Review Article

Confessionalization, Community, and State Building in Germany, 1555–1870*

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The principle *cuius regio eius religio* belongs to the fundamental structures of modern German history. Juridically set at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, expanded to include Calvinists and reapplied at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, it governed political and religious relations in the German lands until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1803. Stipulating that the religion of the ruler should be the religion of the ruled, *cuius regio eius religio* constituted an attempt to ameliorate the vexing problems of religious coexistence, religious pluralism, and religious conflict that the Lutheran Reformation and subsequent Protestant reform movements introduced into the fabric of German society. These problems, in turn, powerfully influenced the special trajectory of German state and nation building, ensuring that the German path, more perhaps even than those of the French or English, would be marked by problems of religious, and therefore cultural, disunity.

In what follows we will consider how religious division affected state building and civil society in Germany from 1555 to 1870. While historians of early modern Germany have recently devoted a considerable amount of research to this problem, suggesting complex interactions between confessional formation and the emergence of the early modern state, historians of nineteenth-century Germany have been slower to recognize the impact of religious division on nineteenth-century German society. Moreover, neither early modern historians nor their counterparts who deal with the modern era have attempted to trace the continuities and discontinuities across what has become a strict disciplinary barrier between the two periods. In this article we will consider both periods, but we will also focus on the continuities across the barrier.

Such an analysis implies two sets of questions. The first concerns the creation—sometimes by suasion, sometimes by force—of confessional unity: What impact did the formation of confessional homogeneity have on state structure, on the con-

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struction of "imagined communities," on the underlying assumptions of German nationalism? Did the reality, and later the utopia, of religious homogeneity shape the "imagined communities" of state and nation in the German lands?

The second set of questions address the legacy of difference and division. For *cuius regio eius religio* was a governing principle to which there were many exceptions. Some exceptions, like the free cities of religious parity in which Lutherans and Catholics lived within the same city walls, had already been set in the Peace of Augsburg; others, such as the mixed areas of the Palatine-Electorate, reflected the changing confessional allegiances of rulers; and still others came as a consequence of conquest—the Prussian annexation of Catholic Silesia, for example. Thus despite the overarching principle of religious homogeneity, a considerable amount of religious mixing occurred throughout the empire. Moreover, this mixing was dramatically accelerated in the nineteenth century, in part by the Napoleonic rationalization of the German states, which in almost all cases brought Protestants and Catholics together under a common ruler, in part by the demographic pull of urbanization and industrialization, which irrevocably altered confessional landscapes, bringing Protestants and Catholics into the same cities, towns, and villages. What, then, were the consequences of the de facto religious mixing and religious plurality? Did religious coexistence create the preconditions for the development of religious tolerance, of an ethic of religious pluralism? Did it reinforce or undermine confessional identities? Did it dissolve the links, fastened for centuries, between religious and political identity? Or did these links tighten as a result of processes of religious integration?

The works under review address these questions, sometimes, though not always, as central themes. Here we wish to gauge the state of historical research on these questions, to bring into relief lines of inquiry particular to historians of early modern as well as modern Germany, to suggest areas of overlap, to trace continuities and discontinuities, and to reflect on the place of confessional division in German history and historiography.

I

The impact of the Protestant Reformation on early modern state building was undeniably profound, as generations of scholars have demonstrated. But that impact has also generated some pervasive myths.¹ Though they have assumed many guises, two variations remain most common, and both stem from modern biases about religious and political causation. The first myth overemphasizes the Reformation's influence on the state by claiming that Protestantism initiated the full secularization of all institutional power, thus clearing the way for the growth of modern states, the pinnacle of which was Bismarck's Second Empire. The second myth exaggerates the nature and degree of the Reformation's resonance in the social and cultural

¹ For a convenient introduction to this vexing problem, see the essays in James D. Tracy, ed., *Luther and the Modern State in Germany* (Kirksville, Mo., 1986), esp. the opening article by Tracy, "Luther and the Modern State: Introduction to a Neuralgic Theme," pp. 9–19.
spheres; it rests on the mistaken assumption that religious reform led to national awakening, that if not the purpose then at least the result of religious reform was a protonationalist indoctrination of "German" society. In both instances, the relationship of religious to political change is misrepresented.

The problem begins with the assumption, central to the structure of both myths, that the Reformation represented a radical rupture and restructuring of the medieval Church-State relationship. Indeed, the entire notion of a transnational, unified Christianity being shattered by the Reformation ignores the decentralized nature of medieval ecclesiastical organization and practices and thus of religious identity. For whatever doctrinal decisions were made by theologians, councils, and popes, the greatest administrative and therefore practical power always remained at the episcopal or regional level. This was the main reason that lay investiture of bishoprics and other benefices had been so contentious throughout the Middle Ages as well as the main reason why the Reformation did not constitute the dramatic break that many scholars have assumed it did. Already by the fifteenth century, the domination of diocesan power had decisively shifted back to secular rulers, with the same potentates usurping an increasing number of ecclesiastical offices and rights. As a significant body of recent research has shown, the Reformation generally accelerated but by no means initiated this process of secular governmental expansion.2

Similarly, many historians have represented Protestantism in general, and Lutheranism in particular, as an omnipotent force for indoctrination in the service of the modern state. There is some truth in this. The Reformation era did in fact witness unprecedented standardization of religious beliefs and practices, a process aided by the printing press, which eased the production and dissemination of religious pamphlets, treatises, dialogues, poems, songs, woodprints, plays, catechisms, and, of course, Bibles. Moreover, clerical personnel of all denominations were recruited and trained with an unprecedented degree of thoroughness and sophistication before being sent off as domestic and foreign missionaries. But it is dangerously misleading to assume that such attempted standardization of religious practice either immediately succeeded or automatically contributed to the growth of early modern states. This view, as Gerald Strauss has demonstrated, easily overestimates the depth and rapidity of religiously inspired social change.3 At the same time, it also ignores the communal, quietist, and even revolutionary versions of some evangelical beliefs and practices.

The long-term political trajectory of the Reformation was to repress such revolutionary and quietist versions, but that trajectory was by no means predetermined by the nature of Evangelical faith or by ambitious state-building agendas among


3 Gerald Strauss, Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation (Baltimore, 1978).
German rulers. Indeed, the initial political direction of German Protestantism appeared strikingly antiauthoritarian. The current consensus in Reformation historiography explains the subsequent political evolution of sixteenth-century Lutheranism (and later Calvinism) by reference to three progressive and somewhat overlapping phases, usually called the popular or communal Reformation (until the Peasants’ War of 1524–25), the magisterial Reformation (from about the same time until the Peace of Augsburg in 1555), and the territorial Reformation (ca. 1540–1618). Despite the oversimplifications of this schema, it allows us to conceptualize new “imagined communities” and the connections between Church and State implicit in each.

