Strasbourg, 1973), pp. 5-22; Gaston Zeller, La Réunion de Metz à la France, 1552-1648 (2 vols., Paris, 1926), i.

pp. 243-6; Hermann Tüchle, 'The Peace of Augsburg: New Order or Lull in the Fighting', in Government

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tered by religious issues. Thus, while the Franco-Habsburg rivalry became predominantly Franco-Spanish, the recurrence of a wider Franco-Habsburg conflict was always possible. This became the case during the seventeenth-century wars when, in the 1630s, the conflict converged on the Rhineland areas. Vital French interests were seriously threatened and the old rivalries had resurfaced, exceeding the limits of dissimulation.

While the western confines of the Empire always offered potential flashpoints, the optimistic, expansionist policies of the Valois monarchs, undoubtedly menaced by Charles V, who dreamed of the partition of France, were not subsequently resumed until the reign of Louis XIV. In the intervening century – roughly speaking – the emphasis of French policy was notably more on defence. The Valois kings had supported an opposition to Charles V which was predominantly Protestant – with the important exception of the pragmatic Maurice of Saxony. At that time the problem of heresy had not yet become acute in France; but it did exist, and the brazen contradiction in French domestic and foreign policy caused grave diplomatic embarrassment. The mounting problem soon created within France a nearly fatal vulnerability which trammeled her capacity, on the national level, at least until 1629. In no period could the Habsburgs be overthrown, or even contained, without the participation of France. Religious and political interests were never conveniently aligned and, since security is necessarily paramount, reasons of state would normally prevail. Nevertheless, the French monarchy was fundamentally and essentially Catholic and, with the regeneration of Catholicism in the seventeenth century, French policy became increasingly hindered by the insoluble problem of how to pursue an anti-Habsburg, yet pro-Catholic policy, when most Habsburg opponents were militantly Protestant. This inherent contradiction accounts for much of the unsuccessful subtlety of Richelieu’s imperial policy before 1635.

As Germany, first in the field, emerged from her civil wars at the end of Period One, the affliction, fuelled by religious strife, was shortly to hit France, the Netherlands and to some extent Scotland. Thus Period Two inaugurated not peace – despite the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in April 1559 between France, Spain and England – but a time of collapse, disintegration, faction and religious strife. In terms of the origins of the seventeenth-century wars, this second period had a markedly different significance from that of the first. Its essence lay in the emergence of the power of Spain in Europe. The power struggle and religious conflict became, to a great extent, focused in the Netherlands, where both France

2. After the Edict of Coucy, in July 1536, Guillaume du Bellay was greatly embarrassed in his efforts to form a vast anti-Habsburg coalition: V.-L. Bourrilly, Guillaume du Bellay seigneur de Langey, 1491–1543 (Paris, 1905), pp. 185 ff.
and England had vital political and commercial interests. The emergence of the power of Spain mainly derived from several important events of the late 1550s, which significantly altered the structure of European politics.

The first of these important events was the division of his empire by Charles V, followed by his abdication, which has already been mentioned. The political aspirations behind this division rested upon an English alliance, ensuring access to the Channel. However, Charles' vision was shattered in 1558 by the death, without issue, of Philip's wife, Mary Tudor, which ended a four-year dynastic alliance. At the same time, relations between France and Spain were disturbed by the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the dauphin, Francis, in April of that year. This union entailed the assumption by France of the crown matrimonial of Scotland, followed by Mary's Catholic claim to England when Mary Tudor died in November. Those apparent French advantages were to be swiftly offset by the accidental death of Henry II during the celebrations to mark the treaty by which Philip II - rather suddenly - married Elisabeth de Valois. The marriage was little more than a deadlock expedient, to be repeated in 1615, when it was similarly impossible to sustain conflict.¹

Henry II was anxious about his imminent campaigns to exterminate heresy. Philip II, while enjoying the protection of the peace settlement, might well have seized upon that opportunity to repay France in her own coin for the interventions in German affairs which did so much to destroy Charles V. Such internal exploitation by Spain was not to be long delayed: the dynastic marriages of adolescents could do little more than improve appearances and sweeten the atmosphere, while creating the risk of future succession conflicts.²

The unexpected death of Henry II instantly shattered his apparently stable kingdom. France fell prey to the rivalry of the nobility, ranged behind confessional barriers, and thence to civil wars. Factions isolated the Crown, which largely lost control of policy, until the accession of Henry IV in 1589. Dropping her previously aggressive stance, France became afraid of Spanish domination - externally and internally - for roughly a century from 1559 to 1659, and further, in a different sense, throughout the length of Period Four. Together with Spain, the Netherlands, Franche-Comté and Italy (besides the Americas), Philip II inherited the major areas of conflict with France. Thus the Habsburg encirclement of France became the Spanish encirclement, thereby crystallizing the issue that came to be called the Spanish road (or roads) which passed

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¹. The marriages of Louis XIII to the Infanta Anna, and his sister Elisabeth to Prince Philip of Spain, were agreed in 1611 and solemnized in 1615. See F.-T. Perrens, Les Mariages espagnols sous le règne de Henri IV et la règence de Marie de Médicis, 1602-1615 (Paris, 1869).
². Elisabeth died in 1568. It was her daughter, Isabella, whom Philip II tried to foist upon France in the 1590s, contrary to the Salic law.
through these areas. The Spanish road represented vital lines of communication between Spain, north Italy and the Burgundian territories, as well as the Tyrol and the Germanic Empire. The German links became vital when, in the seventeenth century, Spain had several times to rescue the Emperor Ferdinand II. Thus, so long as the Netherlands and Milan remained Spanish (in the event, until 1713), recurrent Franco-Spanish conflict was inevitable.

Deprived of the Empire, Philip II nevertheless assumed the Catholic mantle of Charles V, who cast upon his more pragmatic brother the burden of the peace of Augsburg. Spain and Catholicism were almost synonymous and became a powerful emotional factor in the later sixteenth century, whose political conflicts were formulated in strongly religious terms. The dominance of Spanish power was perceived by contemporaries as a fact and was believed to depend upon her possession of the Netherlands. The preservation of this essentially Catholic dominance became – with minor fluctuations – a driving force in Spanish history throughout Periods Two and Three, attracting commensurate opposition. The exaggerated fears of Spain were fuelled by a mid-century Catholic resurgence, characterized by the Council and decrees of Trent and the papacy of Pius V (1566–72), together with the work of the Jesuits. Among other things, the decrees of Trent and their interpretation – especially by Cardinal Borromeo in Milan – tended to increase the powers of bishops, an important factor in the Netherlands and, later, an insurmountable aspect of German religious conflicts.

Philip II was presumed, quite wrongly, to be the executive arm of the Papacy and it was widely feared that he threatened the very existence of all Protestants – something far beyond his capacity. Pius V undoubtedly did crusade against Protestants, in particular England, albeit without the degree of Spanish support he expected. In 1570 he excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, who was consequently to be deposed, and thereby fomented politico-religious strife.

1. The Spanish road was a network of communications between Italy and the Netherlands. See Geoffrey Parker, The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659 (Cambridge, 1972).
2. The Elector of Cologne declared in 1619 that a very long war would ensue if Bohemia deposed Ferdinand, because Spain and the House of Austria would stake their all on the matter: Anton Gindely, History of the Thirty Years' War, trans. Andrew Ten Brook (2 vols., London, 1885), i. 1:35; see also infra, p. 610, n. 3.
3. Charles V wanted and tried to pass the entire inheritance to Philip II. He failed, but in the process antagonized his brother, Ferdinand I, and his nephew, Maximilian II. This very important subject has attracted less analysis than one would expect. See I. de Jongh, Mary of Hungary, Second Regent of the Netherlands (London, 1958), pp. 221 ff., and, for the family compact of 1551, p. 240; August von Druffel, Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts (4 vols., Munich, 1873–96), iii. 161–203.
5. Philip II was not prepared to take orders from Rome. See, for example, N. M. Sutherland, Princes, Politics and Religion, 1547–1589 (London, 1984), pp. 224 ff.
Spanish ascendancy over France was suddenly increased in 1559 by the death of Henry II and Philip’s marriage to his daughter. Philip’s title was undisputed and Spain appeared impressively secure and inaccessible. Nevertheless, once deprived of the necessary English alliance, she remained acutely vulnerable in the Netherlands. This weakness not only poisoned the whole of Philip II’s reign, but also seriously affected the destiny of Spain in Europe until 1648 and even, in different ways, until the end of the reign of Louis XIV. Thus, despite undeniable elements of strength, Philip was haunted by an excessive fear of France. He feared her hold on Scotland, and her dynastic link with Mary Queen of Scots, hence the potential power of France over England. By the same token, he feared that France and England might achieve a dynastic alliance—repeatedly attempted in the sixteenth century and again, after Philip’s death, in the seventeenth—such as he had obtained through his marriage to Mary Tudor. Above all, Philip feared French influence upon, and activities in, the Netherlands, where the power of Spain could be challenged and drained.

The same, in fact, could be said of England, which, it has been seen, could not remain unaffected by the rivalry of the two great powers. Indeed, England had become both the pawn and the prize in that Franco-Habsburg struggle, and stood in danger of becoming—as it was said—a northern Piedmont or Milan. The rescue of England from that subservient plight was to be the supreme achievement of Queen Elizabeth, who (surprisingly perhaps) succeeded Mary Tudor unopposed. Her newly-established Protestantism (April 1559) distanced England from both the Catholic powers and became an essential element in her independence. Thus it was that, with the emergence of England under Elizabeth, the structure of politics, dauntingly complex after 1559, became dominated by a great tripartite struggle which lasted, with surface variations, until approximately 1630—right through the early stages of what passes for the Thirty Years War.

Queen Elizabeth was wishfully elevated, by the Calvinist Huguenots of France, by the rebels in the Netherlands, and by certain German princes to the leadership of international Protestantism—a conception which emerged in the 1560s. While Elizabeth found this partly rebel sponsorship unwelcome, the idea was embraced by some of her servants.

