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Holy Wars, Crusades, and Religious Wars

Then standing inside the gate of the camp, he said: If any man be on the Lord's side let him join with me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

And he said to them: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword upon his thigh: go, and return from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, friend and neighbour.

And the sons of Levi did according to the words of Moses, and there were slain that day about three and twenty thousand men.

Exodus 32:26–8

And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Gospel of St. Luke, 14:23

When the sacred months are passed, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and lie in wait for them in every place of ambush; but if they repent, pray regularly, and give the alms tax, then let them go their way, for God is forgiving, merciful.

Koran, sura, [chap.] 9:5

Scriptural religions, in varying degrees, are necessarily dogmatic. Believers are bound to accept certain beliefs. The Israelites were told by Moses that they were not to tolerate idolatry; those who sinned against this commandment were to be slain—even if the offender was one's own brother or friend. The verse from St. Luke in the New Testament was sometimes used from the time of St. Augustine of Hippo to justify coercion—even holy war—against heterodoxy, which led to wars against infidels or other Christians.¹ The

quotation from the Koran, from one of the “sword verses,” places an obligation on the true believer to wage *jihād*, or holy war, against idolaters and nonbelievers, but urges mercy and restraint toward those who convert and toleration for Jews, Christians, and those “people of the book” who humbly submit themselves to Islamic authority and pay tribute.² However, scriptural justifications and the injunctions of religious leaders alone are not sufficient to explain the many holy wars and religious conflicts that have occurred in the past; traditions of tribal warfare, ethnic rivalries, the pursuit of honor and glory, dynastic ambition, greed, and expansionism must also be taken into account. In addition, Christian and Muslim religious leaders of holy wars simply could not imagine a concept of peace extending beyond a temporary truce.

Holy war in the Bible

All of the empires, kingdoms, and states of the Mediterranean world and the ancient Near East possessed gods of war, which rulers always invoked before going into battle. It was believed that these gods and goddesses would intervene in battle, favoring those deemed worthy and striking down those deemed unworthy. Homer’s *Iliad* (iv. 128) states that Athena deflected an arrow aimed at King Menelaus during a battle. Although religion was always a part of war in the ancient world, such wars were fought for what we would call political reasons, but religious ideas contributed much to official propaganda. These wars may be regarded as holy wars because their rulers had special access to the gods of war, which lesser folk lacked, and they justified these wars on the basis of divine commands. Holy wars were characteristic of scriptural religions, and the concept obliged believers to fight.³

The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible is filled with hundreds of stories of unspeakable violence. However, it must be said many of these stories cannot be verified by archaeological research or the historical records of contemporaneous civilizations. These tales are drawn from the literature of pastoral societies, and are allegorical and filled with ambiguities and hyperbole. Insofar as a message can be deciphered from the biblical text, it is that God was displeased with his chosen people—not for particular transgressions, but because of their general infidelity. The main message seems to be that murder and violence are the

greatest and most widespread of human sins. Because of the original sin of disobedience of Adam and Eve, God hid his face from their descendants, and they became subject to death by violence. War and violence are therefore the consequence of sin. This is the explanation that many theologians and biblical scholars have given us, although it offers small comfort to the devout. While much of the Old Testament is poetic myth and is hardly an accurate representation of the history of the Israelites and their antecedents, we must remember that these myths did much to shape the religious and national identity of the Jewish people.⁴ Also, more literal readings of these biblical tales provided justification for the prophet Muhammad and Christian leaders, such as the popes and the Protestant reformers, to proclaim their crusades or holy wars and wars of religion.

In the Jewish Bible, holy war involved a struggle between the believers and the nonbelievers in which the faithful triumphed through divine intervention and assistance. The glory gained thereby belonged to God. This distinguished the war-making of the Israelites from the wars of other Near-Eastern rulers who used religious propaganda, but claimed the glory for themselves. In nomadic societies, all able-bodied men were warriors and were expected to fight under the leadership of their tribal leaders, as was the case with the Israelites before they came into the Promised Land. During the time that they wandered in the desert, the whole of the Israelites constituted a military expedition and camp. They were summoned to war by the blast of the trumpet, and intimidation was sometimes used to compel attendance. The weapons they bore usually included no more than a sword and a sling. Lances and shields were carried only by their leaders, and they went into battle without helmets or armor. Their tactics included raids and ambushes; because they had no staying power, they avoided pitched battles and sieges. Armored chariots filled them with terror. Considering the risks of fighting with such an undisciplined and poorly trained force, their leaders preferred smaller groups and sent home those who were apprehensive or faint of heart. Small forces and surprise, combined with stratagems such as making a great deal of noise, often worked against their enemies. Some battles were settled by single combat between two champions.⁵

War was a common occurrence among the early Israelites, but not all the wars mentioned in the Jewish Bible were holy wars fought against idolaters.

Some were wars of territorial conquest, and some were wars of defense. The war narratives of the Old Testament tend to be stylized, and the ancient Hebrews were confident that Yahweh aided them in battle. The wars by which the Israelites took possession of the Promised Land were wars of conquest. The Israelites were convinced that they were participating in a divine activity under the leadership of Yahweh. Thus, Yahweh's armies consisted of both earthly and heavenly hosts. The holy war took on a sacral quality and necessarily involved the ministrations of priests in purifying the camp and the warriors, and also undertaking preparations for carrying the Ark of the Covenant before the people into battle. The details concerning the deployment of the astral armies tend to be vague, but a great psychological advantage was gained over the enemy when they discovered that there were visitations of plague and pestilence in their camp, while the camp of the Israelites was spared. As long as the Israelites trusted in Yahweh, victory was assured, but that did not mean that the Hebrew warriors were spared heavy fighting. The action of battle was chaotic, but the Israelites knew that they fought to preserve order. When victory was achieved, the Israelites were reminded that the spoils of war, both prisoners and booty, were reserved for Yahweh.⁶

In the early parts of the Jewish Bible, those who worshiped idols or were rebellious were punished by God directly by famine, plague, serpents, earthquake, and fire (Numbers 11:1, 11:4–34, 16:5–6). But in Exodus 32:26–28, God ordered the sons of Levi to take their swords and go throughout the camp and slay those who practiced idolatry. On this occasion, God used human agency to punish the wicked, and this is taken to be an example of divinely sanctioned holy war. In the Book of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, Yahweh is imagined as a warrior marching across the land to seek vengeance against nonbelievers who had invaded the territories where the Israelites had lived in peace. In this terrible struggle, Yahweh vanquished Prince Gog of the land of Magog and all the forces of evil so that all would acknowledge His power and glory.⁷

The evidence concerning when the Israelites conquered the Promised Land presents problems. There is an alternative explanation to the Book of Exodus and its narration of the Hebrew people under Moses returning from Egypt to the Promised Land and effecting a divinely sanctioned conquest. According to this hypothesis, the chosen people never were in Egypt, but were a rural population of pastoralists who lived at a higher elevation than the cities where

the Amalkalites and Canaanites lived. They had recently converted to Yahwism and rebelled against the local city-states subject to the hegemony of the Pharaohs, whose governance they found unbearable. Although the various biblical narratives agree that the people of Israel came from somewhere else and possessed the Land of the Canaanites by conquest, a small number of biblical scholars assert that the Israelites had always lived in the land that came to be known as Israel, and they see the conquest of Canaan as a peaceful penetration of a thinly populated land. Thus, they deny that the ancient Hebrews ever practiced holy war.⁸

The early Hebrew laws of war are set out in the Book of Deuteronomy: When the Hebrews approached an enemy camp, they were to offer them peace. If the enemy accepted the offer of peace, all of them were to be enslaved and forced to labor. If the offer of peace was rejected, then war was to be waged. If Yahweh bestowed victory, then all males were to be put to the sword, but the women, small children and cattle were to be spared and appropriated. The warriors who willingly surrendered were to be allowed to live, but as slaves. The purpose was to utterly destroy the enemy host and community, but interestingly, fruit trees that still bore fruit were to be spared. The object of destroying the warriors and community of the people of Canaan was to prevent them from contaminating the Israelites with their idolatry.⁹

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites undertook holy war by God's commandment; they were associated with God in the struggle, and fought alongside the hosts of warrior angels in a cosmic battle. They were to destroy the persons and property of the enemy. But such tactics were to be limited by a sense of proportion. Even in divinely sanctioned holy wars, as described in Joshua 11 and Deuteronomy 20:19–20, there were limits placed on the destructiveness of warfare, and the holy warriors needed to carefully distinguish between those among the enemy who had actually taken up arms and those who were noncombatants.¹⁰

The concepts of holy war

Many—probably most—present-day Jews do not believe that holy war was practiced by the ancient Israelites, and we do have to admit that in

most accounts of the wars fought by the Israelites, the nature of that warfare was largely defensive. However, these Old Testament biblical passages were certainly among the sources that later proponents of holy war such as St. Augustine of Hippo and Muhammad drew on. The early Christians, although they knew what profane war was, would have failed to recognize the concept of holy war as it emerged during the medieval period among Christian crusaders and Muslim jihadists. Perhaps the earliest Christian understanding of holy war was that described in the Book of Revelation (otherwise known as the Apocalypse of St. John the Evangelist). The end of time would be characterized by a holy war in which supernatural agents rather than mortal men would wield the sword and bring plague, fire, and brimstone to punish the wicked. There would be an internecine war in which fiends and beasts would slay a large part of humankind. The prophecies contained in the Book of Revelation predicted the overthrow of pagan Rome, but Christians were to take no part in this strife. The proper role of believers was to offer no resistance.¹¹

The early Christians did not believe that they could serve as soldiers. The Christian clergy abhorred all bloodshed as sinful; and later, after Christians actually began serving in the armies of Rome, they believed that soldiers, even fighting in a just war and obeying legitimate commands and having killed infidels in battle, still needed to perform penance. The Christian clergy in both the Latin West and the Greek East continued to adhere to this early pacifist tradition for nearly a millennium. Yet, Christianity was ambivalent about war in the early centuries. While Tertullian represented a completely pacifist position, it must be remembered that Christianity spread during the expansion of a militarist empire, and could hardly remain uninfluenced by the Roman world. Gradually, Christian thinkers after the time of the Emperor Constantine became aware of the holy war tradition as recorded in the Book of Joshua. St. Ambrose, a former Roman official, accepted the Roman arguments for fighting defensive wars, and St. Augustine drew on Stoic philosophy and Roman law as well as the Old Testament tradition of holy war. Although St. Augustine was not an advocate of the concept of holy war, it has to be said that later writers could find an abundance of ideas in his writings, which taken out of context, could justify the crusades, or also assert that war and conflict were characteristic of human society. St. Augustine's views on just war were

particularly influential in shaping medieval attitudes toward war. Such ideas were also acceptable to the Germanic warrior elites who saw warfare as their *raison d'être*, while the Byzantine East viewed war as a social duty.¹²

Christians served in the Roman army from the fourth century onward, but the leaders of the Church did not consider waging war in the name of Christianity before the ninth century. St. Augustine and Pope Gregory I (p. 590–604) could envision two kinds of holy war: an internal war fought against heretics to preserve the pure beliefs of the Christian Church, and an external war to spread Christianity by force. However, heresy was not a serious problem in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and the Church was usually able to Christianize the Germanic tribes by peaceful missionary activities alone. There were, of course, pagan peoples further to the east who might have offered the opportunity for a war of forced conversion, but as Carl Erdmann points out, the warrior had first to be persuaded that the main motive for fighting such wars was to convert heathens and infidels. The Germanic kingdoms of this period were not yet prepared to accept such an ideology, and most of the clergy were unwilling to condone such violence toward even pagan infidels except in self-defense. The ideal *milites Christi*, or soldiers of Christ, were still understood to be those who fought spiritual battles in monasteries. The weapons of profane war were forbidden to them.¹³

The Christian concept of holy war emerged in the ninth century, when all of Europe was beset by invaders and immersed in war. The British Isles, northern France and Moorish Spain were subjected to continuing raids by Norsemen, who established a permanent settlement in Normandy in 911. Arabs from North Africa raided the Italian peninsula and southern France, and established colonies in Sicily and Provence. The Magyars—sometimes mistaken for Turks—also raided as far west as France, but mostly troubled the Danube Basin and the Adriatic. It was the Muslim Arabs—the Saracens—whom the clerical and monastic chroniclers regarded as especially cruel and devastating. The popes could not forget that the Arabs had attacked Rome in 846 and 875, and had dared to enter, loot, and deface St. Peter's Basilica itself. The papal proclamation of holy war against the Saracens grew out of a genuine threat to Rome, the Italian peninsula, and the islands. This proclamation of holy war broke with a centuries-old policy of avoiding bloodshed in Christ's name. Although Charlemagne sent into Spain an expedition that skirmished with the

Moors, his concept of holy war was limited to fighting the Saxons, which nicely coincided with his dynastic ambitions.¹⁴

In the medieval world, war was viewed as an instrument of Divine Providence and a manifestation of God's justice. But some conflicts were thought to be more closely aligned with divine purpose, and were specifically designated by religious authorities as holy wars; they were directed against enemies who were thought to be in league with the devil. Those who volunteered for these sanctified wars were called crusaders, and were granted special benefits such as indulgences or privileged entry into Paradise. Among historians of Europe, the crusades and the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the leading examples of holy wars, but the concept had been employed among the ancient Israelites and continued to be used in the Islamic world.¹⁵

The Byzantine acceptance of the concept of holy war was slow and reluctant because the Orthodox Church had taught that killing for religious beliefs was a sinful act. But, from the time of the first contact with Islam, those who defended the imperial frontiers against the Muslims believed that their struggle represented the defense of Christendom. The Byzantine army considered the Muslims to be blasphemers against Christ, and they believed that the Blessed Virgin guided them in battle. The Byzantines were also aware of the precedents of holy war in the Old Testament. After the Persians captured Jerusalem in 614, it was difficult for the Byzantine soldiers not to view the recovery of Jerusalem and its relics, such as the Holy Cross, as a struggle that was divinely blessed. Beginning in the tenth century, the Byzantine rulers attempted to persuade the Orthodox clergy to accept the doctrine of holy war and to recognize that killing the infidel was not sinful. Generally speaking, the religious leaders and crusaders of the Latin West were disappointed in the response of the Greek Orthodox Church in failing to view the fight against Islamic expansion as a holy war. The Byzantine resistance to Muslim conquests, however, was not totally devoid of religious sanction. The Greek Church did view the military victories of the Byzantine emperors against barbarian peoples as a gift of God because of the justness of the Byzantine cause in the eyes of God.¹⁶

The Muslim tradition of holy war was not very different from that of the Jewish Bible or the religious motivations of the medieval Christian crusaders and the teachings of many of the Protestant and Catholic divines and soldiers

during the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Muhammad commanded that holy war was to be waged against nonbelievers: "When you meet the unbelievers, smite their necks, then when you have made wide slaughter among them, tie fast their bonds; then set them free, either by grace or ransom, till the war lays down its loads." Mercy could be shown after complete victory over unbelievers, and the people of the book had submitted themselves to Islamic authority.¹⁷ This element of triumphalism bears comparison to Roman rituals associated with celebration of military victories.

Islamic holy war

The first Muslims were Arabs who lived in a political void where there was no authority to restrain conflict except that of the tribe. Consequently, various levels of violence were pervasive. This violence mostly took the form of raiding the herds of other tribes and securing possession of wells and grazing grounds. The only restraint on this conflict over very limited resources was the *lex talionis*, the threat of retaliation in kind. As revealed in contemporaneous Arab poetry, this tribal society was pervaded by a warrior ethos emphasizing revenge and honor that was not very different from that found in the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, and the feudal society of medieval Europe. The virtues that were most admired were loyalty, generosity (which extended only as far as the enhancement of reputation), and martial prowess. This pre-Islamic martial ethos continued after the time of the Prophet, although it was combined with Islamic piety. Islamic religious culture was quite open to pre-Islamic and non-Islamic influences, such as those of ancient Persia and India in matters of weapons, strategy, tactics, and more generally, how to conduct warfare. The Koran states that "men are the enemies of each other." Because of these warlike propensities, Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century philosopher and historian, thought that men needed to be restrained by some force that would keep them from attacking one another. He also thought that secular war was evil, and good Muslims should undertake war only for religious purposes. Among other foreign influences on Islamic thought about war and violence was the apocalyptic literature of Jewish and Christian scriptures from whence the Prophet derived the notion of *Jihād* or holy war.¹⁸

Muslims were empire builders from the time that Muhammad began to preach that he was the messenger of God sent into the world to convert all humanity. Islam spread rapidly because it filled a void on the Arabian Peninsula beyond the reach of rulers and states, and Mecca and Medina sat astride trade routes leading to more established political societies in the Byzantine and Persian empires as well as in India and Southeast Asia. Christianity had grown slowly in the already well established political society of Rome. Moreover, Christians had always recognized the political obligations that they owed Caesar. Islamic society, however, combined religious and political functions in one entity, and developed pronounced expansionist tendencies from the beginning. Muslims were not as driven by a desire to convert others as were Christians, but they did mean to require everyone to submit to Islamic authority. They aspired to universal peace within the *dar el-islam* or “Islamic world,” but beyond this was the *dar al-harb*, the “world of war” where strife always prevailed. With those who refused to accept Islamic authority, there could never be peace, and the Islamic empire expanded more rapidly than had the Roman Empire.¹⁹ Islamic legal theory, however, was more insistent about total conquest. It maintained that war had always existed and would always continue between Islam and non-Islamic societies until the Islamic world had conquered the non-Islamic world and all non-Muslims had converted or submitted. Meanwhile, until this permanent state of peace was achieved, Muslim rulers were not allowed to make peace treaties that would exceed ten years. The Islamic law of peace was never regarded as anything but a temporary measure to be employed when holy war between the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds was temporarily in abeyance. However, in later periods Islamic societies sometimes found more permanent peaceful relations were desirable.²⁰

The long conflict between Islam and Christendom had its origins in the rivalry between Byzantium and Persia, both of which sought to expand their influence in the Near East—especially in Arabia. The Byzantines and the Persians had each hoped to gain control of Mecca and other commercial centers near the Red Sea coast of Arabia leading to the Mediterranean. Following the decline of Persian power in the seventh century, some of the Arab supporters of Persian influence turned to Muhammad and became Muslims. His influence was originally exerted among the merchants of Mecca, but later spread to the desert tribes from whom the merchants had sprung in

earlier generations. These bedouins, who were divided into tribes, had been in the habit of raiding one another's encampments because they never produced enough food to feed themselves. Muhammad's message was at first met with resistance and accompanied by strife among the tribes of the Medina oases. In conflicts with members of his own tribe, who refused to accept his religious message, Muhammad and his followers became convinced that God and his angels, dressed in white turbans, fought on their side. Muhammad insisted that all Muslims regard one another as brothers, but they were to fight all others until they acknowledge that "there is no god but Allah."²¹