Both communal and magisterial interpretations of Church-State relations among early Evangelicals represented distinctly traditional versions of a simultaneously religious and political Gemeinschaft, or community, in the local sense. In a now classic work on the early appeal of Luther’s teachings, Bernd Moeller argued that one of the main reasons the reformer’s teachings did so well in imperial cities was the shared vision of religious identity within a local communal context. Other historians, most notably Peter Blickle, have found Moeller’s so-called ecclesiola (small church) model equally applicable in rural settings, although with dramatically different implications. According to Blickle, the Reformation of rural communes (Gemeindereformation) embodied a dynamic blend of revolutionary political and religious concepts that struck at the very core of the existing social order. Scholars continue to debate the causes and consequences of the brutal suppression of the Gemeindereformation during the Peasants’ War of 1524–25, agreeing only that German Protestantism’s brief association with political radicalism was effectively marginalized from this point.

The subsequent magisterial Reformation also represented a communal or ecclesiola interpretation of the Reformation, but one that was set in the context of municipal politics and was therefore more authoritarian in nature. In his study of Strasbourg, for instance, Thomas Brady clearly demonstrated the well-established and pervasive social dominance of an urban oligarchy of “mixed rentier-merchant classes” and aristocrats who consistently prevented the more radical versions of the new religion from taking root. Despite frequent factionalism on all other issues, Strasbourg’s political elite remained united in opposing the dreaded “Swiss solu-

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tion" of popular, egalitarian political and religious authority. In a later work, Brady argued that it is in fact only our modern teleological perspective on nation building that has continued to blind many historians to the option (viable for many of the imperial cities and smaller principalities of the Holy Roman Empire) of "turning Swiss." The medieval combination of local particularism and political alliances or confederations, he maintains, represented a form of the early modern "state" that was just as legitimate as the territorial model (witness Switzerland or the Netherlands). What nineteenth-century Germans lamented as a "failed transition" or a "national error" Brady therefore sees as occurring mainly because conservative and jealously independent urban magistrates found neither the Swiss nor the imperial model acceptable and instead formed a third alliance with various territorial rulers—the doomed Schmalkaldic League—which in turn had crippling effects on all three types of German states. But this process was far from foreordained by an iron logic of premodern religious and political change.

With the suppression of communal tendencies and the failure of the Schmalkaldic League, the subsequent dominance of territorial states in defining Protestant political and religious identity seems less surprising. Even those historians who envision a much more spontaneous Volksreformation concede that probably by the 1530s and certainly by 1555 the social and political aspects of urban religious reforms had been successfully suppressed by the urban magistracy and its conservative agenda. From this point on, territorial rulers—or, more precisely, the jurists and theologians who advised them—introduced the most important innovations in Church-State relations. Here too, though, the social and cultural dynamics between the religious and political spheres were too complex, the interconnectedness too intricate, to be reduced to a rigid narrative of the emergence of modern states.

The interconnectedness of religious and political change in sixteenth-century Germany is in fact the primary emphasis of the relatively recent historiographical term "confessionalization." Its earliest advocates, Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, have sought to convey a social process that represents the full interaction of religious, political, economic, and other interpersonal dynamics in a given region. Working on Reformed and Catholic states, respectively, each scholar has


discovered strikingly similar developments during the late sixteenth century that, in the words of Schilling, "enabled states and societies to integrate more tightly, an integration that could not be achieved in any other way because of the specific form of Old European society." Both Schilling and Reinhard acknowledge their indebtedness to previous approaches, specifically to Ernst Walter Zeeden's idea of confessional formation (Konfessionsbildung) and Gerhard Oestreich's concept of "social disciplining" (Sozialdisziplinierung). Like Zeeden, Schilling and Reinhard emphasize parallel developments among Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic localities and states. Drawing from Oestreich, they also incorporate the idea of an increasingly authoritarian political elite. But while Zeeden and Oestreich focus on theology and law, Schilling and Reinhard fix their gaze principally on bureaucracy and politics. They argue that while the Peace of Augsburg marked the beginning of enforced coexistence and religious tolerance in the cities, the concept of cuius regio eius religio spurred territorial rulers to greater aggressiveness in official confessionalization. The more ambitious and increasingly confrontational methods of these rulers in the years leading up to the Thirty Years' War have in fact led Heinz Schilling to propose the title "Second Reformation" or, alternatively, "Confessional Age" for the period from 1555 to 1619.

Scholarly support for confessionalization appears to be reaching the level of consensus. Certainly some historians object to what they consider too sharp a distinction between the earlier and later periods of the Reformation. Others find Schilling's tight integration of long-term and largely independent political and religious developments—mainly bureaucratic in nature—misleading, particularly in his overestimation of their combined social impact in the short term.

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12 For introductions to the scholarly work on German confessionalization, see, on Lutheran states, Hans-Christoph Rublack, ed., Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung (Gütersloh, 1992); and Hsia, Social Discipline, pp. 10–25. On Calvinist states, see Schilling, ed., Die reformierte Konfessionalisierung; Volker Press, Calvinismus und Territorialstaat (Stuttgart, 1970); and Hsia, Social Discipline, pp. 26–38. On Catholic states, see Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, eds., Die katholische Konfessionalisierung (Gütersloh, 1995); and Hsia, Social Discipline, pp. 39–52.

13 With respect to the Palatine-Electorate, Volker Press argues, "In any case a close connection between religious and administrative innovation is hardly discernible—since the time of
would concede Schilling’s major point, namely, the intensification of confessional formation and related conflicts during the period 1555 to 1619, particularly with respect to the Reformed (Calvinist) territorial states. Moreover, all would agree that regardless of the individual political or religious circumstances, the intertwining of state building and confessional interests represented a universal phenomenon in all early modern German states.

What, then, constituted the advantages of “confessionalization” for state building during this period? Confessionalization first entailed “social disciplining” by early modern elites. A concept that originates from Max Weber, social disciplining is perhaps the most hotly debated aspect of confessionalization. Among historians the point of contention is not the existence of political and religious elites, nor that these elites played a decisive role in confessionalization and state building. Rather, the principal historiographical debate revolves around the nature of the relationship between elites and the rest of society, and, by extension, the impact of official religious reforms supported by the elites and at times forced on the people. Some cases represent clear-cut impositions. Certainly some urban elites—in Hanover and Augsburg, for example—imposed their minority Catholicism on predominantly Lutheran populations. Some scholars, such as Lyndal Roper, Bob Scribner, and Hans-Christoph Rublack, have described an even more antagonistic relationship between rulers and ruled, particularly in imperial cities, where the tools of ecclesiastical bureaucracy and religious indoctrination were combined to extend the magistracy’s local power. But for the majority of German cities and territorial states, the nature of the relationship is more ambiguous. Volker Press,


Bernard Vogler, and Joel Harrington have all found strong and widespread resistance to most of the reforms of religious and secular elites in the Calvinist Palatinate-Electorate, but also—as in other co-confessional states—some popular support.\(^{17}\) Official confessionalization, it seems, often intensified the level and nature of local conflicts, thus making state building more difficult. Still, one should not imagine early modern state making as simply a matter of coercive acculturation of a hostile populace.

