

Confessional Divisions before and during the Reformations

Abstract

Early sixteenth century Europe reflected Roman Catholic religious hegemony, with religious minorities scattered throughout. By the late fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal had reasserted Catholic dominance and Orthodox churches dominated eastern and southeastern Europe. By the end of the sixteenth century, the religious constellation of Europe was much more complicated, as the Reformations solidified into confessional and regional differences and the reach of the Ottoman Empire extended Muslim influences in southeastern Europe. The British Isles hosted Catholic, Calvinist, and Anglican regions, while Lutherans dominated in Scandinavia and Catholic majorities occupied Mediterranean Europe. The German speaking lands reflected regional religious differences variously led by Catholic, Calvinist, or Lutheran majorities. Throughout Europe, pockets of religious minorities, including Jews, Muslims, and Anabaptists, existed with varying degrees of toleration.

Source





Source: Cartography (WCAG-compliant) by Gabriel Moss, 2025, in collaboration with Greta Kroecker. Data based on Mark Kishlansky et al., *Civilization in the West*, New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

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