2. Owing to the collapse of France after 1559, the French threat to England was largely that of the Catholic Guise faction. François duc de Guise was Mary’s uncle. Queen Elizabeth feared the Guises and may be perceived to have supported whomsoever opposed them.
3. Both Henri duc d’Anjou (Henry III, 1574–89) and François duc d’Alençon (duc d’Anjou, 1576) were suitors of Queen Elizabeth. There was no dynastic marriage until that of Henrietta-Maria to Charles I in 1625.
4. Sutherland, Princes, Politics and Religion, pp. 1–12.
The rejected image was never entirely erased and incurred the displeasure of both France and Spain. 1 Upon Elizabeth’s accession in 1558, France was still the traditional enemy, and the old Burgundian alliance – vitally important for trade – the traditional affiliation. However, religion and the acquisition by Spain of the Netherlands gradually but inexorably rendered Spain an equally, or yet more, dangerous enemy. Yet, even after the beginning of troubles in the Netherlands and the arrival in 1567 of the Duke of Alba with a Spanish army, Elizabeth was still more afraid of the establishment of French influence in the Netherlands than she was of the triumph of Spain – if only Philip would govern those provinces in his capacity as duke of Burgundy. From the beginning of the revolt in 1568, the Netherlands, where Spain could be hurt, became the theatre and focus of the anti-Spanish struggle, ultimately assumed in this period by Protestant England, the United Provinces of the Netherlands (which emerged in 1579) 2 and, very confusedly, by France, since she was also prey to politico-religious convulsions. The Netherlands’ war of independence became a principal link between the great anti-Spanish war of the sixteenth century and the later, seventeenth-century wars, in which recovery of the United Provinces remained, for Spain, her principal objective. This point is of vital significance since, without the Netherlands, Spain’s interest in Germany would have been so much less that she might have concentrated her energies elsewhere, in the Mediterranean or overseas – as some of her councillors advised. 3

The later sixteenth-century opposition to Spain, whose success presupposed a modicum of unity, was only gradually, and never completely, combined. This is important in accounting for that unfinished business of the sixteenth century and the consequent conflicts of the seventeenth. England and France both had an interest in supporting the Netherlands’ Revolt – albeit with largely conflicting intentions. Thus, since the power of Spain was the greatest, the eventual equation was bound to be an Anglo-French alliance against her. This was Philip’s lifelong fear, fuelled by the defensive treaty of Blois in 1572. 4 For a long time, intervention in the Netherlands was mainly voluntary, covert, factional and haphazard. But by February 1582, when the Duke of Anjou – suitor to Queen Elizabeth and heir apparent to Henry III – was ceremonially proclaimed duke of Brabant in Antwerp, both England and France were openly committed

1. Elizabeth did seek to form a Protestant coalition in the 1560s: see Ekki Kouri, England and the Attempt to Form a Protestant Alliance in the Late 1560s (Helsinki, 1981).
2. In January 1579, the seven northern provinces formed the Union of Utrecht and later became known as the United Provinces. I use the term for convenience.
4. The treaty of Blois, of April 1572, was a not very threatening defensive treaty, preferred by Queen Elizabeth to a marriage alliance. It was not ratified by Henry IV. Calendar of State Papers Foreign, 1571-1574, p. 87.
to the cause of the United Provinces. This support, albeit fluctuating and grudging, remained a factor in European politics until at least 1609, and consequently affected the relations of both England and France with Spain. The year 1582 is not normally recognized as a turning-point. Nevertheless, from that time on, neither England nor France was to be forgiven for having sanctioned the usurpation of one of Philip’s proudest titles; the great anti-Spanish war had become inevitable. The ensuing years, up to 1598, were to witness as direct and desperate a struggle against the power of Spain as ever occurred in any era.

There soon began a series of conspiracies to murder Elizabeth, and chequered plans for an invasion of England which reached a notorious climax in 1588 in the form of the Spanish Armada – the first of many attempts. The gathering conflict took a sharp turn in 1584 when, upon the death of Anjou, the Calvinist Henry of Navarre became heir apparent to the French throne, and Philip II helped to create, and formally supported, the French Catholic League. This was a revolutionary organization, led by the Guise faction, long-time enemies of Queen Elizabeth on account of their kinswoman, Mary Queen of Scots, who had been detained in England since 1568. The minimum purpose of the Guises was to depose Henry III and destroy the Huguenots. The murder of Henry III in August 1589 was remarkably opportune for Spain since, together with Navarre, Henry might well have overthrown the Spanish/Catholic League. Thereafter, Spain strove for nine long years to prevent Henry IV from establishing his authority as legitimate king of France. His abjuration in 1593, destroying the original religious pretext of Spain and the League, was ignored. Thus in the 1580s and 1590s Spain made a naked and supreme effort to depose Henry III, Queen Elizabeth and Henry IV by assassination, by conspiracy, by subversion and by invasion. To what extent these endeavours stemmed from the Spanish failure to suppress the United Provinces is debatable; evidently they were seen as intrinsically part of the same war. Philip’s real hope was to replace both Elizabeth and the King of France by a Spanish Infanta. Failing that he sought, and very nearly achieved, the destruction of France as a kingdom, by her disintegration into separate principalities which he could hope to dominate.

Ultimately this common danger was bound to force England and France

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2. Especially the Throgmorton plot, 1583, Parry plot, 1585, and Babington plot, 1586. It should be noted that naval and commercial rivalries also played an important part in this conflict, and that privateering assisted Elizabeth to finance it.

3. The Catholic League was formed by the treaty of Joinville, 31 Dec. 1584: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MSS français, 336), fo. 9, original.

4. This comes over well from Simon Goulart, *Mémoires de la Ligue* (6 vols., Amsterdam, 1778), and the *Mémoires d’estat de Villeroy*, ed. M. Petitot (Collection complète des mémoires relatifs à l’histoire de France, sér. i, vol. xliii, 1824).
closer together, although the abjuration of Henry IV unnerved his Protestant allies. While Queen Elizabeth and Oldenbarnevelt, Advocate of Holland, understood that Henry had no choice, their peoples deprecated it, making a pro-French policy uncomfortable. This was an important aspect of future difficulties between the natural enemies of Spain. From the start, in 1589, England helped Henry to some extent, if never altruistically.\(^1\) After the Spanish invasion of Brittany in 1590, England sent several small expeditions to France, fearing Spanish control of the Channel, and invasion from an advanced base. But it was not until 1596, after some successes by the Archduke Albert, Governor of the Netherlands, and the Spanish capture of Calais, that England joined a formal, triple alliance with France and the United Provinces.\(^2\) Such an alliance, if firm and active, would have been too strong for Spain; in fact it was neither, but it did serve to alarm Philip.

This great anti-Spanish war – which nevertheless failed to bring England, France and the United Provinces into sincere and lasting alliance – had not been completed by 1598 when, for Philip, age and death supervened. That was fortuitous for Henry IV, who came close to disaster amidst the chaos of his kingdom and the treachery of the Huguenots.\(^3\) Nevertheless, Philip II feared the potential power of France under Henry IV, and the likely union of Scotland with England when – as he expected – James VI and I succeeded the ageing Queen. Philip was disinclined to bequeath such a struggle to Philip III, his youthful heir, and to the Archdukes, Albert of Austria and his own daughter, Isabella, to whom he 'donated' the Netherlands in 1598. The terms of the treaty of Vervins in 1598, by which France recovered all her captured towns, and the 'donation' indicated Philip's recognition that, whether or not Spain could ultimately win, he himself had run out of time as well as money.\(^4\) Possibly he was also aware of the growing need to concentrate on the defence of the Indies, which were to feature largely in negotiations with England and the United Provinces. Thus, while France and England both opposed their more powerful neighbour, Spain, they did so without more than partially sinking their own traditional hostility. The failure of these disunited allies to co-operate more fully, and their competitive jealousy in respect of their common ally, the United Provinces, whether in the sixteenth century or the early seventeenth, played into the hands of Spain.\(^5\)

In the 1590s there was no true alignment of interest, but rather

\(^{1}\) On Anglo-French relations, see J. B. Black, *Elizabeth and Henry IV* (Oxford, 1914).

\(^{2}\) This was a very simple agreement: Adrien Compan (ed.), *Abrégé historique du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle 1592-1602* (Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de Belgique, vol. xxvi, Brussels, 1867), p. 115.

\(^{3}\) N. M. Sutherland, *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition* (New Haven, 1980), ch. 9.


a resentful desire on the part of each to lessen the burden of opposing Spain.

It was clear by May 1598, at the beginning of Period Three, that Spain would not conquer France, which had found salvation in Henry IV. Philip III, however, continued to assail England and planned to subvert the succession of James I. The struggle was also inconclusive in respect of the United Provinces; the Spanish empire remained intact – if imperilled in the Indies – and the power of Spain was only quiescent, as she embarked upon a new regime. If Vervins had ended hostilities, it had not created amity, and Philip III failed to ratify the treaty until May 1601. Spain continued to weaken France through the subversion of the kingdom, while Henry inevitably continued to support the United Provinces and encourage anti-Habsburg sentiments in Germany. The United Provinces were neither defeated nor victorious; they were, however, severely threatened by Vervins and, at the same time, by the end of English subsidies, as trouble intensified in Ireland. Peace between England and Spain was possible in 1604, once the Irish rebellion had ended in March 1603. But neither England nor France could safely remain indifferent to the fate of the United Provinces, which provided the complexities of the next decade. The 'donation' of the Netherlands, conceived as a way of mitigating their aversion from Spain by granting them their own prince, actually left the problem untouched and, so long as it continued, the relations of England, France and Spain must remain fraught. These desperate sixteenth-century wars, in each case – England, France and the United Provinces – for survival, inevitably confirmed a generalized belief in and fear of the Habsburg purpose to impose universal and Catholic monarchy, not least in the Calvinist states of the Rhineland. Had any one of the opposing powers collapsed, no other state or prince could have lived secure – or so it was believed. Ultimately, England was saved by the sea and the elements, but France enjoyed no such protection.

Here, then, was the unfinished business of the sixteenth century, although at the time the actual outcome was not inevitable. There were still two possible ways in which the unfinished business might have been mopped up – and that would have altered our long-term perspective. Had the new regime of the peaceable Archdukes been effectively, as well as theoretically, sovereign, the restoration of a Burgundian state might have ended the problem of the United Provinces, diverted the attention of Spain elsewhere, taken the pressure off the Rhinelands and broken the tripartite deadlock. In the event, the Archdukes were little more


than governors, wholly dependent upon Spain to finance the war and disdainfully treated by Philip III, while the tripartite struggle continued in a modified form. An even greater hope for Europe was Henry IV, who grew in strength and stature during his remaining years. By 1606, he had mastered his kingdom, which was rapidly recovering. In the long negotiations, mediated by France and England, which preceded the twelve years' truce of 1609, the influence and authority of France were shown to be paramount. For a few years, France was manifestly the dominant power, and Henry's cautious, benign purpose was not revenge but to attain to a tolerable peace. Then, at a stroke, everything was changed by his horrific murder in May 1610 - his heir a minor.