Once one had uttered these words, he immediately became a Muslim and was admitted to the *umma*, the indissoluble and universal Muslim community. To this brotherhood he owed loyalty and he could not leave it without committing the capital offense of apostasy, and as the Prophet himself insisted, he also became obliged to pay the *zakāt*, or religious tax, to this community. Following the death of Muhammad in 632 CE, some of the more outlying Arab tribes believed that his demise ended the treaties that obliged them to pay the *zakāt*, but Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law and the first caliph, undertook the War of Apostasy against them to compel the payment of those taxes. Although the indissoluble character of the *umma* was viewed as a means of creating peace within the Muslim community, its focus was on Arab loyalty. It was this concept that brought the Islamic community into seemingly endless conflict with Christianity. Christians and Jews living within the Muslim world were always obliged to submit to Islamic authority. While recognized as people of the Book, they were compelled to pay the *jizya*, the poll tax or tribute imposed on them, as a sign of their humiliation and submission. These taxes were levied by command of the Prophet himself, and as the messenger of God, his commands were absolute and not to be disputed. In the time of Muhammad, the Prophet was the leader of an integrated religious and political society, and subsequently, the caliphs also exercised this authority. Although the Byzantine emperors and the medieval papacy had aspired to such authority, the world that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West came to be characterized by a distinction between temporal and ecclesiastical authority that worked against the emergence of theocracies.²²

Muhammad waged war against the polytheistic nonbelievers of Mecca, but he sometimes also made war against Jews and Christians even though he

acknowledged that they were “people of the Book”; in Byzantine Syria, war was waged against Christians and Jews “until they paid tribute or utterly submitted.” (This was done with the nice distinction that it was “mere war” and not holy war that was being visited on these Byzantine communities.) Mostly, however, the Islamic community of the Arabian Peninsula made holy war on neighboring states to impose Islamic authority. It was not originally the intention to compel conversion, but rather to persuade Jews, Christians, and pagans to accept Muslim teachings of their own free will. Indeed, in the early years of Muslim expansion, the costs of military conquest were paid by the taxes on non-Muslims, so it was not fiscally desirable to convert the whole non-Muslim population unless they could assist as soldiers or serve in some other useful capacity. During the first two centuries of Muslim expansion, nonbelievers remained a majority of the population. Moreover, the first converts to Islam were regarded as inferior in status to Arabs and could retain title to their property only if confirmed by treaty.²³

Muslim holy war began in the last days of the Prophet Muhammad, when he called on the major rulers of the time to acknowledge his message; he then dispatched military expeditions to the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. Muhammad’s successor Abu Bakr, the first caliph or leader of the political-religious community of Islam, continued this military pressure on the Byzantine Empire. Before the second caliph ‘Umar ibn Abd al-Khatteb died in 644, all of Arabia had been conquered as well as Egypt and Persia. The reasons why such large conquests were made so quickly were much the same as historians have used to explain the decline of earlier great empires such as those of Rome and Persia—barbarian incursions, incessant wars, plague, agricultural decline, diminished population and resources, and shrinking urban settlements. The people who lived in these newly conquered areas sometimes found the caliph’s regime easier to accept because the tax burden, although discriminatory, was usually lighter than under Byzantine rule, and Christian heterodox minorities were not persecuted as much as they had been under the Greek Orthodox Church.²⁴

The original meaning of *jihād*, as pronounced by the prophet Muhammad, was a personal moral endeavor to carry out the will of God and a struggle against nonbelievers who interfered with the dissemination of the Prophet’s message or persecuted his followers. The secondary meaning of *jihād*, or “the

greater holy war,” consisted of the internal struggle to purge one’s soul of impurities. Some jurists thought that this “greater” expression of *jihād* was the true path to martyrdom, but most Islamic scholars argued that internal and external *jihād* were inseparable. From the time of the battle for the wells at Badr, near Medina, Muslims came to believe that when they fought holy war against infidels, they were the winners whether they actually achieved victory over the enemy or died in battle. In the latter instance, they became martyrs and entered Paradise. Muhammad’s preaching aroused a great deal of turmoil in Mecca, and after he had fled that city to seek safety with his kinsmen in Medina, the concept of *jihād* took on a more emphatically military meaning. While Muhammad thought that killing was a terrible thing, he believed that persecution of believers was worse, and therefore, a war against nonbelievers and persecutors became a sacred duty for his followers. *Jihād* was considered to be a just war, carrying with it the sanction of Allah and requiring a formal declaration of war. It was also considered to be a permanently declared war. Indeed, following the example of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Muhammad insisted that God sometimes sent heavenly hosts dressed in white turbans to assist his followers in the holy war against nonbelievers. When the aggressors and nonbelievers had submitted and accepted God, then mercy could be shown. The survival of the Islamic community in the early days depended on the ability of Muslims to remain in a military posture, and those who were unwilling to fight were assigned an inferior status.²⁵

It was the opinion of jurists that the principal collective obligation of the *umma*, or Islamic community, was to exalt the word of God as laid down by the Prophet, and to preserve the unity of the *umma*. This seemingly involved the caliph or *imam*, as the ruler of the Islamic religious state, in the duty of making perpetual holy war against nonbelievers until they submitted. This notion of Islamic unity and perpetual *jihād*, as Fred Donner says, could “logically lead to empire building.”²⁶ However, the term *jihād* includes rhetoric as well as Islamic legal doctrine. Islamic scholars recognized a difference between holy war and the usual sort of war that had occurred throughout human history, which was often caused by the ambitions of rulers or a desire to despoil neighboring states. The latter were unjust and unlawful. However, wars fought against those Muslims who attempted to secede, rebel, or promote civil war were both just and holy wars. As the Muslim world became more

stable and peaceful, the practice of *jihād* was largely confined to the borders with the Byzantine Empire. The decline of Byzantine power in the western Mediterranean opened up Italy and the Iberian Peninsula to Muslim attacks from North Africa. These attacks were notable because the Muslim warriors in this region were experts in sea warfare, unlike the desert Arabs who knew only cavalry warfare. The terrible sack of Rome came in 846, and the attacks on the Italian peninsula continued for the next century. The ninth and tenth centuries saw the Moorish invasion of Spain and an attempt to penetrate the kingdom of the Franks. The Muslim warriors who fought in these border clashes with the Byzantine Empire and Latin Christendom believed that they were *mujahidin*, or fighters of holy war, while those who died in these struggles were regarded as martyrs. Like the scholar-soldier, Asad ibn al-Furat, vizier to the Aghlabid rulers of Kairouan in Tunisia, who launched the invasion of Byzantine Sicily in 827, many of the *mujahidin* were non-Arabs from other parts of the Islamic world, such as Khurasan in the Steppes to the east of modern Turkey. These Turkish tribesmen played an increasingly important role in the military service of the caliphates. Concentrations of such Turkish warriors in Asia Minor led to the emergence of the Seljuk Empire.²⁷

After the remarkable expansion of the seventh century led to the establishment of the great Muslim empires, the concept of holy war became somewhat inconvenient to the 'Umayyad caliphs and other Muslim rulers, who became more concerned with maintaining political stability. Instead of continuing to pursue military expansion, holy wars of defense seemed to make more sense. Some of the Islamic rulers failed to heed the opinions of the Islamic jurists and even entered into treaties with the rulers of nonbelievers and engaged in trade with their neighbors, including the Byzantine Empire—although these arrangements were always thought by Muslims to be temporary. When the 'Umayyad caliphs completed their conquest of the Persian Empire at the end of the seventh century, they began developing sea power in order to extend their conquest to the European shores of Byzantium.²⁸

The armies of the early 'Umayyad period under the caliphs of Damascus resembled the hostings of barbarians. Military leaders were selected from among tribal aristocracies because of their ability to gather warriors, who would be loyal to the regime of the caliphs, but there was no structure of command. Discipline and loyalty to the caliphs was enforced by a kind of

primitive military police. At the end of this period, the 'Ummayyad armies began to show signs of professional training, such as the construction of well-planned rectangular camps with earthen and stone ramparts, watch towers, the digging of trenches, the use of caltrops as well as the deployment of kneeling spearmen to repel cavalry charges. They began to develop sounder tactics and to understand the value of good defense, and came to appreciate the interdependence of cavalry and infantry in battle.²⁹ However, they failed to develop the naval resources to challenge the Byzantine Empire on the European side of the Bosphorus.

When the 'Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad came to power in the later eighth century following the failed 'Ummayyad attempts to take Constantinople, the expansion of the Islamic state was limited to warfare on the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. Border raiding was confined to the summer, and this was sometimes little more than a seasonal ritual that provided an outlet for those who wished to participate in holy war. At other times, the campaigns were more extensive. This level of warfare was sufficient to maintain the reputation of the caliphs, provide opportunities for booty, and also served the function of providing opportunities for military training. Despite the provision for medical care, the volunteers, who came from many ethnic groups, often paid a heavy toll in battle casualties and deaths from disease.³⁰

Crusades against the Saracens

The concept of holy war as practiced by both the Muslims (or Saracens, as they were called in the Latin West) and the Franks (as the Muslims called the crusaders) left little room for constraints on how wars were fought. The Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and the Syrians had all thought of one another as "barbarians," which simply means that they regarded one another's culture as strange and alien. The Latin crusaders thought of themselves as the heirs of the ancient Greeks, Alexander the Great, imperial Rome, and Judas Maccabeus, the latter of whom had come to represent the ideal Christian knight. The crusaders did not observe any rules of war in their dealings with Muslims. The Muslims would spare Christians from death or slavery only if they converted to Islam, and the Frankish crusaders would spare only those Muslims who

became Christians. Both sides would also grant mercy to those who were wealthy enough to pay a ransom.³¹

The Arabs called the crusaders “Franks” because there was no Arabic word for crusader at that time. Strictly speaking, the war against the Franks was not the *jihād* to expand the boundaries of the *dar el-islam* at the expense of nonbelievers that Muslim jurists had in mind. Rather, as fought by Nur al-Din and Saladin, this war had the more limited goal of defending the unity and territorial integrity of the Islamic community. This view allowed Saladin to conclude a negotiated peace with the Franks. Saladin was aware that since he was not the caliph, he lacked the authority to declare and wage *jihād* against Christians. Islam was politically fragmented during the Wars of the Crusades, so the wars that individual Muslim rulers, such as Saladin, fought were something less than holy wars, although they did not hesitate to use the concept of *jihād* as a propaganda tool. However, the actual prosecution of the war was in the hands of professional soldiers, not fanatical amateurs. This helps us to understand how Muslim rulers and military commanders could agree to temporary truces. Sometimes these truces actually led to proposals for marriage between Muslims and Christians, but the Christian clergy would always frustrate such alliances. Clearly, the leaders of both camps saw room for diplomatic maneuvers to end hostilities, and were willing to permit pilgrimages and encourage commerce. At the same time, frequent violations of treaty terms were always at hand to provide the pretext for a renewal of fighting. Muslim scholars and military leaders also used Friday prayer services to whip up enthusiasm for the declaration of *jihād*. This not only had the effect of furnishing wider popular support for the war effort against the crusaders, but it also made life more difficult for Arab Christians (or polytheists as they were sometimes called because of their belief in the Trinity), and Christian churches were often seized as a consequence.³²

The periods of peace that interspersed the Wars of the Crusades were difficult to arrange because the Muslim and Latin Christian worlds had different concepts of peace. Peace was an ideal in both religious cultures. In Islam, it could result only from victory that brought justice, but war had to come first. In the Latin Christian view, as exemplified by the teachings of St. Augustine, universal and permanent peace must first be preceded by the end of the world and the day of last judgment. Both Muslims and Christians aimed

at the destruction of one another by *jihād* and crusade. Muslim legal scholars could conceive of peace among Muslims, but with nonbelievers, peace could be purchased only through conversion or paying tribute. In other words, holy war must continue to the end of time. However, *jihād* was a collective obligation; it did not bind each individual Muslim, and later Islamic scholars such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes) did allow for truces under compelling circumstances. Both Muslim imams and Catholic popes and prelates generally thought that truces and treaties with one another were evil—even when they were dictated by political circumstances—and could only be temporary.³³

Non-Muslims tended to associate Muhammad's teachings with private vengeance and political assassinations to a greater degree than the Prophet intended. The duty of Muslims to engage in *jihād* seemed to the Latin West to be the worst sort of aggression. They did not understand that, for the Muslim, holy war also implied an inner moral struggle. Despite the horror expressed concerning one another's concepts of holy war, it is worth comparing Muslim and Christian concepts of holy war because the two reveal certain similarities. Islamic jurists taught that *jihād* could be waged against bad Muslims and rebels as well as nonbelievers. Many Catholics also believed that holy war could be waged against Christian heretics and rulers who disagreed with papal policy.³⁴ With the rise of the feudal monarchies, Catholic theologians came to accept that war could be a way of maintaining peace and dispensing justice. But there remained from an earlier age an abhorrence of bloodshed and killing—even in a just war—as penitentials, or manuals prescribing penance for certain sins, indicated. Bishop Burchard of Worms insisted that soldiers needed to perform penance if they had killed someone in battle. Burchard did admit that the performance of penance and fighting the heathen could be combined, but the shedding of blood still required penance. This moral stricture seems to have been widespread in local church law, yet it did not derive from any church council or papal decree. The Gregorian reforms were hostile to the idea of performing penance in a just war that enjoyed papal or episcopal approbation, because no guilt attached to such actions provided they were performed for the right motive and not to seek glory or acquire booty.³⁵

The crusade was a species of holy war that was recognized in civil and canon law by the special status granted to individuals and expeditions by papal bull. It was a sanctification of war that combined the elements of just-war theory

with penance and pilgrimage. The crusader was granted a plenary indulgence, or full remission of all sins, for his participation or death in battle. The visible symbol of this special status was the white cross that the crusader wore. The crusades also represented an attempt to bring about peace among Christians by ending private feuding and war among Christian princes. Another function of crusading bulls issued by the papacy was to allow crusading expeditions to solicit contributions from both clergy and laity. Originally intended to liberate the Holy Land from the Saracens, the crusading concept was later applied to military expeditions sent to Syria and Morocco, against pagans in Prussia, Lithuania, and Finland, and also against heretical and schismatic Christians in the Byzantine Empire and southern France. The papacy also practiced a kind of economic warfare against its enemies and imposed sanctions that prohibited trading with Saracens, Moors, Mamluks in Egypt, and pagans in the Baltic region. The crusades led to a mentality in which the interests of the Catholic faith and the institutional Church were to be defended against heretics and schismatics or those who did not immediately submit to papal directives. This reinforced the concept of crusades against other Christians.³⁶

The crusades were also penitential pilgrimages, comparable to the inner struggle of the Islamic *jihād*, which were meant to purge sinfulness on the part of the knights, clerics, and lay folk. It was public penance performed with all of the attributes of theater, and foremost among these histrionic displays was the emphasis on unrestrained violence. The apologists for the Wars of the Crusades employed the holy war rhetoric of the Old Testament to justify their assault on the Saracens by likening themselves to the Israelites entering the Promised Land and slaying the Canaanites, but at the same insisting that their motives were purer than the Hebrews because they were recovering the Holy Places and relics for the glory of God rather than merely acquiring territory. The historical record of the exploits of the crusaders and pilgrims was set down largely by monks who emphasized that the Wars of the Crusades were conflicts between good and evil. Those who died in these wars were martyrs for the faith, and this was part of the effort to justify the conflict as a holy war.³⁷ Susanna Throop argues that the motivations of the Latin crusaders extended beyond the more familiar concepts of pilgrimage, penitence, just war, and holy war to a more fundamental urge to seek vengeance. This was not a secular idea that originated in a primitive lay society characterized by acts of

violence and feuding; it derived from the concept of an act sanctioned by divine and moral authority that combined judicial punishment with vengeance, and as such, was commended by religious writers such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Venerable, and others who represented vengeance as “almost a Christian virtue.” Such sentiments were not characteristic of all the clergy, and many continued to urge that justice and vengeance be tempered with mercy.³⁸

The prelates and clerics who accompanied the crusaders became militarized—especially those from the German-speaking lands. No fewer than twelve archbishops and bishops accompanied the Emperor Henry VI on his crusade of 1195–96. These prelates did not shy away from wielding the sword, and often led their *vassi* into battle. The Third Crusade of 1187–92 had included abbots as well as bishops who won their share of military glory. The popes were tolerant of such clerical bellicosity. The priests who accompanied the crusades made themselves available on the battlefield to hearten the warriors by their preaching. That the crusades were both holy wars and holy pilgrimages can be seen in the large numbers of humble folk—women, children, and the elderly—who accompanied most of the crusades. The crusaders were admonished to protect and feed these pilgrims, but some of them were abandoned on the long journey to the Levant because of sickness and inadequate provisions.³⁹

The regular clergy played a significant role in preaching the crusades. Some of the monks belonged to military orders that fought in the wars. Among the early purposes of the mendicant Franciscan and Dominican friars was the charge to undertake missionary work among the Muslims. St. Francis of Assisi actually went to Egypt in 1219 in an attempt to convert Sultan al-Kâmil. The sultan received St. Francis courteously and listened to what he had to say before allowing him to return under safe conduct. Another band of Franciscans went to Morocco to preach conversion, but insulted Islam and brought about their own martyrdom. This was not the only instance of Catholic clergy in Muslim lands verbally abusing Muhammad and Islam, and inciting violent retribution.⁴⁰

It must have appeared to many Muslims that the crusaders and their clerical supporters had designs on more than the Christian holy places in Palestine. One Muslim ruler and soldier who was aware of how vulnerable the fragmented polity of Islam was to the crusaders was the Kurdish sultan of Fatimid Egypt,

Saladin. He believed that he would need to conquer Syria in order to unite the Islamic community before attempting to recover the lands occupied by the Christian crusaders. This task he began by laying siege to Kerak, or Krak les Chevaliers, the great crusader castle in Syria. His first siege in 1153 was repelled, but he returned four years later after Reginald of Châtillon violated the terms of a truce between Saladin and Baldwin IV, King of Jerusalem, by attacking a caravan carrying Saladin's sister. Baldwin sought to compel Reginald to make amends, but the latter refused to do so. This gave Saladin the excuse to resume the war, and he gathered his forces to meet the crusader army near the village of Hettin on July 3, 1187. The Frankish crusaders were routed in perhaps the most important encounter of the Wars of the Crusades—a battle that continues to hold great significance for present-day Muslims. Reginald was executed by Saladin himself, two hundred Knights Templar and Hospitallers were massacred, and the rank and file of the crusader army were sold into slavery. It was only a matter of time before Jerusalem fell. The Christian governor of the city decided to strike a bargain with Saladin. If Saladin would allow the Christians to pay a ransom to be spared, he would yield. If not, he would put to the sword all of the Muslims of the city. Saladin agreed, and the Syrian Christians were allowed to keep their holy places. Saladin had a reputation for chivalry and was tolerant of Jews and Christians within limits, but at the same time, was determined to destroy the power of the Frankish crusaders.⁴¹