The work of Heinz Schilling suggests an alternative interpretation, emphasizing not conflict but rather the convergence of elite and popular attitudes toward religious reform within a variety of political contexts. His reapplication of Moeller's communal ecclesiola model seems especially appropriate to a number of northern German cities, where nonconformist Lutherans were genuinely viewed by magistracy and citizens alike as dangers to civic peace.\(^{18}\) But Schilling's most significant contribution concerns the new orientation of imperial cities toward the growing territorial states of the seventeenth century. According to Schilling, exclusive concentration on the confessional conflicts of imperial cities has generally obscured an equally dramatic tension between urban centers and neighboring territorial states. Within the cities, Schilling sees the decline of guild domination of urban leadership during the sixteenth century and the gradual emergence of a new professional bureaucracy dominated by jurists.\(^{19}\) For a variety of reasons, including careerism, most of these new leaders felt greater affinity with the growing absolutist territorial states than with their own tiny "homelands." Yet, as in the case of the failed Schmalkaldic League, traditional civic patriotism prevailed, bolstering the cause of urban identity and political independence and frustrating the state-building ambitions of territorial rulers and jurists alike. Thus civic republicanism did not die during the Second Reformation but was instead resuscitated, thriving throughout the empire until the catastrophe of the Thirty Years' War.\(^{20}\)

Confessionalization, then, brought both centripetal and centrifugal forces to bear on early modern state building. For Schilling, the process of confessionalization is based on the "central axis of state and society . . . [running] parallel to, though


\(^{18}\) Heinz Schilling applies Moeller's characterization of imperial cities to the second half of the sixteenth century, arguing for wider lay involvement among Protestants (both Lutheran and Calvinist), with "extensive overlapping of the ecclesiastical and the political circle of leadership," particularly in presbyteries. See Schilling, "Rise of Early Modern Burger Elites," pp. 184 ff. See also Schilling, "Alternatives to the Lutheran Reformation and the Rise of Lutheran Identity," in Fix and Karant-Nunn, eds. (n. 7 above), esp. pp. 112–16.


\(^{20}\) Schilling, "Urban Elites," pp. 130–31. See also Heinz Schilling, "Civic Republicanism in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Cities," in his Religion, Political Culture (n. 8 above), pp. 51–54, and "Dutch Republicanism in Its Historical Context." in ibid., pp. 13–27, which examines the clever appropriation of "freedom" and "republic" by the antimonarchical Regents’ party.
occasionally in opposition to, the rise of the early modern state and the formation of an early modern society of disciplined subjects.” Emphasizing the centripetal force of Protestant and Catholic reforms, Schilling calls these official governmental reforms “a third use of the Law” (a reference to Calvin’s comments concerning the state and social discipline) and shows how they aided ambitious rulers. Similarly, Reinhard summarizes the “decisive comparative advantages” of these reforms for rulers engaged in state building as “enforcement of political identity, extension of a monopoly of power, and disciplining their subjects.”

The centrifugal forces of territorial confessionalization were, however, also formidable. Religious divisions, along with personal assaults, riots, and vandalism, exacerbated rivalries within and between dynasties to the point of open warfare. According to Schilling, the immediate consequences of confessionalization included “an alarming mixture of subjective guilt, blindness, indifference, fanaticism, and indeed diabolical implacability on the one hand, and a fatal accumulation of structural circumstances on the other [that] blocked political stabilizing mechanisms and encouraged confrontations.” Some scholars have blamed religious elites—particularly Catholic Jesuits and Calvinist preachers—for the escalation of tensions during the late sixteenth century. Others point to the fundamental inability of religious or political elites to compromise on questions of religion. But the disastrous results of increased confessionalization—foreign policies driven by a combination of religious fervor and dynastic rivalries—are obvious to all historians, for these policies ultimately culminated in one of the most devastating wars ever fought in central Europe.

Ironically, the thirty years of destruction that broke the backs of rising territorial states such as Austria and the Palatinate also wiped out most of the resistance to territorial state building. In the years preceding and following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, lesser nobles, urban magistrates, and individual subjects and citizens displayed an unprecedented willingness to submit to territorial rulers on a variety of issues, thus initiating a long period of economic recovery and governmental expansionism. For the next 150 years, German cities and territorial states returned to the process of cultural and political confessionalization, but with an

21 Schilling, “Confessionalization in the Empire” (n. 9 above), p. 209. The argument is the same as that of his monograph, Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung (n. 8 above). It is also summarized in Schilling, “Between the Territorial State and Urban Liberty,” pp. 268 ff.
important difference. Demilitarized, confessionalization now assumed the form of political assimilation and cultural homogenization.

Such relative peace, however, was not without its own costs, particularly the many instances of "confessional cleansing." The absence of political parity or religious tolerance in many cities and towns meant that hundreds of thousands of individuals were forced to migrate to more hospitable locations within the empire or elsewhere.27 In some cases, as in the famous Salzburg emigration of 1731–32, the journey involved thousands of people traveling together to a common destination hundreds of miles away. In his recent work on this symbol of religious intolerance, Mack Walker analyzes the motives of expellers, expelled, and royal benefactor and, of equal interest, the way in which the Salzburg expulsion was later used in confessional narratives. Walker retells the story "as successive narrations of one event," each narration different, each representing "separate but equal narrative truths."28 The result is an elegantly conceived, multiperspectival account of an epic event of confessional conflict that eschews the threadbare dichotomies that bedevil the older histories of the expulsion: Catholic zeal here, Protestant sacrifice for the cause of religious freedom there. It may, therefore, be instructive to consider this work, as well as the event, in more detail.

In Walker's view, the expulsion constituted a transaction in which the protagonists shared points of interest, with at least short-term benefits for the political actors involved (if quite disastrous consequences for some of the men, women, and children who departed for the long trek from the Salzburg highlands to the heaths and meadows of East Prussia). From the perspective of the archbishop of Salzburg, Leopold Anton Freiherr von Firmian, the decision to expel Protestants grew out of a series of events not all of which Firmian could control, whose origins lay less in religious fanaticism than in Firmian's weak and embattled political position in the archbishopric. Firmian commissioned an investigation into the moral and religious condition of his archbishopric; this, in turn, renewed tensions between the mountain peoples (who had hitherto feigned Catholic allegiances) and the officials in the service of the archbishopric. These tensions were played out in the context of complicated legal structures concerning the rules of toleration and expulsion as well as within the historical context of previous religious dissent in the archbishopric. In short, the expulsions were driven by fear of both religious dissent and civil rebellion, and Firmian, whom Walker describes as without a clear idea of what he had gotten himself into, was "happily freed of this wasp's nest." The obliging partner—though not conspirator—was the King of Prussia, Frederick William I. For him, the transaction proved cunningly opportune. With a single stroke, he could "assert leadership in defense of the religious weal and the material interests of German Protestants, while prudently adapting German confessional strife to Prus-

27 Not all migrations were forced; cf. the apparently genuinely voluntary movements described by Forster, pp. 232 ff.
sian economic advantage." Indeed, as Walker shows, the invitation to the Salzburger was "sound business." Similarly, the event provided Charles VI, the Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation, with an opportunity to act as "an honest broker" at a time when this position, largely due to the conflict over the Pragmatic Sanction, was increasingly open to question.