Clearly the beginning of Period Three was a time of great uncertainty, without a defined system of alliances. Although counsels in Spain, England and the United Provinces were all divided, there is no doubt that a desire for peace was widespread. England, under James I, sank into a nervous and lethargic neutrality, severely constrained by financial problems and repeatedly threatened by Catholic subversion. England and Spain still feared each other's sea power. Each also feared that the other might achieve a hostile dynastic alliance with France. All three monarchs had children to barter, and intensive marriage negotiations filled the first two decades of the seventeenth century, primarily as obstructive, blocking devices. Henry, Prince of Wales, considered more capable and agreeable than his father, was regarded as a desirable catch, until his death in November 1612. England and Spain conducted a long flirtation, really a diplomatic ploy, marriage negotiations persisting between 1606 and 1623. In the end, the significant dynastic marriages were those of Louis XIII and his sister, Elisabeth, to the Infanta and Prince of Spain respectively, agreed in 1611 and solemnized in 1615, and that of Elizabeth of England to the Calvinist Frederick V of the Palatinate, in February 1613. James I's lofty intention was that this German Protestant match should be balanced by a Spanish marriage for Charles, now the Prince of Wales. But James had neither the capacity nor the means to assume the role of Henry IV as arbiter of Europe.

The mutual antipathy of England and France is very marked in the correspondence of these years. Without a confident Anglo-French alliance, Spain could not be overmastered, and Henry IV understood this, despite his profound distrust of England. Early in the seventeenth century, he tried, but not very hard, to remedy the situation, placing

1. The attitude of Spain to the Archdukes is summed up in a consulta of 26 Sept. 1601: Lonchay and Cuvelier, Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne, pp. 79-84.
2. The documentation on the truce of 1609 is vast. On the French side see, in particular, Les Négociations du président Jeannin.
3. Ambassades de monsieur de la Boderie en Angleterre (5 vols., n.p., 1750), i, pp. iii ff., 111-121, 18 June 1606, La Boderie to Villeroy. Many other documents illustrate the point.

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his long-term hopes in Henry, Prince of Wales.\footnote{There are many references to Henry's hopes in the Prince of Wales, and to their relations: for example, La Boderie, \textit{Ambassades}, i. 60, 31 May 1606, La Boderie to Villeroy; 98–9, 12 June 1606, Henry IV to James I; 105–7, 12 June 1606, Villeroy to La Boderie; \textit{Lettres de Henri IV roi de France et de messieurs de Villeroy et de Puisieux à monsieur Antoine Lefèvre de La Boderie, ambassadeur en Angleterre, 1606–1611} (2 vols., n.p., 1711), i. 23–4, 3 June 1606, Villeroy to La Boderie.} Relations were poisoned by wrangles over French debts to England, and by commercial and marine causes.\footnote{Mark Greengrass, 'Henri IV et Elisabeth: les dettes d'une amitié', in \textit{L'Avenement d'Henri IV. Colloque de Pau-Nérac, 1989} (Association Henri IV, Pau, 1990), pp. 353–70.} But, since neither party wanted renewed war with Spain, they did co-operate – albeit grudgingly – in the pacification of the United Provinces. The twelve years' truce between Spain and the United Provinces was an outstanding achievement of French diplomacy, the fruit of quite extraordinary persistence and the highest quality diplomatic fudge. The truce was guaranteed by England and France, a stabilizing factor so long as Henry lived. Furthermore, Henry IV tried hard to upgrade this co-operation into a firm, new Anglo-French alliance; but he died before the task was completed.\footnote{The treaty was completed by La Boderie on 29 August 1610. It agreed on the need to limit Habsburg acquisitions, formed a defensive league and settled the old quarrel over French debts to England: La Boderie, \textit{Ambassades}, i. p. xxxii. The treaty related, in particular, to the Jülich-Cleves succession.}

These immense stabilizing efforts were, however, largely in vain: in March 1609, just before the truce was signed on 9 April, trouble blew up in Germany, in the form of the Jülich-Cleves succession. This long-awaited dispute may be seen as the point at which the focus and theatre of anti-Habsburg activity switched, in Period Three, back to the German Empire. While the United Provinces, its problem merely proroged, remained a principal link between Periods Two and Three, the continuity is also strongly exemplified in the relations of Henry IV with the German princes; and the two factors are closely related. Henry, fearing further clashes with Spain after 1598 – especially in Italy – placed a high priority upon the preservation of the United Provinces. Indeed, concern for them as the principal bulwark against Spain formed the basis of Henry's German relations. In 1598–9 Spanish forces from the Netherlands invaded and devastated Westphalia. If this was part of their campaign against the United Provinces, it was also partly an attempt to pre-empt the Jülich-Cleves succession in favour of the Habsburgs. Henry was therefore well aware of the incipient danger, unless the German princes could be induced to unite and achieve an agreed settlement in advance of the event.

Germany, however, lurching towards disintegration and collapse, was no source of strength. The three most advanced states, Lutheran Saxony, Catholic Bavaria and the Calvinist Palatinate, were all pulling in different directions. Since Saxony preferred Catholics to Calvinists and, for historic reasons, remained on good terms with the emperor, there was no such thing as the German Protestant cause. This irredeemable cleavage, which Henry IV had tried hard to overcome, constituted a fundamental weakness. The Protestants had failed to obtain solutions to their problems
when they were strongest, under Maximilian II (1564–76). While Maximilian had sought to maintain unity, a different political climate arose under Rudolf II (1576–1612), who had spent eight years of his youth in Spain. Protestants’ efforts to have their gains recognized were defeated in 1582, after which all further attempts failed. During Rudolf’s long reign, the imperial constitution was strained to breaking-point. Disputed jurisdictions, mainly in quarrels over the interpretation of the religious peace of Augsburg, gradually brought about the collapse of imperial justice.

The religious peace of Augsburg had been an ad hoc compromise of questionable validity, cobbled up in circumstances of difficulty and danger. It could not have been expected to settle for ever the conflicts of religious diversity, since the Reformation was not arrested in 1555. Half a century later it was deeply permeating public life, affecting vested interests and, above all, the ownership of church property. The policy of the aggressive Calvinist Palatinate was to strive, and if necessary to fight, for confirmation of the Declaratio Ferdinandea, and for the abrogation of the Ecclesiastical Reservation, which prevented the expansion of Protestantism. The Declaratio, issued as a supplementary recess, on imperial authority alone, protected the already converted subjects of ecclesiastical princes, and permitted others to convert. The Ecclesiastical Reservation obliged prelates who converted to resign their office and surrender their property. The Palatinate also sought liberty for Protestants in Catholic territories, which would have destroyed the compromise.

It was quarrels of this kind which underlined the machinery of justice. Furthermore, in 1603 and 1608 the imperial diet, which had an appellate function, was disrupted and paralysed by the Calvinists, who walked out; after one further session (boycotted by the Calvinists) in 1613, it did not meet again for many years. While the details of this constitutional collapse cannot be recounted, its importance must be emphasized. In the absence of machinery of justice, and with an uncertain imperial succession, there was no obvious alternative to violence. This occurred sporadically and could escalate whenever a serious issue arose. Thus civil strife, in a Germany bereft of imperial leadership and beset by multiple, conflicting interests, rumbled and threatened at least a decade before the Bohemian Revolt of 1618. By about 1609, German demands for the redefinition and enforcement of Augsburg had become very urgent. Protestants were putting up a strong resistance, while Catholics clamoured for the ‘restitution’ of all ecclesiastical lands secularized since 1555. This was very likely a juridical impossibility; at best it would have entailed a massive and menacing change in the ownership of church property. That, in

turn, could have meant the enforcement of Catholicism upon Protestant subjects. By 1608, ‘restitution’ had already become, and was to remain, a key issue in German conflicts, at least until the treaty of Prague in 1635. Unless or until this issue was settled, there would be no peace in Germany. In that respect, at least, the German war was religious. Clashes in 1608 clinched the rough alignment of at least three antagonistic parties, which guaranteed the complexity of any future conflict.

The militancy displayed by the Palatinate – leader of one of these parties – was nothing new. The Elector Otto-Heinrich (1556–9) had led the militant Protestants at the diet of 1556–7, demanding complete religious liberty. His successor, Frederick III (1559–76), was educated in France and sought a great military alliance with England, Scotland, Denmark and the Huguenots to eradicate Spanish power from northern Europe. John-Casimir, brother of the Lutheran Elector Ludwig VI (1576–83), was constantly, if not altruistically, concerned for the cause of the Huguenots and the United Provinces, and his militancy was continued under Frederick IV (1583–1610) by Christian of Anhalt, another Francophile. Anhalt was governor of the Upper Palatinate, contiguous with Bavaria, from 1595, the year in which Henry IV declared war on Spain. Thus German opposition to Spain, born in the reign of Charles V, was sustained into the seventeenth century by the Calvinist states, excluded from the religious peace. The Palatinate had always seen the wars in the United Provinces and France as part of a great Catholic offensive against Protestants everywhere. If this conception was largely imaginary, it was vigorously fostered by the Huguenots, William the Silent, and by Henry IV, all of whom needed help. Several times in the 1590s the princes assisted Henry with loans, and in 1591 – before Henry’s abjuration – Anhalt commanded a German force in France. This personal experience of the great sixteenth-century struggle may well have influenced Anhalt in his conviction that Protestants must find a way to crush the world power of the Habsburgs – Spain and Austria – which would, of course, entail their exclusion from the imperial throne. Anhalt and the Palatinate councillor Ludwig Camerarius were deadly serious in this desire which, however, could never be fulfilled without an international coalition and a major war. The tragedy was that their injudicious efforts were to land them in the war without the coalition.