Another example of a Christian crusader who was prepared to negotiate with Muslim rulers and commanders was the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Frederick had been educated in Sicily where he had been personally acquainted with Muslims, and he spoke Arabic himself. He also employed at his court the astrologer and scholar Michael Scot, who had been one of the translators of Aristotle from Arabic texts at the cathedral school of Toledo in Spain. When Frederick went to the Holy Land to lead the Fifth Crusade, he carried with him the assumption that much wisdom and knowledge could be acquired by contact with the Arab world. Frederick had looked forward to leading a bloodless crusade in which he hoped to negotiate a truce with the Saracens. When Frederick reached Acre in 1228, he entered into talks with the Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil of Egypt, who was of the same mind. The sultan actually offered Frederick and the Christians access to Jerusalem, which no longer possessed any strategic value since the razing of its walls, but Pope Gregory IX

and the papal legate on the crusading expedition objected to a truce and excommunicated Henry, while Muslims took to the streets in the cities of the Levant to voice their outrage at the idea of a compromise with the Franks after being incited by their muezzins. Among the crusaders, the Knights Templar plotted his assassination. There was little popular support for diplomatic efforts at peace-making on either side.⁴²

As far as Latin Christendom was concerned, the most obtrusive presence of Muslims was to be found in the Iberian Peninsula. The Moors, as the Muslim Berbers of North Africa were called, had invaded Iberia in 711 under the leadership of the Arab general Târiq ibn Ziyâd and destroyed the short-lived kingdom of the Visigoths. There was little resistance to the Moorish occupation of Visigothic Spain, which encompassed some four-fifths of the peninsula by 720, because the new regime proved to be tolerant of Christians and Jews. Although the *reconquista* was not officially designated a crusade until 1212 by a papal bull of Innocent III, clearly the idea of a holy war or crusade sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities with the usual grant of indulgences first emerged in eighth-century Iberia. The *reconquista*, or Christian reconquest of Spain, continued until 1492, when the kingdom of Granada, the last Moorish stronghold in Spain, fell to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella. In the interim, for seven centuries, al-Andalus, or Andalusia, had been part of the *dar el-islam*, and Christian warriors from the northern part of Spain, the kingdom of Asturias, fought their version of a holy war to drive the Moors from Spain. The *reconquista* and the *conquista*, the Spanish conquest of the New World, signaled a revival of the crusades called for by the pope after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. The *reconquista* provided an excuse for the king of Castile to tax his subjects and an opportunity for glory and booty for *hidalgos* as well as ordinary Castilians to migrate to the rich lands of southern Spain. The initial policy of tolerating Muslims in the newly conquered territories was subsequently abrogated. When the monks of Cluny in Burgundy took control of the pilgrims' route from France to Santiago de Compostela, Spain became a place that attracted pilgrims as well as crusaders from all over Western Europe.⁴³

The Spanish and Portuguese holy war against the Moors carried over into North Africa, and later provided the driving spirit for the founding of overseas colonial empires. Following the end of the Portuguese War of Independence, the younger Portuguese noblemen and knights were looking for other frontiers

where they could seek honor and wealth in battle. Prince Henry's military expedition to seize the Moroccan port of Ceuta in 1415 provided an opportunity for military adventure in a crusade against the Muslims comparable to the opportunities afforded Castilian knights on the frontier with the Muslim kingdom of Granada. Prince Henry pressed his case for invading Ceuta with his father the king. Although King John appeared to hesitate to grant permission until he could assure himself that an invasion of Morocco constituted a just war, in actuality, the Portuguese kings had always accepted the papalist argument that any war against Muslims, pagans, or infidels could always be considered a just war. Despite their protestations of crusading zeal, the Portuguese conquerors were more intent on plundering Ceuta's merchants, both Muslim and Christian. Prince Henry and his followers were also aware that this foothold in Africa opened up the prospect of exploiting the Atlantic coast of Africa for colonization and trade.⁴⁴

Prince Henry was the son of King John I of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, and his descent from the English royal house of Lancaster made him aware that he was the heir of a notable chivalric tradition. He saw himself as dedicated to the tradition of crusading against the Moors. During his boyhood, the new Portuguese nobility, created after the old Portuguese nobility had sided with the Castilian invaders in Portugal's War of Independence from Spain, were dedicated to the proposition that war brought honor and profit; Henry's enthusiasm for exploration and trade as a source of wealth came later. His projects for the exploration of Guinea showed a rational mind at work: Henry was well educated and quite capable of planning such an expedition in detail; his approach to crusading, on the other hand, was emotional and less rational. As a crusader, Prince Henry kept the new Portuguese nobility busy fighting Moors or engaging in chivalric displays. He was quite aware of the maxim that the honor of a family could be maintained only by demonstrating prowess on the battlefield in each generation.⁴⁵

The Turkish holy war against Christendom

As the jihadist spirit waned among the Arabs and the Moors, another ethnic group emerged from out of the Steppes of Central Asia to lead the Islamic holy

war. These were the Turks, and their ambitions would extend to converting all Christians and conquering Europe as far west as the Atlantic. This change in the leadership of the Islamic world extended over several centuries and began when the 'Abbasid dynasty of caliphs succeeded the 'Umayyids in the middle of the eighth century. The new rulers of the Islamic world came to power with Persian assistance, and established a more centralized and absolute monarchy, as contrasted with the network of tribal alliances that characterized the government of the 'Umayyids. The 'Abbasid caliphs and their ministers were frequently men of humble birth and were often non-Arabs. The caliphate was moved from Damascus to Baghdad in the eighth century. The soldiers who were quartered in the military camp at Baghdad came from Kurasan on the northeast frontier, a region that had been part of the Sasanian Persian Empire. They were drawn into the city's factions, and civil war followed. The need to find a more loyal army caused the caliphs to recruit another military force that was increasingly drawn from the nomadic Turkish-speaking tribes of Iranian Transoxiana who originally came from the Steppes. The court and the army camp moved northward to Samarra on the River Tigris to get away from the factionalism of Baghdad. The Turks, who were skilled cavalrymen, constituted an elite group and lived in their own quarters. Eventually, they came to dominate the caliph's government. From that point on, Turkish became the language of the army and the caliph's court in the eastern half of the Islamic world. The Arabs who remained in the caliph's army played a diminishing role and mostly served as foot soldiers.⁴⁶

The nomadic Turks who constituted the elite troops at Samarra were used to spending as much time in the saddle as on foot. Although some of them were recruited as Mamluks, or slave soldiers, the Turks were brave and formidable fighters who came to enjoy free status and to regard themselves as superior to the caliph's other troops. They introduced new tactics and were skilled horse-archers. At first they had no particular loyalty to the predominantly Arab state of the caliphs and were not enthusiastic practitioners of holy war. They were recent converts to Islam, and what they sought was booty.⁴⁷

The migration of the Seljuk Turks from Transoxiana into the Near East in the eleventh century led to the conquest of Persia and the caliphate of Baghdad. The Seljuk Turks then turned their eyes toward the Byzantine territories in Anatolia, and after the defeat of the Byzantine forces at Manzikert (1071), they

colonized Anatolia to the point where Turks and Muslims became the dominant ethnic and religious group. The Turks were originally nomadic pastoralists, but thereafter, they gradually established themselves in the agricultural villages of eastern Anatolia. In the time of the Seljuk dynasty, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, Persian culture was dominant in the court and cities of the Turkish Empire. The frontiers, however, were settled by many Turcoman dervishes, who had migrated from the Steppes more recently. These semi-nomadic frontier peoples were adherents of a mystical sect and were regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims. They were especially devoted to continuous holy war and the conversion of Christians on the other side of the frontier. In the thirteenth century, the Seljuk Turks were overrun by the Mongols, and they became the vassals of the Mongol khan. The Mongols displaced many of the Turks of eastern Anatolia, and the latter were forced westward. This migration ended Byzantine rule in western Anatolia. Thereafter, the ruling class, formerly Persian-speaking under the Seljuks, became Turkish and Muslim. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Ottoman dynasty had replaced the Seljuks.⁴⁸

The original concept of *jihād* as expounded by Muhammad and the Islamic jurists was to expand the Islamic community in all directions in order to spread the message of the prophet. During the Wars of the Crusades, this came to include defending the Islamic community against the incursions of the Frankish crusaders in Palestine and the Levant. With the rise of the Turkoman principalities in the thirteenth century—most notably the Ottomans—a new form of holy war emerged in the *ghazâ*, which focused on the efforts of the *ghazis*, or Islamic warriors, in conquering the Christian West, including the Byzantine Empire. This strategy involved the conquest of Byzantine Anatolia and Constantinople and the Balkans, gaining control of the Mediterranean and its commerce as well as the former territories of the western part of the Roman Empire. Thus, the ambition of the Turkish sultans extended to claiming the caliphate, a title assumed by Murad I in the latter part of the fourteenth century, which gave the sultans the authority to wage holy war against the Christians and other infidels, as well as the Roman imperial title formerly borne by the Byzantine emperors prior to the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and by the emperors of Rome prior to the founding of Constantinople. The rise of the Ottoman Turks also changed the orientation of the Christian

crusading movement because from the crusaders' point of view these wars ceased to be an attempt to reconquer Palestine and convert by the sword, and instead, became a desperate attempt to defend Europe from Turkish expansion. The sultan's exclusive claim to the caliphate also involved the Ottoman Turks in eliminating rival sultans and caliphs in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. The proclamation of *ghazâ*, or holy war, by the Ottoman Turkish sultans implied that they were the successors of all caliphs and *imams* going back to the Prophet himself.⁴⁹

The primary source of the sultan's authority was his military leadership. During the fourteenth century, the Ottoman military force had changed from a group of raiders (the original meaning of *ghazi* was raider) to a disciplined army capable of mounting sieges and engaging in pitched battles. The two most important branches of the Ottoman army were the cavalry, the members of which held a *timar*, a kind of feudal fief, which freed the cavalryman from dependence on pillaging in exchange for military service when called on, and the Janissaries, a skillful body of guards with a strong esprit de corps. These two groups were the basis of the Ottoman standing army. Because they served on a contractual basis, the sultan could raise a predictable number of soldiers every year. The corps of Janissaries (which means "new army" in Turkish) was the first standing army in Europe. They were the enslaved children of non-Muslims who were acculturated and enrolled in the Ottoman army as a distinct corps paid by the treasury and served directly under the command of the sultan. The Ottoman army also began using gunpowder weapons during the fourteenth century. The Ottoman artillery was manned by mercenary soldiers, and constituted the first standing corps armed with cannons in Europe. These Ottoman units were a highly disciplined force in contrast to the crusader and other Western armies in which mounted knights and other members of elite cavalry corps showed an obsessive concern with individual honor that frustrated the attempts of their commanders to maintain cohesiveness when engaging the more tactically innovative Turkish light horse, who easily picked off knights who broke formation to engage in single combat. The sultan's army achieved a notable victory when it defeated the French crusaders at the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396.⁵⁰

Since the Ottoman Empire was essentially a military organization, the sultan's command of an effective and well disciplined army afforded him a

distinct advantage, and enabled him to hold together a conglomeration of diverse nationalities and religions. Islam was, of course, the official religion, although Christians and Jews sometimes held minor offices. To Machiavelli, the sultan appeared to be an absolute monarch by virtue of his political and military leadership, but in fact, there were a number of limitations on his power. He could not alter Islamic law, which was immutable; the strength of custom was such that his law-making powers were quite limited. As long as the sultans led their armies in the field, their military power was extensive, but maintaining discipline among the corps of Janissaries, the sultan's household infantry, could be a problem because they mutinied frequently when their demands for rewards or booty were not met. Also, the very complexity of Ottoman government gave viziers, court officials, and bureaucrats some degree of influence—especially after the sultan ceased to attend meetings of the imperial council in the mid-fifteenth century. And, of course, the tendency to solve the question of succession among the sultans' many sons by fratricide was bound to introduce a certain degree of instability. A sultan with a strong personality, however, could prevail in the face of these limitations on his power.⁵¹

When the Ottomans under Sultan Mehmet II were making preparations to invest Constantinople, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI sent an urgent plea to Pope Nicholas V asking for help in defending the Byzantine capital. The pope did supply some aid to the Knights of Rhodes, Cyprus, and the kingdom of Hungary, but he refused assistance to the Byzantines unless the Orthodox Church entered into union with Rome. Nicholas V, it would seem, had intended to help the Greeks, but he had used the issue of schism as a bargaining chip; he was quite shocked when Constantinople fell to the Turks, and his reputation suffered much as a consequence. He issued a crusading bull when he realized that the sultan had designs on Italy. However, at that time, the rulers of Renaissance Europe were too divided and absorbed in their own problems to undertake a war against the Grand Turk.⁵² Also, the Turkish massacre of Christian prisoners of war following the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396 had shaped Western views of Turkish cruelty and discouraged many would-be crusaders for years to come.⁵³

Following the successful Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1453, commentators in the Latin Christian West were unable to recognize and appreciate Turkish military prowess, organization, and discipline because the

Turks were infidels. The humanist Aeneas Sylvius Piccolimi, the future Pope Pius II, who lamented the death of Greek letters, asserted that the Turks were effeminate and lacking in martial prowess. Many Christians who believed that Divine Providence was the first and only source of causation in history, thought that the Turks had been sent by God as punishment for the sins of Christians; they could undo this calamity only by repenting and mounting a strong defense of their faith and the integrity of Christendom. At the end of his life, Pius II sought to lead a crusade against the Turks in 1463, but he died before it could be brought to fruition.⁵⁴

Having conquered Constantinople, Mehmet II saw himself as the greatest Islamic ruler since the first four caliphs, the successor of the Roman emperors, and the upholder of the Roman, Islamic and Turkish claims to universal sovereignty. Selim I (1512–20) also claimed to be the protector of the Jews and the Greek and Armenian churches, and appointed the patriarchs of those churches. With the incorporation of the Arab lands into the Ottoman Empire, Selim also became the protector of the pilgrim routes to Mecca and Medina and of all Muslims. As *gazi* sultans, they were devoted to making continuous holy war, and such a policy also had the benefit of providing wealth for the Ottoman treasury.⁵⁵

The expansionism of the Ottoman Turks led to a revival of the crusading ethos in Western and Central Europe. The grand master of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem warned that Mehmet II intended to conquer all of Europe. The Venetians were especially alarmed by this news because of their trading interests and ports in the eastern Mediterranean, and they begged the pope and other Western rulers for assistance. Pope Nicholas V, regretting his miscalculation concerning the threat that the Turks had posed to Constantinople, hoped to bring about peace in Europe so as to gather forces to repel the expected Turkish advance. Other prelates and clerics also came forward to preach another crusade and to remind their audience of Turkish cruelty. When an appropriate response failed to materialize in the Latin West, a number of bishops lamented the lives of soldiers wasted in civil conflicts, such as the Wars of the Roses, when they could have been fighting the Turks. As we shall see, there were other crusading efforts in the late medieval period in the Baltic Sea area, the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean islands, and the Iberian Peninsula, but without the formidable Turkish threat, there probably

would not have been such an emphasis in the Latin West on the continuing importance of religious war. With the exception of Portugal and the Balkans, other late medieval crusades in the Baltic and Spain were subsiding.⁵⁶

The most notable attempt to halt the westward advance of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans was the Crusade of Varna, which involved several battles fought in 1443–45.⁵⁷ The politics behind the various military and naval campaigns that constituted this crusade were more complicated than the religious conflicts between the Muslims and the Latin and Orthodox churches. The Genoese were allies of the Ottomans, as was the Christian ruler of Athens. The enemies of the Ottoman sultan comprised not only the Byzantines, the Venetians, and the Hungarians, but also the Muslims of Karaman in southern Anatolia, where the Mongol ruler Timur had earlier restored the khanate in opposition to the Ottomans. The involvement of the Genoese and the Venetians, often inveterate enemies, together with the Burgundians, provided a naval dimension to these struggles. The main battle of the crusade was fought between the Ottoman and Hungarian armies on November 10, 1444, at Varna on the Bulgarian coast of the Black Sea. At first, it appeared that the Hungarians would prevail because of the devastation wrought by their artillery on the Turkish army under the command of Murad II, but Vladislav III, king of Hungary and Poland, foolishly charged ahead of the ranks of his army and was killed by the sultan's Janissaries. This decided the battle, and the failure of the Crusade of Varna delivered the predominantly Orthodox Balkan Peninsula into the hands of the Ottoman Muslims rather than the Catholics. With allies as disparate as Hungary and the khanate of Karaman, it is little wonder that the opponents of Sultan Murad II failed to coordinate their military efforts. The collapse of the Hungarian Army at Varna and the quarrels between Venice and the papacy made it impossible to continue the crusade. There were a few more skirmishes as the ships of the Burgundians resorted to piracy in the Bosphorus and the Black Sea.⁵⁸

From their victory at Varna, the Ottoman Turks had turned their attention to capturing Constantinople, the great center of Eastern Christianity. They then besieged Rhodes and advanced up the Danube Valley, capturing Belgrade in 1521 and defeating the Hungarians at Mohacs in 1526. Not until after 1683, when the Siege of Vienna was lifted, did the Turkish threat begin to subside. The fall of Constantinople was a great loss to the world of humanist learning; it also raised the possibility of the eradication of Christianity. That was why the

papacy responded with a crusade to defend Christendom and to reinforce its defenses in borderlands such as Hungary, Transylvania, Cyprus, Malta, Rhodes, and the outposts of the Venetian Empire along the Adriatic. In order to encourage soldiers to volunteer for this crusade, every effort was made to demonize the Turks and depict them as barbarians, like their alleged ancestors the Scythians. Others called on Biblical prophecies that identified the Turks with Gog and Magog of the apocalyptic Last Battle.⁵⁹