The role of the broker is central to Walker's argument, which emphasizes the expulsion as a transaction and not as a conspiracy. As Walker writes, "If this was a trade between them, it was not a conspiracy on either of their parts but a transaction negotiated at more than arm's length and without direct contact between principals." The expulsion therefore took place, and could probably only have taken place, at a very specific juncture of imperial and religious politics. It is also clear that, aside from the transaction, Archbishop Firmian received little support in the empire, not even from his Catholic colleagues. Indeed, the emperor beseeched him, as Walker paraphrases, "to put an end to confessional posturing and irritation." By the mid-eighteenth century, then, the general contours of confessional conflict and diplomacy had become clear. In terms of its consequences for the state, the coercive confessionalization practiced by the archbishop of Salzburg had become both outdated and counterproductive. Frederick William I of Prussia, however, with a well-established bureaucracy and civil culture, readily perceived the economic, demographic, and propagandistic benefits of welcoming nineteen thousand new subjects, as had his father with respect to twenty thousand French Huguenots shortly before. Regardless of the private convictions of individual rulers, enforced religious conformity had become a largely indulgent expense that serious state builders could no longer afford.

The close connections between state building, economy, and the imperative of religious tolerance have also been established by Joachim Whaley with respect to eighteenth-century Hamburg. Here the cultural and political dominance of Hamburg's Lutheran community clashed with the economic necessity of officially recognizing the right to private religious practice (exercitium religionis privatum—chaplains without spires and bells) of local Catholics and Calvinists. Whaley argues that it was not, primarily, the discourse of enlightened tolerance ("the spirit of the age") that determined the shift from a narrow to a more tolerant reading of the principles enshrined in the Peace of Westphalia. Rather, mercantilist pressure, rendered more severe after the economic crisis that followed the Seven Years' War, forced the Lutheran citizenry of Hamburg to concede greater toleration to the confessional groups recognized in the Treaty of Osnabrück. Moreover, the discourse of toleration still remained within the interpretive framework of cuius regio eius

29 Ibid., p. 86.
30 Ibid., p. 98.
31 Ibid., p. 118.
32 Ibid., p. 107.
33 Ibid., p. 135.
religio. Even in the city of Lessing in the late eighteenth century, religious tolerance was not yet pitched in terms of humanité; and Mennonites, Sectarians, and Jews were not extended the same rights as Calvinists and Catholics.35

The economic basis for expanded religious toleration is, of course, neither a new nor an unambiguous idea.36 With competing economic interests at stake, the toleration question could prove especially divisive, as in the so-called Kölner Toleranzstreit of 1787 between Cologne’s master craftsmen and the pro-toleration patriciate and merchant class. Local studies continue to reveal how and why tolerance was so fiercely resisted and thus so late to develop. Full legal and political rights for members of minority religions remained generally as inconceivable to eighteenth-century state builders as sheer coexistence had been to their early seventeenth-century predecessors. In Hamburg, a city known for its toleration, official toleration for all Christian religions was not achieved until 1785 and full parity was not granted until 1819. Territorial states and their clerical backers displayed similar recalcitrance. The Toleranz-Patent issued by Austria’s enlightened Joseph II led the way in granting parity for religious minorities, but it was only reluctantly followed by Prussia in 1788, by Bavaria and Württemberg in 1803, by Baden in 1818, by Hesse in 1831, and by Saxony in 1841.37

II

The eighteenth century did, then, mark an important transformation in the relationship between confessional identity and state building. By the end of the century the rigid juridical structures of cuius regio eius religio had begun to crack and crumble, not just in isolated cities and regions with peculiar confessional compositions but throughout Germany. Consequently, historians have traditionally perceived the eighteenth century as constituting the end of an age dominated by confessional concerns. In 1965 Ernst Walter Zeeden could argue without much fear of contradiction that “from the middle to the end of the seventeenth century, confessional influences were on the wane. In the eighteenth century, they only played a subordinate role.”38 Yet recent studies—less focused on juridical constraints and high politics, more interested in popular mentalité—have begun to expand the definition of confessional concerns. Indeed, Etienne François has recently entreated German historians to consider the post-Reformation religious division as a continuously central factor in modern German history, to imagine the architectonic plates of this division as being governed by what Fernand Braudel has called the longue durée, and to observe the shifting causes of friction, the changing forms of confessional affinity and antagonism. From this perspective, historians would not

35 See ibid., pp. 145–68.
simply narrate the late seventeenth century as the end of the confessional age; rather, they would redirect the focus of their research on confessionalization from a concentration on the questions of state building to a concern with meaning and identity. How, in other words, was an “imaginary community” constructed across what François calls “the invisible boundary” of confession?

This, indeed, is the subject of his pathbreaking study of Protestants and Catholics in Augsburg from 1648 to 1806, Die unsichtbare Grenze. Arguing for the centrality of the confessional boundary to the communal life of Augsburg, François delineates its twisted path along demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural lines. It is not easy to communicate the shades of subtle differentiation that characterize his careful analysis. Demographically, he shows a dynamic Catholic population counterposed to a stable Protestant one; these demographic scissors, he maintains, were the result partly of confessional attitudes, but more importantly of the way in which demography and confession overlapped to produce confession-specific configurations in migration patterns, marriage patterns, and population growth. Thus, for example, the fact that Lutheran marriage partners typically came from distant Protestant cities, while Catholic partners were drawn almost exclusively from the nearby countryside, had important ramifications for the comportment of members of each confession. He also shows how coexistence and competition between confessions influenced—“dialectically”—demographic patterns within Augsburg. But perhaps the most important discovery of François’s study is the divergence between objective differences and subjective perceptions. François demonstrates that while Catholics and Lutherans coexisted in Augsburg in different, if overlapping and often entangled, social and economic spheres, they nevertheless perceived that the boundary between them, far from being invisible, was quite distinct.

As in eighteenth-century Hamburg, the interests of the Augsburg business community necessitated flexible, undogmatic cooperation across confessional lines. But far from fading, perceptions of difference sharpened in this period. François analyzes these “subjective” perceptions by looking first at confessional controversy, then at confessional identity. He demonstrates that confessional controversies—in the form of sermons and pamphlets against the other confession, didactic theater, rituals of intraconfessional solidarity—reached their high point in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but declined in power and popularity thereafter. Yet in the course of the eighteenth century, Lutherans and Catholics powerfully reaffirmed their confessional identities, as François illustrates by documenting the increasing tendency of Catholics and Protestants to insist on confessionally specific Christian names: in the case of Catholics, an increase, for example, in “Jesuit” first names (Aloys, Ignaz, Xavier); in the case of Protestants, more “non-Catholic” names as well as more names of Protestant and Germanic

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40 Ibid., pp. 54–60.
41 Ibid., pp. 143–66.
heroes. Following Norbert Elias, François interprets this as evidence of a powerful "process of internalization" and suggests that, by the end of the eighteenth century, confessional identity had become so firmly implanted that it "could no longer be separated from the person and belonged, as it were, to the essence of every Augsburg citizen." 