The German princes were shaken by Henry’s abjuration in 1593, though he did his best to explain, and they refused to join the alliance of France, England and the United Provinces in 1596. Henry’s agent, Ancel, completely failed to obtain the German league which might have enabled

France to defeat Spain in the sixteenth century. The princes were also
shaken by the treaty of Vervins, although Henry was careful to have
them included. He made that peace because he had to, not because he
thought the struggle was over. Consequently, he favoured a German
league in order to ensure that the United Provinces could sustain the
cause.\(^1\) In 1602, Henry's friend and correspondent, Maurice, Landgrave
of Hesse, went secretly to France to discuss a league. Above all, the
Germans wanted Henry to help them to remove the House of Austria
from the imperial throne. There was no king of the Romans and, for
at least two decades, the imperial succession remained a lively European
issue.\(^2\) Henry was sympathetic, but not hopeful, because the only suit-
able candidate was Maximilian of Bavaria, the princes' Catholic enemy.
Nervousness was also increased by the Anglo-Spanish peace of 1604 and,
in December, Henry made it clear that he would assist the claimants
to Jülich-Cleves – Brandenburg, Neuburg and Saxony – sooner than
stomach a Habsburg solution, if the princes failed to settle the issue
in advance.\(^3\)

Between 1602 and 1606 difficulties arose between Henry and the princes
which cannot be recounted here. Then fears aroused by Spanish successes
in the United Provinces and by Rudolf's impending peace with the Turks
(11 November 1606) induced a closer co-operation.\(^4\) Henry urged the
need for a properly constituted union of all who feared the power of
Spain, and declared the councils of the Empire to be controlled by officials
of Rome and Madrid.\(^5\) In October 1606, Anhalt went to France and
there drafted the articles of a union. Even so, it was not until the princes
had increased their vulnerability by destroying the diet, in February 1608,
that they finally achieved the Evangelical Union.\(^6\) Unfortunately for
Frederick and Anhalt, the Union was never to be the firm, aggressive
confederation which could have served their purposes, though it may,
perhaps, have raised their hopes. Its formation coincided with the manipu-
lation of the Archduke Matthias by Protestants in Austria, Hungary
and Moravia to extort concessions from the Emperor Rudolf.\(^7\) Prodded
by Zuñiga, the Spanish ambassador in Vienna, Maximilian of Bavaria
retaliated by forming the Catholic League, in July 1609, just as Rudolf
granted the Bohemians their famous Letter of Majesty. No doubt the

\(^1\) Anquez, *Henri IV et l'Allemagne*, p. 51. Henry tried for years to build up a German coalition:
see especially ibid., pp. 18 ff.; also Rommel, *Correspondance inédite de Henri IV*, pp. 209-12, 27 Dec.
1604, Henry to Hesse; 319 ff., 14 Aug. 1606, Henry IV to Hesse; *Négociations du président Jeannin*,
pp. 608-10, 3 Apr. 1609, Henry to Jeannin; 668, 27 July 1609, Jeannin to Richardot.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 327-8, 15 Nov. 1604, Hesse to Henry; 209-12, 27 Dec. 1604, Henry to Hesse. Henry
was aware that Spain had long been reaching for the Jülich-Cleves territories: G. G. Vreede, *Lettres
et négociations de Paul Chobart, seigneur de Buzanval et de François d'Aerssen* (Leiden, 1846), passim.

\(^3\) This was a twenty-year truce: Rommel, *Correspondance inédite*, pp. 337.


\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 332 ff., 333. The Union was formed at Anhausen on 4 May 1608: Anquez, *Henri IV
et l'Allemagne*, p. 125.

developing Jülich-Cleves dispute had something to do with it. The League included the three ecclesiastical electorates of the Rhineland, Mainz, Trier and Cologne, and the prince bishops of Franconia and Swabia. It was therefore clear that, in any serious need, the Habsburgs would be bound to turn for help to their organized kinsman in Bavaria. Indeed, the Emperor Matthias would have liked to dominate the League himself, but Maximilian reserved his independence and, through the Bohemian crisis, sought to advance his own interests by driving a hard bargain. Bavaria had always been the unquestioned champion of the Catholic cause and, in 1607, bared her teeth by executing an imperial ban on the Lutheran free city of Donauwörth, thereby increasing Protestant fears.

From the 1550s, the dukes of Bavaria had favoured Catholic reform. Albert V (1550–79) married a daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I, and their daughter married the Archduke Charles of Styria. Their son, Ferdinand (Emperor Ferdinand II in 1619), was educated in Bavaria with his cousin Maximilian at the Jesuit university of Ingolstadt. Bavarian links with the Habsburgs were therefore close and sustained. Both Albert V and his successor William V were deeply pious. Church reform was carried out under Jesuit guidance and ducal supervision and, by the end of the century, Protestants were expelled and uniformity enforced. It was natural that Bavaria should seek to extend her power over ecclesiastical territories in south and central Germany, both to impede their secularization and to provide for younger sons. Thus Ernest, son of Albert V, became Bishop of Freising, Hildesheim, Liège, Münster, and Archbishop-Elector of Cologne - a considerable Bavarian presence in north-west Germany.

Efforts to enforce the Ecclesiastical Reservation reached a climax in the 1580s with the struggle for Cologne - followed by a similar conflict over Strasbourg. The quarrel first arose over the archbishopric of Cologne in 1580, and is held to have been a turning-point in the relations between Catholics and Protestants in Germany. The loss of Cologne to Catholicism would have created a Protestant majority in the electoral college, a startling proposition, even if the danger was more theoretical than real. In 1583, the archbishop, Gebhard Truchsess, married a nun and granted toleration. But - contrary to the Ecclesiastical Reservation - he also sought to retain his see. Consequently he was deposed, Ernest of Bavaria elected, and the ensuing war lasted until 1589. The Ecclesiastical Reservation and the status of churches in free cities fired most of the confessional quarrels, which were increasingly settled by force. One such quarrel was the Bavarian occupation of Donauwörth in December 1607, already mentioned, swiftly followed by the showdown in the diet of

Regensburg in February 1608, which galvanized the princes into consolidating their Union. Everyone was concerned about Jülich-Cleves.

Henry IV was about to take the field when he was murdered in Paris on 14 May 1610. One should, however, beware of assuming that there had to be, in sixteenth-century terms, an ultimate conflict. England had no such intention until 1623 — and then only briefly — and, when Henry IV prepared for war in 1609-10, he did so for two specific and limited reasons. One was to settle the Jülich-Cleves succession, and the other to prevent Spain from exploiting the defection to Milan of the prince de Condé, in order to subvert the succession. This was a matter upon which experience had rendered Henry acutely sensitive. Whether or not his war would have escalated, is a matter for speculation. But, from that time, opposition to the Habsburgs necessarily reverted to Germany, where war was already in progress when the Netherlands’ truce expired in 1621.

Henry’s death was an absolutely stunning catastrophe for the anti-Habsburg cause, once again animating Germany, which was thereby deprived of outstanding, yet restraining leadership. James I is said to have turned whiter than his shirt upon receiving the news, and Maurice of Hesse to have been devastated by grief. His agent in the Netherlands, Philippe Dubois, swiftly reported that the Jesuits in Flanders were informed of the attack before it occurred. He also reported Spinola – Spain’s commander in the Netherlands – to have said: ‘On fera la guerre en coche.’ Henry was, precisely, stabbed in an open coach, and the timing was perfect. If these remarkable reports do not prove anything, they were obviously sufficient to enrage the princes, and we may reasonably assume that, thenceforth, their hatred of Spain was stoked by anger.

The connection between Henry’s death and the origins of the seventeenth-century wars was undoubtedly considerable. It caused, like the sudden death of Henry II before him, a further, major disjunction in the affairs of Europe, and an alteration in the structure of politics which was shortly to become apparent. French nullity, for well over a decade, may be seen to have created something of a vacuum. While the Protestant opposition in Germany remained fragmented and ineffective, France was plunged into all the instability of a regency, so that her newly prominent role in Europe was again substantially curtailed. A pro-Spanish, ultramontane dévot faction quickly influenced the government. Partly through the dual marriages of 1615, the deceptive appearance was produced of a Franco-Habsburg entente, though the desire to live in peace was nothing new. The marriages had long been under discussion – or intermittently so. They had not been ruled out in 1608; but they were not realistic

2. That he planned to exploit Condé to subvert the succession was one of the principal charges brought against the duc de Bouillon.
3. Rommel, Correspondance inédite, pp. xxv–xxvii, 21,27 May 1609, Dubois to Hesse.
while the children were too young. In 1611 they were arguably quite sensible, when it was feared that Spain might still challenge the succession, and when the French commitment to Jülich-Cleves had become embarrassing. In reality, they meant little more than the Valois match of 1559, a smoothing of the surface without any change to the underlying pattern of relations – for Spanish friendship depended upon French strength. Her sudden weakness in 1610 was certain to be exploited in the usual ways, as noble and Huguenot rebellions again invited intervention.

Thus, the unfinished business of the sixteenth century particularly affected Germany, whose seventeenth-century struggle would not otherwise have taken its historic form. The Jülich-Cleves affair, which should have been pre-empted, threatened the fragile truce. Spain had schemed for a peace or cessation of hostilities in the United Provinces, hoping to avoid significant concessions, and remained resentful, reputación having been tarnished by the terms of the truce and the persistence of France. The failure of Spain and the United Provinces to agree upon a proper peace was to have the gravest repercussions. While Spanish power in Europe was held to depend upon the possession of the Netherlands, the United Provinces had still to be recovered. This mere suspension of the struggle necessarily rendered Philip III extremely concerned about the recurrent issue of the imperial succession.1 It was consequently essential to keep the imperial crown within the House of Austria – to which various princes were opposed – and to safeguard the Spanish road, parts of which passed through imperial territory. But the succession was troubled and clouded by childlessness, incompetence, and Habsburg family quarrels, which left the emperor vulnerable to exploitation by his Protestant subjects in Austria, Bohemia and Hungary, while the affairs of Germany were steadily worsening in the early years of the seventeenth century.

The nature of the imperial succession was also crucial to Germany, since the problems arising from the peace of Augsburg could not be settled without the intervention of the emperor. The issue, long since debated, became acute in 1612, upon the accession of Matthias who, at fifty-five, was childless, and from whom little was expected.2 In theory, the Habsburgs could field five candidates, including the King of Spain, the most plausible being Ferdinand of Styria. But, as a Jesuit-trained absolutist, Ferdinand was the last prince in Christendom who could be expected to preside over an acceptable adjudication of the peace of Augs-

1. References to the imperial succession and the election of a king of the Romans – which was frustrated – are ubiquitous in the diplomatic correspondence. There was much talk of excluding the House of Austria. For example, England, France and Denmark considered the matter in 1606: La Boderie, Ambassades, i. 91-3, 7 June 1606, La Boderie to Villeroy; Lettres de Henri IV, Villeroy et Puisieux, pp. 59-61, 9 Aug. 1606, Villeroy to La Boderie. Anquez, Henri IV et l'Allemagne, pp. 136-36, discusses the imperial succession issue in some detail. See also, on the Spanish attitude: Lonchay and Cuvelier, Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne, passim and vol. vi, supplement: 1598-1700 (Brussels, 1937), passim.

This alarming prospect therefore caused Frederick (now Frederick V) of the Palatinate (grandson of William the Silent), and others concerned, to set about stiffening the Protestant Union. In February 1613, Frederick married Elizabeth, daughter of James I by his Danish wife, and in May the Union allied with the United Provinces – affiliations the princes had previously refused. These precautions were all the more necessary since the two Franco-Spanish marriages, determined in 1611, cast doubt upon the traditional role of France as the protector of ‘German liberties’ – just when the need seemed greatest. Frederick, who was fiercely anti-Spanish, as from his descent one might expect, intended to exploit this imperial weakness and disunity, in the forlorn but ardent attempt to avert yet another Habsburg succession.