Fernand Braudel considered it significant that Christendom should have built formidable defenses mounted with heavy ordnance against Islamic expansion along its eastern frontier in Austria, Hungary, and the islands in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seas that were held by the Venetians and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, while the Turks, who built no such defensive line, gloried in wars of aggression against the Christian West and pursued those holy wars to the gates of Vienna. Braudel thinks that one of the motives of the Turks, besides their endless pursuit of holy war, was that the Turks needed to acquire knowledge of Western military technology such as improved gunpowder weapons and naval shipbuilding from the Christians to employ against their Persian enemies to the east. The Christian powers, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, the Poles, the Venetians, and their allies continued to defend the frontier against the Turks until the latter were beaten back from Vienna and were driven out of Hungary in the seventeenth century. The Western determination to mount offensive crusading wars against the Turkish Empire, however, ended in the wake of the defeat of the Turkish naval fleet at the Battle of Lepanto of 1572, which was not as great a victory for the Christian powers as it is sometimes represented. Following Lepanto and the Turkish conquest of the Venetian outpost on the island of Cyprus in 1570–71, the Turkish advance was slowed and they entered a period of decline and retreat from their earlier conquests in Europe. Thereafter, the war in the Mediterranean continued at the level of piracy and brigandage.⁶⁰

Crusades against Christians

Crusading had begun as an ideology based on the determination of the papacy and other Latin Christian powers, the Byzantine emperors, and their Orthodox

allies to halt Muslim expansion as well as to recover the holy places of Jerusalem. Muslims remained the chief enemy, but in later crusades, other enemies of the Church or papacy were also pursued, such as Christian heretics, schismatics, and pagans. Pope Gregory IX had established the Roman Inquisition in 1231 to conduct inquiries concerning heresy and to try individual heretics, but it was not capable of dealing with heresy on such a large scale. For this reason, crusades against heretical Christian sects were proclaimed under papal authority, but required the participation of Christian kings and knights, whose cooperation could be procured only if these military campaigns also served their secular interests. Expansionism and dynastic ambitions were always an integral part of the holy wars of both Christendom and Islam.⁶¹

Honorius II was the first pope to declare a holy war against a Christian ruler, Roger, the Norman Count of Sicily, whom the pope labeled “a semi-pagan tyrant.” Roger had supported the anti-pope Anacletus, and employed Muslim courtiers and soldiers. Honorius promised the Normans of Apulia, who undertook to fight Count Roger full forgiveness of their sins if they died in battle; those who fought and survived were allowed a half remission of their sins. The papal crusade against Count Roger resulted in a victory for Pope Innocent II, who had succeeded Honorius. This first holy war against Christians followed the model of the First Crusade, which had been proclaimed by Pope Urban II at Clermont in 1095. One of the precedents for employing holy war against other Christians was the Peace and Truce of God movement, which was directed at violent and lawless bands within Christendom. A number of bishops had organized groups of the faithful in the eleventh century to compel lawless individuals and gangs to behave themselves, and they administered oaths to these prototype parish constables to enforce the peace. Such peace militias, organized by parishes, with the priests bearing banners before them, were sent against robber-barons such as Thomas of Marle, who had terrorized a whole province from his castle of Crécy-sur-Serre in northern France. Before assaulting Crécy, the parishioners were absolved of their sins, and told that their penance was to lay siege to the castle. In southern France, a region much troubled by *routiers*, or roving bands of mercenary soldiers, and a region where the king of France’s authority and reach were less sure, peace edicts were also used to raise peace militias by various prelates. The use of such peace militias,

the members of which were promised indulgences, was also a precedent for the later crusade against the Cathars or Albigensians, and there was some popular confusion of the *routiers* with the Albigensians.⁶²

In 1208, Pope Innocent III attempted to stop the spread of the Cathar heresy in Languedoc by preaching and by appeal to King Philip Augustus, but the French monarch was more interested in fighting wars with other Christian kings. The pope then decided to appeal to Christian knights from other parts of France to launch a holy war or crusade against the Cathars by promising that such a crusade would make participants instruments in God's work by granting them absolution of sins. Those who died in such an undertaking would be regarded as martyrs just like those who had participated in the crusades to recover the Holy Land. The papal blessing on wars directed against fellow Christians was supported by a radical reorientation of Christian thinking in the eleventh century that made it acceptable to employ violence in carrying out God's work when peaceful means had failed. Not all theologians and canonists supported this granting of indulgences and absolution of sins to crusaders, and Sigebert of Gembloux wondered where the popes got this authority to wage war—especially against Christians. Pope Leo IX had actually declared war against the Normans in Sicily by claiming that they were worse than pagans. Such holy wars proclaimed and waged by the papacy might have gained more support if they had been more successful; their usual lack of success raised the question whether God had actually authorized these wars.⁶³

The war against the Cathars, also known as the Albigensian Crusade or the Occitan War, was viewed as a war fought to protect the Church from heretics or internal enemies, and thus, was construed as a just war. This argument was, however, rejected by many of the leaders and inhabitants of Languedoc, such as Raimon-Roger, Count of Foix. In the event, the knightly code of chivalry as well as Christian ethics, provided few, if any, of the customary constraints of how the Occitan War was fought, or indeed, any of the informal rules of war observed in the conflicts between Christians and Muslims. By any measure, the Albigensian Crusade was an exceptionally brutal war in which prisoners, civilian and military, men, women, and children, were mutilated and massacred in the cause of eliminating heresy. Such atrocities were not committed only for religious reasons, however; also involved were rivalries based on conflicting feudal jurisdictions and allegiances.⁶⁴

It is now generally accepted among medievalists that combat between mounted knights on the battlefield was rare during the Middle Ages, while sieges of strongly fortified towns and castles as well as raiding were more usual. The nobility of southwestern France raided one another frequently before the beginning of the Albigensian Crusade. The crusaders, on the other hand, demonstrated a willingness to engage in devastating and costly siege warfare. Although the crusader armies in the Languedoc region always included some knights who served their feudal lords, most of the soldiers fought for pay. These included many *routiers* who were mercenaries who lacked political allegiances and who were feared because of their utterly ruthless methods of war. If captured as prisoners in the Occitan War, they were often massacred.⁶⁵

Holy war against Christian heretics had thus become an instrument of papal policy. The *militia Christi*, the knights of Christ, were originally conceived of as a purely spiritual force, devoted to prayer and ascetic practices. Pope Gregory VII (the former Hildebrand) began to put a more military construction on the term and began to conceive of the knights of Christ going out into the world and engaging in actual combat on behalf of the Church and the patrimony of St. Peter. He inaugurated the practice of appealing to temporal monarchs and knights to wield the sword on behalf of the papal states. Thus, pious devotion was interwoven with the feudal obligation to render military service as a papal vassal. Pope Gregory was moving in the direction of holy war as an instrument of papal policy against those temporal rulers such as the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, who had incurred papal displeasure and was excommunicated. One of the most ardent defenders of the Gregorian doctrine of war against heretics, Bonizo of Sutri, stated that it was the duty of all Christians to fight heretics by means appropriate to their status: priests by spiritual means, and knights with weapons of war. Moreover, Christians should fight heretics more fiercely than pagans or unbelievers.⁶⁶

While many of the supporters of Pope Gregory VII and his predecessor Pope Leo IX, who had proclaimed holy war against the Normans in Sicily, held that the use of violence and war in defense of the faith was laudable, there were papal advisors, such as Peter Damian, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, who were opposed to using force against heretics. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, was also opposed to the papal proclamation of the crusade because he thought that all war was profane and immoral. But those who supported the concept of

holy war could draw on the example of the military heroes of the Old Testament, such as Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus, and the mythical or actual warrior saints such as Sebastian, Maurice, George, Denis, Theodore, and James (the Spanish Santiago), whose patronage and protection were widely believed to bring victory in battle.⁶⁷

In the twelfth century, the papal concept of holy war was also extended to northern Europe. The Northern Crusades, which were at first directed against pagans in the Baltic Sea region, were recognized as holy wars by papal bulls issued between 1147 and 1505. The Danes and the Swedes, later joined by the Teutonic Knights, attempted to pacify and Christianize the Prussians, the Lithuanians, the Latvians, and other peoples called Balts, who had been in this region since before Roman times. This lent legitimacy to a war of territorial conquest by drawing on crusader and chivalric traditions, and this helped to attract contributions and volunteers from a wide area of Central and Western Europe. In their continuing quest for territory and trade, the Teutonic Knights did not hesitate to go up against nations with older Christian traditions such as Poland.⁶⁸

The Slavs, or Wends, as the Germans called them, were more recent arrivals than the Balts. The Baltic Slavs were quite militarized because, as they moved into the Baltic region in the ninth and tenth centuries, they had to be able to defend themselves against the Vikings and the Germans. They had a warrior class, supported by peasants, and they quickly learned how to build fortifications and to fight on the sea as well as land. They lived in fortified village communities clustered along rivers and estuaries. The dense forests and impenetrable bogs made settlement on land away from the rivers and estuaries difficult. The Baltic Slavs were slow to accept Christianity, and clung to their pagan holy places long after their nominal conversion, but so did the inhabitants of Denmark and Sweden. Even after the ruling classes had accepted Christianity, the rural areas saw continued resistance to Christian belief. Of all the various Baltic peoples, the Lithuanians put up the most cohesive struggle against the aggressions of their Christian neighbors because they had a line of princes that provided strong leadership. The tendency of the Balts and the Slavs to fortify their communities, and to fight back and to resist Christianity provided a challenge to crusaders from Germany and the West.⁶⁹

The first of the Northern Crusades was the Wendish Crusade of 1147. This supposed holy war in the lands along the frontier to the east of Hamburg and

the Elbe River began when the land-grabbing Saxons overran the lands of the Wends. The Saxon warriors and their chiefs had lived as raiders and mercenaries, and were hardly more civilized than the Wendish chiefs whom they displaced. The crusading phase began when a bishopric was established at Lübeck, and priests were called in to convert and tame the supposedly more savage Slavs. German invaders of Slavic lands had previously been content to levy tribute money, but the Slavic peasants were now rounded up and forced to live in fortified stockades dominated by wooden blockhouses, where they could be exploited more effectively. The Wendish Crusade of 1147 involved both the Saxons and their Danish allies, and was recognized in a bull issued by Pope Eugenius III. Paying tribute to the Germans was no longer sufficient; Slavs were now compelled to convert to Christianity or die. However, in all subsequent Northern Crusades, conversion remained subordinate to the acquisition of land and collecting tribute. This became a cause of contention between the Saxon nobles and the numerous bishops from other German cities who also participated in the Wendish Crusade.⁷⁰

The Teutonic Knights were the most successful of all the major monastic military orders of crusaders. Like the Knights Templar and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, they began their operations in the crusades to recover the Holy Land. After their expulsion by the Turks, the Teutonic Knights transferred their operations to the Baltic, where they combined fighting pagan Prussians and Lithuanians with the opening of the Baltic hinterland to trade and the exploitation of raw materials. In the process, the Teutonic Knights built an extensive territorial state, ruled as an *Ordenstaat*,⁷¹ and were able to recruit many members of the lesser nobility of Germany, who were eager to acquire land. In 1309, the order established their headquarters at Marienburg, just as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, also expelled from the Holy Land by the Turks, had moved to Rhodes. They justified their acquisitions of territory by the need to extirpate paganism in Prussia and Livonia, quite ignoring the fact that some of the lands that they grabbed belonged to Christian Poles and Livonians. Prussia was extensively resettled by immigrant Germans. Livonia and Poland then served as bases from which to conquer pagan Lithuania. The Lithuanians tried to head off conquest by the Teutonic Order by opening negotiations directly with both the papacy and the Russian Orthodox Church concerning their possible conversion to Christianity. This was only a ploy, and

the conquest of the Lithuanians, a martial people, involved a long and bitterly fought war during the fourteenth century in the most difficult of terrain. These *Reisen*, or summer and winter campaigns of the Teutonic Knights, which were undertaken against the heathen Lithuanians, were particularly popular with noblemen and knights from England and France, and gave them something to do during the intervals of peace in the Hundred Years War. Prussia acquired the reputation as a place where one could gain unique expertise in the exercise of arms.⁷²

The Teutonic Knights continued to insist that their efforts to conquer and convert the pagan Lithuanians in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries constituted a holy war. This argument, however, was undercut when the Lithuanians became Christians. In 1386, Jadwiga of Poland married Jogaila of Lithuania just after the latter had been baptized a Christian and accepted the new name of Wladyslaw. Since the territories of the two greatest enemies of the Teutonic Knights' *Ordenstaat* had been united and the Lithuanians were nominally Christians, the Teutonic Order no longer possessed a justification for launching crusades. Internal strife in Lithuania made it difficult for the Lithuanians to take the field against the Teutonic Knights. Many among the Teutonic Knights and their supporters remained unpersuaded that the Lithuanians had sincerely accepted Christianity, and more military campaigns were sent against the Lithuanians, who had territorial ambitions of their own. They and the Poles sometimes called on the Russians and the Muslim Tartars for military assistance. The Teutonic Knights suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410. Although the Teutonic Knights survived, the order had lost its crusading appeal and fewer Westerners volunteered for their *Reisen*. Moreover, when these issues were debated at the Council of Constance in 1415, it was charged against the Teutonic Knights that they were more interested in territorial aggrandizement than converting the pagans of the territories that they had conquered. Clearly, the Baltic Crusades were no longer regarded as holy wars, since the *Reisen* were now directed against Christians. For a time, the Teutonic Knights attempted to maintain their status as crusaders by fighting the Hussites and defending part of Transylvania against the Ottoman Turks. When volunteers ceased to come from the West, the order began hiring mercenaries, who proved difficult to manage, while their own subjects became unhappy with the governance of the Knights, and they faced

the continuing enmity of the Poles, and later, the Russians. The knights gradually began to abandon their monastic rules and to secularize themselves, a process that was completed at the time of the Lutheran Reformation when the grand master of the Teutonic Knights, the Margrave Albert of Brandenburg-Anspach, transformed the *Ordenstaat* into a dynastic secular state in 1525. The Teutonic Knights lost governance and Prussia became a duchy.⁷³

Some of those who attacked the sacred violence of crusades and holy wars as proclaimed by the papacy were members of heretical sects. The Hussite heresy in Bohemia posed a particularly severe threat to orthodoxy and Christian unity because it was fed by Czech nationalist feelings. The papacy was unable to deal effectively with the Hussites through the Inquisition because the Great Schism and the corrupt practices of the papal court had diminished the reputation of the Church and the authority of the popes. The Hussite movement was strengthened by the support of the Bohemian nobility, the intellectual coherence of its beliefs, which derived from the teachings of the English heresiarch John Wyclif, and the hatred of the Germans on the faculty of the University of Prague. The leader of this Czech reform movement was John Hus (c. 1369–1415).⁷⁴ Hus was a vigorous and prolific preacher who reached a large audience because his sermons were delivered in Czech. Whereas the Wycliffite heresy in England was largely suppressed, the Hussite heresy was more difficult to deal with because King Wencelas IV manipulated the movement to pursue his anti-Habsburg agenda. Those clerics who were sent by the Roman pontiff to preach against the Hussite movement were ignored, and the archbishop of Prague, having failed to enforce obedience to Rome, resigned. Hus's attempt to defend his views at the Council of Constance led to his condemnation and execution as a heretic in 1415. This only served to make Hus a martyr and to strengthen popular support for his teachings. The resulting conflict led to two civil wars in 1424 and 1434. The inability to control the Hussite Revolt moved Pope Martin V to proclaim a crusade, which was led in 1420 by the emperor-elect, Sigismund of Hungary, and a number of German princes and prince-bishops. The crusade was defeated by the Hussite armies, as was a second crusade in 1421 and a third in 1422.⁷⁵

The Hussite reform movement consisted of many factions, ranging from conservative reformers, who were found among the Bohemian and Moravian nobility and the faculty of the University of Prague, to social radicals who

wished to turn the world upside down. The latter included Taborites, so called after the town of Tabor, where many of them had migrated to share their unorthodox and revolutionary ideas, which struck terror in the hearts of ecclesiastical and temporal rulers throughout much of central and Western Europe. So great was the fear of the Taborites and other Bohemian radicals that there was perhaps more enthusiasm for crusades sent against them than those launched against the Turks. For their part, the Taborites put forward the brilliant and capable leader of the Hussite forces, John Žižka. Žižka's leadership of the Hussite armies was characterized by brilliant tactics and strong discipline together with religious zeal. Some of the anti-Hussite crusaders came from as far away as England and Burgundy, and one crusade was led by the English prelate Henry, Cardinal Beaufort. When they were not repelling German, English, and Burgundian crusaders, the Bohemian Hussites fell out among themselves because the nobility feared the radical groups that emerged during the Hussite Reformation such as the Taborites. In retaliation for foreign intervention, some Hussite military forces raided Saxony, Franconia, and the Upper Palatinate in southern Germany. Another crusade, sponsored by the pope and Julian, Cardinal Cesarini, and Albert V, Duke of Moravia, also failed to crush the Hussites. The mounting of crusades against Christian heretics, such as the Hussites and the Waldensians in the Alpine regions of France and Savoy, were failures and both sects survived into the sixteenth century when they merged with the Protestants. At the same time, the papacy and the Habsburgs needed to be wary of the continuing westward advances of the Ottomans.⁷⁶

Generally speaking, the religious wars of Europe were confined to the latter part of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. However, Bohemia experienced two centuries of confessional conflict that began with the Hussite Revolt and the execution of that precursor of the Reformation, Jan Hus, in 1415. Within four years of Hus's death, Jan Želivský, a priest and follower of Hus, led a crowd to reclaim the church where Želivský had been deprived of his benefice, and expelled the orthodox Catholic priest and congregation. From there, the angry crowd followed him to the New Town Hall to release a number of Hussite prisoners. When the Prague magistrates did not comply, the Hussites threw them from the top of the tower to the pavement below. This anticipated by two hundred years the more famous

defenestration of Prague of 1618, when several Habsburg officials were thrown out of a high window, which was followed by the Thirty Years War. The two centuries between these two defenestrations were filled with half a dozen anti-Hussite crusades and a full-scale revolt during which the Bohemian Hussites elected their own king, George of Poděbrady. This led to conflicts with Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus and with the Catholic Bohemian dynasty, the Jagiellonians. The Habsburgs became kings of Bohemia in 1526 in the person of Ferdinand I, who subsequently tried to reconvert his Czech subjects to Catholicism and who later invited the Jesuits to assist in this endeavor. Confessional clashes between the Hussites, some of whom displayed Lutheran sympathies, and the Catholics continued into the seventeenth century. The defeat of the Hussites and the German Calvinist prince, Frederick V, Elector Palatine, whom they had elected as king of Bohemia, at the Battle of White Mountain outside Prague began the Thirty Years War and the most thorough-going recatholicization undertaken anywhere during the Counter-Reformation.⁷⁷

