

# Inspector Rex's History Snippet #19

## The Reichs

Everyone is aware of Hitler's Third Reich (1933-1945) which was supposed to last for a thousand years.

### But what are the other two Reichs?

It is common knowledge that Germany under Adolf Hitler (1933-1945) is referred to as the Third Reich, it is however less well known what the First Reich and Second Reich were. The word Reich is hard to translate to English, but realm or empire are probably the best translations.

The **First Reich** was the Holy Roman Empire (the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, Heiliges Römisches Reich deutscher Nation, not the ancient Roman Empire), 800 - 1806. Charlemagne (Charles the Great) was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in Rome on Christmas Day 800, this is normally seen as the founding of the Empire, but sometimes the year of 962 is used, that was when Otto I (Otto the Great) was crowned.

The Empire existed almost in name only following the Peace of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, but was not formally dissolved until 6 August 1806 when Emperor Francis II (Franz II) abdicated.

The **Second Reich** was the Hohenzollern Germany, from the unification of Germany following the Franco-Prussian War (1870 - 1871) and crowning of Wilhelm I as German Emperor at the Palace of Versailles, with Otto von Bismarck as the first Reichskanzler, to the abdication of Wilhelm II in 1919 following the German defeat in the First World War.

The Hohenzollern Empire was followed by the **Weimar Republic** (1919-1933), but this was not seen as the Third Reich, but rather as an Interim Reich.

The term **Third Reich** was most likely taken from the book "Das dritte Reich" published by Arthur Möller van den Bruck (1876-1925) in 1923.

### Attribution:

<https://www.axishistory.com/various/125-germany-unsorted/germany-unsorted/4865-the-first-a-second-reich>

### Comment by Inspector Rex

Hitler's ideal Third Reich to last for a Thousand Years was probably an evocation of the First Reich, 800-1806 of just over a thousand years of the Holy Roman Empire beginning with the crowning of Charlemagne.

Chancellor Otto von Bismarck championed the unification of Germany after the Franco-Prussian war (9 July 1870 to 28 January 1871).

The [German Empire](#) and Kingdom of [Prussia](#) were abolished in 1918.