Events were soon to emphasize the already strong concern of Spain to secure a suitable imperial candidate. A war arising from the first Mantuan succession crisis (1613–17) threatened vital Spanish interests in the control of north Italy, and alerted her to the continuing sensitivity of France in that area. Furthermore, a war between Venice and the Emperor (1615–18) affected the contiguous archducal territories of Ferdinand, and brought Venice, at least nominally, the support of the Protestant alliance. Spain could not afford to see Ferdinand overthrown and had therefore to support him.1 Up to 1617, Philip III himself was an imperial candidate. This was mainly a matter of leverage, which he exploited. In January and March 1617, the Spanish ambassador, Ofiate, secured a secret agreement with Ferdinand by which he promised, if he became king of Bohemia and emperor, to cede to Spain Piombino and Finale in Italy, and Alsace.2 By means of a Habsburg family compact, comparable to that of Charles V in 1551, Ferdinand was recognized as their candidate for Bohemia and the Empire, and sole heir to all patrimonial territories, which were therefore to be reunited as previously under Ferdinand I.

In Protestant and anti-Habsburg circles, there was a great fear of the dangers of Ferdinand’s candidacy, based on his ruthless Catholic and autocratic policies in his own dominions. Continuation of the Roman crown within the House of Austria would render it everywhere supreme – so it was felt – and the real power would accrue to Spain, to which Ferdinand owed his elevation. Then, in June 1617, Ferdinand, by sleight of hand, was foisted upon, and recognized by, the estates of

1. On Ferdinand, see Robert Bireley, Religion and Politics in the Age of the Counter Reformation (Chapel Hill, 1981); Tapie, Guerre de trente ans, i. 66 ff.
2. V.-L. Tapie, La Politique étrangère de la France et le début de la guerre de trente ans, 1616-1621 (Paris, 1934), pp. 131–9, says that the demand for Alsace was refused, but promised secretly. Tapie also (p. 138) mentions a claim to the Tyrol. Alsace was later claimed by the Archduke Leopold. He succeeded the Archduke Maximilian in November 1618, and had not been consulted about Alsace: Peter Brightwell, ‘Spain, Bohemia and Europe, 1615–1621’, European Studies Review, xii (1982), 373–4; E. Rott, Histoire de la représentation diplomatique de la France auprès des cantons suisses, de leurs alliés et de leurs confédérés (10 vols., Berne, 1900-35), iii. 209, says the treaty was abrogated in 1623. It illustrates what Spain really wanted: Gindely, Thirty Years War, i. 25, 28.
Bohemia. Ferdinand confirmed the Letter of Majesty, albeit without honourable intentions, and was crowned on 19 June. Nevertheless, Bohemia and the Palatinate were both appalled. If the principle of heredity had been asserts in Bohemia, the same thing could happen in the Empire. The aspiration to heredity, combined with religious opposition, had already brought about civil war, late in the reign of Charles V. Could Ferdinand prevail where Charles had not? This would depend upon the attitude of Spain and France. Any threat to the emperor must concern Spain. In extremis, Spain and the emperor would, and did, stand together, thereby disturbing the balance of power, even though each entertained little sympathy for the other’s true objectives. Spain’s participation in the imperial wars was primarily intended to enable and induce the emperor to assist her in the suppression of the United Provinces – always her principal objective – which again underlines the continuity of Periods Two and Three.

No bid to oust the House of Austria could hope to succeed without the support of France. Maurice of Hesse was clear about that when he visited France in 1602. In September 1617 the Palatinate begged France to seize the opportunity of protecting German liberties which, in 1616, Richelieu had earnestly professed to uphold, despite the Spanish marriages. But Richelieu was no longer in office, and frequent changes and disturbances within France had produced a vacillating policy, above all ineffective. Various different influences were in conflict over foreign policy during the early years of Louis XIII’s personal rule, of which V.-L. Tapié has made an excellent study. Nicolas de Baugy, French ambassador in the Empire, who suffered at first hand the aggressive insolence of Oñate, was well aware of the resurgence and danger of Habsburg ambition. But he was also uncomfortably aware that France could not obstruct Ferdinand’s succession without favouring the heretics – the Evangelical Union – excessively. This proved to be an intrinsic and insurmountable dilemma. French ministers also suspected that the Palatinate was really seeking to benefit by embroiling France with Spain, a risk which in 1617 France was too weak to contemplate. Besides, the young King and his close associates were devoutly Catholic and, for the moment, aspired only to neutrality and peace.

1. Tapié, Politique étrangère, p. 141; Gindely, Thirty Years War, i. 39–42.
2. Spain rescued Ferdinand in 1617, at the time of the Venetian war; in 1619, supporting the Catholic League; in 1631, when Feria crossed the Alps to help against Sweden; and in 1633, when the Cardinal Infante, on his way to the Netherlands, also crossed the Alps and defeated the Swedes at Nördlingen. The much desired Spanish-imperial alliance followed in 1635: R. A. Stradling, ‘Olivares and the Origins of the Franco-Spanish War, 1627–1635’, ante, ci (1986), 81–2.
3. This is an immensely important point because it frequently defined Spain’s attitude. The documentation is vast. See, for example, J. H. Elliott, The Count-Duke of Olivares (New Haven/London, 1988), pp. 224, 231–2, 320–5, 358, 369, 395, 401; Bireley, Religion and Politics, p. 177.
4. Richelieu was briefly Secretary of State for war and foreign affairs, 1616–17: Salvo Mastellone, La regenza di Maria dei Medici (Florence, 1962); Tapié, Politique étrangère, p. 164.
5. See supra, p. 609, n. 2.
After his acceptance as king of Bohemia and Hungary, efforts were made to get Ferdinand elected king of the Romans, which would have greatly strengthened his position. The Palatinate blocked his path by demanding, as a precondition, the settlement of outstanding religious problems. Thus Frederick and Anhalt began to try to realize their anti-Habsburg aspirations. Gaining time in this way, Frederick appealed to France, and sought an alternative candidate for the imperial throne. Ferdinand, already repugnant as king-elect of Bohemia, was now, as imperial candidate, doubly unacceptable at home, and equally opposed by Protestants – albeit not unitedly – in the Empire. Anhalt, and possibly other members of the Union, had long been in touch with Bohemia. The degree of contact would be impossible to estimate because many students from eastern Europe attended the University of Heidelberg, a major Calvinist centre. Now the Palatinate and Bohemia shared an urgent interest in the rejection and exclusion of Ferdinand; and for this they were prepared to fight.

The dreaded election, first frustrated by the Palatinate, then several times postponed, was finally rescheduled for the end of May 1618. This time it was averted by the outbreak, on 23 May, of the notorious Bohemian Revolt. Was this timing fortuitous? At the outset, the Emperor Matthias sought to keep Germany calm, and appealed to France and others for help against the rebels. France was the only power which might have prevented the ensuing wars, but she was too weak, too threatened internally – as her enemies doubtless intended – and now too feebly committed to the peace of Christendom. Baugy believed the revolt to have been a premeditated conspiracy, involving the Germans, and feared that it heralded a long war because it would arouse all who opposed the election of Ferdinand. There is no obvious sign that this was the case, other than in terms of shared aspirations. Certainly the Palatinate and her adherents, especially Christian of Anhalt, hailed it as their opportunity to weaken the emperor, arrest the spread of Catholicism and win advantages for Protestantism; aspirations which far outstripped their capacity.

In July 1618, the princes sent Albrecht von Solms to encourage the Bohemians, who were already inclined to turn to Frederick, and also alerted the Evangelical Union, whose support they expected. The Union met at Rothenburg in October and, put to the test, it became apparent that it was unwilling to take the risks involved in supporting Frederick. To the radical Palatinate group, the danger to Bohemia threatened them all. If Bohemia were defeated, the emperor would extend his power in Germany – which proved to be true – and their religious problems would never be solved juridically. But members were afraid

1. Ibid., p. 177.
2. J. V. Polilenský, The Thirty Years War, trans. Robert Evans (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1971), pp. 98 ff.; Gindely, Thirty Years War, i. 43 ff.
3. Tapie, Politique étrangère, pp. 216–220.
4. Ibid., p. 247.
and merely called upon the Emperor to withdraw his forces and drop his harsh conditions.\(^1\) In the autumn of 1618, Matthias agreed to the mediation of four electors, while the radical Protestants pushed on, despite the lack of German support, and intrigued with the ambitious and turbulent Duke of Savoy, seeking means to exclude Ferdinand. They bungled this, like their relations with the Union; and, except for the employment of Count Mansfeld to defend Bohemia, secretly paid for by Savoy, they were merely compromised by the negotiations without commensurate benefits.\(^2\)

This was the scenario as the German war began to loom and it is at this stage that the altered structure of politics, and its effect upon the origins of the seventeenth-century wars, become apparent. Appeals to France from all sides in 1618 and 1619 illustrate the leverage she might have exerted, and the extent to which her renewed collapse affected European affairs. Through most of 1618 France – injudiciously engaged in trying to restore Catholicism to Béarn – merely watched and waited, instinctively unsympathetic to a Protestant rebellion in Bohemia and, conversely, mildly supportive of the Emperor. To Baugy, from his vantage point in Vienna, this tepidity was ill-advised. It was clear to him that France would soon be obliged to oppose Spain. It should not, however, be assumed that from the moment of the Bohemian Revolt, in May 1618, a great war was inevitable. It occurred, primarily, because the initial participants desired it. France favoured a settlement before the fire could spread. She did not want Germany to help Bohemia for fear of encouraging the Huguenots who had connections in the Palatinate. Consequently, in November 1618, the duc de Nevers, travelling in the Empire, was commissioned to intervene.\(^3\) Matthias, and ostensibly Ferdinand, accepted his offer of mediation, but he found the Bohemians, under the radical direction of the Palatinate, and the imperialists, controlled by Ferdinand, determined to pursue preparations for war. With the Palatinate and Oñate both urging hostilities, it seems unlikely that the scheduled mediation of four princes – due to meet on 14 April 1619 – would have been successful; the Elector Palatine was one of them. However, just as the revolt had averted the election of a king of the Romans, so mediation was prevented by the death of the Emperor, Matthias, on 19 March. An imperial election was now essential and anything might happen in the interregnum.

Were statesmanship not entirely lacking, the Bohemian crisis might have been defused before the death of Matthias. Thereafter it was unlikely.

1. Ibid., pp. 271-3.
2. Peter Brightwell, 'Spain, Bohemia and the Decision to Intervene', European Studies Review, xii (1982), 122; Gindely, Thirty Years War, i. 100, 103, 143-4.
Frederick, Elector Palatine, who emerged as a misguided catspaw, nevertheless observed that Henry IV, in those circumstances, would have enforced mediation. The policy of Louis XIII was not, in fact, fundamentally different; the contrast was that, unlike his father, Louis was powerless to act. Henry might well have restrained the Palatinate extremists, while seeking to fortify the Protestant Union. It is less certain whether he could have sustained a settlement, since the rebellion was really aimed at Ferdinand. In the event, France had actually favoured Ferdinand, as a preferable candidate to the King of Spain. Now, with an imperial election pending, both sides were bound to harden their attitude. With Spanish help on the way, Ferdinand wanted peace in Germany until his election could be secured. Thus, in April 1619, he made agreeable approaches both to the Palatinate and to France. Bohemia’s reaction was to extend the rebellion to all the Habsburg lands, and to appeal to England and the United Provinces. Her real desire was to make Ferdinand head of a confederation of Protestant states – something he would never accept. The Union took up arms in self-defence, while the Palatinate negotiated two abortive treaties with Savoy – a hopeful idea, had they shared the same objectives. Baugy, in Vienna, warned Puisieux, Secretary of State, on 14 April 1619, that France ought to abandon Ferdinand because to support him and restrain the Union could only benefit Spain.