Wars of the Reformation

Protestant thinkers generally condemned the Wars of the Crusades. Thomas Fuller, in his *History of Holy War* (1639), stated that they were excessively long, cruel, and costly. He had doubts about whether these incursions into the Holy Land could be regarded as just wars, and he suggested that an argument could be made that the Saracens possessed a legitimate title to the lands that they ruled. The only possible argument for calling the crusades a just war was that they were defensive in nature, which Fuller doubted. Sir Walter Raleigh stated that the Muslims had also put forward a similar argument. Both Fuller and Raleigh objected that one of the main goals of the Wars of the Crusades was to convert Muslims to Christianity by the sword, which they regarded as repugnant. Protestants generally saw the concept of holy war in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as an attempt by the papacy to undermine the power of princes.⁷⁸

It is no longer thought to be accurate to label the Wars of the Reformation as crusades. The preferred term is religious war. A religious war is a conflict in

which at least one of the belligerents bases its claim to be fighting a just war on religious law or beliefs. The use of the term religious war in early modern Europe was based on a claim to legitimacy, not on actual motivation, which was likely to be much more complicated and difficult to discern—especially considering that there were something like 250 wars in Europe between the late fifteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century, with at least 500 distinct belligerent parties participating. The term religious war seems to be more applicable to those wars fought after the middle of the sixteenth century.⁷⁹

Despite the wide influence that Martin Luther had on the settlement of religion and the emergence of more assertive secular governments in the Holy Roman Empire and Scandinavia, it cannot be said that he was a systematic thinker or that he was possessed of political imagination. His passions too often got the better of him and caused him to overreact—however sincere his desire for reform. He was notably consistent on one doctrine: that it was the duty of all Christians to obey constituted authority and never to resist it. Although true Christians did not need to be restrained and punished by the sword, Luther maintained that there were few true Christians in the world. The true Christian, however, submitted himself to the secular power and performed duties required by the prince because the sword was needed to preserve peace in the world and to restrain the wicked. Princes and magistrates were needed to maintain order, and only when peace and order reign could the word of God be preached and spread. In his pamphlet *Concerning Secular Authority* (1523), Luther stated that while the ruler also possessed the authority to reform the Church, he could not compel men to accept specific beliefs that were not sanctioned by Scripture or to worship in a certain way contrary to the same.⁸⁰

In his *To the Christian Ruling Class of the German Nation* (1520), Luther rejected the traditional Catholic teaching that secular rulers have no jurisdiction over the Church or that only the pope could summon a church council and that the pope possessed authority to depose princes. Luther also denied that there was any distinction between clergy and laymen because baptism consecrates all Christians and makes them all priests. Bishops and priests can baptize and consecrate only because the whole Christian congregation has delegated to them that sacerdotal authority that belongs to

all Christians. Princes and magistrates were ordained by God “to punish evil-doers and to protect the law-abiding,” and this authority to correct extended over the clergy as well as the laity, and could be exercised without hindrance from popes, bishops, and priests. This gave the princes the authority, from God, to reform all things pertaining to religion as long as they abided by sacred Scripture. Luther believed that those portions of canon law that decreed otherwise were devised by the “archdevil himself.” Luther was too naive to see that the princes would not always act in the best interests of the Christian community. Accepting Luther’s invitation to reform the churches within their jurisdictions, the German princes established Erastian churches. Although Luther thought that princes were often fools, he recognized his dependence on them when the Peasants’ Revolt broke out in May 1525. Luther actually witnessed some of the violence on a journey through Thuringia, and he subsequently wrote a ferocious pamphlet entitled *Against the Robbing and Murderous Hordes of Peasants* (1525), in which he urged the princes to crush the rebellion with whatever means were necessary.⁸¹

Theological and political discourse in sixteenth-century Europe had moved beyond the confines of the academic world, and became abusive and incendiary. In Germany during the early stages of the Reformation, there had been attempts to keep the debate within an academic setting and in Latin. But the Protestant and Catholic reformers, even if they came from an academic background, could not resist the temptation of playing to a popular audience by way of sermons preached and books published in the vernacular—the latter of which took advantage of the printing press and lower costs of production. Like medieval popes and inquisitors, they staged book burnings to catch the attention of the public. The debate grew especially acrimonious in France where royal authority was weakened in the second half of the sixteenth century, and as Andrew Pettegree says, the Protestants “encouraged disobedience and disorder within families” and opened divisions within French society that led to religious and civil war. The Catholic polemicists, for their part, depicted heresy as such a monstrous thing that popular outrage and violence led almost inevitably to such events as the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in Paris.⁸²

Considering what had happened in Bohemia during the Hussite disturbances of the fifteenth century, it is small wonder that the Lutheran Reformation unleashed forces of social and economic unrest. Religious protests provided a

degree of ideological unity to disparate social and economic grievances that troubled the feudal and seigneurial societies of the German states as well as those lands within and bordering Habsburg Austria, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Swiss Confederation. Rural and urban communities both suffered from population pressure and inflation, and wages and rents had not adjusted to these changed economic conditions. The imperial knights, or the lesser nobility of the empire, were losing power and influence to the territorial princes and the imperial free cities, and their lawless and undisciplined habits did not accord well with the new political and military order. Many served as mercenary soldiers to eke out a living, while others lived as robber barons. The problem was especially acute in southwestern Germany where Franz von Sickingen led the Knights Revolt of 1522–23. Their armed protest failed, and when they retreated to their castles for a last stand, their outmoded defensive walls were easily demolished by artillery.⁸³

The peasants' situation was even more desperate. Increasing population had made their labor less valuable than it had been in the fifteenth century when the workforce was still contracting following the fearful mortality that resulted from the Bubonic Plague. They faced the threat of enservment and greater demands on their labor, higher rents, and seigneurial dues, together with a diminishment of rights of common in pastures and woodlands. As so many of their ancestors had done before them in the medieval period, they vented their rage against these injustices by banding together in localized peasant revolts. In the period 1513–17, larger peasant leagues began to emerge in southwestern Germany and Switzerland such as the German one employing the *Bundschuh*, or laced peasant's boot, as a symbol of unity in protest against seigneurial exactions. In 1525, the Swabian peasants joined in a league and put forth their "Twelve Articles" protesting such matters as excessive rents and dues, game laws, loss of rights of common, and payments of church tithes, which revealed more explicitly the influence of religious reforming movements. The most serious combination of peasant social and economic unrest, together with religious protest, erupted under the leadership of Thomas Münzer of Zwickau, who preached social revolution and hatred of both Catholics and Lutherans, and became the leader of the peasants' army in 1525. He was executed after the Battle of Frankenhausen when the peasant army was defeated. Following the brutal suppression of the participants in this uprising, Luther regretted

some of the harsh words he had written earlier, when he had urged the German princes to put down the peasants' revolt.⁸⁴

Pope Leo X was so distracted by the threat of renewed Turkish expansion into Europe under the leadership of Suleiman the Magnificent that he overlooked the danger to Christian unity posed by Martin Luther. Unlike earlier challenges to Catholic orthodoxy, the Lutheran Reformation spread rapidly by means of inexpensive printed books and pamphlets, and German princes who wished to challenge imperial authority also took advantage of the need of both papal and imperial authorities to worry about the Turks who had pushed their way as far as Belgrade in 1521 and were laying siege to Vienna in 1529. Thus, the Turks and the Lutherans were unwitting partners in diminishing papal power and allowing Protestantism to expand. For their part, Luther and his followers were little interested in joining a crusade against the Ottoman Turks that would be proclaimed under papal authority and led by a Catholic prince.⁸⁵

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V was a steadfast enemy of Lutheranism and an upholder of Catholic orthodoxy, but the necessity of diverting his attention to the *comuneros* rebellion of 1520–21 in Spain, the wars with Turkey and France, and the arduous task of governing a vast and incoherent dynastic empire prevented him from dealing more effectively with the spread of Lutheranism and the recalcitrance of the many German territorial princes within the Holy Roman Empire who chose to become Lutheran. The Lutheran states had trouble reading the emperor's intentions, and in 1531, formed a defensive alliance called the Schmalkald League, which was intended to prevent the enforcement of the Edict of Worms that aimed at stopping the spread of Lutheran ideas. The resolve of the Lutheran states and cities was stiffened when they learned of the formation in 1533 of the Halle League, made up of Catholic states and towns. There were also other distractions. Religious warfare had already shattered the peace in Switzerland, and the advance of the Turks on Vienna compelled Charles V to agree to a truce in Germany. Because of numerous delays and attempts to work out a compromise, war did not actually break out between the Schmalkald League and the Catholic and imperial forces until 1546, and by 1547, the emperor had defeated the Lutheran states' armies. By this time, of course, Luther was dead. After a generation of Lutheran evangelization, Catholic unity was destroyed. There was no going back, and both Lutheran and Catholic states were disposed to

accept the status quo, which was embodied in the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555. While other European rulers and governments also attempted to impose religious settlements on their territories requiring adherence to a state church and providing punishments for those who did not conform, such as Spain, Portugal, the Italian states, and the British kingdoms, the religious situation in the Holy Roman Empire (including the German lands and much of Hungary), Switzerland, and France was too complex to admit of a similar solution. In general terms, the Peace of Augsburg brought a limited amount of religious toleration to Germany; the treaty specified that only one religion, as authorized by the ruler, could be practiced in each state or city. Anabaptists, Zwinglians, and Calvinists were excluded from the terms of the peace.⁸⁶

But the Treaty of Augsburg did contain some exceptions to the rule of one religion only in one jurisdiction. In a number of German towns, Catholics and Protestants were forced to accept one another as neighbors however much they disliked one another's religion. One such town was Biberach in Upper Swabia, a cloth town, where the Emperor Charles V in 1548, following the Schmalkaldic War, compelled the majority Lutherans to share the one parish church with the minority Catholics. This was one of a number of *Simultankirchen* in Germany. Each held their own liturgies conducted by their own clergy in the church, but by imperial decree, at different specified times. The church interior had a clock that rang out the hours to ensure that the allotted times were precisely observed. The Peace of Augsburg settled this issue permanently, and required the two groups of worshipers to cooperate. Other biconfessional towns included Ulm, Ravensburg, Dinkelsbühl, Donauwörth, Aachen, Augsburg, Colmar, and the Dutch city of Maastricht. Biconfessionalism was also guaranteed in hundreds of urban and rural communities in France by the Edicts of Nantes. In Augsburg, the largest of the biconfessional cities, antagonism between the two religious factions was especially fierce, and they continued to be confrontational well into the eighteenth century in an attempt to maintain their confessional identities; yet, the Lutherans and Catholics obeyed the law and managed to govern the city together because the right of each to hold municipal and guild offices as well as to worship separately was guaranteed by law. The consequence of the Peace of Augsburg was political fragmentation carried to an extreme, but it ended violent religious conflict in the German states for more than half a century.⁸⁷

There were always those who rejected force as a means of maintaining Christian unity. Georg Wetzel was a German priest who followed Luther for nine years before returning to the Catholic Church. He was opposed to religious war because he thought it was incompatible with Christianity, and declared that “it behooves the wise man to try all things rather than weapons.” Wetzel was a Christian humanist and an admirer of Erasmus who devoted his career to attempting to reconcile Lutherans and Catholics. He was very much a Catholic reformer, but in his own way. He sought to strip away the dogmatic and liturgical accretions of the centuries, and return to the simple liturgy of the second century, which would have incorporated sermons based on the Gospels, communion in both kinds, and prayer in the vernacular language—all of which were features that would have appealed to Lutherans and other Protestants. Wetzel remained convinced that dialogue could reunite Christians. There were also Protestants, such as Philip Melanchton and Martin Bucer, who were prepared to engage in dialogues or colloquies, such as the one held at Regensburg in 1541 with Cardinal Contarini.⁸⁸

But other voices prevailed. The Lutheran and Zwinglian attacks on Catholic doctrine and worship provoked a Catholic reaction known as the Counter-Reformation or the Catholic Reformation. This movement was based in part on decrees issued by the Council of Trent (1545–63), but it also incorporated older reforming efforts. The Counter-Reformation was spearheaded by the founding of new religious orders such as the Jesuits, the Theatines, and the Capuchins, or reformed Franciscans. Although persuasion may have been the dominant thrust of the Counter-Reformation, force always lurked in the background. The half century of peace that followed the Peace of Augsburg was undermined by the militancy of the Emperor Ferdinand II, who had been taught to hate Protestantism by his Jesuit tutors. Ferdinand’s Jesuit confessor, William Lamormaini, thought that the emperor had a divine mandate to restore Catholicism in Germany and the Habsburg lands. Lamormaini derived this idea from the Old Testament notion of holy war. Ferdinand began to extirpate Protestantism when he was entrusted with the government of the Austrian province of Styria, and next he turned his attention to Bohemia as king of the Bohemians. As ruler of that country, Ferdinand instructed the papal nuncio, Giovanni Caraffa, to close all Protestant schools, purge the University of Prague of all Protestants, and compel townsmen, landowners, and peasants to become

Catholics or suffer fines and imprisonment. Probably a quarter of the landowners and townsmen left Bohemia rather than convert to Catholicism. Ferdinand's views were shared by Maximilian of Bavaria, who was his chief ally at the beginning of the Thirty Years War. One of Ferdinand's most provocative acts was the Edict of Restitution of 1629, which sought to recover all lands of the Catholic Church that had been secularized or had fallen into Protestant hands since 1552.⁸⁹ During the reign of Ferdinand II and continuing through the reign of Charles VI, much of Bohemia, Austria, and the German lands of the Habsburg Empire were reconverted to Catholicism. The methods used were to isolate Protestant communities, to sever their communications with Protestant centers elsewhere, and to prevent stubborn individuals from emigrating, a right guaranteed under the Peace of Westphalia. Protestant congregations were placed under the supervision of Catholic prelates, and individuals were conscripted into military service or forced labor and denied the right to hold public office. Some were sent to regions farther to the east on the Turkish-Hungarian frontier. The Jesuits preached their sermons with soldiers in the background, and the result was often no more than outward conformity.⁹⁰

The impact of the Counter-Reformation was delayed in France by the religious and civil wars and by royal hostility to ultramontane influences, but it flourished in the lands ruled by the Habsburgs, where it was skillfully harnessed to further dynastic ambitions. The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrsis of 1559 favored the Habsburgs—especially the Spanish branch: it established Spanish hegemony in Europe, terminated the illusion of papal political power in Italy, and put an end to France's hegemonic ambitions as well its role as an ally in European politics of the Ottoman Turks. The political landscape of Italy had also changed in the years preceding the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrsis. The Spanish Habsburgs had consolidated political control in the Italian peninsula despite French efforts to prevent this. Milan had become a military base to supply the Spanish Army of Flanders by way of the "Spanish Road," an overland supply route between northern Italy and the southern Low Countries. Under Spanish hegemony, the rulers of the Italian states such as Florence constructed very powerful absolutist states with the instruments of finance and military force.⁹¹

War and rebellion dominated the politics of the Spanish Empire. Whereas Charles V, like a medieval king, had led his soldiers into battle, his son Philip II was a monarch who ruled and made war through a bureaucracy. Being

unfamiliar with the unpredictable nature of warfare, he assumed that the end of the wars with France after the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis afforded him the resources to make war on the Ottoman Turks instead of going ahead with plans to seek a truce. Philip did not believe in negotiating with rebels or heretics. He was unable to compromise or negotiate, and was extremely inflexible. This apparently arose out of his fear of appearing weak. This was a dangerous strategy considering the growing strength of Calvinism in France and the Low Countries. His policies for governing his subjects also led to rebellion and civil war. However, as conscientious a monarch as Philip was, his choice of Madrid as his capital city and his preference for employing Castilians as councillors encouraged a growing animosity between Castilians and Aragonese, Catalans, and other subjects who lived in places as separated as Naples, the Low Countries, New Castile, Portugal, and Brazil.⁹²

The political landscape of Italy had also changed in the years preceding the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Believing that the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis had brought peace to northwestern Europe, Philip II turned his attention to the Mediterranean and the Turkish foes. In planning his strategy, he overestimated Spanish resources for making war on the Turks and exaggerated Turkish decline. When he committed a major part of Spanish fiscal resources to the Mediterranean war effort, he left the Spanish viceroys in the Low Countries with insufficient means to deal with the Dutch Revolt. But he could not ignore the fact that the Turks were on the march, and that Italy and the islands of Malta and Cyprus were the principal barriers against Turkish expansion in the western Mediterranean. The Turkish naval forces had improved their effectiveness, and the Ottoman Turks had forged an alliance with the corsairs of Moorish North Africa. In fact, the Turks possessed enormous resources for making war, and the Islamic threat was heightened by the rebellion in 1568 of the *Moriscos* of Granada, the Moors who had supposedly converted to Christianity, but surreptitiously continued to practice the Muslim religion. Following the suppression of this revolt, the *Moriscos* were expelled from Granada and dispersed throughout Castile. Because of the continuing difficulty in assimilating the *Moriscos*, a quarter of a million of them were expelled from Spain in the reign of Philip III. After the Turks invaded Cyprus, Philip II acceded to Pope Pius V's urgent plea for a crusading war against the Turks, and a Spanish naval fleet, joined by the Venetians and

the Genoese, was launched to make war on the Ottomans. The battle was joined September 16, 1571, at Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth, and the Turkish navy was defeated.⁹³

The Revolt of the Netherlands grew out of aristocratic and popular discontent with Spanish rule, and a Calvinist opposition to the militantly Catholic practices of the Spanish Habsburgs, which were even more harsh in the Spanish Netherlands than in Spain. Nationalism also played an important role, and led to one of the longest of European conflicts, the Eighty Years War (1568–1648), as the Dutch call their war of independence. The Low Countries were divided by the conflict, and only the northern half gained independence from Spain. The southern half was occupied by the Spanish Army of Flanders, a well-disciplined force with competent leaders, while the configuration of the coast of the Northern Netherlands together with their many waterways and islands allowed the irregular Dutch naval forces, known as the “Sea Beggars,” to hinder the operation of the Spanish land forces in what became known as the Dutch Republic.⁹⁴

When Philip II inherited the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands in 1555 he was determined to crush Protestantism. He began by increasing the number of Catholic bishoprics in the Low Countries from four to eighteen, and he gained papal approval for appointing all of the archbishops and bishops. His revamping of the ecclesiastical government went hand in hand with the integration of the Inquisition into the episcopal administration of the dioceses so as to stop the flow of Protestant ideas, books, and refugees into the Low Countries. Philip’s attempts to confessionalize the Seventeen Provinces violated many local privileges and customs and was at variance with the more tolerant attitudes that characterized Netherlandish culture and society. Politically, it forced a number of burghers and noblemen into opposition. The reaction of popular Protestantism was to challenge the ecclesiastical establishment by delivering public sermons and mounting a wave of iconoclasm beginning in 1566, which destroyed images in hundreds of Catholic churches. After the armed revolt began, the Sea Beggars made it difficult for the Spanish Army of Flanders, under the command of the Duke of Parma, to operate in the maritime provinces such as Holland and Zeeland.⁹⁵

