

THE JESUITS AND THE
THIRTY YEARS WAR
KINGS, COURTS, AND CONFESSORS

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CHAPTER 1

Setting the Scene

AT about nine o'clock on the morning of May 23, 1618, members of a Protestant assembly meeting in Prague burst through the door of the Hradschin Castle and forced their way up the narrow staircase into the council room. There they confronted four of the ten regents appointed by the Habsburg Emperor Matthias to govern the Kingdom of Bohemia. Two regents were the object of their assault, Vilém Slawata and Jaroslav Martinitz, reputed to be advocates of an imperial policy to recatholicize Bohemia and establish an absolute royal government. A spokesman for the intruders accused the two of attempting to subvert the Letter of Majesty of 1609, which guaranteed widespread religious freedom in the kingdom. So they deserved to be treated as enemies of the common welfare. Five assailants seized Martinitz and, despite his plea for the chance to go to confession, pitched him out the window and certainly, they thought, to his death. Slawata received the same treatment, though he managed to cling to the edge of the sill until a blow with a knife handle forced him to let go. A secretary was then hurled out the window in their wake. Thus occurred what came to be called the Defenestration of Prague. It set off the first Europeanwide war that was to continue for thirty years and to ravage Germany, carrying off between one-third and one-fourth of the population.¹

The event seemed to flow spontaneously from an outraged Protestant assembly, and it was meant to seem so. But it had been carefully planned and was the result of a long-simmering conflict. Bohemian Protestants, who composed more than two-thirds of the population, had pressured Emperor Rudolph II in 1609 to grant them the Letter of Majesty. But the document left openings for differing interpretations. One issue on which interpretations collided was whether Protestants could construct

¹ Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe* (New York, 1997), 185.

churches on ecclesiastical lands. These lands were, Protestants argued, ultimately royal lands and thus accessible to the construction of Protestant churches. But the government responded vigorously to attempts to build churches there, imprisoning citizens of Braunau and razing a structure constructed in Klostergrab. It was to protest these actions that the assembly gathered in Prague. Heinrich Count Thurn, a Protestant leader long hostile to Habsburg rule, along with a few associates prepared the seemingly spontaneous march to the Hradschin. Their intent from the beginning was to murder the regents and so create an incident that would provoke a clear break between the assembly and the Habsburg ruler and so end the drawn-out, indecisive contest between the two parties. Initially, some favored stabbing the regents, but the group then opted for defenestration. There was a precedent for it in Bohemia dating from the Hussite wars. But all three victims landed on a compost heap. Two walked away nearly unharmed, while Slawata suffered minor injuries to his head. Surely, Catholics were to assert, God had worked a miracle.²

The very next day the Protestant assembly constituted itself as the Bohemian estates, or representative body, and established a government of thirty "directors." After the Defenestration, it was a foregone conclusion that the expulsion of the Jesuits would follow, and in an apology for their actions issued on May 25, the estates blamed the Jesuits for the unrest in Bohemia. Yet Count Thurn himself intervened on May 28 to prevent a hostile mob from sacking the Jesuit college in Prague, apparently aware of the dire political repercussions that such violence against the Society might provoke. Five days later notification reached the Jesuits that they would have to leave Bohemia within six days. Jesuit efforts to secure the revocation of the decision proved unavailing.

The actual decree of expulsion, dated June 9, accused the Jesuits of both undermining the Letter of Majesty and twisting its meaning to suit their purposes and, it added interestingly, of so weakening imperial government. The "hypocritical sect" of Jesuits used their influence to have Protestants excluded from governmental offices, regularly vilified Protestants as heretics in their writings and preaching, and so they continually incited unrest in the kingdom.³ Within a few days the Jesuits departed Prague—two remained incognito to aid the frightened Catholic populace—and then they gradually took their leave from the other towns

² Hans Sturmberger, *Aufstand in Böhmen: Der Beginn des Dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Munich, 1959), 7–14.

³ "Praescriptio Patrum Societatis Jesu ex Regno Bohemiae," June 9, 1618, in Francesco Gui, *I Gesuiti e la rivoluzione boema: Alle origini della guerra dei trent'anni* (Milan, 1989), Allegato 1: 414–16.

of Bohemia. Severe penalties threatened those who harbored Jesuits. An intense pamphlet war followed the expulsion in which the Jesuits responded in detail to the accusations of their Bohemian adversaries.⁴

The decree expelling the Jesuits from Bohemia repeated other charges against the Society that circulated especially in Protestant Europe. These accusations help us to understand the enmity that the Society aroused in some quarters. The Jesuits meddled in politics. They allegedly used the sacrament of confession to penetrate the designs of princes and to manipulate consciences to their own purposes. Two charges in particular drew impetus from recent history. First, the decree accused the Society of promoting sedition and even encouraging political assassinations. On December 27, 1594, a crazed former student at the Jesuit College of Clermont in Paris attempted to murder King Henry IV of France. As a result of the ensuing uproar, the Society suffered banishment from most of France for eight years, from 1595 to 1603.⁵ The Spanish Jesuit Juan de Mariana provided further grist for the mill of the Society's enemies with the publication of his *The King and the Education of the King* in 1599.⁶ In it he defended tyrannicide under certain extreme circumstances. Then, in late 1604, a small band of English Catholics, disillusioned that James I did not moderate the penal laws against Catholics as they understood him to have intimated that he would, engineered the Gunpowder Plot. They planned to blow up Parliament as the king addressed the Commons and the Lords jointly and thus overthrow the government of England. Only at the last hour was the plot foiled, according to the government's account. Jesuits were accused of knowledge of the plot's existence if not participation in it, a charge that they denied vehemently.⁷ Five years later, in 1610, enemies of the Society pounced upon the assassination of Henry IV as another opportunity to attack the Jesuits and Mariana's teaching on tyrannicide.

