

Using GIS to Construct an Interactive Map of the Religious-Confessional Division of Europe in the mid-17th Century

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With the advent of the Reformation in the 16th Century, religious strife became endemic in Europe, especially in central Europe from where the Reformation had made its way. In 1555 the Augsburg Confession linked the prevailing creed practiced in a territory to the confession of the dynastic family ruling there. What was to be known as the principle of *Cuius regio, eius religio* remained contested, though, through the subsequent decades. Only in 1648 with the peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years War, did a settlement of religious-confessional strife come to some form of containment in Central Europe. 1648 is therefore a logical year to construct an interactive map, which will contain information on the prevailing confession – catholic, protestant, mixed-confessions - within the 300 or so territorial entities of the Holy Roman Empire. Through a GIS database this information is linked not only to the historical geography of the time, but also to dynastic heritage, political structures, and processes state building. The map will therefore become an indispensable tool for the study of religion, politics, and society in the early modern period.