The establishment of the Reformed religion in the Province of Holland owed much to the forceful tactics of the Sea Beggars, who began occupying the

towns after 1571–72. Although the stadholder and leader of the Dutch revolt, William of Orange, worked for a policy of toleration of both Calvinism and Catholicism, the Beggars entered on a campaign of murdering priests—especially friars—and destroying Catholic buildings and images. It is open to question whether the Beggars were convinced Calvinists or merely antireligious. While William of Orange was devoted to promoting religious peace and toleration, he chose to finance the Dutch resistance to the Spanish with treasures plundered from Catholic churches rather than impose an unpopular tax. The Calvinists found that the cause of reform was not easy to carry out because the municipal corporations of Holland, which still included many Catholics, were uncooperative about assigning Catholic parish churches to Reformed congregations. This helps to explain why members of the Reformed religion continued to invade and vandalize Catholic parish churches. The magistrates of Leiden, Gouda, and other towns sought to deal with this popular violence and iconoclasm by closing Catholic churches, which effectively banned the Catholic liturgy. The prohibition against saying mass proved to be permanent, and as a consequence, many Catholic clergy departed. Thereafter, only Calvinist services were performed in public after the States General banned the Catholic mass in 1581 despite the fact that only a minority of the population were of the Reformed persuasion. This remained true as late as 1600. Yet, failure to attend the services of the Reformed Church was an offense, and membership came to be a requirement for holding public office. Whenever Spanish forces captured a town in Holland, Reformed ministers were sometimes executed. Consequently, most people chose to remain uncommitted to either religious faction. In the countryside, support of the Reformed religion was very weak.⁹⁶

As the more stringent members of the Reformed religion migrated from Flanders and Brabant to Holland and the northern provinces to escape Spanish control, they remained a minority because not all of their sympathizers were disposed to accept strict presbyterian discipline. Although they were a minority, they were well organized and attempted to forbid Catholic practices. At the same time, public sentiment was strong that no one should be compelled to accept one particular religion, and Catholics were tolerated as long as they did not worship in public. Above all, the Dutch magistrates wanted to maintain religious peace because discord would weaken resistance to the Spanish. The

Dutch were also well aware of the bloodshed that confessional disputes had brought in France and Germany. In 1578, the Synod of Dordrecht issued its *Supplication*, a document that advocated religious peace as a political solution to the growing discord among the Dutch religious parties and provinces. The *Supplication* was also meant to lend support to William of Orange's campaign for religious concord. Another widely circulated pamphlet, *The Admonition and Advice for the Netherlands*, attributed to the French Huguenot, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, also argued that religious concord must be the foundation of the Dutch Republic if it were to avoid civil war and survive. The persecution of heresy only led to sedition. Christians of different denominations should attempt to convert one another only by preaching, not by force. The Dutch religious compromise partly repudiated the teachings of John Calvin, who never accepted the concept of religious liberty, but it cannot be said to have granted full toleration because religious minorities were not allowed to worship in public.⁹⁷ Patriotic sentiment continued to identify Catholicism with loyalty to the Spanish regime, and the Catholic religion remained illegal and could only be practiced in private. Many Catholics fled south to the Flemish provinces, which remained under Spanish control while the seven northern provinces formed the loose confederation that became the Dutch Republic whose independence was recognized in 1648 at the end of the Eighty Years War. While Calvinism remained the only officially recognized religion, Jewish merchants and artisans fleeing persecution in Spain and Portugal, as well as others seeking an escape from repressive regimes, found a guarded welcome in Dutch cities such as Amsterdam, but this culture of toleration was not recognized by Dutch law.⁹⁸

The Dutch Republic was born of war; the central institutions of the Dutch state were almost entirely military and diplomatic in nature. The Dutch liked to cultivate the myth that they were a peace-loving people, and had no territorial ambitions in Europe nor war heroes. It is true that they were little motivated by honor or military reputation, but they were ruthless enough to pursue their economic ambitions in a number of naval and colonial wars. Their naval and military forces always contained numerous foreign mercenaries until the end of the Republic. The Dutch themselves preferred civilian pursuits—especially those of a mercantile nature, and they had a small demographic base and a relative scarcity of labor. For this reason, foreign volunteers and mercenaries,

especially from England, Scotland, and France, together with many Protestant volunteers from the German territories, made up for the small number of Dutch soldiers in the States' Army as the Dutch land forces were called. Under the leadership of the Stadholder Maurice of Nassau, later styled Prince of Orange, the States' Army became a highly trained and disciplined military organization that drew many gentlemen volunteers from all over central and northwestern Europe who wished to learn the latest methods of warfare that modern military historians associate with the Military Revolution. The Protestant movement in the Dutch half of the Netherlands was less rigidly Calvinist, more humanist, and politically flexible than was the case with the French Huguenots. Nor were all of the provinces of the United Netherlands as Calvinist as was the case with Holland and Zeeland. Catholics remained a strong minority elsewhere. For this reason, the Eighty Years War was less overtly religious than were the French Wars of Religion.⁹⁹

By the end of the sixteenth century Spain, drawing on the bullion that it had plundered in the New World, had built a huge empire, and had become the greatest power in the world, but had exhausted its resources on imperial and military adventures. When Philip III succeeded his father Philip II in 1598, the Spanish thought that their empire was greater than that of Rome and they had prospered thus far because they were, like the ancient Hebrews, a chosen people. They were also familiar with the belief, expounded by Polybius after witnessing the destruction of Carthage, that states are living organisms, and that periods of greatness are usually followed by decline and extinction. This made Philip III and the Spanish ruling class determined to preserve their empire and reputation. It was understood by political philosophers such as Giovanni Botero that preserving a state was more difficult than building an empire. This meant pursuing a foreign and military policy that would secure peace with the Dutch in their long war for independence from Spain without allowing it to appear that the Dutch had humiliated Spain and gained their independence. Likewise, the Spanish Habsburgs wished to secure an honorable peace settlement for their Habsburg cousins in Germany that would appease the Protestant princes and cities, and not drive them to take up arms again. This awareness of Spanish *declinación*, or decline, led to the policy promoted by Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-duke of Olivares, to reform the economy so as to increase revenues, maintain military strength, and preserve the empire. This

so-called *pax hispanica* led Spain to revive the war in the Netherlands at the end of the Twelve Years Truce in 1621, and to intervene in the Rhenish Palatinate and to help the Austrian Habsburgs crush the Bohemian Revolt at the beginning of the Thirty Years War.¹⁰⁰

French religious wars

One of the consequences of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was that France, having withdrawn from foreign wars, was led into religious and civil wars. The peace settlement came about because Valois France and Habsburg Spain were both on the verge of bankruptcy and feared the spread of heresy and confessional strife within their realms. As a result of Cateau-Cambrésis, England lost Calais, France retained a few former Imperial cities in Lorraine, but was expelled from the Italian peninsula and Corsica. Savoy emerged as a strong state and an ally of Spain. Since the head of the Montmorency family, Anne, Duke of Montmorency and Constable of France, was blamed for France's humiliation as one of the negotiators of the treaty, Charles of Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, and his brother, Francis, Duke of Guise, did everything they could to destroy their Montmorency rivals. Following the accidental death of King Francis II in a jousting tournament in 1560, royal power fell into the hands of Catherine de Médicis, the Italian queen mother and her four ineffective sons, but was much diminished as the Guises on the one hand and the Montmorencys and the Colignys on the other vied for control of the rival Ultra-Catholic and Huguenot factions. France could no longer afford foreign adventures as the country dissolved in a series of religious and civil wars. This diminished the Habsburg-Valois rivalry during the latter part of the sixteenth century.¹⁰¹

The Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis left impoverished nobles in France, who had previously fought in the Italian wars, without employment. The French crown depended on the support of the French nobility, who had willingly followed monarchs such as Francis I and Henry II when they personally led their soldiers into battle. However, Francis II, only fifteen years of age when he became king in 1559, lacked military experience, and was too young to play the commander. Many of the provincial governors of France were high-ranking nobles, who had fought in Italy or resided at court in the time of Francis I and

Henry II. But after the end of the foreign wars, they lived in the provinces that they governed and commanded large escorts of armed noble clients who followed them about when they traveled through their jurisdictions. This brought about a militarization of French society, which exacerbated the confessional disputes and undermined royal authority. Disaffected nobles who were denied patronage or who were disgusted by the corruption and venality at court and among the higher nobility were often attracted to the Huguenot party.¹⁰²

Protestantism in France first spread among the more humble social orders—especially urban craftsmen. However, in the 1560s, Calvinism made many converts among the nobility, and probably between one-third and one-half of French noble families became Huguenots at one time or another. Because there was so much popular hostility to the meetings and conventicles of the Huguenots, these noblemen, who mostly still regarded themselves as soldiers, took it on themselves to provide armed protection for the meetings, and organized themselves and their retainers into a sort of militia commanded by captains of congregations and colonels of provincial colloquies. Also, as a consequence of the numerous popular tumults of the latter part of the fourteenth century, the nobles had grown wary of arming the people. Thus, Huguenot communities had organized themselves along military lines, and were ready for action when the first of the religious and civil wars broke out in 1562. While the French nobility had been hit hard by the inflation associated with the Price Revolution of the sixteenth century and the lack of opportunity for winning martial glory and booty abroad after the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, the main reason for the recruitment of so many of the French nobility to the Huguenot cause probably had more to do with the influence of the bastard feudal system of patronage and clientage, which compelled many of the lesser noblemen to follow the political leadership of their patrons among the greater nobility.¹⁰³

In the medieval period, the Catholic Church often had a role in peace-making, but confessional divisions had diminished that role, and aristocratic feuding made the bitterness of the French Religious Wars even worse. The role of royal leadership became more important as the process of peace and reconciliation fell to the monarchy. Queen Catherine de Médicis played an important part at court at the beginning of the French Religious Wars, and her

influence on the peace-making process was significant. Although she was a staunch Catholic, her main concern remained the survival of the dynasty, which was represented by her four young sons. For this reason, she urged a compromise with the Huguenots, which resulted in the Edict of January 1562, also known as the Edict of Saint-Germain, which allowed the Huguenots a degree of freedom of worship. The thrust of royal peace-making was political and social unity rather than religious uniformity. However, the Huguenots' *prêches*, or meetings, could not be held publicly within walled towns. Some Huguenots were not content with these concessions since they expected parish churches to be handed over to them. The Catholic leaders were outraged by the arrogance of the Huguenots and began preparing for war. The first major act of violence occurred when the Duke of Guise stopped to hear mass in the town of Vassy. A large crowd of Huguenots had gathered in a nearby barn to attend their meeting. Since Vassy was a walled town, where Reformed worship was by law prohibited, the duke ordered the Huguenots to disperse, but, instead, the Huguenots threw stones at him. Guise's retainers fired into the barn where the Huguenots were meeting and killed 23 and wounded more than 100. When Guise returned to the predominantly Catholic city of Paris after the so-called massacre at Vassy, he was welcomed as a hero, and did his best to appeal for popular support for his cause. Queen Catherine recognized that Guise was a bad influence on her son, King Charles IX, and appealed to Henry, Prince of Condé, to rescue him from Guise's influence, which only worsened the factionalism. Condé refused the opportunity, but the French nobility began choosing sides for the coming conflict. However, Catherine's hand was strengthened in the Royal Council.¹⁰⁴

The teachings of John Calvin were the source of the Reformed religion in France. Calvin was born and educated in France, but had taken up residence in Geneva, in the French-speaking region of Switzerland, which may have limited his direct political influence, but did little to minimize his enormous intellectual influence as contained in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), which went through various revised editions and set forth the most systematic exposition of Reformed doctrine. Calvin's teachings concerning the role of Divine Providence are noteworthy for the uncompromising doctrine of predestination that instilled in Calvin's followers a militancy and fatalism that disposed them to believe that they were the agents of God's will on earth. The

Reformed religion was the most international variety of Protestantism, and Calvin's followers were responsible for helping to bring about the Religious Wars in France, the Dutch Revolt against Spain, the Thirty Years War in the Holy Roman Empire, not forgetting the religious and civil wars of the British Isles.¹⁰⁵ Calvin's doctrine of Divine Providence appears to obliterate human free will and to make use of evil agents to perpetrate horrors such as war and all its accompanying calamities to carry out His divine will. This appears to make God the author of all evil deeds, but Calvin made a distinction between what God did and what He permitted. Calvin thought that it was impious to attribute such evil deeds to His divine will.¹⁰⁶

When the Reformed religion began to take hold in France, Calvin was very careful not to become openly involved in the religious and political conflicts because he always emphasized the obligation to obey the civil powers when he wrote to the leaders of Reformed congregations in France. However, it does appear that Calvin had previous knowledge of the Conspiracy of Amboise of 1560 when some of the Huguenot nobility attacked a royal palace in order to free King Henry II from Guise influence. Calvin later privately expressed the opinion that the deaths of Henry II and Francis II were providential acts of deliverance. There were those who urged Calvin to come out openly and support the king of Navarre, whom many Huguenots viewed as a leader, but he had no wish to listen to "the noisy outcries of the multitude." Calvin taught that secular and spiritual government were quite distinct. The purpose of secular government was "to foster and protect the external worship of God" and "to defend pure doctrine." It should also promote civil concord and dispose good Christians to accept a mode of behavior compatible with "civil justice." Like Luther, he thought that while the elect of God might not need these restraints, "the effrontery of the wicked is so great, and their evil-doing so incorrigible, that laws of great severity are scarcely enough to keep them in check."¹⁰⁷

Calvin stated that rulers and magistrates were ministers of God, and subjects had no right to resist them. If a ruler was harsh and evil, then that might simply mean that he had been sent by God to punish the sins of his subjects. But Calvin did allow exceptions to the rule that subjects may not rebel against their princes: Sometimes certain divinely appointed messengers were charged with liberating good people from the rule of tyrants, or magistrates might sometimes act to restrain the evil deeds of tyrants. Although Christians had a general

obligation to obey their rulers, those rulers could also void their authority by stepping outside the bounds of good government. That would allow their subjects to resist them. It would seem that Calvin's political thought always contained ambiguities, which sometimes approached equivocation. Although he feared anarchy, Calvin also opened the door to tyrannicide. Some of Calvin's disciples, such as John Knox, even went so far as to openly advocate tyrannicide. And certainly, the Huguenot nobility had no qualms in resorting to armed rebellion, but they often clothed such resistance as the restoration of good government.¹⁰⁸

Calvin assumed that rulers and their appointed officials possessed authority to seek "public vengeance" on those who seditiously disturbed the peace by rebellion, and they could also use that same authority to punish those who invaded a country without right. It made no difference whether the foreign invaders were kings or "the lowest of the common folk." They were all to be regarded as robbers and punished accordingly. Calvin was especially fearful that countries might be invaded by Anabaptists or other radical sects. He was happy to see the attempt by the popular party of reformers who had attempted by violence to gain control of the municipal government of Schaffhausen, Switzerland, defeated. They had meant to impose a more radical religious settlement, and Calvin attributed their defeat to divine intervention.¹⁰⁹

The Edict of Saint-Germain of 1562 signified a noteworthy departure in royal policy in that it attempted to impose a political solution on the religious conflict of the preceding months, which had seen an attempt by the Guise faction, led by Francis, Duke of Guise, to control the young king, Francis II. This was followed by the Conspiracy of Amboise, by which the Huguenots attempted to seize the person of Francis II, which was thwarted by the Guise followers with much bloodshed. When Francis died in 1560, his younger brother Charles IX, who was three years of age, became king and his mother, Catherine de Médicis, appointed herself regent and drove the Guises out of the court. She subsequently sought to heal the breach by bringing representatives of the two factions together at Poissy in 1561. The Guises had responded to the Edict of Saint-Germain with the massacre at Vassy in March 1562. So began the Wars of Religion. The novelty of the Edict of Saint-Germain was that it broke with the formula of earlier Reformation religious settlements that had insisted that the ruler decided the religion of his or her realm and maintained

absolute religious uniformity. The Edict of Saint-Germain, which was authored by Catherine de Médicis, Michel de l'Hôpital, and Jean de Montlac, asserted the doctrine of tolerance as a means of maintaining political unity. Actually, the toleration granted to the Huguenots was quite limited, and this edict was meant to be only a temporary measure until unity of religious practice could be restored.¹¹⁰

The decision to impose a political solution and grant a degree of toleration to the Huguenots was determined partly by the fact that decisions in the Royal Council were no longer advisory, but were determined by a binding majority vote. These votes were very close, and Catherine de Médicis sought to avoid being identified with only one faction, but rather attempted to keep a dialogue going between members of the council without abandoning the initiative. The increasing importance of securing a majority vote within the Royal Council appears to reflect a growing view that sovereignty did not reside within the king's person, but rather in the concept of a larger sovereign body that incorporated the views and interests of those officials who were the enforcers of royal power, as well as the Parlements and the Estates General, which came to meet more frequently during this period. These ideas anticipated the later monarchomach concept of a mixed monarchy in which the king recognized that his personal power was limited. One adherent of the monarchomach school of thought, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, a Huguenot and a *politique*, went so far as to argue that there was a covenant among God, the king, and his subjects that justified rebellion if the king disobeyed God's commandments.¹¹¹

Even before the Religious Wars began in France, a loosely associated group of *moyenneurs* emerged that wished to pursue reconciliation between the Catholic and Reformed leaders. They included the queen mother, Catherine de Médicis, Michel de l'Hôpital, and a few royal councillors, prelates, and Sorbonne theologians. Their efforts were rooted in the Erasmian program of concord and their goal was a reunion of the different factions—perhaps by means of a church council. L'Hôpital realized that concord and reunion were distant prospects, and accepted the fact that France would, for the time being, have to live with a diversity of religious beliefs and practices, or what we call toleration, as a matter of practical politics. The alternative was religious warfare. Religion, he thought, was “what keeps a subject from obeying his king, and what causes rebellions.”¹¹²

The politiques were mostly a faction of Catholics who broke with the mainstream of Catholicism in France in the early 1570s. Their ranks included a few Protestants such as François de la Noue. Following the failed attempt of a royal army to take La Rochelle by siege from the Huguenot defenders in 1572, they realized that the Royalist forces lacked the resources to defeat the Protestants—especially the Huguenot leagues in the south of France—and came to believe that religious toleration, or the official recognition of two religions, was the only way to achieve peace. Some regarded the politiques as being little better than atheists; many were actually what we would call skeptics and utilitarians. They believed that toleration was the only way to avoid the breakup of the kingdom and achieve peace. Montaigne thought that the Religious Wars not only corrupted public morals, but that the differences between the two religions were exaggerated. Catholics and Huguenots had more in common than was generally admitted. Therefore, religious persecution was futile. At the same time, most politiques believed in a limited monarchy that needed to work with the Estates-General. Many were also drawn to Gallicanism, the belief in an autonomous Catholic Church in France, which would effectively limit papal intervention in French religious politics. In order to resist this papal interference, which was disinclined to accept toleration of heresy, the politiques were later drawn to uphold the concept of absolute monarchy. These were also the views of Henry of Bourbon-Navarre, the future King Henry IV, and the Huguenots who were also increasingly drawn to accept his leadership and the politique position.¹¹³