The second charge, that the Jesuits aimed to undermine the legitimate sovereignty of kings and to submit them to papal authority, though not completely new, gathered renewed prominence from two conflicts. These erupted in 1605, over the Venetian Interdict and the Oath of Allegiance that James I demanded from Catholics after the Gunpowder

⁴ Alois Kroess, *Geschichte der böhmischen Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu* 1 (Vienna, 1910): 919–43; Gui, 36, 226–45. Gui analyzes the polemics in detail.

⁵ Roland Mousnier, *The Assassination of Henry IV: The Tyrannicide Problem and the Consolidation of the French Absolute Monarchy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. from the French (New York, 1973), 217–24.

⁶ *De Rege et Regis Institutione*.

⁷ Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York, 1996), gives a judicious account of events.

Plot. Paul V imposed an interdict, that is, the prohibition of most church sacraments and rites, on Venice when it refused to turn over to the ecclesiastical courts two clerics accused of crimes and to rescind limitations on the acquisition and use of church property. The dispute threatened to end in war until mediation, especially by Henry IV of France, effected a compromise.⁸ For their support of the papal position, the Jesuits were then expelled from Venice also, to return only in 1656.

The Oath of Allegiance that was prescribed for Catholics in England did not require that they renounce the spiritual authority of the pope nor even that they deny his power to excommunicate a king. It did insist that Catholics forswear any right of the pope to depose or take any political action against a sovereign ruler. But according to the oath, the power of the pope to depose rulers was “damnable” and “impious and heretical.”⁹ Pope Paul V rejected this. First James’s theologians and then James himself took up the pen on his behalf, as did the Scottish Catholic theologian William Barclay.¹⁰ Prominent Jesuits took the lead in defending the papal position in the ensuing “battle of books.”¹¹ In the most important of his several contributions to the exchange, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, now a major figure in the Roman curia, responded to Barclay in 1610 with his *Treatise on the Power of the Roman Pontiff in Temporal Affairs*.¹² Four years later the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suarez published his *Defense of the Faith* against James.¹³

Both books elaborated variations on the theory of the indirect power of the pope in temporal affairs. It had originated with Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, had been developed further by the Dominican Francisco Vitoria in the first part of the sixteenth, and was in fact held by many contemporary Catholic theologians, but with the growth of the sovereign state in the sixteenth century, it was outliving its usefulness in the seventeenth. According to this theory, the pope might by virtue of his spiritual authority, or indirectly, intervene in the temporal order, when a prince stood in the way of his subjects’ attainment of their ultimate, spiritual goal, eternal life. This intervention could take the form of a warning, a correction, and finally, of deposition should such a drastic measure be called for. To implement such a measure, of course, the pope

⁸ W.B. Patterson, *James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), 115–17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 79–81, citation of the oath on 81.

¹⁰ *De potestate papae: An et quatenus in reges et principes seculares ius et imperium habet*, ed. John Barclay (London, 1609).

¹¹ Patterson, 100, citing James Brodrick, *Robert Bellarmine, 1542–1621* 2 (London, 1950): 224.

¹² *Tractatus de potestate summi pontificis in rebus temporalibus*.

¹³ *Defensio fidei*.

would have to call for the assistance of other princes.¹⁴ “The controversy over the Oath of Allegiance showed the highly wrought intellectual and emotional state of Europe” as the year 1618 approached.¹⁵

Tensions similar to those in Bohemia had long been rising between Catholics and Protestants in Germany, or the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. Martin Luther had launched the Reformation with his *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, so that Protestants were celebrating the centennial of the Reformation on the eve of the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. Luther’s movement spread rapidly out from Wittenberg. After the disastrous Peasants War of 1524/25, some German princes and imperial cities began formally to establish Reformation churches, and their number steadily increased in the following two decades. Attempts at reconciliation failed, either through a council or at the Diets of Augsburg in 1530 or Regensburg in 1541. Eventually, with papal backing, Emperor Charles V (1519–55) took up arms against the Protestants. He won a decisive triumph over the Protestant League of Schmalkeld at Mühlberg on the Elbe River in 1547, but with assistance from the French King Henry II, the Protestants subsequently overturned this result so that the emperor was forced to grant the Protestants formal legal status at the Diet of Augsburg in 1555. Rather than take responsibility for this, Charles resigned in favor of his younger brother, Ferdinand I (1558–64). He divided his patrimony between Ferdinand and his son Philip II, thus creating the two branches of the House of Habsburg, the Austrian and the Spanish.