The deposition of Ferdinand in Bohemia and his exclusion from the Empire were not quick and easy things to arrange. Time had been spent in considering the dukes of Savoy and Saxony. Thus Ferdinand was elected on 28 August, before the news arrived of his deposition two days before, in favour of Frederick. Spanish support for Ferdinand was clearly apparent. In May and November 1619, before and after the Bohemian deposition and imperial election of Ferdinand, Vienna was twice besieged. Thus, for the second time, Spain moved to rescue Ferdinand, sending a small force from the Netherlands to raise the first siege. The deposition is said to have been an intrigue of Anhalt. If so, it was presumably a bungled attempt to avert the election of Ferdinand. Together, Bohemia and the Palatinate had launched the ultimate provocation, but without deriving any benefit. Ferdinand, now offended but not excluded, had still to be opposed. A month later, buffeted by conflicting advice, Frederick accepted the Bohemian throne. His wiser instinct was to await the support of his father-in-law, James I of England, which was not forthcoming. Doubtless fearing a negative reply, Anhalt, whose courage exceeded his judgement, coerced Frederick with arguments of honour and of shame. In accepting Bohemia, Frederick ‘carried sixty years of anti-Catholic and

1. Ibid., p. 390.
2. Ibid., p. 341.
3. Ibid., p. 342.
4. Elliott, Olivares, pp. 59-60. The exact dates and number of forces vary in different accounts.
anti-Habsburg policy to its logical conclusion."¹ If the logic is doubtful, the action was positive. This was naturally seen as an act of rebellion against the Emperor for whom his envoys had so recently felt compelled to vote. Frederick’s unwise decision, which had the direst consequences, was not a causal, but a secondary, factor in a conflict which already existed, governing to some extent the form it was to take.² Even without the deposition, Ferdinand was already at war in his patrimonial estates, which he intended to master. Conflict with the princes in Germany could never have been avoided without the possibility of recourse to courts or diets, and with Ferdinand determined to enforce the peace of Augsburg in a Catholic sense. If Frederick’s allies were neither strong nor united enough to have excluded an intensely Catholic, Habsburg emperor, they were still too numerous and influential to be ignored. Ultimately, therefore, the indispensable rectification of the Augsburg settlement could only emerge from the agonies of war, which alone compels acceptance of the unacceptable.

In electing Frederick, Bohemia formalized her connection with the militant German princes, her last remaining hope. But the Union was not militant, and Frederick had acted rashly without first securing its full support – or apparently any support at all.³ Yet he must have seen the cracks appearing at the Rothenburg assembly. Opposing their leaders and concerned for their own defence, the members of the Union were not prepared to save Bohemia, but only to support the Palatinate in Germany – a factitious distinction difficult to sustain. In this confusion, the Spanish ambassador, Óñate, was quick to exert his influence. Serious Catholic action against Bohemia and the Palatinate derived from the treaty of Munich (8 October 1619) between Ferdinand and Maximilian of Bavaria, leader of the Catholic League. With a total disregard for German interests, Óñate persuaded Ferdinand to offer Maximilian any part of the Palatinate he could occupy, together with Frederick’s electoral title – an arrangement Spain was later to regret. Óñate, exceeding his instructions, also guaranteed the Spanish support without which Maximilian would not play.⁴ These disruptive agreements were to have serious, long-term repercussions. Not only were they illegal; they were designed to alter the balance of the electoral college in Ferdinand’s favour. In the short term, the treaty secured a Catholic army which, together with Spanish help, defeated Frederick and the Bohemian rebels on 8 November 1620 – the battle of the White Mountain.⁵

It is clear from this analysis that, from about 1617, everything tended

¹. Gindely, *Thirty Years War*, i. 152; Clasen, *The Palatinate*, p. 25.
². Gindely, *Thirty Years War*, i. 100, says that the moment had arrived (1618) for carrying out the rule of Protestantism in Germany, mooted in 1608.
³. Saxony refused to join the Union, and James I and the United Provinces – for different reasons – both advised Frederick to refuse the Bohemian crown: Clasen, loc. cit.
to converge on Ferdinand: as archduke of Inner Austria; as king elect and deposed of Bohemia; as king of Hungary, which joined the revolt; as the Habsburgs' imperial candidate and, furthermore, as the imperilled emperor who, by 1631, was again to come within sight of rejection. Ferdinand was the key, both to the outbreak and to the subsequent prolongation of a German war which, by about 1623, was no longer necessary. Thus, when we seek the German origins of their Thirty Years War, it is on Ferdinand and the controversial imperial election that our emphasis ought to lie. In May 1618, the Bohemian Revolt did not 'spark off' anything, except propaganda. But for the death of Matthias in March 1619, precipitating an imperial election, the revolt, like those of 1609 and 1611, would probably not have attracted foreign intervention. Within the year, however, everything had changed and, by the end of 1619, a predominantly Protestant rebellion had developed against Ferdinand in Germany, as well as in the Habsburg lands. Thus the German war began over the imperial election of 1619 - a hundred years after that of Charles V - and all that it implied in terms of Habsburg power and religious dislocation.

Towards the end of 1619, the attitude of both France and Spain was tepid and hesitant, while their respective ambassadors, Baugy and Oñate, held much bolder views as to their masters' urgent interests. Baugy, in November 1619, declared that Frederick's coronation had created a new situation in which France must make a decision. Religion, he observed, problematically conflicted with raison d'état. This was not a new problem, but it did become acute when the Huguenots were in arms, or menacing, or likely to attract foreign support, as was then the case. Apart from her help in relieving Vienna, Spain had so far made no commitment, despite Oñate's aggressive efforts. Ferdinand therefore sought help in France, sending Fürstenberg in December 1619; and he found France seriously divided. While Fürstenberg was urging help for the Emperor (which would, in theory, have involved France in a war with the Protestant alliance), an opposing Palatinate group, backed by Frederick's kinsman, the Huguenot duc de Bouillon, insisted that France should support her ancient allies. The young King and his favourite, Luynes, were under strong clerical pressure and favoured the Emperor, while Puisieux advised mediation. Confusion was assured when, on Christmas Eve, 1619, the King unwisely promised help, something he could not afford.

The outcome was a decision that a token force should approach the

1. Tapie, *Politique étrangère*, p. 335, points out that, apart from a few ambitious men, Europe was not interested in the renewal of Bohemian conflicts; cf. Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 11.
3. Spain was very hesitant at this time for a number of reasons. Oñate was supported in Madrid by Balthasar de Zuñiga, but the Council was deeply divided. Some thought Mediterranean projects more important than the European 'system'; the King was ailing and the Lerma regime failing: Peter Brightwell, 'The Spanish Origins of the Thirty Years' War', *European Studies Review*, ix (1979), 410-11, 415-18.
4. Louis XIII was also put under Jesuit influence. His confessor, Jean Arnoux, put pressure on him to help the Emperor: Gindely, *Thirty Years War*, i. 197.
frontier, while France launched a major diplomatic effort. Mediation, however, was compromised once help had been offered. Worse still, it was already too late when the ambassadors departed in May 1620. Success for the French peace proposals would depend upon the inertia of Spain but, while France was dithering, Oñate imposed his policy of intervention, seconded by the imperial ambassador in Madrid, Khevenhüller, and the papal nuncio. Thus Louis’ Christmas offer of help was countered in January 1620, when Spain provided for the invasion of the Rhine Palatinate by Spinola, and for other forces to join those of the Catholic League. Once an adequate force was expected, Ferdinand lost interest in negotiation; he wanted submission and obedience. The French ambassadors went to Ulm and, on 3 July, signed the controversial treaty of Ulm, which neutralized central Germany; Union and League agreed not to attack each other. This treaty is usually condemned, on the assumption that France was anti-Habsburg, while the treaty favoured the Emperor by liberating Bavaria to support him against Bohemia. The ambassadors, however, had merely sought to avert a German war as the first step towards a general settlement. Between the treaty of Ulm in July 1620 and the defeat of Bohemia in November, efforts were continued to reach an agreement. England sent Sir Henry Wotton, who worked together with the French, but he did so only as Bavarian troops were entering Bohemia. In other words, it was too late. Yet, even in 1620, a settlement would not have been impossible had France not lacked the power and authority to impose one, while Ferdinand – who wanted help, not mediation – lacked the inclination to reach one. The Bohemian government fled to Silesia, Frederick wandered away and the Emperor refused to pardon even those willing to submit.

This total defeat of Bohemia was not what the French had envisaged, but their vague aspirations to equilibrium were not realistic. Alliance with Spain, Bavaria and Saxony had brought the Emperor to supreme power in the patrimonial lands. The serious, but belated, French efforts had failed, and the princes were exposed to the Emperor’s wrath and revenge. From the captured papers of Christian of Anhalt, Ferdinand was aware of the whole conspiracy of the German princes: amongst themselves, with Bohemia, and with Savoy. The princes were not strong enough to oppose the Emperor without the support of France, and they should have realized, after the tragedy of 1610, how uncertain that was. Having punished his own rebellious subjects, Ferdinand lashed out against their accomplices. On 22 January 1621, he imposed the ban of the Empire on Frederick and several other princes. Their property was bestowed on imperial commanders, and a number of executions took place.

The French ambassadors, still in Vienna, were appalled by their exper-

2. On help received by Ferdinand, see Poliánsky, Thirty Years War, pp. 123–5; Gindely, Thirty Years War, i. 91–2, 183–4.
3. Tapie, Politique étrangère, pp. 498, 509.
iences. The duc d’Angoulême shared the concern of the Germans at what he called the ‘unbridled ambition’ of Ferdinand. Now, after the defeat of Bohemia, the ambassadors thought his attitude wicked and foolish. They submitted a long memorandum in which they urged on Louis a change of policy. He must not abandon the old allies of France, but protect the weak, because the political balance had now been disturbed. Frederick’s German allies, they said, would not be able to oppose Spain. If his electoral dignity were transferred to Bavaria, Ferdinand, with a majority of votes, would be free to impose his will on Germany. The ambassadors advised a fresh initiative but, failing that, France ought to go to war.