The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Guises were the leaders of the Ultra-Catholic party in France and did much to fan the flames of animosity by proposing a “Brotherhood of Catholics in France”; they also invited Catholic powers such as Spain and Savoy to intervene in France. The Parlement of Paris organized a militia, but the Holy League (*sainte ligue*) was mostly a provincial movement. Catholic militancy against the Huguenots was first mobilized in 1561 in the southwest of France, and the leadership was provided by the nobility, including some army officers under the command of Blaise de Monluc, with the assistance of local clergy.¹¹⁴ In Bordeaux, lay Catholics resisted attempts by Huguenots to alter the liturgy in a parish church by preaching a sermon along with a baptism, and by attempting to bury their dead in the parish cemetery. After demanding the church keys, Catholic parishioners

stoned the Protestants, and a riot broke out. Subsequently, the president of the Parlement of Bordeaux ordered the arrest of fourteen parishioners. The other parishioners immediately demanded their release. Citizens of Bordeaux and the inhabitants of the suburbs began organizing secret societies to protect the Catholic religion, and a number of members of the Parlement lent their support to those who resisted the Huguenots.¹¹⁵ Similar organizations appeared in Toulouse, where officers and soldiers swore to extirpate Huguenots and formed an association to which royal officials and the Cardinal of Armagnac lent their support. The Parlement of Toulouse authorized a Catholic League in March 1563, which had the power to levy taxes, swear adherents to obey its covenant and orders, and the authority to establish armories in every diocese and civil jurisdiction. Blaise de Monluc was appointed to command the Catholic League Army. Municipal and provincial leagues spread throughout the south, but a strong Catholic League movement did not develop in the north of France before 1568 when the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit was formed under the command of Marshal Saulx Tavannes, one of the procurers of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. The local companies of this Catholic League Army, which included many professional soldiers of all ranks, pursued Huguenots from village to village with firebrands, and burnt and demolished the houses and chateaux of Huguenots or anyone who sheltered them. Collectively, the actions of the Catholic militants took on the form of a crusade. The patronage of Catherine de Médicis was sought, and pamphlets began to appear setting forth the historical precedents for punishing heretics to be found in the Albigensian Crusade.¹¹⁶

The French Wars of Religion displayed the characteristics of confessional strife found in other wars of the period of the Reformation, but also retained some of the features of earlier crusades against the heretical Cathars of medieval France. Members of confraternities formed at Dijon and Toulouse during the first of the religious wars wore the white cross of the earlier crusaders when going into battle or defending their cities against the Huguenot enemy, and were granted indulgences by Pope Pius V. The white crusaders' cross was a sign of defiance against Huguenots, who held that symbol in particular horror. These newer confraternities resembled those that had been organized in 1212 at Marseilles by the papal legate for deployment against the Albigensians. The sixteenth-century confraternities frequently grew out of

guilds that had been formed by urban tradesmen, but were often joined by members of the nobility.¹¹⁷

Popular opposition in France to Protestantism often drew on popular religious rituals and organizations. These might imitate Good Friday processions or perhaps the dramaturgy of late-medieval flagellants; participants sometimes carried large crucifixes. Such processions often began at the door of the parish church with the priest carrying the Holy Sacrament. Among the religious organizations that perpetrated violence against Huguenots were lay religious confraternities. Some were newly founded to defend the Catholic faith against Calvinist reform; others were medieval confraternities revived after falling into disuse. These confraternities provided an organized outlet for the violence of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 in Paris. Similar incidents on a smaller scale in provincial towns such as Toulouse, Limoges, and Aix-en-Provence were also carried out by confraternities.¹¹⁸

As in German biconfessional cities, the frequent religious processions staged by Parisian Catholics flaunted the images, relics, and other symbols of their faith and enraged Protestants; the latter were derided because of their refusal to participate in these civic and religious spectacles. Catholic processions were frequent in the years during which religious conflict manifested itself. These processions expressed not just religious fervor, but also loyalty to the monarchy and community solidarity. To take part in such processions, as one clerical pamphleteer put it, constituted "a public profession of faith." They were also associated with the veneration of saints, such as Sainte Geneviève, a patron saint of Paris—a practice which especially offended Protestants. The increased frequency of such processions was associated with the diminution of royal power that led to the Religious Wars and the growth of heresy in Paris. Henry II, when he ascended the throne in 1559, ordered a procession specifically directed against heretics in which a number of them were burned at three different locations. Protestants responded with rioting and the smashing of statues in parish churches.¹¹⁹

The Huguenots invited the hostility of Catholics by setting themselves apart, affecting a moral superiority to their neighbors and refusing to participate in popular religious festivities. They also disrupted Catholic services with acts of violence and iconoclasm. Huguenot synods were often inflammatory, and the Wars of Religion had been preceded by Huguenot

revolts in a number of French cities, which also mobilized Catholic opinion against the Calvinists.¹²⁰

The Huguenots also contributed to the Wars of Religion by refusing to abide by the terms of the Peace of Amboise of 1563, which ended the First Civil War. This agreement specified that the royal government would protect and support the Calvinist religion in all towns where it prevailed except Paris; in one town in each jurisdiction, Calvinist preaching was to be allowed, and the royal government was to pay for the upkeep of the Huguenot army. In the countryside, Huguenot lords who were licensed to dispense justice might have preaching within their households. The Peace of Amboise was difficult to enforce because the royal army could not contain the violence; both Catholics and Huguenots were armed, and civil violence continued in many parts of France.¹²¹

As the religious warfare continued, the Huguenots were subjected to a great deal of popular violence. The horror of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of August 24, 1572, in Paris reverberated through provincial towns. Three thousand Huguenots, including their leader Admiral Coligny, were killed in Paris, and another 10,000 in provincial towns. During the rampages in Orleans, rioters broke into the houses of Huguenots and demanded money, plate, and jewels as ransom to spare their lives. The Protestants were then put to death whether they paid or not. All of this was done in the spirit of carnival. Similar massacres occurred in Bourges, Rouen, Meaux, Angers, Saumur, Lyons, Troyes, Bordeaux, Toulouse, and several other provincial cities following news of the bloody events in Paris. The leadership in these wholesale slaughters was usually popular, but the perpetrators claimed to be acting on the king's orders. This was often the pretext offered for earlier religious riots. In actuality, Charles IX had written to his provincial governors and lieutenants commanding them to prevent the spread of violence in their jurisdictions. There is good evidence, however, that these written instructions countermanded earlier verbal orders uttered by the king. Thus, the king's earlier words, perhaps hasty and ill-considered, may have contributed to the massacres. What can be said for certain is that the king failed to make his intentions absolutely clear. His subjects lost confidence in the Valois dynasty following these events.¹²²

The Huguenots maintained the upper hand from about 1560 until the massacres, when they lost much of their leadership. Thereafter, they went into decline. One of the reasons that the Huguenots never developed much of a

popular following in France was that they distrusted the common people because of the demagoguery of the Catholic League. The word *ligue* in French seems to have acquired a new meaning at this time, if, indeed, it was not a new word. It connoted anarchy. After 1580, the Catholic League became dominant and was sustained by the militancy of Ultra-Catholic ideology. The leadership of the Guises was largely nominal and limited to the national level; at the provincial level, Catholic preachers whipped up fanaticism among the commonalty.¹²³

From the beginning of the outbreak of violence in southern France in 1561, the motivation behind the civil wars involved more than just religious animosity toward the Huguenots. The various provincial Catholic leagues were drawn into the feud between the Guises and the Montmorencys, and became so truculent that they threatened the monarchy itself. The stronger monarchy that had emerged under Francis I and his late-medieval predecessors had weakened noble power and influence. As the manifesto of the Holy League circulated by Henry, Duke of Guise before his assassination in 1588, on the orders of King Henry III, made clear, the Guises and their supporters used the League to preserve and strengthen the powers of the Estates General and the ancient privileges of the nobility by curtailing the Renaissance monarchy.¹²⁴

The Wars of Religion also touched off various local popular riots and rebellions. Although these usually began as protests against heresy, the unrest eventually focused on the high taxes and other exactions caused by the wars, and on the inequities of the tax system, which largely exempted the nobility and the clergy. One symptom of the unease caused by these conflicts was that in provinces such as Dauphiné, many craftsmen and peasants dared not leave their houses unless armed with daggers or swords. In many places, they organized themselves into militias for protection. Both the royal army and the Huguenot forces as well as outlaw soldiers pillaged and terrorized the countryside in the late 1570s, and the commonalty felt that they also needed to be armed. This kind of popular unrest usually began as simple opposition to Protestant heresy mixed with social conflict and popular rebellion, and later developed into ultra-orthodox militancy. In short, the French Wars of Religion, and the widespread social and economic unrest that accompanied those conflicts led to a general arming of the population. Denis Crouzet sees a “triumph of war” taking root in French society and culture.¹²⁵

Altogether, the Catholics and the Huguenots fought eight religious and civil wars. Each conflict had been temporarily ended by a royal edict or peace treaty that granted certain concessions such as a limited right of worship for Protestants in certain places and the right to retain and fortify certain towns (but not including Paris and its suburbs, where popular support for Catholicism remained strong). The religious conflict engendered much bitterness, and each peace settlement sought to consign the memory of each side's grievances to oblivion. However, memories persisted and from these grew the religious identities of each party, thus making it more difficult to return to a state of peace. In the last of the peace settlements, the Edict of Nantes of 1598, the new Bourbon monarch, Henry IV, in effect, created a Huguenot state within a state by allowing the Protestants to retain and garrison some two hundred fortified towns. Just as each of the preceding peace settlements had proved temporary, Henry IV made it clear that the Edict of Nantes was meant to last only eight years until he could consolidate his rule under peaceful conditions. Religious identities had hardened for many Catholics and Huguenots, but the violence that accompanied the Religious Wars also caused many Huguenots to defect from the new religion. Political support for the Ultra-Catholic party also diminished as many moderate Catholics preferred to join the politique faction.¹²⁶

Thirty Years War

The process of confessionalization split the medieval Latin church into three confessional churches: the post-Tridentine Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Reformed or Calvinist Church. It placed an emphasis on religious identity, doctrinal orthodoxy, and observable outward behavior. The clergy underwent professionalization to prepare them for more effective preaching and pastoral work among the laity. This fostered ideologies that were confrontational. The rituals and beliefs of each faith were employed in such ways as to exaggerate the differences in religious identity and contributed much to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. An increased emphasis on organization and spiritual community led to stricter discipline and conformity among the Calvinists that separated the zealots from those who were not yet

deemed worthy to be full members of that elite spiritual community. Ultimately, the convergence of political interests and confessional solidarity led to the emergence of national identities during the many wars of this period.¹²⁷

The fragile religious peace imposed by the Treaty of Augsburg began to fall apart after 1603 in the biconfessional city of Donauwörth. In that year, on St. Mark's Day, the monks of the Catholic abbey mounted a procession through the mostly Protestant town. In subsequent years, the monks and the Catholic laity were violently confronted by angry Lutheran mobs who attacked their increasingly ostentatious processions. Because the Catholic minority possessed imperial immunity, the Emperor Rudolf II imposed a ban on the city and Maximilian of Bavaria occupied it with an army. Maximilian ordered the city's Lutherans to convert to Catholicism or leave the city. The result was that a number of Protestant territories and cities organized the Protestant Union, and in response, the Catholics also formed an armed league.¹²⁸

Religious conflict remained a part of almost all European wars until the end of the seventeenth century, but dynastic rivalries, competition for colonial empire and trade, and, in some cases, such as the Dutch Republic, Portugal, and the kingdom of Bohemia, an assertion of national identity also contributed to the continuing European conflicts. It was indeed an "age of iron"; standing armies had become the principal instruments of early modern sovereign states, whether they were republics or monarchies; and armies staffed by professional soldiers were dangerous when idle. War had become institutionalized.

The Thirty Years War (1618–48) does not easily fit the pattern of a religious war. While it is true that many of the noblemen who led the Bohemian revolt in Prague in 1618 were Protestants resisting Catholic pressure, they were also defending Bohemian identity and aristocratic power against Austrian Habsburg centralization. They were crushed at the Battle of White Mountain near Prague in 1620, and a more Teutonized nobility began to replace the Bohemian lords. The Calvinist Elector Frederick V of the Palatinate, who had unwisely allowed himself to be talked into becoming King of Bohemia, a title claimed by the Habsburgs, found that his German territories were overrun by the Habsburg army, and Germany was also drawn into the civil and religious conflict. Dynastic ambitions and an urge to grab territory led Christian IV of Denmark into the Thirty Years War on the pretext of helping the Protestants. The conflict expanded as the Dutch war of independence from Spain, known

as the Eighty Years War, became part of the struggle. Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, intervened in the German war after 1631, and campaigned extensively in Germany with armies that included many volunteers from Scotland and England. Many of these volunteers had joined the Swedish and Dutch armies to fight for the Protestant cause, but the motives of the rulers of Spain and France, which were also drawn into the Thirty Years War, were more concerned with dynastic rivalries and the expansion of trade. The Franco-Spanish conflict continued until 1659, after the Peace of Westphalia had ended the main conflict. On its peripheries, this European-wide conflict also spread into Eastern Europe in the war between Russia and Poland.¹²⁹

Because of the continuing threat posed by the Turks, the Habsburg emperors could not neglect the affairs of Bohemia and Hungary. Bohemia on the eve of the Thirty Years War was an economically advanced part of Central Europe. Because so much of Hungary was in the hands of the Turks, Bohemia was vital to the defense of the Habsburg Empire. However, besides being Slavic rather than German, perhaps as many as nine-tenths of the population of Bohemia and Moravia were Hussite or Protestant. They had a strong national identity, and were fiercely antipapal and anticlerical. During the time that Rudolf II (1576–1612) was emperor, he resided mostly in Prague and worked to preserve peace between Protestants and Catholics.¹³⁰ The situation in Hungary was perhaps even more dangerous. Bethlen Gabor, Prince of Transylvania, was the political leader of the Hungarian Protestants, who included Bohemian Brethren, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Hussites. He contested those parts of Hungary not controlled by the Turks in order to protect Protestantism, and at one point, he launched an incursion into Austria. The possibility existed that Bethlen might join the Turks in order to oppose the Habsburg-Jesuit Counter-Reformation, which the Turks encouraged by making Bethlen King of Hungary. Albert von Wallenstein, a Bohemian noble who was at first loyal to the Emperor Ferdinand II and had raised a large mercenary army for the Habsburg cause, was sent into Hungary to attempt to contain Bethlen's forces; Wallenstein later became too independent and ambitious, and was assassinated on the emperor's orders.¹³¹

The Thirty Years War was long viewed as one of the most destructive wars of European history. Earlier estimates of population decline as a consequence of the Thirty Years War stated that Germany, or the Holy Roman Empire, lost

between one-half and two-thirds of its population. More careful recent estimates, although far from precise, put the population loss at between 15 and 20 percent. Post-war demographic growth brought the German population back to its prewar level by 1700. The population losses were mostly caused by malnutrition and epidemic diseases rather than by battle casualties. Although the armies of the time were not very well disciplined, most commanders did make an effort to prevent injury to noncombatants.¹³² The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 repudiated the militancy of the Catholic Reformation. Otherwise, little was achieved toward granting religious toleration that had not been contained in the Peace of Augsburg. The terms of the Peace of Westphalia allowed individual princes and free cities to determine the religion of their subjects or allowed the latter to go somewhere else. It was also symptomatic of the decline of papal and imperial power.¹³³

Europeans now accepted that religious unity could never be restored, and that they must now learn to live with one another. It was also assumed that the Enlightenment that followed brought religious toleration to the European world. Benjamin Kaplan questions this argument and reminds us that more religious conflict followed. Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685 causing perhaps 300,000 Huguenots to flee France; the Duke of Savoy rescinded the edict of toleration that had been granted to the Waldensians. After the last Calvinist Elector Palatine died, his Catholic heir began to reinstate Catholicism in the Rhenish Palatinate and to force Protestants to abandon or share their parish churches. In retaliation, Catholics were persecuted in Prussia and other Protestant states of Germany. Religious civil wars broke out again in Switzerland in 1702. In England, anti-Catholic violence surfaced again in the so-called Popish Plot of 1678, in reaction to the Scots Jacobite invasion of England in 1745, and especially, during the Gordon Riots of 1780, when for two weeks, London was in the hands of a mob protesting Parliament's enactment of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1778. Although the philosophes advocated tolerance, most Protestants and Catholics continued to hate one another's beliefs and practices.¹³⁴

However, it can be said that the Peace of Westphalia ended large-scale religious conflicts within the Holy Roman Empire. This came about because of the emergence of a fully developed body of international law that recognized the constituent member-states as equals that were now free of the authority of

the Holy Roman Empire. This, in turn, owed much to the principles laid down in the writings of Vitoria and Grotius, who applied Roman law to new situations, and to the increasing tendency to view politics in secular terms without completely ignoring the legitimate concerns of religion. This transition to an era of many competing sovereign states brandishing their independent status by military and economic means also provided the opportunity for cooperation by more peaceful means. The Peace of the Pyrenees of 1659 likewise signified that France had succeeded Spain as the dominant power in Europe. That France asserted its military power during the reign of Louis XIV is widely recognized, but at the same time, France also exerted its influence by establishing a diplomatic service staffed by professional diplomats who took up permanent residence in all the courts and capitals of Europe. France led in the development of diplomatic practice, which was as important in asserting French influence as its military arm, and became a model for other sovereign powers. Significantly, French also replaced Latin as the diplomatic language at this time.¹³⁵

British and Irish civil wars

The British and Irish civil wars were the last of the European religious wars. There was always the possibility that religious armed conflict, so pervasive in mainland Europe, would spread to the British Isles, but unification of the Three Kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland under the Stuart dynasty and a Protestant king appeared to have lessened that prospect after 1603. This effectively closed off the possibility of intervention by France or Spain in Ireland. Also, by the end of the sixteenth century, the religious wars in the Low Countries had largely run their course. Although the religious conflict reopened on the Continent after 1618, the danger of it spreading to the British Isles had diminished. Both England and Scotland were mostly Protestantized by the beginning of the reign of James VI and I, and Catholicism retained a strong presence only in Ireland. By the 1640s, the Catholic powers of mainland Europe had fallen out with one another, and were too busy struggling for dominance to invade the British Isles. Insofar as religion influenced the English civil wars, the struggle was between two rival varieties of Protestantism.¹³⁶