The diet (or Reichstag) constituted the representative body in the cumbersome political structure of the Holy Roman Empire, which comprised around 1,000 separate, semiautonomous political units. Many of them were very small, especially in the south and west. Three councils made up the diet. The council of electors took its name from its privilege to elect the emperor; and in the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, its status grew at the expense of the other two. Since the fourteenth century it included three ecclesiastical princes, the archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, and four secular ones, the count palatine of the Rhine, the duke of Saxony, the margrave of Brandenburg, and the king of Bohemia. The remaining princes, both ecclesiastical and secular, were represented in the council of princes and the imperial cities in the council of cities. As was customary in representative bodies of the

¹⁴ F.X. Arnold, *Die Staatslehre des Kardinals Bellarmin: Ein Beitrag zur Rechts- und Staatsphilosophie des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Munich, 1934), 324–60, esp. 347–60.

¹⁵ Patterson, 120.

early modern period, each council as a body possessed one vote. Above the diet stood the emperor, who was an elective rather than a hereditary ruler as in the monarchies of France and Spain. Efforts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to strengthen the central authority of the empire, either the diet or the emperor, met with little success, and the Reformation further weakened it. Elected emperors through nearly all the early modern period were members of the Habsburg family, who governed as their own the principalities of the various Austrian lands in the south of the empire. Emperor Ferdinand I combined these with the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, which he had acquired through marriage in 1526, to form what would become the Habsburg Monarchy. So he was both ruler of the monarchy and Holy Roman Emperor.

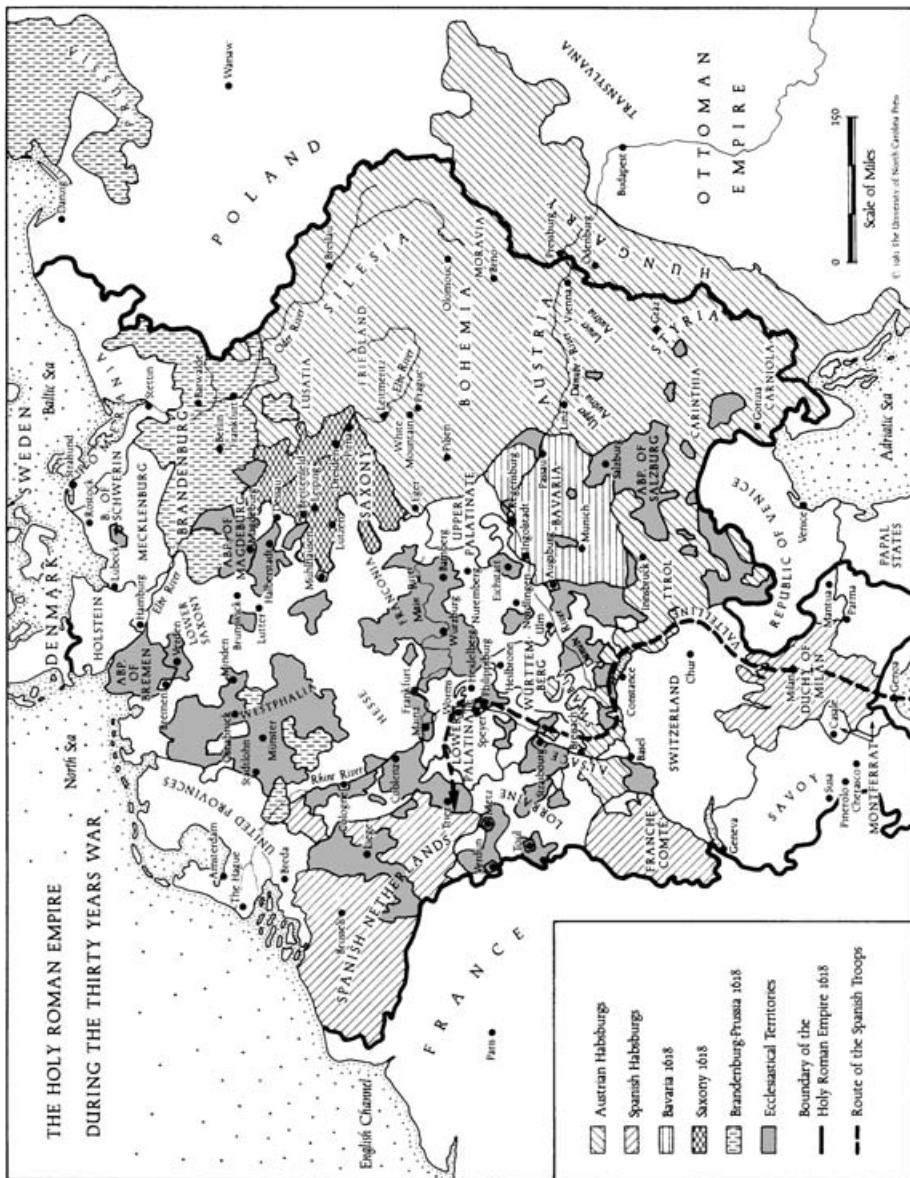
The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 provided Germany with relative peace into the early seventeenth century at a time when conflict was convulsing France during its religious wars from 1562 to 1598 and the Dutch were fighting for their independence from Spain starting in 1568. Each prince in the empire was granted the right to determine whether Lutheranism or Catholicism was to be the established religion in his territory according to the principle later enunciated by the jurists, "whose the region, his the religion." Complicated provisions were worked out for the possession of church property according to the general principle that Catholics would surrender permanently the property confiscated by the Protestants up to that time with the understanding that they would seize no more. But like the Letter of Majesty in Bohemia, the peace was open to varying interpretations. The fate of the ecclesiastical principalities that had fallen into Protestant hands, for example, was left unclear.