This analysis represents a subtle but certain shift in the historiographical concern with confessionalization. Focused less on theology or administrative praxis, this analysis seeks to identify the deep contours of culture and identity. As the very gradual nature of confessional formation gains recognition among early modern historians, more and more historians have come to share François’s emphasis both on the later period (after the Peace of Westphalia) and on a more interactive cultural process than sixteenth-century studies have suggested. Among the growing number of works emphasizing the dialectical dimension of the process of confessionalization, Marc Forster's prizewinning The Counter-Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 1560–1720 stands out for its emphasis on the local processes by which confessional identity was constructed and for its forceful critique of a self-evident association of confessionalization and state building. Examining the Bishopric of Speyer, one of a number of small territories that made up much of the old regime in southern and western Germany, Forster argues that the Counter-Reformation ultimately prevailed in the Bishopric of Speyer not because of a state-driven process of confessionalization, nor because of a one-sided acculturation to a new post-Tridentine Catholic culture, but rather because of the continued vitality of traditional Catholic religion in the villages.

This is an argument of considerable revisionist import, as historians, focusing more typically on Bavaria and the Habsburg territories, have usually emphasized the sorry state of the Catholic hierarchy in the sixteenth century and have, accordingly, attributed considerable transformative power to the outside influence of the territorial state and the post-Tridentine church. Forster instead emphasizes the tenacity of community-oriented devotion (weekly religious services, masses, processions, local pilgrimages) and shows considerable resistance to post-Tridentine, Counter-Reformation piety (frequent confession and communion, individual prayer, austere self-discipline). Post-Tridentine practices introduced by reforming Jesuits, he argues, probably had an impact on clerical concubinage and related abuses, but they did not take immediate root in popular consciousness or significantly shape confessional identity. Indeed, not until the early eighteenth century could one discern a distinctive Catholic culture in the bishopric and even then it

42 Ibid., pp. 167–89. See also Peter Zschunke, Konfession und Alltag in Oppenheim: Beiträge zur Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Gesellschaft einer gemischtkonfessionellen Kleinstadt in der frühen Neuzeit (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 111, who documents an increasing tendency to differentiate according to first names toward the end of the eighteenth century without, however, according this development central significance.

43 François, Die unsichtbare Grenze, pp. 178–79.

was characterized much more by traditional and pre-Reformation communal rituals and values. Forster's evidence is ultimately more extensive and detailed for the failure of official clerical reforms than it is for popular confessionalization. Nevertheless, his findings challenge historians to reconsider confessional formation as a process more negotiated than imposed.

Forster's observations also suggest considerable revisions in the way we look at the hardening of confessional division and antagonism. According to the confessionalization model, this hardening occurred as a result of the social-disciplining measures of the rising, and increasingly absolutist, territorial state. But Forster, his analysis focused on a weak state, discerns a similar hardening, not before but after 1648, and not so much state-driven as fueled by the identification of the village commune with the revival of traditional Catholic religiosity: this, in other words, is the intolerance of the Catholic hometown. Impressively documented as a series of confessional conflicts as well as the unwillingness of Catholic villagers to accept Protestant immigrants, it was also an intolerance that welled up from below, its pace accelerating in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.45

The pace and geographical pattern of confessional hardening will remain an object of scholarly debate—perhaps the inevitable result of the vastly variegated social and political contexts of the old regime. Yet it seems clear that by the early eighteenth century much of what Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl once called the third Germany was divided, as Forster puts it, "into two confessional cultures."46 But here, on the cultural cusp of the divide, the historiography remains underdeveloped. As R. Po-chia Hsia writes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: "The great gap in our knowledge is the social history of culture: the questions of literacy, book ownership, the sociology of reading, patronage, and the history of meaning do not as yet have definite answers."47 Yet research into "the history of meaning" is precisely what we need to establish the links between the early modern process of confessionalization and the social significance of confessional identity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As François argues in the conclusion of his work: "Only because the confessional borders had become (firstly) an internalized border—and therefore largely independent of the institutional preconditions that led to their formation—could they survive the radical structural changes of the early nineteenth century (dissolution of the Reichskirche, the carrying out of the principle of religious parity and religious freedom, the rise of multiconfessional, religiously neutral states on the rubble of the Empire) and continue to exist in a

completely altered context."

Thus by focusing on the internalization of confessional culture we can begin to sketch the continuities and discontinuities across the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The problem remains, however, that for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the research on the confessional dimension of what Hsia calls the "social history of meaning" is still in its infancy. Thus we have only scattered information on the topography of confessional reading in the nineteenth century, even though a number of historians have convincingly argued that confessionally informed reading continued to dominate German print culture. Similarly, we have few serious studies of religious publishers, such as Herder, for the Catholic world. The degree to which confessionally determined cultural worlds still determined horizons therefore remains an open question. Hsia suggests that in the early modern period the most dramatic split was between the bilingual Baroque culture of Catholicism, which drew considerable intellectual sustenance from Spanish sources, and the Protestant world of learning, which was ideologically centered on the interests and reading of the urban middle classes, was more dependent on the vernacular of Luther's Bible, and was more open to intellectual influences from England and Holland. According to Hsia, the creation of confessionally homogeneous cultures contributed decisively to the general process of confessionalization thought to be central to the emergence of early modern territorial states.

III

Did these deep cultural divisions also cripple the emergence of a unified German nation, as nineteenth-century nationalists stridently insisted? The answer to this question depends, in part, on how it is posed. If we follow Ernest Gellner's insight that nationalists make nations, and not the reverse, then religion must be seen as a persistent and aggravating source of contention among compatriots of the newly

48 François, Die unsichtbare Grenze, p. 242.


50 On the publishing industry generally, see, for a convenient starting point, Reinhard Wittmann, Buchmarkt und Lektüre im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: Beiträge zum literarischen Leben, 1750–1880 (Tübingen, 1982). For a recent example of the fruitfulness of this approach, although concentrated on liberal Protestant publishing at the end of the nineteenth century, see Gangolf Hübinger, Kulturprotestantismus und Politik (Tübingen, 1994), pp. 190–218. On Catholic publishing we are still quite uninformed, but see the exemplary treatment of one of the most important Catholic publishers, Joseph Bachem, in Thomas Mergel, Zwischen Klasse und Konfession: Katholisches Bürgertum im Rheinland 1794–1914 (Göttingen, 1994), pp. 195–210.

51 Hsia, Social Discipline, pp. 89–121.

52 Ibid.
imagined nation. This is, in fact, the line of argument pursued in Wolfgang Altgeld's complex and impressive study on religion and nationalism in nineteenth-century Germany. In this work, a revised Habilitationsschrift and the first part of a projected two-volume study on confessional division and modern German nationalism, Altgeld pursues the complex relationship between an emergent German nationalism and the persistence of religious division in the period from the late Enlightenment to the Revolution of 1848. Specifically, he focuses on the impact of "national religious ideas" on two aspects of German nationalism: modern anti-Catholicism and modern anti-Semitism. Altgeld does not argue that these two sentiments are the same, but rather that they share an important common root in the nationalist vision of Germans as a chosen people. This vision, argues Altgeld, flourished in Protestant more than in Catholic thinking, in liberal more than in orthodox milieus, and represented an aspect of the larger process of secularization. Moreover, the idea of Germans as "chosen" accompanied German nationalist ideas from the start. Accordingly, Altgeld unearths the importance of national-religious assumptions in the thinking of Herder and Nicolai, von Dohm and Schleiermacher, Fichte and Arndt, as well as in a number of lesser-known figures.