No doubt they were substantially right: but by February 1621 France, convulsed by her own rebellion led by the Queen Mother, Marie de Medici, was hors de combat and in a quandary. If, as the ambassadors had said, she was now threatened by the advancing power of the House of Austria, she would also be threatened by a triumph of Protestantism, because of her indigenous Huguenot problem. The Huguenots had rebelled in 1620 and, in December, mounted a revolutionary assembly in La Rochelle. Ten years of trouble lay ahead. Puisieux agreed that the Habsburg power ought to be opposed. Nevertheless, France did no more to redress the balance than to offer the Germans diplomatic consolation. She was not going to fight for the cause of the Calvinist Palatinate, occupied by Spanish forces, although it would have been logical to oppose that extension of Habsburg influence on the Rhine.

The Union was suffered to collapse; perhaps it would have done so anyway. Ferdinand transferred the Upper Palatinate and the electoral title to Bavaria and, later in 1623, crushed what remained of Protestant resistance. Puisieux, in fact, was not against the electoral transfer, seeing in Bavaria a counterpoise to the Emperor. This conception clearly adumbrated Richelieu’s later imperial policy, and Tapie suggests that it could have originated with Père Joseph. The first German war was over; the Emperor was victorious and he could have had peace on better terms, in respect of religion, than he eventually obtained in 1635. No one else wanted war in Germany. To France, England and Spain it was a threatening distraction. Both England and Spain had tried to obtain a settlement for Frederick and the Palatinate, but the Emperor refused to compromise. The continuation of the German war, which provoked a fresh Protestant coalition, must therefore largely be blamed on Ferdinand, together with the mercenary generals whose livelihood was war. The

1. Ibid., pp. 533, 583.
2. Ibid., pp. 602–6, c. Nov. 1620.
4. The Union had been scheduled to dissolve before the termination of the twelve years’ truce in April 1621, for fear of involvement in the defence of the United Provinces.
5. Tapie, Politique étrangère, p. 606.
German war was not arrested, because Spain could not afford to see the Emperor overthrown and, after the end of the Netherlands' truce in 1621, she was always manoeuvring for imperial help, which was not vouchsafed until 1635. France, for her part, lacked the authority to enforce a solution as, it was believed, Henry IV might have done. As her neglect of the Union shows, French attention was focused elsewhere. When Spinola invaded the Rhine Palatinate in August 1620, as a diversionary tactic, Spanish forces also occupied the Valtelline. This was probably another reason why the ambassadors urged on Louis a change of policy. As early as December 1620, Angoulême warned the Emperor in Vienna that they would not tolerate the Spanish in the Valtelline where France possessed sole right of passage through the Alpine passes.¹

It has been said that the so-called Thirty Years War represented the superimposition of a German civil war upon the long-term struggles and rivalries of European politics. Events in Germany certainly alerted France to the renewal of Habsburg imperial power, and the Spanish occupations of the Palatinate and the Valtelline were, or appeared to be, related to imperial affairs. There was, however, nothing unusual about Spanish campaigning beyond the Rhine, or the involvement of German princes in the Dutch war. Nor was there anything unusual in Spain's attention to her power base in north Italy. The renewal of Franco-Spanish rivalry was, in any case, inevitable, with the ending of the Dutch truce and the simultaneous recurrence, in April 1621, of Huguenot wars in France.² These old struggles were resumed alongside the German war, which added a complicating new dimension, and eventually influenced the form they were to take, with both branches of the House of Austria in action.

If a renewal of Franco-Spanish rivalry was already looming by about 1621, France had no desire for a showdown. Indeed, the taxing problem was how to dissipate, control and contain the conflict for so long as the Huguenot problem continued; that was to be until 1629.³ France and Spain, furthermore, were still involved with England, from whom neither received satisfaction as an ally. Up to 1623, England had been seeking a Spanish marriage, and trying also to incorporate a Palatinate settlement. But England overestimated the ability of Spain to impose her will on the Emperor, who was too dependent on Bavaria to cheat Maximilian of his electoral reward. If Spain had ever been sincere about the marriage, it was evidently opposed by the Count-Duke of Olivares,

¹ Tapié, Politique étrangère, pp. 590 ff. In July 1620, the Catholics of the Valtelline revolted against the Grisons, their Protestant overlords, and appealed to Spain. Consequently Feria, Governor of Milan, occupied the valley: Elliott, Olivares, pp. 62-3; Rott, Histoire de la représentation diplomatique, iii, covers the subject in bewildering detail.
² On French internal disorders, see V.-L. Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu (Cambridge, 1974).
³ The peace of Alais, 28 June 1629, ended a series of Huguenot wars.
who had risen to power under Philip IV, in 1622. 1 Olivares was determined to redeem the humiliation of the twelve years’ truce – for which France was largely responsible – and to restore the power and reputation of Spain in the Catholic spirit of Philip II. 2

Thus, by 1623, the Duke of Buckingham and Charles, Prince of Wales, had become convinced of the need to regenerate the great sixteenth-century struggle, and from 1624–30 England became involved in a war with Spain which she could ill afford. 3 In Buckingham’s conception, the great war would overlap with the German war, because of England’s concern for the Palatinate. It was, of course, too late: renewal of the great war was impossible without the participation of France, but she was neither able nor inclined to respond when England’s sincere cooperation was finally on offer. She would not, however, have been an effective ally. Herein lies a paradox, and much confusion followed in the sphere of action. The rise of Olivares in Spain was shortly paralleled in France by that of Cardinal Richelieu, who returned to the Council in 1624. 4 Like Olivares in Spain, Richelieu also felt that France had lost power and reputation which had to be restored. Whereas in the early sixteenth century the Valois’ purpose in war was aggrandizement, power and dominion, in the later sixteenth century the purpose was survival, painfully achieved by Henry IV. Alliance – or intermission – under Louis XIII gradually crumbled into conflict: while both France and Spain really wanted a general peace, each minister wanted a peace over which his country would predominate.

The personal rivalry of Richelieu and Olivares, both able ministers, ensured the vigorous conduct of affairs until 1642, when Olivares was dismissed and Richelieu died. Richelieu did, indeed, renew the traditional alliance with the United Provinces in June 1625, make a marriage treaty with Savoy in January 1625, and conclude the marriage alliance already begun with England in May 1625; all of which had much in common with policies of Henry IV. As a political alliance, however, the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria was a failure, and France refused to join a new coalition against the Emperor. It appears that Buckingham, deeply frustrated, believed Richelieu to be the villainous obstacle to the success of his aspirations, and did not live long enough to perceive his error. Despite the war between England and Spain, both provoked trouble for France by supporting Huguenot rebellions and court conspiracies against Richelieu. 5 Consequently, the French domestic turmoil pro-

1. Certainly Olivares opposed the English marriage after the transfer to Bavaria of the Lower Palatinate and the electoral title in February 1623: Elliott, Olivares, pp. 205-7. See also, on the Anglo-Spanish marriage, Lockyer, Buckingham.

2. Elliott, Olivares, pp. 55, 407.

3. Lockyer, Buckingham, chs. 5 and 6, and Part II; Cogswell, ‘England and the Spanish Match’.

4. J. H. Elliott, Richelieu and Olivares (Cambridge, 1984), has made a remarkable comparison of the parallel careers of these two statesmen.

5. There appears to have been a curious resemblance between the attitude of Buckingham and of Olivares to Richelieu. Both wanted his removal, although each expected a different effect.
duced a sort of twisted coda to the old tripartite conflict of the sixteenth century, which assumed a new complexity of operatic proportions. That England and Spain, while at war with each other, should both have supported the Huguenots, was an absurdity. That England should have gone to war with France was also an absurdity; once again, those two powers failed to march in step to pursue their true opposition to Spain. The Franco-Spanish alliance of 1627 against England — another twist — was, faute de mieux, really only a holding operation while England was giving trouble, and should not be interpreted as a Franco-Spanish entente. It served a small purpose, until the fall of La Rochelle in 1628 and the defeat of the Huguenots in Languedoc in 1629 destroyed them both as an exploitable force, liberating the energies of France and the abilities of Richelieu for renewed action in Italy. Buckingham was dead, and the old, distracting tripartite struggle finally expired when, in 1630, England made peace with Spain and dropped out of the equation. Only from that point on — the year in which Sweden intervened in Germany — were France and Spain free (or obliged) to concentrate on their growing hostility to each other.

Franco-Spanish rivalry had already focused on Italy, and been rather shakily resolved in 1626 on account of the Huguenot problems. But, during the siege of La Rochelle (August 1627—October 1628), in December 1627, the second Mantuan succession crisis arose, in which the principal claimant was the French duc de Nevers; and Mantua was an imperial fief. It was to be a combination of the Mantuan conflict, involving France in war with the Emperor, and the devastating effects of the Swedish intervention in Germany — initially encouraged by France as a diversion from Italy — which led to a new stage, both of the German war and of the old Franco-Spanish rivalry. The alarming Swedish victories forced the Habsburgs into closer co-operation, and their joint defeat of the Swedes at Nördlingen in 1634 caused the collapse of the German/Swedish opposition. This dramatic Habsburg advantage enabled the Emperor to detach the German Protestants from their Swedish protector and to institute talks at Pirna (November 1634), talks strongly reminiscent of the peace of Passau in 1552 which laid the foundations for the Augsburg settlement. By accepting a compromise on his Edict of Restitution — imposed at the height of his power in 1629, and designed to enforce the original

2. Elliott, Olivarès, ch. 9, analyses this alliance. Mémoires du cardinal de Richelieu (10 vols. [to 1639], Société de l’histoire de France, 1907-31), vii.
4. The treaty of Monzón, 1 March 1626.
5. Elliott, Richelieu and Olivarès, ch. 4, discusses the Mantuan crisis. See also Bireley, Religion and Politics, pp. 67 ff.; Richelieu, Mémoires, viii, ix, x, passim.
Augsburg settlement – Ferdinand was able to reconcile most German Protestants and conclude the peace of Prague in May 1635.\(^1\)

With the collapse of anti-Habsburg forces in Germany, France was seriously exposed, her vital interests at stake. The House of Austria, finally acting in concert, threatened to overwhelm the United Provinces, and France was forced to assume an open leadership role. But the normal assertion that she entered the war in May 1635 is quite misleading.\(^2\) She had been active on the Rhine since 1632, occupied Lorraine in 1633, joined the Swedish Heilbronn League in 1634 after the battle of Nordlingen, and invaded the Palatinate.\(^3\) In March 1635 she occupied the Valtelline, thereby blocking another vital area of the Spanish road. Perceiving the inevitable, Richelieu dangled a formal declaration of war as a carrot in negotiations with Sweden and the United Provinces, both of which wished France to be definitively committed to continuous warfare with Spain.\(^4\) Richelieu may have wanted to be first with his declaration and his propaganda because, having achieved alliances and a position of strength, his real purpose was to force the Habsburgs to an acceptable peace. But, to Olivares, Richelieu himself was the obstacle to peace, because he had shattered the Count-Duke’s vision of a \textit{pax Austriaca}, guaranteed by the overwhelming power of the king of Spain, together with the emperor and the pope.\(^5\) Thus Richelieu’s policy, traditional in its guiding principles, was vindicated by Olivares himself. The underlying conflict between France and Spain was nakedly exposed and the combined strength of the House of Austria was still so great that only the outcome of war could determine the settlement.