If England was spared armed religious conflict in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there were those in the British Isles who were drawn to the religious wars of mainland Europe. Protestant gentlemen volunteers viewed service in the armies of the mainland European Protestant powers as a religious crusade. However, the rank and file who served under them in the English and Scots regiments of the Anglo-Dutch Brigade and the Scots Brigade of the Dutch Republic's army, as well as the armed forces of other Protestant powers, were usually impressed from among masterless men, but Protestant preachers and pamphleteers thought such rogues should not begrudge serving in a just war. Some of the lords, who commanded regiments in the Low Countries wars, recruited tenants by means of a feudal levy. Recruiting masterless men was thought to be a good way of cleansing the streets of London and the countryside of vagrants and criminals. In the last seventeen years of the reign of Elizabeth, an estimated 2 percent of the total population of England and Wales were impressed to serve in the wars in the Netherlands, Ireland, France, and naval expeditions to Spain, Portugal, and the Azores. Because of deaths from battle, disease and malnutrition as well as desertion, few of these men ever returned home. The Privy Council of Scotland followed similar policies of impressment—especially following the end of the Scots civil war in 1573. Probably 10 percent of the male population of Scotland served in various mainland European armies during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries both as impressed soldiers and as mercenaries. The numbers of English and Scots who served in the field forces of the Dutch army during the Eighty Years War varied between one-third and two-thirds of the total.¹³⁷

The civil wars in England were fought between two factions of Protestantism, but an exaggerated fear of popery certainly did help to bring on those civil wars. This largely derived from James VI and I's plans to marry Charles, Prince of Wales to the Spanish Infanta. The scheme was based on a desire to get the Spanish to agree to return the Rhenish Palatinate, which had been conquered by the Austrian Habsburgs following the foolish attempt by James's son-in-law, Frederick, Elector Palatine to become King of Bohemia, which had for some time been part of the Habsburg Empire. These marriage negotiations fell through. Charles was then married to Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII, King of France. It was widely feared that this marriage treaty contained

provisions to suspend enforcement of the recusancy laws penalizing English Catholics. The fear of the potential resurgence of Catholicism reflected a fear of the two greatest Catholic powers in Europe more than the potential for a revival of Catholic religious practice in England. English Catholicism had long since been marginalized.¹³⁸

Fear of popery at home and apprehension of the threat from France and Spain, the major Catholic powers abroad, helped to sow the seeds of division both in London and in the provinces, but the absolutist direction in which Charles I's rule was proceeding also aroused popular fears. The arbitrary governance, levying taxes without parliamentary approval, and the imprisonment of critics of the regime without trial in the common-law courts provided evidence that the king believed that he was above the law and the ancient constitution, and that he acted on that assumption. To these problems was added the intractable task of trying to govern three separate and distinct kingdoms—each with its own constitutional forms and religious preferences. Charles's subjects mostly adhered to the Anglican Church, while the better part of the Scots were Presbyterians and saw little difference between Anglicanism and Catholicism. In Ireland very few people belonged to the Anglican Church of Ireland, and hardly any of its clergy spoke Irish Gaelic.¹³⁹

One of the most important royal prerogatives that King Charles possessed was that of summoning and dissolving Parliaments. When the English constitution functioned in a healthy manner, meetings of Parliament allowed the king to become aware of his subjects' grievances, and king and Parliament worked together enacting statute law and authorizing the levying of taxes. Unfortunately, Charles I did not listen to good advice and thought that he could dispense with Parliament during the period of his personal rule between 1629 and 1640. After 1638, when the Scots moved in the direction of armed rebellion, Charles discovered that he did need Parliament in order to raise and pay for an army to bring the Scots to heel. More than any other country in Europe, except, perhaps, the Netherlands, the English were a well informed and politically aware people. When Charles finally summoned their elected representatives to Westminster in May 1640, he found that the members of Parliament were determined to secure redress of their grievances before they were willing to trust Charles with an army, and England began its descent into civil war.¹⁴⁰

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, a contemporary observer, a faithful servant of Charles I and a pious Anglican, did not think that religion was the main cause of what he called “the civil war and rebellion.” He stated that “religion was made a cloak to cover the most impious designs” of members of the Long Parliament. Clarendon was also of the opinion that Anglican clergy such as William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, intruded religious matters into the political affairs of the day; he was of the opinion that religion was a matter of private concern. Clarendon’s view was that the war was a conflict between Royalists, who were persons of honor, good lineage, and property, and Parliamentarians, people of mean birth and no reputation, who were jealous of their social superiors. The fear of popery, Clarendon thought, was a mere pretense. In other words, Clarendon’s account of the civil war and rebellion emphasized “class conflict,” as a later generation of historians would have put it.¹⁴¹

Thanks to the breakdown of official censorship during the Interregnum, we have inherited a vast contemporaneous literature in which the religious reasons for justifying the English civil wars from the viewpoint of both parties to the conflict are recorded. It is important to remember that popular political discourse in the British Isles at this time had not yet become fully secularized. Both sides produced numerous arguments to assure their audiences that they were fighting a just and necessary war, sanctioned by the Lord. The Parliamentary army was always well equipped with chaplains and preachers, and the soldiers often went into battle singing hymns. The rhetoric of the two contending armies would have been familiar to those who had fought in the mainland European religious wars, and their justifications for taking up the sword reached back to St. Augustine and drew on the examples of holy war in both the Old and New Testaments. Their religious convictions were sustained by the belief that God was on their side. Religion was still a useful propaganda tool.¹⁴²

In Scotland, a seemingly trivial issue of contention between the crown and the Scots arose from Charles I’s peremptory treatment of the Scots nobility and his attempt to make them abide by the very formal English court rituals. As in England, the religious side of the conflict was also between two incompatible forms of Protestant church government—the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland and Charles’s attempt to impose on the Kirk an episcopal type of church

government and an Anglican liturgy. When Charles was crowned king of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Scots were horrified by the elaborate rituals and pageantry of the king's coronation ceremony, which the Scots thought was excessively popish and that were conducted by an archbishop and a bishop—officials who had no place in the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Kirk. It was a clear indication that Charles meant to alter the presbyterian government of the Kirk. The following Sunday an Anglican service was conducted in the High Church, formerly the Cathedral of St. Giles. The direction in church polity that Charles was pursuing had become all too obvious, and it was unacceptable to the Scots. It should hardly have caused any surprise that the first of the king's subjects to rebel were the Scots who did so by proclaiming their National Covenant in 1638. The so-called Bishops Wars that followed were the first of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms—the British and Irish civil wars. The ramshackle army that King Charles put together with militia units and tenants of royalist gentry and peers was no match for the Covenanting Army that the Scots assembled from amongst experienced Scots veterans of the Thirty Years War. The need to finance his army led Charles to summon two English Parliaments in 1640, which led to an impasse between the king and his subjects. Thus, began the first of the three English civil wars.¹⁴³

Religion played an even more important role in the Elizabethan Irish wars and the later civil wars of the 1640s, but national identity was also very important. England had never conquered Ireland in medieval times beyond the English Pale, a small group of counties surrounding Dublin. The English regarded the Irish as pagans and barbarians comparable to the Turks, the indigenous peoples of the New World, or even the Scythians. As late as the reign of Elizabeth, the English crown failed to recognize the Irish as subjects with legal rights. They were viewed as rebels and were not accorded the usual treatment allowed to enemy prisoners in the mainland European wars. Consequently, the Irish rebelled frequently during the Elizabethan wars in that unfortunate island. Both sides assumed that the only way of settling their differences was by war.¹⁴⁴

The question of national identity was complicated by the existence in Ireland of several distinct groups. The Old English of the Pale and the littoral settlements of the Province of Munster had lived in Ireland for many generations, and many were descended from the Norman conquerors. They

were disposed to loyalty to the English crown, but since they remained Catholic, they were alienated by the Protestantizing policies of the crown. Many of the mostly Protestant New English had gone to Ireland during the Elizabethan period as soldiers and behaved like Spanish *conquistadores*; they carved out estates by displacing the Gaelic Old Irish who defiantly continued in their attachment to Catholicism. The latter retreated into the bogs and forests and resisted their conquerors by the tactics of guerilla war. Both sides frequently hired redshanks and gallowglasses, who were mercenary warriors brought over from Scotland.¹⁴⁵

The Irish Civil War (1641–53) in its early stage was a contest between the Royalist forces on the one hand and the Scots Covenanters and the new British settlers in Ulster and Munster, who chose to side with the English Parliamentarians in their rebellion against Charles I. Between 1642 and 1649, the situation was complicated by the existence of a third entity, the Catholic Confederation of Kilkenny, which hampered the Irish cause by dividing the Catholic ranks. The Scots Covenanters also maintained a separate army in Ireland, so for a time, there were four distinct armies campaigning in the field.¹⁴⁶

The Protestant faction in the Irish Civil Wars recruited followers by greatly exaggerating reports of a Catholic massacre of Protestants and using the same for purposes of propaganda. Some deaths did occur as the native Irish reclaimed lands from which they had earlier been forcibly ejected. But most of these deaths resulted from hunger and disease. The lords justices of Ireland estimated the number of deaths caused by the so-called massacres at 154,000, but a more accurate figure would be 6,000. The animosity between Protestant and Catholic certainly made the Irish Civil Wars more brutal. Because of the rumors that they heard about the massacres, English Parliamentarians such as Oliver Cromwell and Henry Ireton resolved that revenge must be exacted and the Irish would have to pay in blood for these alleged atrocities. Participants claimed that the cruelties inflicted on combatants and noncombatants alike were worse than those perpetrated by the Turks and Christians during the Wars of the Crusades. The Catholics said that Irish soldiers taken prisoner were immediately put to the sword, and in Britain, Irish soldiers captured there were usually hanged until Prince Rupert of the Rhine, a Royalist commander, threatened retaliation on Parliamentary prisoners.¹⁴⁷

When Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, became lord deputy of Ireland in 1632, he managed not only to estrange every important group in Ireland, but also to unite them in opposition to his rule. He alienated the Old English by undercutting the power of the Irish Parliament to criticize his policies, by weakening the protections of land ownership that had been granted by King Charles in return for loans to the crown made in 1628, and by reneging on promises made by the king to relax the Irish penal laws against Catholics; he also expropriated the lands of the Old Irish and attacked their religion, their Gaelic language and customs; and he offended the Scots settlers in Ulster by purging their church of Presbyterian practices and ministers, and by imposing fines on the latter when they departed from the conditions of their tenancies.¹⁴⁸

Another Irish group whom Strafford offended were the New English, whose antecedents had come to Ireland in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to make their fortunes by dispossessing the Old Irish. Looking for ways to make the government of Ireland pay its way, Strafford inaugurated the Connacht Plantation scheme. This would raise money by selling land grants in the west of Ireland, and it also fitted in with the policy of civilizing the Gaelic Irish by moving them to Connacht and making them tenants of the New English. The latter could be expected to support such a policy because they stood to acquire some of the lands from which the Old Irish were being evicted. Strafford meant to squeeze money out of the New English as well by compelling them to return church lands that they had acquired earlier in an irregular manner. He demanded the return of these alienated church lands in order to introduce the Anglicanizing reforms that were sponsored by Archbishop William Laud, his partner in forcing through absolutist policies of Charles I. The New English and the Ulster Scots were much offended because these Laudian reforms had a distinctively popish flavour.¹⁴⁹

The Wars of the Three Kingdoms took a heavy toll—even by comparison to the two World Wars of the early twentieth century. In the latter conflicts, the mortality rate for combatants and noncombatants alike never exceeded 2 percent of the population of Britain. The English civil wars resulted in 75,000 deaths in battle, and probably 105,000 died as a result of disease and accident, which probably represented 3 percent of the total population. Scotland suffered 25,000 battlefield deaths and another 35,000 died due to disease and accident,

which constituted 6 percent of the population.¹⁵⁰ The civil wars in Ireland, between 1641 and 1652, were comparable in their destructiveness to the Thirty Years War, and lasted longer than they did in England and Scotland. The population of approximately two million was reduced by a third, and at least 200,000, and possibly as many as 300,000, people died as a direct result of hostilities. In addition, many were displaced from their lands and died of disease or hunger. Irish soldiers, known as “wild geese,” were dispersed abroad in mainland European armies for generations thereafter. Those Catholic Irish who remained at home were denied the basic rights of subjects of the crown, and were dominated by English and Irish Protestants, whom they regarded as alien conquerors.¹⁵¹

Because of their departure from the methods and rules of war that characterized the civil wars of England and Scotland, the Irish civil wars need to be discussed at some length. After the beginning of the Third Civil War in England, the fighting also resumed in Ireland. The laws of war, which had come to be accepted on the European mainland, had little influence in Ireland where it was usual for victors to slay the defeated when they were taken prisoner. Only the prospect of ransom could bring mercy. When Cromwell took command of the Parliamentary forces in Ireland, he told his officers that God had commanded them to crush the barbarian Irish as the Israelites had slaughtered idolaters in the land of Canaan. In September 1649, Cromwell besieged the well fortified walled town of Drogheda that commanded the mouth of the River Boyne. He first called on the commander of Drogheda to surrender; when the latter refused, Cromwell began a heavy bombardment and finally breached the walls with great loss of life. Cromwell allowed no quarter, and some 3,500 Irish were killed. The following month another massacre of the same magnitude occurred at Wexford, which offered no resistance after a traitor opened the gates. Cromwell’s men slaughtered noncombatants as well as soldiers. This was followed by similar massacres at Carrick, Callan, and Gowran Castle. The Cromwellian conquest of Ireland was consolidated by large-scale confiscations of land. The Catholic proprietors and tenants were driven westward to the barren lands of Connacht. This forced removal was accompanied by much brutality because Cromwell and many of his senior officers believed that the Irish needed to be punished further. Cromwell supposedly remarked that those Irish who had taken part in the

rebellion against the authority of Parliament were to have the choice of going to Hell or Connacht.¹⁵²

Cromwell was able to defeat the Royalist and Catholic Confederation armies in Ireland because of the disunity among these factions. This divisiveness can be traced back to the failure of the Gaelic or Old Irish to reconcile with the Old English of Leinster and Munster—despite the Catholic beliefs that they shared. The Irish civil war was well under way before the Old English lords of Munster joined forces with the Gaelic Irish following the formation of the Catholic Confederation at Kilkenny in 1642. The prospects of the Catholic forces were much improved with the arrival later that year of experienced military commanders such as Owen Roe O'Neill and Thomas Preston, who had served in the Spanish Army of Flanders. O'Neill, in particular, brought with him several hundred experienced officers and noncommissioned officers who introduced their Irish recruits in the Confederation's Ulster army to the latest continental European battlefield tactics, which allowed his army to become a formidable force. Otherwise, the Confederate army remained badly divided because the Old English lords, led by James Butler, earl of Ormond, continued to work for a closer alliance with the Royalists, while the Gaelic Irish sought closer ties with Spain. The dispatch of a papal nuncio, Cardinal Rinuccini, to Kilkenny in 1647 did little to promote unity among the Confederates. Rinuccini took a hard line against the members of the Supreme Council, which had governed the Confederation for the previous five years, and excommunicated those who did not agree with him and sought a compromise peace with the Royalists, which would have ended the Recusancy Laws and discrimination against Catholics in Ireland.¹⁵³

The victors in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms were the English Rump, or purged Parliament and its army, the New Model, a well disciplined force led by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell. The people of England and Wales were not as divided by religious or ethnic animosities as were the peoples of Scotland and Ireland. In England there existed wide recognition and acceptance of Parliament as a national institution, and the only real threat to this unity came from the Leveller revolt within the army, which the generals easily suppressed. The civil wars in Ireland and Scotland displayed many of the characteristics of religious conflict, but in England religious sects so proliferated that none could completely dominate the others. As Adam Smith later

explained, this was how religious toleration eventually came about. Cromwell had been the scourge of Irish Catholics and his atrocities cannot be forgotten, but Cromwell always considered Irish Catholicism to be a political religion, and he thought its links to Spanish Catholicism posed a threat to religious liberty for Protestants. Cromwell never believed in full religious toleration, but he was willing to allow more religious freedom than most other English rulers of the seventeenth century. As lord protector of the Commonwealth or English Republic, he allowed Catholics and Anglicans to worship in private without disturbance. Cromwell told Cardinal Mazarin of France that he wanted to grant more liberty of worship to Catholics, but political considerations such as the opposition of Parliament and his council stood in the way. Alexandra Walsham makes the useful distinction between concord and toleration in Anglican thought that continued to cling to the notion of the indivisibility of religious truth. Full toleration of non-Protestants was conceded only very slowly; legal recognition of Catholic worship was not granted by Parliament until 1778, and full civil rights were not restored until 1829.¹⁵⁴

The concept of holy war, in the various guises of the medieval crusade and the Reformation wars of religion, was never fully accepted in the mainstream of Western political theory because the usual legal and moral justification for declaring war was based on the concept of just war. That doctrine had its roots in classical antiquity, and always had its defenders during the medieval period. Except for periods when the papacy or other religious leaders asserted themselves when temporal authority and power were weak, it was usually assumed that only the recognized leader of a political society or a sovereign ruler possessed the right and authority to declare war.¹⁵⁵ The sovereign states that emerged during the Renaissance and early-modern period of European history could not allow contending religious and aristocratic factions to disrupt the peace, as happened in France during the latter part of the sixteenth century. Violent confessional conflict came to be classified as civil war or nonwar, which could not be considered just war.¹⁵⁶ For this reason, most states that aspired to sovereign status pursued Erastian state churches if they were Protestant, or severely limited the authority of the popes and bishops if they remained Catholic, as was the case in Spain and with the Gallican Church in France. The latter monarchies were major powers, and could apply pressure on

the papacy to grant extensive royal control over the Catholic Church within their realms because they wielded military and political power in Italy or were in close proximity to the Italian peninsula. Also, both Spain and France gradually eliminated earlier policies of tolerating religious minorities. Spain had expelled the Jews and *Moriscos* who refused to convert to Catholicism, and Louis XIV revoked the Edicts of Nantes that had allowed the Huguenots to worship in certain designated places.

Increasingly, in the early modern period, political philosophers as well as monarchs rejected religion as a valid reason for going to war. In his *The Law of War and Peace*, published in Latin in 1625, Hugo Grotius argued that relations between states should be grounded in natural law and historical experience. This, of course, embodied the just war tradition, but it also reinforced the growing secularization of political thought. Grotius insisted that the only grounds for a just war were “the defence of persons and property.” He denied that the Church or the Holy Roman emperor had the authority to declare offensive war.¹⁵⁷