National-religious ideas had three essential components, which, given the legacy of cuius regio eius religio, necessarily led to conflict: the assumption that Protestantism defined what it was to be German, the belief that a perfect nation would be religiously homogeneous, and the projection of a future German utopia in which nation and religion would be one. This set of ideas necessarily excluded the complex, if imperfect, confessional arrangements that marked the old regime. Moreover, following a line of emerging literature on nationalism, Altgeld argues that the drive for religious homogeneity was essentially a modernizing drive. He offers the example of Friedrich Nicolai, whose travels throughout Germany in the 1780s were intended to help create a nation defined by cultural cohesion. Far from celebrating Germany's religious plurality, Nicolai was first shocked, then dismayed by what he considered the sheer backwardness of Catholic culture in southern Germany, a backwardness all the more evident when seen against the light of an emerging, enlightened Protestant culture increasingly coterminous with the nation itself. Especially irked by the Byzantine set of rules that characterized parity cities such as Augsburg, Nicolai considered such arrangements outdated and no longer befitting an enlightened age. Altgeld argues that a confessionally determined construction of national identity underlay Nicolai's insights and that this way of perceiving Germanness became more pronounced still in the process of the reconfessionalization of German life after the Wars of Liberation and after the tricentennial of Luther's

55 Ibid., pp. 47-76.
56 For important reflections on this issue, as well as suggestions for periodization, see Hartmut Lehmann, "The Germans as a Chosen People: Old Testament Themes in German Nationalism," German Studies Review 14, no. 2 (May 1992): 261-73.
57 Altgeld, p. 58.
theses in 1817. As Altgeld puts it, "the beginning reconfessionalization of religion at the start of the nineteenth century also meant . . . the confessionalization of German national thought." 58

This is an important insight. Moreover, the confessionalization of German national thought had, according to Altgeld, a number of profound consequences for the course of German history in the nineteenth century. First, to the Protestant-informed versions of German nationalism, the new confessionalization imparted a certain missionary zeal to German nationalism. More specifically, Altgeld argues that national-religious ideas, which sought to overcome confessional division by erasing ultramontane influence, ultimately served to radicalize German nationalism. Thus nationalism, far from being an ersatz religion, drew some of its most volatile substance from Germany's history of confessional polemic. 59 Second, the appropriation of this messianic tradition by enlightened Protestants meant that German Catholic understandings of the nation were very different from the visions of nationalism to be found across the confessional divide. Indeed, Altgeld writes of a national consciousness, but not an ideologically driven nationalism, among German Catholics in nineteenth-century Germany. Here the argument concerns less the degree of nationalist enthusiasm, and still less its antiforeign impetus (compare the anti-French polemics of the Catholic publicist Joseph Görres), than the specific internal logic behind confessionally determined nationalist visions. Third, Altgeld insists on the importance of confessional division for understanding the tangled tradition of anti-Judaism in Germany, and specifically for understanding that part of the tradition that culminated in modern anti-Semitism. He shows how "national religious" assumptions led German Protestants to see Jews not as just another religious group but also, and more portentously, as another people—another Volk. He thus locates arguments for a "utopia of a German world without Jews" in the early nineteenth century and maintains that this utopia was all the more dangerous for its appeal to a Germanic-Christian religion shorn of Old Testament immorality and unenlightened popular religiosity—in short, for its appeal to a religion of reason. 60

Altgeld's arguments imply that Germany's three-hundred-year-old tradition of religious division imparted a considerable burden to nineteenth-century attempts to create an imagined community. But this burden is less to be found in the everyday reality of religious division than in its ideological instrumentation. In this sense, the legacy was extremely volatile and unsettling. Yet Altgeld's study, precisely because it is the first to address these issues squarely, raises as many ques-

58 Ibid., p. 162.
60 On this particular "utopia," see Altgeld, p. 50. Though we have not, in this article, addressed the problem of anti-Semitism, Altgeld's work shows that the terms of inter-Christian rivalry and debate also had profound effects on the specific trajectory of anti-Semitism in modern German history. For a brilliant analysis of this issue, shedding a great deal of new light on the relation of Liberals in Baden to Jewish emancipation, see now Dagmar Herzog, Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden (Princeton, N.J., 1996), pp. 53–84.
tions as it answers. To what extent did the confessionalization of nationalist thought among intellectuals reflect a broader confessionalization of national identity among the wider public? Does confessionalization follow radicalization in the sphere of public discourse, as Altgeld sometimes suggests, or is this radicalization itself the result of social and demographic changes? What is the relationship of an ever-wider reading audience to the process of "reconfessionalization" in the nineteenth century? Here we come up against the limits of a methodological approach confined to delineating the logic of nationalist arguments in selected published texts. Do these texts reflect local, popular antagonisms? Does Altgeld's periodization make sense when seen from the ground?

The social history of the confessional division in the early nineteenth century remains, unfortunately, a seriously neglected field of inquiry. Social historians, for example, have yet to consider the impact of long-term migrations on confessional cityscapes. Yet, at least in some cities, these demographic changes were of considerable import. To take one case: Breslau, which in the seventeenth century was almost exclusively Lutheran (its conversion to Lutheranism was accepted in the Schlesisches Majestätsbrief of 1609), became, over the next three centuries, increasingly Catholic. In 1800, Breslau's population of fifty-nine thousand consisted of 72 percent Protestants, 24 percent Catholics, and 4 percent Jews. By 1905, its population (1,773,198) consisted of roughly 56 percent Protestants, 42 percent Catholics, and 2 percent Jews. When considered in the long term, such transformations, complicated by changes in class and ethnic composition, no doubt had a profound impact on the social and political life of the city, not to mention on the relationship between the two major religious groups. Yet we know far too little about the consequences of this religious sea change.

Similarly, social historians have been slow to consider the impact of the French occupation on religious communities, as well as their reaction to it. This remains the case despite the thesis, based largely on scattered and often anecdotal evidence, advanced over a decade ago in T. C. W. Blanning's The French Revolution in Germany: namely, that "for Catholic and Protestant Rhinelanders alike, religious faith supplied both the occasion and the justification for opposition to the French." Blanning suggests that while confession as a general category cannot be seen as a reliable indicator of whether a population welcomed or resisted French occupation, local confessional configurations were often decisive. He offers the examples of Bermersheim near Alzey (Hessen) and Worms: the former a mixed community under Catholic rule in which Catholics and Protestants shared the same church and were, therefore, in constant strife; the latter a demographically mixed town in which Protestants (73 percent Lutheran, 6 percent Calvinist) dominated Catholics (13 percent) and Jews (8 percent). In Bermersheim, local Protestants perceived the

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61 For suggestive comments on this problem generally, see François, Die unsichtbare Grenze (n. 39 above), pp. 230–243. On Breslau specifically, see ibid., p. 233, n. 22; and H. A. Krose, Konfessionsstatistik Deutschlands (Freiburg, 1904).