Meanwhile, reform had taken hold within the Catholic Church and the Council of Trent, which convened for three periods between 1545 and 1563, gave it further impetus. As a new generation replaced the war-weary one that had concluded the Peace of Augsburg, militance revived, and conflicts about interpretation of the peace spilled over from the legal into the political and military spheres. The Protestant states of the empire divided into two parties increasingly hostile to each other. The Palatinate, which had first gone over to Calvinism in 1563, led the more activist party. A more moderate Lutheran party usually took its direction from the elector of Saxony. In the War of Cologne of 1583 Bavarian forces with Spanish and papal assistance prevented the archbishop, who had taken a wife, from secularizing this critical ecclesiastical state along the Rhine. Had he been successful, the Catholics would have lost their four-to-three majority in the council of electors and the way would

have been open to the election of a Protestant emperor. The victory of the Catholic forces revealed their growing power in the empire. The two dynasties of Wittelsbach in Bavaria and Habsburg in Austria served as pillars of strength for the Catholics, though the Habsburgs wavered for a time in the second half of the sixteenth century and were weakened by strife within the family early in the seventeenth.

In 1607 Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, with imperial sanction, intervened in the south German free city of Donauwörth to guarantee the Catholic minority its right to freedom of worship, but then in an action of questionable legality, he incorporated the city into Bavaria as compensation for his costs and soon prohibited the exercise of Protestantism. The upshot was a Catholic-Protestant stalemate at the Diet of Regensburg in 1608 – the Imperial Supreme Court had already been paralyzed by the confessional conflict – and the formation of the Protestant Union, comprising six states led by the Palatinate, to defend Protestant interests. In response the following year Duke Maximilian organized the Catholic League, including Bavaria and a number of ecclesiastical states. Confessional alliances were forming.

Founded at Rome in 1540 by the Spaniard Ignatius Loyola and a small group of companions when they received papal approval as a new religious order, the Jesuits had risen to prominence in Germany in the second half of the sixteenth century. They had greatly contributed to the Catholic revival there. From their foundations at Cologne in 1544, Vienna in 1552, and Ingolstadt in 1556, they expanded into three Jesuit provinces. The Rhine Province with its headquarters at Cologne counted close to 600 Jesuits in 1614, and in 1626 it was to be divided into two provinces, the Lower Rhine Province, with 406 members, ten colleges, and a number of smaller houses, and the Upper Rhine Province centered in Mainz, which comprised 434 members and twelve colleges or academies plus other houses. To the south the Upper German Province, which included large communities in Munich and Ingolstadt, numbered 465 Jesuits in 1611, with twelve colleges and other houses, and by 1630, when Bavaria had not yet experienced the war directly, grew to 800 members with twenty colleges. The Austrian Province to the east, with Vienna at its center, possessed a multiethnic character unlike the others, where not only German but Czech, Hungarian, Slovenian, Croatian, and Italian were spoken. Superiors indeed complained that it was difficult to transfer men from Bohemia, where beer was the preferred drink, to other areas where wine was usually on the table. Five hundred thirty members were attached to the province with its twenty-three colleges and other houses when in 1622 it was divided into Austrian and Bohemian provinces, the former counting 850 members



in 1634, the latter over 600.¹⁶ The later years of the war saw all these numbers decline substantially.

Two German princes closely associated with the Jesuits were the Wittelsbach Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, who ruled from 1598 until 1651, and his Habsburg cousin, Archduke Ferdinand, who governed Inner Austria from his residence at Graz from 1595 to 1619, when he began his reign as Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, which lasted until his death in 1637. They were the two leading princes of the Counter Reformation in Germany. Both studied with the Jesuits at the University of Ingolstadt. Maximilian's grandfather, Albert V, had first brought the Jesuits to Munich in 1559. His father, William V, laid the cornerstone for the magnificent complex of the Jesuit college in Munich in 1583, and he saw the completion of St. Michael's Church, the greatest Renaissance church north of the Alps, in 1597. The construction costs of the buildings nearly bankrupted the principality, and the disastrous state of finances prompted William's abdication in 1597 in favor of his twenty-five-year-old son. By the start of the war Maximilian turned Bavaria into the best-administered and most financially stable German territory.¹⁷ He was a man of genuine piety, perhaps tinged with scrupulosity, and a highly self-conscious prince with a grasp of the worldly realities of power. Besides advancing Bavaria's welfare, Maximilian was intent on maintaining the character of the Holy Roman Empire, especially its Catholic character. This was one reason why he assumed the leadership of the Catholic League when dynastic quarrels known as the *Brüderzwist* distracted the Habsburgs in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

A number of Jesuits were closely associated with Maximilian. The well-known Spanish Scholastic Gregory of Valencia taught him at Ingolstadt. Among the others were Jakob Keller and Jeremias Drexel. Keller served for an unusually long period as rector of the college in Munich, from 1607 to 1623 and again from 1626 to his death in 1631, and he frequently wrote on controversial topics for Maximilian. Drexel preached at court from 1615 to 1638, and his ascetical works circulated in the major European languages. From 1595 until his death in 1623 the Luxembourgger Johann Buslidius accompanied Maximilian as his confessor as well as his wife's. In 1615 Maximilian would not allow Buslidius to follow the summons of the new Jesuit superior general, Muzio Vitelleschi, to Rome to serve as a councillor, on the grounds that

¹⁶ Bernard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge* 2, 1 (Freiburg, 1913): 15–17, 143, 315–16.

