



A Mighty Fortress

A Mighty Fortress (AMF) simulates the conditions which made possible the spread of the Lutheran Reformation and the subsequent Catholic reaction (the Counter-Reformation) in the years 1532-1555.

AMF was designed by Rudolph W. Heinze, developed by Richard Berg and published by SPI on September 25, 1977. Mr. Heinze designed no other games for SPI. Michael Dean feels that this was the first and one of a very few outside submissions published by SPI.

AMF was available in both SPI's plastic z-pack (initial stock number ZMG and then subsequently 1651) and in a 2" deep bookcase box (MG then 1650).

SPI felt it important to indicate that *AMF* was designed to be a simple game, with the few complexities it contained added reluctantly. "Therefore, *A Mighty Fortress* is not a definitive picture of the political-military-economic situation in the 16th century. The idea was to present the European picture in basic, strategic terms. Much has been purposely omitted; even more has been abstracted in. Then again, how accurate is Diplomacy?"

Components

- ❖ one 16-page 8½"x11" rulebook
- ❖ six 5½"x8½" player cards, one each for England, France, Hapsburgs,

Lutherans, Ottomans and Papacy

- ❖ two identical 5½"x8½" tables
- ❖ one full-colored 21¾"x34" hex map covering all of Europe
- ❖ one sheet of back-printed ½" counters totaling 200 counters, as follows:

England	16	black on light olive
France	23	white on blue
France (blank)	1	blue
Hapsburgs	40	black on ochre
Lutherans	55	ochre on dark olive drab
Lutherans (blank)	3	dark olive drab
Ottomans	22	black on green
Papacy	39	black on blue-grey
Game Turn	1	black on blue-grey
Total	200	

Errata

Two errata sheets were published by SPI for *AMF*, one short page as of 25 July 1977 and one extensive sheet as of March 1978. The following are 25 July 1977:

Game-Map:

- ❖ Hexes 2911, 3010, and 3011 comprise the area of *Anhalt*.
- ❖ Saxony encompasses hexes 3012, 3112, 3211 and 3311. There should be no area dividing line between 3012 and 3112.
- ❖ Marseilles (2223) is a Port.

Player Cards:

- ❖ *Ottoman Player*: The Ottoman Player receives 1 Naval Unit at Athens at the start

"Ein feste Burg
ist unser Gott"

*A mighty
fortress is our
God,*

*A bulwark
never failing;*

*Our helper He
amid the flood*

*Of mortal ills
prevailing.*

Martin Luther

of the game, **not 4** (as erroneously stated on his Player Card).

- ❖ On several Players' cards, in the Victory Conditions, the city of *Basel* is listed. Treat this as *Geneva*; i.e., Basel = Geneva (2418).

Reinforcements:

- ❖ [11.24] In placing reinforcements during the Reinforcement Phase, the Player who controls a city places his reinforcements in that city first. This is mentioned because there will occur times that more than one player will be capable of bringing in reinforcements or replacements in the same city.

The following errata are March 1978:

The following changes and corrections are the result of several letters (OK, more than several) questioning certain aspects of the game. One major change has been effected — that referring to the process of conversion. The former conversion method was much too easy for the Lutherans and resulted in some rather ludicrous situations (and even more ludicrous schemes). That has, hopefully, been somewhat remedied here. Other corrections refer to the Order of Battle, map misprints, and general problem areas. However, the game is diplomatic in nature and the number of problems is virtually unforseeable. Rather than correct and detail every single possibility we will trust that the players will undertake the game in the spirit of the era.

Corrections to the Game-Map:

- ❖ Marseilles (2223) should be a port.
- ❖ There should be no border between 3012 and 3112; 3012 is part of Saxony.
- ❖ The phrase "to Genoa" or "to Venice" is purely for historical purposes.
- ❖ You do not have to take Crete to take Venice, nor does possession of Crete give you Venice (or vice versa).

Corrections to the Turn Record Track:

- ❖ 1538 should not have an 'L'.
- ❖ 1539 should have an 'L' instead of 'P'.

Corrections to 16.2 City Income Schedule:

- ❖ Calais should be italicized (i.e., it starts the game under the control of one of the players). (Same for the Tables card.)
- ❖ Metz provides 2 "guilders" income. (Same for the Tables card.)

Corrections to the Player Cards:

- ❖ The Ottomans start with 1 Navy in Athens.
- ❖ Whenever the city of Basel appears on a Player Card, treat it as Geneva (2418).
- ❖ In any discrepancy between the Player Cards and the rules or game-map, the Player Cards control.

Corrections to the Rules:

- ❖ 3.12 (clarification)
Scotland and France are separate areas, even though they are allied to each other. For purposes of defining that alliance, Scotland is considered part of France, with no insult to the Scots intended (*non taken -ed*). This also means you do not have to take Scotland to take France.

- ❖ 3.15 (addition)

The country of Sweden is Lutheran in religion only. It is not controlled by the Lutheran player in the sense of 12.0.

- ❖ 8.45 (clarification)

There has been some trouble with this rule vis a vis the Papal-occupied cities of Cologne, Mainz and Trier. Although, technically these cities are in Germany, for the purposes of this rule they are considered part of the Papal States. Thus they may be attacked and entered by Lutherans without having first been converted. The Papal armies in those cities are, of course, immune from 8.46 — as long as they stay in the cities.

- ❖ 10.23 (major change)

Conversion of an area from one religion to another may take in either of the two following ways: A Missionary of the opposing religion is in the area in a city and no Missionary of the prevailing

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the sword is a very great benefit and necessary to the whole world, to preserve peace, to punish sin, and to prevent evil

*Martin Luther
Secular Authority
1523*

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religion is in the area; or A Missionary unit of the opposing religion is in the area (not in a city) and no Missionary of the prevailing religion is in the area. The player wishing to convert them rolls one die; if the total is higher than the number of army units (not Navies) belonging to the player who controls (12.0) that area (including mercenaries and any rented armies) then that area is converted.