French as liberators and, for this reason, were denounced by their Catholic towns-
men as traitors to the fatherland. In Worms, Lutherans embraced the Revolution,
while Catholics and Calvinists opposed it.\textsuperscript{63} Unwilling to hazard generalization,
Blanning prudently observes that the "relationship between sectarian strife and
response to the Revolution . . . cries out for systematic investigation."\textsuperscript{64}

Part of this systematic investigation would examine the effects of redrawing po-
litical boundaries on confessional communities; another would look at the demo-
graphic rupture that the Revolution and the Wars of Liberation caused; and still
another would investigate the dialectic of secularization and religious revival that
marked the early nineteenth century. The issue of secularization is, of course, cen-
tral to an understanding of confession and community in the nineteenth century.

But here too we are just beginning to see distinct interpretive contours. For Protes-
tants, historians will have to await the publication of data on religiosity and secular-
ization compiled by Lucian Hölscher and his coworkers at the University of Bo-
chum, where a detailed database on the topography of religious observance is being
compiled. This will give us precise quantitative information on religious infrastruc-
ture as well as on confessional geography and on the rate of adherence to standard
religious practices.\textsuperscript{65} But quantitative material only brings us part of the way. As
Hölscher himself has pointed out, "What an enlightened Christian of 1800 under-
stood as religious worship had hardly anything in common with what was under-
stood by this term two generations later, and by 1900 Christian convictions were
expressed in ways that were qualitatively different from half a century earlier."\textsuperscript{66}

Hölscher has convincingly argued that we should take into account not only stan-
dardized measurements of religious practice and participation but also subjective
and historically changing perceptions of what it meant to be religious. This may
complicate simple notions of a gradual long-term secularization (which he sees as
being counterbalanced by tendencies toward sacralization), but it may also reinte-
grate an analysis of changing patterns of religious behavior into a larger cultural
history of German society.\textsuperscript{67}

The qualitative nature of these changes is, at present, better understood for the
Catholic community, in large part because of a significant amount of new research
on the religious life of the Catholic middle and upper classes during the transition
from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. In an impressive work entitled
\textit{Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung: Die katholische Stadt—Köln, Aachen,
Münster—1700–1840}, Rudolf Schlögel has, for example, convincingly docu-
mented the process of secularization among the middle and upper classes of three

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., pp. 245–46.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. 245.
\textsuperscript{65} The title of the project is "Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutsch-
land 1850–1940."
\textsuperscript{66} Lucian Hölscher, "Secularization and Urbanization in the Nineteenth Century: An Interpretive
\textsuperscript{67} For reflections, see Lucian Hölscher, "Die religiöse Entzweiung: Entwurf zu einer Geschichte
der Frömmigkeit im 19. Jahrhundert" (unpublished inaugural lecture at the Ruhr-Universität Bo-
Rhenish cities. Exploiting sources such as book ownership and reading patterns, testaments and obituaries (Totenzettel), he has shown that the process of secularization among the Catholic middle class preceded the onset of the Catholic enlightenment. In Schlögel's view, the Catholic enlightenment was therefore an answer to the problem of secularization and not its cause. Combining careful demographic analysis with an ethnographic sensibility, Schlögel also provides an analytical vocabulary with which to reexamine the process of secularization and therefore the larger dilemmas of nineteenth-century religion as well. Following Nikolas Luhmann, Schlögel perceives secularization as part of the "evolutionary process of differentiation within society." Religion and religious ethics became, in this interpretation, a "second code," which was forced to coexist with other moral discourses as well as with other constituent factors of personal identity. The "disenchantment of the world," and the marginalization and aestheticization of religion, therefore followed the dissemination of knowledge, the rise of the idea of Bildung, and (closely connected) the cultivation of a civic (bürgerlich) idea of the individual personality. By 1830 religion remained only a part, and often a problematic part, of the identity of a Catholic Bürger.

The subject of the relationship between religious identities and other identities has also been taken up by Thomas Mergel in his recently published Bielefeld dissertation, Zwischen Klasse und Konfession: Katholisches Bürgertum im Rheinland, 1794–1914. Mergel argues that between 1794 and 1848 a unified urban bourgeoisie existed as a liberal, enlightened, ruling elite and that the rise of ultramontanism—an antibourgeois movement supported by a clerically manipulated petit bourgeois and rural population—destroyed this unity. The consequences, he shows, were of considerable moment. Before 1848 one could be both Catholic and bourgeois; religion and world were separate spheres, not hardened milieus of irreconcilable ideological systems. After 1848, and particularly by the late 1860s, this was no longer the case, and Catholic members of the urban bourgeoisie were forced to decide between two social milieus: that of ultramontane Catholicism or that of the local, bourgeois, liberal elite. Most chose the latter. For Mergel, the decisive break came with the Kulturkampf, which marked the successful pairing of confessionalization with mass mobilization and mass politics.

The motor of this transformation was, according to Mergel, the rise of ultramontane piety, which he defines, not unproblematically, as "antirevolutionary ideology, a process of immunization against political revolution and social modernity." Based on an extreme emphasis on clerical authority and direction, ultramontane piety forced the process of differentiation vis-à-vis other confessions and, as such, represented a "counterreality" to the world of Cologne’s Catholic bourgeoisie,

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69 Ibid., p. 24.
70 Ibid., p. 28.
71 Mergel (n. 50 above), p. 169. The classic work on ultramontane piety and its relation to nineteenth-century German society is, of course, David Blackbourn, Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany (New York, 1994).
which was marked by a much higher degree of interconfessional sociability than historians have traditionally supposed.

The picture that emerges from these new works is of a reconfessionalization of Catholic life in mid-nineteenth-century Germany—not simply a return to the old religion after the brief interlude of the Catholic enlightenment but a redefinition of what it meant to be Catholic. Central to this redefinition was the clergy itself. Yet for nineteenth-century Germany there have been few serious attempts to understand the clergy as such, a fact all the more astonishing when we consider their importance as shapers of religious ideas, beliefs, and practices.

This lacuna has now been filled for Protestant pastors in Prussia by Oliver Janz’s Bürger besonderer Art, and for the Catholic clergy by Imtraud Götz von Olenhusen’s study of the priests of the Archbishopric of Freiburg, Klerus und abweichendes Verhalten. In the course of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1850, the Protestant pastors of Prussia became increasingly estranged from the central values of the educated German Bürger. Janz traces their increasingly distinct status within the German Bürgertum by delineating not only their ideology but also their Alltag, by demonstrating the gradual erosion of their social status as well as by pointing to a powerful trend toward resacralization of the spiritual office. The transformation of the Catholic clergy ran apace. In her study, Götz von Olenhusen argues that in the course of the century the clergy became increasingly rural in origin and that the rise of ultramontanism corresponded with a drastic decline in young priests from the cities and from the middle and upper classes. Yet this process was by no means a natural one—quite the contrary. The ruralization of the Badenese clergy occurred in inverse proportion to the more general process of urbanization and modernization. Moreover, strict disciplining and policing accompanied this ruralization, as Götz von Olenhusen points out by showing the myriad ways in which clergy were denounced, cited, and disciplined for nonconformist behavior—in some cases political, in others sexual.