¹⁷ Dieter Albrecht, *Die auswärtige Politik Maximilians von Bayern, 1615–1635* (Göttingen, 1962), 2.

the prince and his spouse could not dispense with his presence.¹⁸ Shortly after the outbreak of the Bohemian rebellion, when Emperor Matthias and Archduke Ferdinand asked him to mediate with the rebels, the duke sought the opinion of Buslidius and Keller, who encouraged him to do so.¹⁹ But events quickly moved beyond this stage.

Ferdinand was the grandson of Emperor Ferdinand I and son of Archduke Carl, founder of the Styrian Habsburg line that governed Inner Austria from Graz from 1564 to 1619. Carl looked to the Jesuits as allies in his struggle to improve the precarious position of Catholics in Inner Austria. Five years before Ferdinand's birth in 1578 the archduke brought in the Jesuits to open a college in Graz, and when the college was raised to the status of a university in 1586, Ferdinand, though only eight years old was the first student to have his name inscribed in the book of matriculation. In 1596, a year after his return from study in Ingolstadt, Ferdinand assumed the responsibility for government in Inner Austria. As his confessor he chose the Belgian Jesuit Bartholomew Viller, who had served as provincial of the Austrian Province from 1583 to 1590. Viller remained in this office until Ferdinand's coronation as Holy Roman Emperor in 1619, when he resigned because of age. While returning in 1616 from the Jesuit General Congregation in Rome that elected Muzio Vitelleschi, Viller was arrested and imprisoned for nearly two years by the Venetians, who were then at war with Ferdinand.²⁰

Ferdinand's years in Graz saw him carry through a vigorous program of Counter Reformation in Inner Austria. This campaign won for him the reputation of a Catholic militant. A codicil to his testament of 1621 made explicit the principle on which he acted from the start of his reign, that his first responsibility as ruler was for the preservation of his people in the Catholic faith. The same document contained an eloquent recommendation of the Society of Jesus to his heir.

In the first place, with special concern we earnestly commend to you the well-deserving Society of Jesus and its priests. Through their skill, their instruction of our dear youth, and their exemplary manner of life, they do much good in the Christian Catholic Churches and more than others loyally work and exert themselves to maintain and propagate the Catholic religion not only in our Inner Austrian lands but in all our kingdoms and territories and throughout Christendom. In this ungrateful and perverse world they encounter more hatred

¹⁸ Duhr 2, 2 (Freiburg, 1913): 246.

¹⁹ See their two common position papers, HStA, Kschw 8613, ff. 1–2; these are undated but stem from late 1618 or early 1619. A third Jesuit, Casper Torrentinus, who was the confessor of Maximilian's father, Duke William, also signed the papers.

²⁰ Duhr, *ibid.*, 214.

and persecution than others and so are more in need of protection, help, and assistance.²¹

From 1605 on, the contest between the two Habsburg brothers – Emperor Rudolf II, whose fitness for government was now in question, and Archduke Matthias – weakened Habsburg rule in the territories of the monarchy. The Protestants exploited the situation to secure new guarantees from the competing rulers. One result was the Letter of Majesty itself, which the Bohemian Protestants extorted from Rudolf. Matthias finally succeeded Rudolf as emperor in 1612. But he was childless, so the question of his successor quickly arose. A Habsburg family conference decided upon Ferdinand as their candidate for the imperial throne. Accordingly, he was reluctantly recognized as king of Bohemia by the estates in 1617, while Matthias was still living, and he was in the process of being recognized as king of Hungary by the Hungarian estates when the Bohemian rebellion broke out. After the death of Matthias in early 1619, Ferdinand was elected Holy Roman Emperor in August of that year.

The lot of the Jesuits in France consistently wavered precariously, because of the hostility not only of the Huguenots but of the parlements, especially the Parlement of Paris, and of the universities, especially the University of Paris. Deeply seated Gallican sentiments imbued these institutions and made them wary of the Jesuit attachment to Rome. More than any other Catholic country, France had advanced toward the formation of a state. The protonational feeling accompanying Gallicanism raised particular difficulties for the Jesuits in France. University professors often saw unwanted rivals in the Society's educational institutions. In addition, as the seventeenth century progressed, an increasingly self-conscious hierarchy and diocesan clergy, especially in Paris, resented the privileges that the religious orders, in particular the Jesuits, received from Rome. The Jesuits came to look to the king for protection; hence, the crucial importance to them of the post of royal confessor.

Ignatius Loyola and his early companions had studied at the University of Paris, but Ignatius did not achieve his goal of a college there before his death in 1556. Only in 1562 did the Society obtain formal legal recognition in France, though several colleges were already in operation by then. In 1564 the College of Clermont opened its doors in Paris, and it enrolled more than 1,000 students by 1570. Ten years later the

²¹ Gustav Turba, *Die Grundlagen der Pragmatischen Sanktion 2: Die Hausgesetze* (Vienna, 1913): 351–2.

Jesuits counted fifteen colleges concentrated in south and central France. During the Wars of Religion that wreaked havoc in the country through the second half of the sixteenth century, Jesuits were divided in their sentiments between the Valois and the extremist Catholic League. The superior general in Rome, Claudio Acquaviva, urged them to stay out of politics.²² After the assassination of the last Valois king, Henry III, at the end of 1589, the Huguenot Henry of Navarre, a Bourbon, stood next in line for the throne. His conversion to Catholicism and coronation in 1593–4 and the support he increasingly gathered from French Catholics, including the theologians of the University of Paris, put the Jesuits in a difficult position. Acquaviva directed the French Jesuits not to take an oath of allegiance to Henry until his excommunication for heresy was formally lifted by Pope Clement VIII. Yet, with the approval of the papal legate, they did so, an action that brought them a stern rebuke from Acquaviva. Then the attempt of their former student Jean Chastel on the life of Henry IV energized the opponents of the Society, and in early January the Parlement of Paris expelled the Jesuits from much of France and the College of Clermont was forced to close.²³

In 1595 Pope Clement VIII formally lifted the excommunication of Henry. One condition for this was that he work for the return of the Jesuits to all France. The religious wars came to an uneasy conclusion in 1598 when Henry issued the Edict of Nantes granting limited toleration to the Huguenots along with the right to fortify a number of towns as a guarantee of their security. But the king remained suspicious of the Jesuits.

At this point there entered the scene the Jesuit Pierre Coton, who was to play a significant role in France for the next quarter century. Born at Nérondes in the Forez in 1564 to a family of the nobility of the robe, he entered the Jesuits in 1583 and did most of his studies in Italy, where Robert Bellarmine was among his instructors. His personal charm, deep spirituality, and preaching style impressed his superiors, and his early missionary work in southern France brought many back to Catholicism. In 1599 Pope Clement VIII dispatched a special legate to Paris to encourage Henry to readmit the Jesuits to the kingdom. A member of the legation introduced Coton to the king. His conversation immediately impressed Henry, who requested that he preach for him. Coton's sermon captivated the king and won him over completely. Gradually the terms were negotiated on which the Society could return to all of France.

²² See A. Lynn Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians* (Geneva, 1973), esp. pp. 123–4, 125, 127–8, 140, 160, 195, 203–4, 214, 217–18.

²³ William Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, 1972), 64–71, 119–22.

The Jesuits had to swear an oath of allegiance to the crown, and they were not allowed to reopen the College of Clermont in Paris, their flagship school. On September 1, 1603, the edict permitting their return was issued, and within five months there were applications from thirty-two towns for colleges. Coton became a genuinely close friend of the king and began to function as his confessor in 1602, even though he was not formally appointed to the post until 1608.²⁴

France rebounded gradually from the upheaval of the Wars of Religion during the first decade of the seventeenth century as Henry took measures to restore political stability, promote commerce, and raise living standards. In 1600 he married the Florentine princess Marie de Medici, and she bore him a son, the future Louis XIII, in 1601. The king encouraged Catholic reform in France while at the same time he carefully protected the privileges granted the Huguenots by the Edict of Nantes. As the decade progressed and the situation of France improved, Henry's thoughts turned increasingly to a reassertion of France's role in Europe and a challenge to the Habsburg rulers, Emperor Rudolf II and Philip III of Spain. A dispute in 1609 over the succession to the duchy of Jülich-Cleves just over the border in the empire seemed to offer the opportunity for this. The duchy's location between the Dutch United Provinces and their allies in Germany made it strategically of great importance. Imperial troops occupied it provisionally.²⁵

By 1610 the French Jesuits too were flourishing, roughly 1,300 of them residing in forty-five communities organized in four provinces.²⁶ But that year proved to be a fateful one for them as well as for France. On May 14, as he was preparing to invade Jülich-Cleves, King Henry fell victim to the assassin Ravaillac. Immediately their enemies blamed the doctrine on tyrannicide found in Mariana's *The King and the Education of the King*. His tract had raised no eyebrows in Spain, but already in the year of its publication the Jesuit provincial superior in Paris complained about Mariana's book to Acquaviva because of the problems it could cause the Society in France. When French Jesuits once again complained to him in 1606, Acquaviva ordered that the book be reissued in a corrected edition.²⁷ In the wake of the murder of Henry, then, he promulgated a decree dated July 6, 1610 prohibiting any Jesuit from writing or speaking

²⁴ Bangert, 120–5; Georges Minois, *Le confesseur du roi: Les directeurs de conscience sous la monarchie française* (Paris, 1988), 339–45.

²⁵ David Buisseret, *Henry IV* (London, 1984), 173–5.

²⁶ Bangert, 123–4.

²⁷ Robert Keating O'Neill, "Politics and the New Orders in France, 1584–1629," *Dissertation* (U. of Chicago, 1975), 108, 114.

in defense of tyrannicide under pain of excommunication.²⁸ Meanwhile, by order of the Parlement of Paris, Mariana's treatise had been publicly burned on June 8.