In 1635, the old struggles and rivalries merged with, and to some extent subsumed, the partially completed German conflict. First England, then Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the United Provinces – independent and free – all fell out. So, after 1648, France and Spain remained, face to face, to complete that unfinished business of the sixteenth century, and fight the war of attrition which neither power any longer desired. France is usually held to have emerged victorious, although, as late as 1656, victory was no certitude. It was only by the unholy alliance of the cardinal, Mazarin, with Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan regicide (1657), and by neutralizing the League of the Rhine princes (1658), that France obliged Spain to sue for peace. Thus it was finally demonstrated that

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\item By the peace of Prague, 30 May 1635, the ‘normative’ date up to which secularizations were recognized was November 1627: Bireley, \textit{Religion and Politics}, p. 224. By the treaty of Westphalia, 24 Oct. 1648, the ‘normative’ date was 1624 – a considerable Protestant advance on the peace of Augsburg. Calvinism was also finally recognized: David Maland, \textit{Europe at War}, 1600-1650 (London, 1980), p. 183.
\item On Richelieu’s policy, see Gustave Fagniez, \textit{Le Père Joseph et Richelieu}, ii. 104 ff.
\item Elliott, \textit{Olivares}, p. 488.
\end{enumerate
only an effective alliance of France and England could overmaster the power of Spain in Europe and, having done so, they were soon to dispute the commerce of the Indies. Philip IV, like Philip II, was forced to make peace, but was there really anything fundamental or definitive about the French victories of 1658?

Certainly Period Four, 1659-1715, marked, in a new sense, the preponderance of France under Louis XIV. But it should be considered to what extent this derived from the fact that, from 1665, it was the turn of Spain to suffer from a damaging minority, while the regency problems of France had been terminated in the wars and revolution of the Fronde (1648-53). No power could dominate Europe during a minority. Charles II was five years old in 1665 and not expected to live. Consequently Period Four was dominated by two principal factors: the conflict and dangers inherent in the uncertain Spanish succession, together with the deficiencies of the treaties of Westphalia (1648) and the Pyrenees (1659), which, in respect of France, were very ill-defined, trailing still more unfinished business. Louis' reaction to his frontier problems may well have been affected by the uncertainty of the Spanish succession which, in a sense, overshadowed his reign. In 1648, France finally received recognition of Henry II's conquests, Metz, Toul and Verdun, plus three other cities in Lorraine. This was actually a net loss since, in 1634, France administered the whole province. She also obtained four German cities on the right bank of the Rhine and the Sundgau, or lower Alsace. Since the emperor was not reconciled to losses in Alsace – which Spain had also coveted – the nature and extent of French jurisdiction were left incomprehensible. The treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 was clinched, like that of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, by a dynastic alliance: Louis XIV married Maria-Theresa, daughter of Philip IV. France obtained parts of Artois – claimed since 1477 – and various strategic cities, useful but scattered acquisitions rather than clearly defined areas like Perpignon and Roussillon in the south.

Period Four had most continuity with Periods One and, of course, Three, from which it emerged. Once again, as under Francis II and Henry II, France was aggressive and expansionist in respect of the Burgundian and imperial territories to the north and east, if not in Italy. Notoriously, Louis XIV pursued gloire. Whereas the Valois monarchs were undoubtedly threatened by Charles V, the extent to which Louis was, or genuinely believed France to be, endangered, remains controversial. Since the Fronde, and for the first time since the Reformation in France – roughly the 1520s – there was no exploitable opposition. The succession was undisputed and the internal and external integrity of France was not threatened. The danger was potential, consisting in the possibility that the death of Charles II might, at any moment, recreate the 'Charles V situation', bringing the entire Habsburg inheritance under one prince. Since Spain still held the Netherlands and Milan, the more Louis acquired of Spanish
and Imperial possessions on his frontiers, the less dangerous that eventuality would be. Nevertheless, Louis' conquests up to 1684 aroused such opposition that France replaced the Habsburgs as the overmighty power against which coalitions were formed. The opposition came to be led by William III of Orange, joint sovereign of Britain in 1689. This union (1689-1702) was a disaster for France since, having rid herself of Spanish oppression, Holland now feared the proximity of France, as well as her commercial aspirations. Holland and England were to unite with Spain and the emperor against France during the Nine Years War (1689-97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13). The enmity of the 'maritime powers' is probably the major element of discontinuity with previous periods.

The German war had failed to overthrow the Habsburg succession, spasmodically attempted by France and various German princes, and in 1648 France and Sweden were unable to secure a ban on the election of another Habsburg. Nevertheless, it was agreed that there should be no more kings of the Romans elected in an emperor's lifetime.1 As a part of the war effort, Louis in 1658, like Francis I in 1519, made a serious bid for the imperial throne. But Germany had never wanted a French emperor and Leopold I was elected. Nevertheless, the latter was forbidden to assist Spain in the Netherlands or Italy, which underlines the continuing French fear of joint Habsburg action.2 The peace of Westphalia had terminated Austrian ambitions in Germany and the need to overthrow the emperor had passed. The religious motif expired, the states became virtually independent, and the Spanish interest in Germany was vastly diminished by the termination of the Dutch war and the transformation of the emperor's role. While neither Spain nor the emperor seriously threatened Louis, except in terms of the Spanish succession, it must be allowed that, by 1659, French frontiers were so irregular and fragmented as to be indefensible. Louis was bound to seek some rationalization, and clarification of jurisdictions. As guarantor of Westphalia, with bridgeheads over the Rhine, he was strategically placed to harass long-coveted Spanish possessions and to create clientes to undermine the emperor. Louis pursued, but more aggressively, the traditional French policy of Periods One and Three in areas of Charlemagne's 'middle kingdom', a conception he was aware of.3

Before the end of the war, Louis formed a new League of the Rhine, and renewed it in 1663 and 1665 - a further attempt to induce the princes to enter the orbit of France and facilitate her domination of Europe. After 1679, many of Louis's acquisitions were made by means of his policy of réunions, first attempted by Henry II: systematic interpretations of the treaties in favour of France. By 1684, Louis held the whole of

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1. Maland, loc. cit.
Artois - claimed by France since 1477 - and many more Flemish towns, from his war of Devolution (1667-8). He also held Franche-Comté - disputed by the Valois kings and Charles V - Luxembourg, Trier, Lorraine and Alsace including Strasbourg. Because the Emperor Leopold was not reconciled to French acquisitions in Alsace, he invaded France through Strasbourg during the Dutch war (1672-8) and Louis intended to ensure that this could never recur. He similarly opposed the extension of Habsburg influence on the Rhine by intervening in the Palatinate succession in 1685 and that of Cologne in 1687, though in each case he failed. In the end, the grand alliance of Vienna and the Nine Years War brought Louis humiliation and forced him to relinquish most of his conquests. It became clear by the time of the treaty of Ryswick (1697) that what Louis most wanted was Alsace and Strasbourg - which he retained - and what he most feared (still, yet and again) was the 'Charles V situation'.

The fears aroused by the Spanish succession existed from 1665, and the manner in which Louis sought to pre-empt the dispute appears to show that he was more concerned to avert a Charles V situation than he was to obtain the inheritance for France. Although the infant Charles II survived until November 1700, he remained a childless invalid. Initially, there were complex reasons why the Emperor Leopold and Louis XIV, who were brothers-in-law, would each claim the inheritance in the right of his wife if Charles II died. Louis' first effort to regulate this problem was a secret but revealing partition treaty with Leopold in January 1668. Leopold was to have Spain itself and the Balearics and Americas, while Louis would get the Spanish Netherlands, Franche-Comté, Naples and Sicily, Navarre - a very old score - the Philippines and African harbours. It may be assumed that this agreement reveals what Louis really wanted: a handsome portion, of greater value to France than the throne of Spain. Such division would have eliminated the Spanish road by placing the Netherlands and Milan in separate hands, and that solution was to be at the heart of Louis' efforts to pre-arrange the succession. Louis would have been well placed to acquire Lorraine and consolidate Alsace. At the same time, he could feign generosity in so far as Leopold was to retain both the Empire and Spain - a Charles V situation shorn of its dangers.

The partition treaty was denounced by Leopold in 1673. Charles II grew to manhood, and the problem receded until the end of the century when Louis was no longer in a position to demand so much, but had to concentrate on what he most wanted to avoid. During the Nine Years War Louis tried again to bargain with Leopold. He would agree to the whole inheritance going to Leopold's younger son, Charles, provided that Austria and Spain should never come under one ruler. In return, Louis hoped to retain most of his conquests. Leopold refused; so, in 1698, Louis concluded a partition treaty (known as the first) with his


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opponents, the maritime powers. The significant point was that the inheritance should be divided, and the Netherlands were again to be separated from Italy. The dauphin was to receive little more than Naples and Sicily, while the lion’s share went to the electoral prince of Bavaria, Joseph Ferdinand, grandson of Leopold, because it was supposed that he would never succeed to the Empire. But Joseph Ferdinand died, to be replaced in a second treaty of 1700 by the Archduke Charles. Charles, however, stood at only one remove from the imperial throne which he did, in the event, inherit in 1711. Thus the second partition treaty was not satisfactory to France; nor was Spain willing to suffer partition. It is well known how Louis finally accepted the will of Charles II, leaving everything to his grandson Philip of Anjou. Thus, paradoxically, France and Spain were to fight on the same side. The long war that followed - by no means entirely over the will - was, ultimately, a considerable triumph for Louis XIV and his specifically French concerns.1

By the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Louis retained the acquisitions of Nijmegen as well as those of Ryswick, in particular Artois, parts of Flanders, Franche-Comté and Alsace - a significant part of what his predecessors had aspired to, providing a clarified frontier and leaving only the rest of Lorraine to be acquired by succession in 1766. Spain not only suffered loses to France: she also suffered partition, the Netherlands and Italy going to Austria. Consequently the remaining problems arising from the division by Charles V of his empire were finally resolved. The encirclement of France, the Spanish domination of Italy and the Spanish road had all ceased to exist, and the Charles V situation was no longer a possibility. Assisted by time and dynastic accident, Louis XIV ultimately presided over the destruction of Spanish power in Europe.

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