In this sense, her findings complement Mergel’s work, which, in the end, attempts to illuminate the process by which the Catholic Church increasingly marginalized members not willing to bend to its authority. Who belonged, and who did not, was therefore defined within a complex dialectic of disciplining, marginalization, and resistance—a process not unfamiliar to historians of early modern confessionalization. Indeed, Mergel’s study may be read as an examination of the processes and consequences of confessionalization for a specific class in a nineteenth-century context.

IV

When considered over the long term, what is striking is the tenacity of confessional identities, the sheer resilience of identities constructed over the course of three

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centuries by dint of complex negotiations between ruler and ruled, between official and popular religion. In the nineteenth century, as Rudolf Schlägel has convincingly shown, confessional identities and loyalties competed with other identities and other allegiances and, in certain historical configurations, confessional ties proved the less powerful. Yet they were never absent, and, as Étienne François might argue, confession remained an important and determining factor in the longue durée of modern German history. What, then, constituted the main lines of continuity? Where can one discern rupture? What themes and periods remain to be researched?

Research on confessional identity has focused on three processes: the construction of confessional identity as part of early modern state building; the internalization of confessional identity as part of the larger process of the constitution of subjects and citizens; and, in the final period, the instrumentalization of confessional identity and confessional history in the service of a renewed confessionalization (in the case of Catholics) and of an incipient nationalist ideology (in the case of Protestants).

The first focus—the construction of confessional identity—represents a relatively advanced tradition of historical research: historians working on this problem have undertaken a series of closely researched case studies, have hammered out a precise conceptual apparatus, and have arrived at a considerable level of consensus concerning the timing and implementation of confessionalization from above. But, taken together, these studies have often overemphasized the coercive power of the state while underestimating the degree to which local traditions and popular cultures contributed to the process of confessionalization. Here, again, Marc Forster's study of the Bishopric of Speyer proves particularly revealing: In Speyer, a state with relatively weak tools of coercion, confessionalization occurred nevertheless, owing not to the power of the state or to the vigor of post-Tridentine Catholicism, but rather to indigenous traditions and communal experience. Similarly, in the case of Augsburg, François has demonstrated how local traditions of parity shaped the modalities of confessional formation and confessional conflict. And from a different vantage, and in a later period, Thomas Mergel has shown how, in the case of Cologne, the communal traditions of the Cologne Bürgertum profoundly affected confessional loyalties, serving, quite often, as a countervailing force against exclusive confessional positions. Such local studies, carried out over the long term and cutting across traditional chronological boundaries, promise to


73 Even Schilling, a pioneer in comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to the traditional subject of ecclesiastical discipline, has remained constrained by his political emphases to a paradigm of cultural change from above. But, on this problem, see Heinz Schilling, ed., Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung in frühneuzeitlichen Europa, Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beiheft 6 (Berlin, 1994), esp. the contributions by Heinrich Richard Schmidt, Helga Schnabel-Schüle, and Hans-Jürgen Goertz, all of whom emphasize social control and transformation "from below."
reshape the field of inquiry, shifting the focus from administrative praxis to the negotiation of confessional identity.74

Confessional exclusivity and the negotiation of confessional identity did not, however, occur within a simple space of dichotomous possibilities—Catholic or Protestant, obedient subject or resisting citizen. Rather, the formation as well as the dissolution of confessional identities took place within a complex arena of multiple loyalties, sometimes competing, sometimes overlapping. From the start, confessional identity was intertwined with class or caste consciousness, with economic interest, with equally powerful forces of sociability, and, not least, with local traditions of negotiation across the confessional divide.

In our search for a precise understanding of the creation of confessional communities as well as of the ongoing negotiation of confessional identities, we are confronted with a paucity, rather than an abundance, of historical studies. The serious lacunae are in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; but even for the earlier period, the answer to the question of how confessional communities were created no longer seems self-evident. Certainly in many instances state coercion was decisive. But historians are now beginning to understand the local processes involved and that, to borrow a phrase from Clifford Geertz, the reach of the state is not the same as its grasp. Yet even in weak states, confessional communities, exclusivist and intolerant, were formed. As Marc Forster poses the question: "Could it be that modern historians are reluctant to find the roots of intolerance in the people?" 75

The relation of confessional to other identities also remains an open field, especially for the later period. If historians have demonstrated the close relationship between confessional formation and state building, the relation between confessional identity and nineteenth-century nationalism remains significantly less clear. Here the work of Wolfgang Altgeld must be seen as pathbreaking, but also as provisional. To supplement his observations in the realm of intellectual history we need close social and cultural studies of specific communities. How did loyalties and identities—whether confessional or political—change from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century? What impact did the larger process of secularization have on such identities? Is it correct, as Altgeld insists, to speak of the reconffessionalization of identity? And does the observation hold for both Protestants and Catholics? We now have a number of works on the growth and influence of ultramontanism in Catholic communities. Yet the social and cultural history of Protestant communities remains, with precious few exceptions, terra incognita.76 But without this kind

74 For an example of a close reading of local class and confessional conflicts, see Frank Müller’s forthcoming dissertation (Universität Frankfurt) on nineteenth-century Augsburg, which is conceived, in part, as a continuation of some of the questions posed by François in Die unsichtbare Grenze (n. 39 above). For an outstanding new work on social and confessional milieus in Hessen in the 1920s, but with a great deal of material on the nineteenth century, see Siegfried Weichlein, Sozialmilieu und politische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik (Göttingen, 1996).
75 Forster (n. 25 above), p. 247.
76 See, for a start, Lucian Hölscber, "Die Religion des Bürgers: Bürgerliche Frömmigkeit im 19. Jahrhundert," Historische Zeitschrift 250 (1990): 595–630. On the later period, see Hübinge (n. 50 above), for an excellent work on the milieu of the left-liberal Protestantverein. Comparable studies on the conservative and orthodox milieus are just beginning to appear. See, most recently,
of research, it is difficult to advance compelling arguments concerning the relationship of popular Protestantism to the formation of early German nationalism.

As the works under review demonstrate, the valences of confessional cooperation and coexistence, conflict and division, were complex, regionally and temporally variegated, and differed according to class and estate. Yet these works also communicate a sense of the depth of the problem. To measure this depth, one may consider two observations by eminent historians looking at societies separated by three centuries. Heinz Schilling, his analysis focused on the late sixteenth century, has insisted that confessional lines were drawn in the society of the empire down to the level of "the cities and villages, even individual houses and families." Similiarly, the late Thomas Nipperdey, his analytical gaze fastened on the Second German Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, has argued that despite "cooperation and coexistence, . . . confessional division was one of the fundamental, vital facts of everyday life in Germany." It is our contention that confessional identities and divisions belong to the deep structures of German history, and that these structures, however complex, are traceable over the long historical term and across traditional disciplinary boundaries.


77 Schilling, "Confessionalization in the Empire" (n. 9 above), p. 230.