

Cambridge University Press

0521547504 - The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629 - Second Edition

Mack P. Holt

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## The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629

This is a new edition of Mack P. Holt's classic study of the French religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Drawing on the scholarship of social and cultural historians of the Reformation, it shows how religion infused both politics and the socio-economic tensions of the period to produce a long extended civil war. Professor Holt integrates court politics and the political theory of the elites with the religious experiences of the popular classes, offering a fresh perspective on the wars and on why the French were willing to kill their neighbours in the name of religion. The book has been created specifically for undergraduates and general readers with no background knowledge of either French history or the Reformation. This new edition updates the text in the light of new work published in the last decade and the 'Suggestions for further reading' has been completely rewritten.

MACK P. HOLT is Professor of History at George Mason University. His previous publications include *The Duke of Anjou and the Politique Struggle during the Wars of Religion* (1986) and *Renaissance and Reformation France, 1500-1648* (2002, ed.)

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Second Edition

MACK P. HOLT

*George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia*



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In memory of  
J. Russell Major and  
Nancy Lyman Roelker

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## Acknowledgements

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Finally, I owe a special debt to two scholars who have strongly influenced me. Russell Major rescued me from the scrapheap of burned out graduate students at a critical point in my career. When I was close to abandoning an academic career altogether, he took me aside and told me that he believed in me. Without that support, I would never have become a historian, much less written this book. And when I was first asked to write this book, I was fortunate enough to spend a year in Cambridge, Massachusetts where I encountered Nancy Roelker. We talked about the book a lot and shared a number of ideas, and she generously supported me in every way thereafter. Although I am saddened that she is unable to see the finished product, I can only hope that she would have been pleased. Thus, it is a privilege as well as a pleasure to dedicate this book in memory of Russell Major and Nancy Roelker.



## Preface to the Second Edition

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It has been a decade since I wrote the text of the first edition of this book, and I am happy to accept the invitation of Cambridge University Press to produce a revised and updated edition. I wish to thank all those readers and reviewers who took the time to point out several minor errors of fact or interpretation in the first edition, especially Hilmar Pabel and Mark Greengrass, and I have silently corrected these errors in this new edition. Because so much new work has also been published in the last decade, I have also taken the opportunity of this new edition to update the text in order to incorporate much of this recent scholarship. In some cases this has resulted in the expansion of certain passages or the insertion of totally new passages. Finally, I have also rewritten the 'Suggestions for further reading'. Although these revisions have not significantly altered my original approach or the principal argument of the book, they have, I hope, resulted in a more up-to-date and satisfying book.

## Chronological table of events

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- 1516 Concordat of Bologna; Guillaume Briçonnet appointed Bishop of Meaux.
- 1517 Luther posts his 95 theses in Wittenburg.
- 1525 Circle at Meaux broken up by the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris.
- 1534 Affair of the Placards.
- 1536 Calvin published the first edition of the *Institution of the Christian Religion*.
- 1541 Calvinism is established in Geneva.
- 1545 Pope Paul III convoked the first session of the Council of Trent.
- 1547 Death of Francis I, who is succeeded by his son Henry II.
- 1548–50 The *Chambre ardente* is established by Henry II.
- 1551 The Edict of Châteaubriant bans Protestantism.
- 1555 The evangelical ministry from Geneva begins in France.
- 1559 Execution of Anne du Bourg; Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis; death of Henry II in a jousting accident.
- 1560 Conspiracy of Amboise; death of Francis II in December.
- 1561 Colloquy of Poissy.
- 1562 Edict of Toleration in January; violence at Vassy in March begins first civil war.
- 1563 Edict of Amboise ends first civil war; Charles IX reaches his age of majority.
- 1564–66 Royal tour of the kingdom by the court.
- 1567 Second civil war begins when Huguenots seize several fortified towns.
- 1568 Edict of Longjumeau ends second civil war in March, quickly followed by the beginning of the third civil war in September.
- 1569 Battles of Jarnac and Moncontour result in heavy Huguenot defeats, as well as the death of Condé.
- 1570 Edict of St. Germain ends the third civil war.
- 1572 St Bartholomew's massacres in Paris and the provinces start the fourth civil war.