But more was yet to come. Bellarmine's *Treatise on the Power of the Supreme Pontiff in Temporal Affairs* appeared in 1610, and traditional as his doctrine was at the time, it touched a sensitive nerve in Gallican France and further embroiled the Jesuits with parlement and the university. Parlement condemned the treatise on November 26, 1610. The Jesuits, then, inopportunistly, petitioned the reopening of the College of Clermont, a measure that Henry IV despite his affection for the Society had for political reasons refused to allow. His widow, the regent Marie de Medici, gave her approval, but again the Jesuits became entangled with parlement. The upshot was that they did not obtain permission to resume teaching at the college. Perhaps more significantly, under great pressure several leading Jesuits, including the provincial of Paris, declared that they upheld the teaching of the university that denied the pope any role in temporal affairs and that they would teach accordingly. For this compromise of papal authority, they garnered a severe reprimand from Acquaviva in Rome.²⁹

But the issues of the indirect power of the pope and tyrannicide refused to go away. *The Anglican Controversy over the Power of King and Pope*³⁰ published by the German Jesuit theologian Martin Becan in 1612 was condemned by the university and criticized by Rome for its overstatement of papal power.³¹ But the publication of Suarez's *Defense of the Faith* in 1614 caused a greater stir. It not only defended the indirect power of the pope in temporal matters but also allowed for tyrannicide in extreme cases. Both Philip III of Spain and Pope Paul V praised the work, but it was bound to embarrass the Jesuits in France, and parlement condemned it. Suarez had indeed secured permission for the publication of his volume, and Acquaviva now apologized to the French Jesuits that his prohibition of writings on tyrannicide had not been adequately communicated to the whole Society.³² In 1614 the Jesuits of the

²⁸ ARSJ, Francia 32, f. 431; an English translation of this is found in Guenter Lewy, *Constitutionalism and Statecraft during the Golden Age of Spain: A Study of the Political Philosophy of Juan de Mariana*, S.J. (Geneva, 1960), 167. This decree seems to have been sent only to the French provinces. A later decree of August 14, 1610, forbidding any Jesuit to take up the defense of Mariana was sent to all the provinces; see Lewy, 143 and 167, where it is printed in English translation.

²⁹ Pierre Blet, "Jésuites et libertés gallicanes en 1611," AHSJ 24 (1955): 165-7; id., "Jésuites gallicanes au xviiiè siècle?," *ibid.*, 29 (1960): 61-2; Bangert, 126-9; Henri Fouqueray, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France* 3 (Paris, 1922): 253-67, 268-94.

³⁰ *Controversia anglicana de potestate regis et pontificis*.

³¹ Fouqueray 3: 302-5; Gui, 64-5.

³² Fouqueray 3: 301-13.

Paris Province again urged the superior general to prohibit the publication of books that dealt with tyrannicide or the temporal power of the pope, and he responded with decrees to this effect on August 1 and 2, 1614.³³

Two years before his assassination, Henry IV had entrusted his son Louis to Coton for instruction in the faith. Shortly after Henry's death, his widow Marie asked the Jesuit to remain at court as confessor of the nine-year-old king, who was crowned at Rheims on October 17, 1610.³⁴ So Louis began to acquire an affection for the Jesuits that lasted until his dying day and that greatly benefitted the Society in France. He did more than any other prince to secure the canonization of Ignatius Loyola in 1622.³⁵ As confessor, Coton stood out as an early exponent of a double marriage alliance between France and Spain that would unite the two crowns against the Protestant threat emerging in Germany. So he was in agreement with a fundamental element of papal policy that aimed at a common Habsburg-Bourbon front against the Protestants. According to the contract concluded in 1612, Louis would marry the Spanish Infanta Anne, and his sister Elizabeth would marry the future Philip IV. After the marriages were celebrated in 1615, the Spanish chief minister, the Duke of Lerma, wrote Coton thanking him for his role in bringing them about.³⁶ Coton was also involved in negotiations for the marriage of Louis's sister Christine, who wed the heir in Savoy in 1612 after the breakdown of discussions with England, and he enjoyed contacts at the courts of Munich and Mainz.³⁷

In 1614 the French Estates-General met for the only time between the start of the reign of Henry IV and the French Revolution. The event signaled the weakness of the crown during the regency of Marie de Medici following the death of Henry. Allied with *parlementaires*, the third estate once again raised the issue of the Jesuit position on papal power and tyrannicide, and on January 2, 1615, the Parlement of Paris renewed its decrees against the Jesuits and their teaching. But the king and his council along with the clergy and the nobility opposed

³³ ARSJ, Cong. 54, ff. 196–7, 204; the decrees are published in English translation in Lewy, 167–8. The Provinces of Paris and Lyons proposed that these matters be taken up at the Seventh General Congregation in 1615–16, but it issued no decree on them; see Cong. 54, ff. 204, 222, and Ignace Armand (provincial) to the provincials of Italy and Spain, Paris, June 29, 1614, in Jean-Marie Prat, *Recherches historiques et critiques sur la Compagnie de Jésus en France du temps du P. Coton, 1564–1626* 5 (Lyons, 1878): 336–9.

³⁴ Fouqueray 3: 230, 322–3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 324, 477–8; Eugène Griselle, *Profil des Jésuites du xvii^e siècle* (Lille/Paris, 1911), 2–3, 32–3.

³⁶ Fouqueray 3: 331–2, 357; O'Neill, 105, 134.

³⁷ Prat, *Recherches historiques* 3 (Lyons, 1876): 471, 486, 488–91; 5: 310–14.

the third estate and parlement in what was a victory for Rome, the Jesuits, and especially the young king. But by no means did the issues disappear.³⁸

After attaining his majority in 1614 and taking a wife, Louis began to chafe under the tutelage of his possessive mother, and, of course, there were figures at court waiting to exploit any differences between the two. Their divisions spilled over into factional conflict and eventually open war. Several Jesuits, including Coton, helped facilitate the periodic reconciliations of mother and son. In the summer of 1616 there were six Jesuits in the service of the court. When Coton wrote asking the superior general Vitelleschi whether these Jesuits should accompany the court on its journeys, the response was that this depended upon the desire of the king and the queen-mother, which the Jesuits were to obey.³⁹ Vitelleschi deferred to the royal wishes.

As was usually the case at the time of weak royal government, leading nobles raised their heads in rebellion, this time including the king's cousin, Henri de Bourbon, the prince of Condé. Marie's Italian favorite, the corrupt, arrogant Concino Concini, awakened widespread resentment among the French and offered the restive nobles a convenient target. Increasingly, Charles Albert de Luynes, who began in Louis's entourage as falconer, grew in the king's affection and became his favorite. Luynes urged Louis to assert himself as king. Finally, on April 24, 1617, in what amounted to a coup, Concini was assassinated – whether this was intended by Louis or not is unclear – and Marie was imprisoned briefly and then exiled to Blois and her entourage turned out.⁴⁰

Now a duke and “minister-favorite,” Luynes stood out as the most influential figure with the king.⁴¹ He steered Louis away from Coton, whom Luynes considered too sympathetic to Marie de Medici. The new papal nuncio in 1617, Guido Bentivoglio, attributed Coton's departure in May to his urging the position of the queen-mother with the king.⁴² Coton also, Bentivoglio himself thought, was involved in too many matters at court and tended to favor a Spanish view. The year before Coton had complained to Vitelleschi about the “national spirit” increasingly

³⁸ Fouquieray 3: 343–53; Pierre Blet, *Le clergé du Grand Siècle en ses Assemblées, 1615–1715* (Paris, 1995), 23–9.

³⁹ Vitelleschi to Coton, Sept. 4, 1616, ARSJ, Francia 3, f. 205.

⁴⁰ A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, the Just* (Berkeley, 1989), 80–102, esp. 94. Most historians would allow that Louis ordered the killing.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴² Bentivoglio to Scipione Borghese (cardinal-nephew), May 9, 1617, Guido Bentivoglio, *La nunziatura di Francia del Cardinale Guido Bentivoglio: Lettere a Scipione Borghese* 1 (Florence, 1863): no. 220: 218–19; Fouquieray 3: 418–21; Prat 3: 735.

evident among his Jesuit brothers,⁴³ which perhaps was an indication that they did not share his enthusiasm for the marriage alliance with Spain. Bentivoglio recommended that the cardinal-nephew speak to Vitelleschi, “a padre of great prudence,” about removing Coton from court.⁴⁴ So Coton departed for Lyons, eased out by Luynes but also desirous himself to leave the court. His departure cannot be considered a fall from favor with the king, who testified in a warm letter to Coton’s long and faithful service. Coton journeyed to Italy, where he fulfilled vows on Louis’s behalf in Milan, Loretto, and Rome.⁴⁵ The storm that broke over the Jesuits in 1625 would bring him back to Paris as provincial superior.

Coton’s successor was a well-known Paris Jesuit, whom Bentivoglio called a “grand preacher,” Jean Arnoux.⁴⁶ He was already confessor of the favorite Luynes, so that he and the king made their confession to the same priest, as Louis wanted and undoubtedly Luynes did too. Vitelleschi welcomed the appointment, and he thanked Louis for his benevolence toward the Society in again choosing a Jesuit as confessor. Louis would continue, Vitelleschi was confident, to protect the Jesuits as his father had.⁴⁷ Luynes, in turn, helped the Jesuits secure a goal they had long pursued, the reopening of the College of Clermont, for which Vitelleschi expressed his gratitude.⁴⁸ The Jesuits had invested heavily in France; by 1623 they conducted fifty-eight colleges, which in 1627 enrolled more than 13,000 students.⁴⁹

Spain remained the most powerful state in Christendom on the eve of the Thirty Years War, though cracks had long since shown up in its armor. In addition to its holdings in America with the appendage of the Philippines, the Monarchy of Spain had assumed control of Portugal and its colonies in 1580 and dominated Italy through its rule in Milan, Naples, and Sicily. The Dutch had compelled Spain to recognize their de facto independence in the Twelve Years Truce of 1609, but Spain still remained the ultimate authority in the Spanish Netherlands. There in 1598 just before his death Philip II had turned over control to the

⁴³ Vitelleschi to Coton, Aug. 4, 1616, ARSJ, Francia 3, f. 196’.

⁴⁴ Bentivoglio to Scipione Borghese, June 20, 1617, Bentivoglio, 1: no. 359: 301–2.

⁴⁵ Louis XIII to Coton, Fontainebleau, June 7, 1617, in Prat, *Recherches historiques* 5: 381; Griselle, *Profils des Jésuites*, 20–5.

⁴⁶ Bentivoglio to Scipione Borghese, May 9, 1617, Bentivoglio 1: no. 220: 218–19.

⁴⁷ Vitelleschi to Arnoux, June 27, 1617, ARSJ, Francia 3, f. 233; Vitelleschi to Louis XIII, July 16, 1617, ARSJ, Gallia, 46I, f. 43’; see also Vitelleschi to Louis, May 27, 1617, *ibid.*, f. 42.

⁴⁸ Vitelleschi to Luynes, Apr. 10, 1618, ARSJ, Gallia 46I, ff. 49–49’.

⁴⁹ Fouqueray 3: 531; Bangert, 215.