

Preface

The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 ended over three decades of political and religious strife in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. By agreeing to the peace, the Empire's estates accepted profound constitutional changes. Among them, both Catholics and Protestant Lutherans received legal protection, thus making the Empire the first officially biconfessional polity in Europe. The Augsburg settlement ended over a century of Imperial reform, during which emperors and estates had sought to create strong central institutions. The subsequent shift to particularism made the estates' responsibility to uphold peace, a fixture of peace agreements (*Landfrieden*) since the medieval era, even more heavy.¹

Despite these significant alterations of the Imperial constitution, there prevails a widespread understanding of the Peace of Augsburg as merely a fragile, temporary truce for a conflict that would erupt again in the form of the Thirty Years' War. This assumption ignores many salient aspects of the settlement. First, this presumed armistice lasted 63 years, longer than most "eternal" peace treaties of the early modern or medieval world. Seldom did a country in early modern Europe experience more than a half-century free of violent internal turmoil. Second, for many of the Empire's estates, the Augsburg agreement enshrined gains made during the period of strife, and thus, enjoyed broad support. Third, the Augsburg settlement withstood serious external pressures. In addition to the long-standing threat from the Ottomans, many other conflagrations along the Empire's borders after 1555—the Dutch Revolt, the French religious wars, and the Danish-Swedish struggle for Baltic hegemony—threatened to spill into the Empire and destroy the Augsburg order.

This study will examine the Empire's relations with the Scandinavian kingdoms during critical years of the post-Augsburg period, 1563–1576. This era represented an important phase in the sixteenth-century rivalry between Sweden and Denmark as well. For the first seven years of this period, Denmark, aided by cobelligerents Poland and Lübeck, fought a war against Sweden known as the Seven Years' War of the North, also called the War of the Three Crowns. In terms of geographic scope, it was the largest of the many Danish-Swedish

¹ Maximilian Lanzinner, *Friedenssicherung und politische Einheit des Reiches unter Maximilian II. (1564–1576)*, Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 45 (Göttingen, 1993), 223. On the period of Imperial reform see Heinz Angermeier, *Die Reichsreform 1410–1555: Die Staatsproblematik in Deutschland zwischen Mittelalter und Gegenwart* (Munich, 1984).

wars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Land forces fought on the Scandinavian peninsula and in Livonia while large navies squared off at sea.² The decision of Lübeck and Poland to join Denmark's military undertaking as a means of settling their own disputes with Sweden further complicated hostilities. The Empire, which had much at stake in this northern conflict, spearheaded the mediation efforts culminating in the Peace of Stettin in 1570. During the following six years the Empire, and Emperor Maximilian in particular, sought to resolve outstanding issues in order to transform the peace into a real reconciliation.

This study does not focus primarily on either Danish-Swedish relations or the Scandinavian kingdoms' policies toward the Empire. Existing works examine both of these important questions.³ Instead, this study places the Scandinavian contest in the context in which northern European powers understood it: as a problem to be solved, manipulated, or managed. More specifically, this work investigates the Holy Roman Empire's quest for an advantageous settlement: a negotiated peace that prevented a Swedish victory.

Using the Danish-Swedish struggle as a case study, this study will advance two arguments concerning the post-1555 Empire. First, the individual estates of the Empire were ready and able to defend the Augsburg order against foreign threats. In the specific case of the Seven Years' War of the North, they thwarted attempts by the Scandinavian powers, Sweden in particular, to bring the war into Germany. Second, the German states demonstrated that the Empire's loose confederal structure did not hinder the conduct of a common foreign policy if it fostered the preservation of internal stability.

This study places the Holy Roman Empire's policy toward Scandinavia into the larger context of peacemaking in early modern Europe. Overshadowed in modern historical scholarship by other contemporary European conflicts, such as the Dutch Revolt, the religious wars in France, and the Habsburg-Ottoman wars, the Seven Years' War of the North was a regional but not a marginal conflagration. It threatened the Baltic trade that was vital to the economies of western Europe. Connections with other concurrent crises made the war an

² The only military histories of the war are in Scandinavian languages, the most recent and best of which is Frede P. Jensen, *Danmarks konflikt med Sverige 1563–1570*, Skrifter udgivet af det historiske institut ved Københavns universitet, vol. 12 (Copenhagen, 1982).

³ Ingvar Andersson, *Erik XIV: En biografi* (Stockholm, 1935); *Svenskt och europeiskt fentonhundratäl: Fynd, forskningar och essäer* (Lund, 1943); Poul Colding, *Studier i Danmarks politiske Historie i Slutningen af Christian III.s og Begyndelsen af Frederik II.s Tid* (Copenhagen, 1939); Karl Hildebrand, *Johan III och Europas katolska makter 1568–1580: Studier i 1500-talets politiska historia* (Uppsala, 1898); Jensen, *Danmarks konflikt*; G. O. F. Westling, "Det nordiska sjuårskrigets historia," parts 1 and 2, *Historiskt bibliotek* 6 (1879): 421–601; 7 (1880): 41–112; "Sveriges förhållande till Danmark från freden i Stettin till Frederik II:s död (1571–1588)," parts 1 and 2, *Historisk tidskrift* [Sweden] 39 (1919): 55–102, 123–154.

important matter not only for the Empire but also for other major European powers. It is not surprising, then, that no other conflict during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was subjected to more mediation attempts. These interventions were qualitatively exceptional in that the Empire often worked in concert with powers with such divergent and conflicting interests as France, Spain, and eventually Poland. In this way, the Seven Years' War of the North resembles a modern-day regional conflict in which great powers have little direct influence over the combatants.

Over the course of a project of this scope, one collects many debts. During the development of this study as a doctoral dissertation at Yale University, I was guided by people who are both expert historians and scholarly role models. In overseeing the dissertation, Professor Paul Bushkovitch provided sound advice and steady encouragement. Professor Geoffrey Parker focused my attention to detail as well as the big picture. Professors Paul Kennedy and the late Harry Miskimin also made important contributions. Fellow graduate students, now colleagues, have given significant assistance over the years: Dr. Stefan Ehrenpreis, Dr. Georg Haggrén, Gregor Horstkemper, and Dr. Thomas W. Maulucci, Jr.

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I dedicate this book to my parents. They opened to me at a young age the world of learning. I hope that this work is a reflection of their devotion.