Example: A Lutheran Missionary enters France in 1536. There are four French armies in France. The Lutheran player must roll a 5 or 6 (or enter a city with his Missionary) to convert France. Were there six or more armies, conversion might not be possible. Obviously, neutral areas can be converted easily. (However, see new Optional Rule, 21.0).

❖ 10.26 (addition)

4. The Papal States may not be converted. This applies only to the area in Italy.

❖ 14.1 (clarification)

No matter what it says anywhere else, to gain points for conversion of an area other than one you held at the beginning of the game you must have a Missionary in that area.

❖ 16.47 (addition)

As part of the terms of a loan, a player may "lend" one of his armies to the other player. A player may not "loan" more than one army at any given time.

❖ 17.2.d (clarification)

This rule covers Voluntary conversion to the Lutheranism simply by stating you are converting. A Catholic player who states, "I am converting to Lutheranism" may still be ex-communicated by the Pope. Note further that the Pope must initiate the Excommunication process immediately; this means in the immediate ensuing Diplomacy Phase (or in the Diplomacy Phase they are now in if that is when the conversion occurs). Simply serving a Papal Bull is enough to initiate the process.

❖ 17.24 (change)

Communication does not stop immediately upon a country becoming Lutheran. It continues for three years after the year the country becomes Lutheran.

❖ 21.0 Armies of Neutrals (optional rule)
General Rule:

In the Basic Game all the Neutrals are not only Neutral, they are unprotected. This was done for the purpose of simplicity. The following rules add a little flavor to the game — and a lot of problems — in the form of Neutral Armies.

❖ 21.1 Who is Neutral

For the purposes of this rule all Bright Yellow areas are Neutral, with the exception of Poland. (No military units may enter Poland.) Furthermore Sweden is also considered a Neutral for this purpose.

❖ 21.2 Neutral Armies

❖ 21.21

Each city in a neutral area has a garrison/army equivalent to its army capacity for that city. Thus, Venice has an "Army" of four points while Lisbon has an Army of six points. The Naval points are ignored for this rule.

❖ 21.22

No counters are used — or needed. Players keep track of any changes in the status of a neutral city on a piece of paper.

❖ 21.23

In order to occupy/control a neutral area, a Player must eliminate the garrison of all cities in that area. Any retreat result is treated as an elimination (for the defending neutral army).

❖ 21.24

Once eliminated, a neutral army may not be reformed.

❖ 21.25

Neutral armies may never be controlled by another player. They may only be

Not only does [AMF] compare the secular confrontation between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, and between the English and the French/Scots, but it also attempts simultaneously to present the religious struggle between the Lutherans and the Papal States. This attempt to combine such disparate motives in a single game seems to me to be the cause of its overall failure.

Marcus Watney

eliminated.

- ❖ 21.26
All rules that apply to religious conversion (i.e., the new 10.23) apply to neutrals.

Collector's Value

Up to 1996, activity on *AMF* on the Internet was as follows:

	Auction	Sale
Low	29.00	25.00
High	83.00	100.00
Mean	49.20	63.57

data from Mark Boone's *Internet Wargames Catalog*

In December 1997, I auctioned an unpunched z-pack copy for \$85 and a punched z-pack copy for \$65. In a current internet auction I am running, the high bid on an unpunched boxed copy is \$115.

At 200 counters, *AMF* is one of the smaller SPI games to command \$100 or more. The unusual subject matter likely meant that fewer copies were sold, particularly since the reviews were less than flattering (as an example, see the sidebar on this page): "This is a weird game", and, "But after a while it does become rather boring", and, "It is a great pity that this game seems to lack that vital spark of excitement." (Nicholas Palmer; *the Best of Board Wargaming*; 1980). Comments such as these would very likely have been the kiss of death for any red-blooded wargamers of the time, and the title suggested strongly a game of sieges.

And even though the original price was only \$9 for the boxed version and \$8 for the z-pack, it had to compete with the new monster games which were starting to reach their peak of popularity, such as GDW's *Operation Crusader* (even though it was selling for \$29.95).

If the truth be known, *AMF* is a game with

great potential once the errata are incorporated. According to Michael Dean, "If it weren't for the fact that this game takes six players all of two solid nights to play, it would certainly be one of the best games of all time."

Other Games of This Type

Quite frankly, there simply are no other games which deal with the religious difficulties of the 16th Century. There are, however, some games which are similar in a second-cousin-thrice-removed sort of way. For example, the following games are contemporaneous, but have slightly different subject matters:

- ❖ *Armada* SPI 1979.
- ❖ *Conquistador!* SPI 1976.

The following games have generally similar play, but are in different times:

- ❖ *Kingmaker* Philomar 1974/AH 1976.
- ❖ *Machiavelli* Battleline 1977/AH 1980.

The following games are all grander in scale but encompass the basics of *AMF*:

- ❖ *Blood Royale* GW 1987.
- ❖ *Emperors of Europe* Xeno 1992.
- ❖ *Empires of the Middle Ages* SPI 80.
- ❖ *Europa Universalis* AWE 1993.
- ❖ *Holy Roman Empire* WWW 1984.

And finally, there is the following game, which deserves to be listed, if for no other reason than its wonderful title:

- ❖ *Mad Monks & Relics* SimWrkshp 95.

Other Games by Rudolph W. Heinze

As far as can be determined, this is the only Heinze design which has been published in English.

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