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- 1573      Siege of La Rochelle; Peace of La Rochelle ends the fourth civil war; Henry, Duke of Anjou is elected King of Poland.
- 1574      Death of Charles IX in May.
- 1575      Escape from court of the Duke of Alençon in September begins the fifth civil war; German mercenaries led by the Duke of Casimir join Protestant army.
- 1576      Henry of Navarre escapes from court in February; Peace of Monsieur (Edict of Beaulieu) ends the fifth civil war in May; the Estates-General meets at Blois in November.
- 1577      Sixth civil war begins in March and ends in September with the Peace of Bergerac.
- 1578–80   Peasant revolts in Provence, the Vivarais, and Dauphiné.
- 1580      Seventh civil war erupts briefly, ending with the Peace of Fleix in November.
- 1581–83   Duke of Anjou visits England and the Netherlands.
- 1584      Death of Anjou in June makes the Protestant Henry of Navarre the heir to the throne and begins the eighth civil war; Treaty of Joinville signed in December between Spain and the Catholic League.
- 1585      Treaty of Nemours signed by Henry III and the League in July.
- 1587      Duke of Casimir leads another invasion of German mercenaries into France to support the Huguenots.
- 1588      Day of the Barricades in May; Edict of Union in July; Estates-General meets in Blois in December; assassinations of the Duke and Cardinal of Guise lead to numerous towns supporting the League.
- 1589      Death of Catherine de Medici in January; assassination of Henry III in August; Catholic League begins its reign of terror.
- 1590      Siege of Paris by the army of Henry IV.
- 1591      The Sixteen in Paris executes Barnabé Brisson in November.
- 1592      Siege of Rouen by the army of Henry IV.
- 1593      Estates-General of the League meets in Paris in the spring; Henry IV abjures Protestantism in July.
- 1593–94   Peasant revolts begin in Burgundy, Limousin, Périgord, and Agenais.
- 1594      Coronation of Henry IV at Chartres in February; Paris submits to the king in March, as other towns soon follow suit.
- 1595      Henry IV receives papal absolution in August from Pope Clement VIII; the Duke of Mayenne submits to the king in September; Henry IV declares war against Spain.
- 1596      Spanish army seizes Cambrai and Calais.

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- 1597 Spanish army seizes Amiens in the spring, which is then liberated by Henry IV in September after a three-month siege.
- 1598 Duke of Mercoeur submits to the king in January; the Edict of Nantes ends the eighth civil war in April; Henry IV signs peace treaty with Philip II of Spain in May.
- 1606 The brevets of the Edict of Nantes are renewed.
- 1610 Assassination of Henry IV in May by François Ravaillac; regency government of the young Louis XIII is headed by Marie de Medici.
- 1611 Sully resigns from the privy council; Huguenot assembly at Saumur.
- 1614 Revolt against the regency government led by the Prince of Condé; Louis XIII reaches his age of majority; the Estates-General meets in Paris in October.
- 1617 Assassination of Concini.
- 1618 Protestants revolt in Bohemia against the Habsburg Emperor.
- 1620 Royal military campaign in Béarn; Edict of Restitution restores Béarn to the crown of France in October; Huguenot assembly in La Rochelle opens in November.
- 1621 Military campaign against the Huguenots begins in the spring; fall of St. Jean d'Angély in June; the siege of Montauban is lifted in November.
- 1622 Renewal of military campaign against the Huguenots in the spring; Soubise is routed by royal troops at the Ile de Ré in April; Montpellier submits to the king in October after a short siege.
- 1624 Cardinal Richelieu is admitted to the privy council.
- 1625 Soubise seizes the islands of Ré and Oléron off the coast of La Rochelle in January; Louis XIII's sister Henrietta marries Charles I of England.
- 1626 Edict of La Rochelle signed in February; a royal garrison is placed on the Ile de Ré.
- 1627 English fleet under the command of the Duke of Buckingham attacks the Ile de Ré in July; Buckingham is repelled by royal forces in November; the siege of La Rochelle by the royal army begins in August.
- 1628 Fall of La Rochelle and submission to the king in October.
- 1629 Submission of the Duke of Rohan to the king in the spring; Peace of Alais signed in June ending the last civil war.
- 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV.