

## INTRODUCTION



# Reformations Lost and Found

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When Johannes Sleidanus became the official historian of the Schmalkaldic League in 1545–46, he was charged with describing “the whole matter of religion as it had started in our times, how far it has proceeded, and the events that have happened concerning this.” To advance the project, Elector John Frederick of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hesse agreed to supply Sleidanus with documentary source materials as needed. The princes also stipulated that they should have final approval over the resulting history. After the League was defeated and the princes imprisoned, Sleidanus persevered in his research, seeking documentary sources elsewhere. His history of the initial decades of religious reform was published in 1555 during the Diet of Augsburg. Sleidanus and his printer expected a controversial reception of the *Commentaries on the Condition of Religion and the State under Charles V* by Catholics and the Habsburg court, and sought to limit its social disruptiveness by printing it only in Latin. Protestant objections to the *Commentaries* were less anticipated, yet Philipp Melanchthon criticized it for containing “much which should be buried in eternal silence.” Sleidanus defended his history by emphasizing its dependence on the documentary evidence. Despite such critiques, the *Commentaries* became extremely popular, and the book was soon translated into German, French, and other vernaculars. The history was considered an indispensable account of politics and religion in the Holy Roman Empire during the first half of the sixteenth century. Its success led Sleidanus to be heralded as the first historian of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

Sleidanus’s experiences highlight the complexities of writing and reading histories of the Reformation. As Protestant (later Lutheran and Calvinist) and Catholic confessions developed and became linked with state interests, confessional identities were promoted by political, religious, and cultural institutions and structures. The production and propagation of historical narratives figured prominently among these confessionalizing processes. As

the self-titled “historiographus protestantium,” Sleidanus engaged with the writing of history on multiple levels. He composed official documents on the Schmalkaldic League’s behalf (thus authoring sources for future historians). He gained access to archives and used their contents to shape his twenty-five-part narrative.<sup>2</sup> Melancthon’s wish that historical oblivion would subsume some events and actions was a contemporary acknowledgment of historical narratives’ power to influence decisions or outcomes and to establish the legacies of the Reformation’s participants. The inseparable connection between the writing of history and the silences of history is this volume’s problematic and theme.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot theorizes the interconnection between writing and silence in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. For Trouillot, silences or omissions in historical writing are not simply consequences of power relations, they are also a method of historical research. The shapes and forms of absence and erasure are a type of historical evidence that expresses the contours of power in a given historical moment. “History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.” This expression of power is “constitutive of the story.” Making power visible requires uncovering and identifying the silencing stratagems of historical production. As Trouillot points out, silences occur at many points and scales in the crafting of history; they occur in the making of sources, the making of archives, the making of narratives, and the making of historical significance. “[A]ny historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly.”<sup>3</sup>

Trouillot’s understanding of history goes much further than an elegant statement of a truism about who writes and controls history. The careful and aware historian must consider not only who exercises power, but how they do so. Exposing the silences and gaps of history to scrutiny, as well as possible research or narratological redress, is one part of the process that interests Trouillot. Considering the historicity of those occlusions is the other. Narratives and sources occlude power in historically specific ways; they ignore people as members of structural groups, as actors, and as subjects with their own voices. Ultimately, in Trouillot’s project of giving voice to the disempowered, both positivist unveilings of hidden facts and constructivist historical retellings are needed to expose the elisions of the past in each step and process of history-making.<sup>4</sup>

In the decentralized Holy Roman Empire, the processes of history writing were also the processes of erasing the historical evidence of religious plurality. The fourteen essays assembled in this volume not only examine the formation of confessional identities through the construction of historical knowledge,

they also pay close attention to the strategies employed to silence alternate narratives of religious identity. Each essay is a case study of sources, archives, or narratives that reveals acts of willful excision and unintentional exclusion in the shaping of confessional identity or knowledges. These processes were integral to polarizing and streamlining confessional identities over time. Some of these essays expand our understanding of the roles played by key actors in the history of the Reformation, such as Martin Luther, Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, and Heinrich von Treitschke. Others point to the enduring influences of less-visible historians and other authors, whose stamp on historical sources and narratives has sometimes been greater than that of the dominant actors and annalists themselves. Multiple essays concern themselves with confessional identity projects of the two (Catholic and Protestant), then three (Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed) legally accepted Christian confessions in post-Reformation eras; others examine projects of dialogic religious identity formation beyond the confessions strictly speaking (Jewish and Christian, orthodox Lutheran and Pietist). Each history under scrutiny here defended or promoted confessional identities and boundaries and stood opposed to the continuation of religious or confessional plurality in the German lands.

The volume's chronological range, spanning the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries and in several essays continuing to the present, alerts us to the longevity and particularities of these polemical silences. Tactics of silence are inescapably present in these histories of Reformation and confessional identity formation. In each period, historical elision took specific forms for specific aims. In this volume's archeological metaphor, the essays taken together reveal strata of historical methods and concerns. During the sixteenth century, projects of historical writing sought to create myths of origin and narratives of shared identity for emerging confessions. In the eighteenth century, historical methods were crucial tools utilized to clarify divisions and boundaries between confessions or religious communities. By the nineteenth century, histories and scholars were enmeshed in questions of nationalism and the place of confessional identities within the increasingly Protestant German nation-state. By highlighting these acts of historical production, stemming from either amnesia or careful craftsmanship, and by tracing their ramifications through the centuries, our authors uncover and recover some of the histories of plurality lost, obscured, or distorted during the past five hundred years.<sup>5</sup>

## Historiography

This volume appears at a historiographical juncture caused by the waning dominance of confessionalization as a research paradigm. Confessionalization

as a historiographical concept emerged in the late 1970s to describe the evolving societal and political dimensions of confessional formation and institutionalization. Its questions shaped much historical inquiry during the 1990s and 2000s. Recently, scholars have moved from exploring the strength and efficacy of political and religious institutions' capacities for promoting confessional churches and identities to addressing the limits, oversights, and cultural ramifications of confessionalization.<sup>6</sup> Chief among the examined cultural consequences of confessionalization has been its role in the writing of history. Confessionally informed histories have served as key entry points into early modern understandings of the Reformation as either continuation or radical break with the past, probing how Protestant and Catholic reformers (and their supporters) perceived and presented their actions and ideas in the flow of time.<sup>7</sup> Previously dismissed as polemical, these historical texts stand in productive tension with the practices of humanism, which offered models for characterological histories of individuals and methods of source presentation.<sup>8</sup> The formation and expression of Protestant confessional identities through life histories and narratives has received the lion's share of attention, as historians have sought to explicate links between historical method and the principle of *sola scriptura* as well as evidence of an awareness of the Protestant rupture with Rome.<sup>9</sup>

Another form of confessionalized historical writing, sacred history, has also received recent productive attention. Through these sacred or ecclesiastical histories, the confessions advanced their competing claims to embody the true legacy of Christianity, seeking to demonstrate the integrity of their confessions through their ties to the early church. These histories were segregated from other historical writing for much of the twentieth century as "church history" and their authors charged with a limited commitment to humanist practices of evidence and argumentation.<sup>10</sup> The titanic projects of early church history produced in the later sixteenth century, the Protestant *Magdeburg Centuries* led by Matthias Flacius Illyricus and the conscious Catholic response by Cesare Baronio, have been recently recuperated. Flacius, Baronio, and their fellows are now appreciated for their contributions to evolving practices of history writing and for their careful standards of evidence, proof, and argumentation.<sup>11</sup>

As Anthony Grafton has noted, these Protestant and Catholic histories of the early church were fundamentally involved in the formation of the great research libraries and scholarly teams. Such institutions have often been considered the fruit of modern, post-Rankean historical practice. Thus, their existence before the nineteenth century disrupts a teleological notion of history as a discipline.<sup>12</sup> The resulting voluminous compendia are only one of the forms of knowledge produced in the era of early modern mega-data. This early modern information era was roughly contemporaneous with that of confessionalization, and it bears confessionalization's stamp. Along with projects of

ecclesiastical history and libraries, the period witnessed the reformation of the archive and archival classification. Archives served as instruments of early modern governance by confessionalized states and churches, and their silences and scrutinies were confessionally informed. And, of course, knowledge about a newly expanded world was often collected and organized by individuals and institutions with strong confessional affiliations.<sup>13</sup>

This volume's essays, particularly as they focus on the themes and omissions of history writing in the long nineteenth century, are also informed by the historiographical debate about history's use and misuse in societal memory and memorialization. Early in the twentieth century, sociologist of knowledge Maurice Halbwachs described "collective memory" as distinctively separate from history. Post-World War II, the search to write meaningful history after the Holocaust has inspired much reflection on the relationship between history, memory, and society. The stakes are high: events of the first half of the twentieth century caution historians about the dangerous consequences of history placed at the service of the nation-state as well as the challenges of remembering and commemorating traumatic histories. In the late 1980s, Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory, gained broad currency as a method to explicate the relationship between social memory, history writing, and nation formation in France, applying critical methods of history to public symbols with powerful cultural currency. Such sites function as symbols of memorialization by a common social group (akin to Benedict Anderson's imagined community), yet Nora's characterization of these sites as sacred rests uneasily for the reader or writer of German history.<sup>14</sup>

Breaking away from nation-statist studies of memory, Aleida Assmann proposes defining history and memory as interwoven and complementary, as storage memory and functional memory. Her definition of a deracialized "cultural memory" interrelated with history offers an alternative to late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century exclusionary oppositions of history and memory. In this processual model, some records of the past are transformed into cultural memories deployed by publics, while others are shelved in dusty archives. Assmann's focus on cultural memory delineates its often political tasks as distinction (the work of the *lieux de mémoire*), legitimation, and delegitimation in society.<sup>15</sup> While the theory of cultural memory has not been developed exclusively for the German nation, its tasks were prominent in historical writing within the former Holy Roman Empire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some histories were silenced or remained shelved; those that contributed to a usable past were intentionally brought into prominence by authors.

## Overview

*Archeologies of Confession* begins in the stratum of the long nineteenth century with “Silencing Plurality.” This first section explores a distinctive layer of history writing, during which histories were made “usable” through erasures of religious plurality. These confessionally inspired exclusions were produced amid the professionalization of history in the emergent German nation. In the post-Napoleonic era, the confessions sought to establish their positions in the new political and cultural orders. Influenced by the imperatives of political nationalism, the growing ideology of Germany as a Protestant state, and the casting of Luther as its national hero, histories of the Reformation and of the era of confessionalization took new shapes that excluded religious plurality.<sup>16</sup> The narratives, source editions, and scripted commemorative or ceremonial performances generated by these projects were intended for broad audiences as well as professional historians.<sup>17</sup> The confessional affiliations and national loyalties of one or more publics were to be galvanized or stabilized through the authority of these histories.

David M. Luebke (chapter 1) demonstrates that in the lower Saxon village of Goldenstedt, the conceptual space for religious plurality continued long after the Peace of Westphalia and only faltered under nineteenth-century pressure. Luebke identifies two silences: first, he establishes that Goldenstedt’s institutionalized *simultaneum mixtum* emerged during the late sixteenth century and continued despite occasional resistance by incumbent priests. Second, in tracing the accounts of Goldenstedt’s religious practices from the early eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries, he reveals how authors in these centuries grappled with the undeniable reality of religious plurality within a community. The discomfiture of eighteenth-century observers, including supporters of legal religious tolerance who preferred the confessions to be pure and segregated, was eventually replaced by open hostility in the nineteenth. By the close of the nineteenth century (and after the Kulturkampf), Catholic Karl Willloh’s history could and did effectively deny Goldenstedt’s long history of a functioning hybrid rite.

Stan M. Landry (chapter 2) examines the cultural memorialization of Martin Luther in the early nineteenth century and more generally the range of inclusive and divisive consequences resulting from such reworkings of historical significance. As Germans marked the tercentennial of the Reformation in 1817, the strongly Lutheran character of previous centenaries was replaced by broad calls for interconfessional irenicism and for valorizing Luther as a role model for every German. Impetus for this new Luther and new Reformation came from the Prussian state, which inaugurated its union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on the date inscribed in cultural memory as the anniversary of the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses. Lutheran and Catholic

churchmen beyond Prussia also heralded the tercentenary as an opportunity for cross-confessional tolerance and dialogue among Christians and between Christians and Jews. Such interpretations of an irenic Luther as a pan-German advocate of religious tolerance did not go unchallenged. Orthodox Lutheran pastors and theologians resisted the anniversary's appropriation by the supporters of the Prussian Union, decrying its erasure of doctrinal distinctions that had been irreducible since the early Reformation.

Anthony J. Steinhoff (chapter 3) offers a counterpoint with his study of orthodox Lutherans' struggle to maintain their confessional distinctiveness against Prussian "Unionist-Pietism" in late nineteenth-century Strasbourg. During Strasbourg's reunification with the German Empire in the decades after the Franco-Prussian War, Strasbourg's Protestants faced new challenges and opportunities. Pastor Wilhelm Horning sought to bolster the identification of Strasbourg Protestants with Lutheranism through a series of historical texts that valorized the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century work of Lutheran reformers and their post-1598 Ecclesiastical Ordinance. These texts gave little space to the work of preceding reformers, influenced more by Martin Bucer than Martin Luther. The figure of Martin Luther and the celebration of anniversary commemorations were important tools for Horning's efforts, which took published form in historical narratives and editions of sources. Together, Landry and Steinhoff point to the polarizing importance not only of the *Kulturkampf*, but also of intra-Protestant struggles, in the writing of confessionalized histories during the nineteenth century.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks (chapter 4) directs our attention to a nineteenth-century silencing project shared by historians regardless of confession, the erasure of women from the histories of Reformation as well as their exclusion from the emerging professional discipline. This erasure contrasts starkly with their visibility in eighteenth-century histories. Pietist Gottfried Arnold's history of religious plurality, the *Impartial History of the Church and Heretics*, presented women as prominent recipients of God's word or spirit, and women's historical prominence continued in the confessionally polemical biographies of Katharina von Bora. With university professors sternly excluding women from historical narratives and from the profession, the public appetite for Reformation histories of women as protagonists was met by "amateur" histories. These histories, many written by women, celebrated Protestant plurality from their authors' locations in Britain or the United States and found broad popular reception. Women's return to subjecthood in professional history occurred, at the end of the twentieth century, through a confessional lens. Confessionally framed studies of women's agency within and outside of marriage in the Reformation era were coeval with women's entrance into the profession of history in larger numbers. In the twenty-first century, gender studies have begun regularly crossing confessional boundaries, yet the older legacy of



amateur historians has not survived this trend. Women and gender remain largely absent in recent general histories that shape public understanding and cultural memory of the Reformation.

Like Luebke and Wiesner-Hanks, Ralf-Peter Fuchs (chapter 5) compares shifts in histories of religious plurality from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Fuchs traces the confessional agendas of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians of the county of Mark, concluding with works published in the decades leading to the three hundredth anniversary of the 1609 Treaty of Dortmund. That treaty established joint control over the county by two princes, the count of Palatinate-Neuburg and the elector of Brandenburg. Confessional amity between the rulers soon dissolved, as the count converted to Catholicism and the elector to Calvinism, resulting over time in a tri-confessional land populated by Lutherans, Catholics, and Calvinists. This rich example allows Fuchs to examine Lutheran approaches, methods, and strategies to exclude rival Reformed and Catholic churches from their territory's history. A mid-eighteenth-century history acknowledged that all three confessions were present in the county. In subsequent Lutheran histories, Calvinists disappear. Tactics ranged from silence about the ruling dynasty's Calvinism, ignoring strong number of adherents in the population at large, and designating the Reformed Church a tardy latecomer to the region. Catholics suffered a different, more nuanced fate in historical writing. Catholicism was branded foreign, a faith brought to the county by Spaniards, Italians, Silesians, and Poles. Nineteenth-century historians judged Catholic rulers intolerant and vengeful, publishing archival documents organized to emphasize the relative weakness of Catholic positions and the strength of Lutheran ones. A narrative of Lutheran enlightened tolerance, stretching back to the sixteenth century, was firmly in place by the tercentenary of the Treaty of Dortmund.

Nineteenth-century histories often sought to erase evidence of religious plurality, but the objects of these attempts did not passively accept oblivion. Several of this volume's authors offer examples of resistance to effacement in historical writing: Landry's orthodox Lutherans rejected Prussian Unionist interpretations, and Wiesner-Hanks's amateur historians insisted on the value of women's contributions to the Protestant Reformation. Essays in part I reveal that a history's nineteenth-century value often depended on its capacity to memorialize events as precursors to Protestant German nationhood. Essays in part II "Recovering Plurality," move deeper into the past, examining projects of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century authors to reinforce their confessional churches by other methods. These efforts resulted, paradoxically, in evidentiary recuperations of religious plurality. Richard Schaefer (chapter 6) highlights Catholic critiques of Protestant epistemology in the 1820s, just after the 1817 Reformation tercentenary. Schaefer's Catholic authors did not identify common, pan-Christian philosophical ground with Protestants. Rather, they



sought to regain intellectual legitimacy for contemporary Catholic concepts of the religious spirit that they felt had been dismissed by Protestant philosophical rationalism. Their efforts to reestablish space for a Catholic epistemology were grounded in their understanding of the Protestant Reformation's historical contribution to philosophical rationalism. Protestant rationalism and notions of the modern individual were, they argued, derived from confessional errors, evidence of which could be found in Protestant sacred histories as well as Luther's misunderstandings of grace. These early nineteenth-century genealogical deployments of sacred history and Reformation-era source material depended on the preceding centuries' extensive reliance on the use of sacred history in confessional identity formation.

From the late sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, historians charted the truth of the confessions with the help of vigorously collected and copiously cited historical sources. Documents and archives were marshaled in the service of confessional suasion, and history writing was grounded in humanist and Enlightenment-era practices of knowledge formation. In this era of confessionalization, a history's function was to be instructive and polemical, inspiring readers to reject rival confessions. Over time, the focus on the early church—the Magdeburg Centuriators' histories, for example, only reached the twelfth century—expanded to include more recent periods. By the eighteenth century, historical sources and narratives of the Reformation also became important components of confessionalized history. Gottfried Arnold's Pietist *Impartial History of the Church and Heretics* utilized such evidence to condemn the Lutheran institutional church to a wide vernacular audience. Authors countering the influential Arnold followed these evidentiary methods.

Early in the eighteenth century, orthodox Lutheran Ernst Salomon Cyprian was galvanized by the provocations of Arnold's history. Alexander Schunka's profile in chapter 7 of the theologian and librarian Cyprian, who worked for the Ernestine branch of Saxony's ruling dynasty during much of his career, offers insights into the complexities of polemical history writing in the early eighteenth century. Cyprian's emphasis on the value of material evidence was thoroughgoing and visible in his dissertation, his amassing of Reformation-era documents for the Gotha library, his publication of manuscripts, and his preservation of over eleven thousand pages of his own voluminous contributions to the expanding republic of letters. Both his correspondence and his scholarship demonstrate the artificiality of separating the confessionalized state's projects into categories of religion and politics. The two were intertwined in Ernestine Gotha. Cyprian's writing included many elements later associated with Prussian nationalism: his histories defined the Reformation as German, and his writings identified its opponents as enemies both abroad (erroneous Swiss, Italians, and Netherlanders) and internally (atheists, Pietists, and other misguided Protestants). His adherence to rigorous historical

methods of source collection, publication, and citation led to the preservation of a religious plurality he decried.<sup>18</sup> The demands of historical method required the documentation of confessional plurality, however objectionable.

By the mid-eighteenth century, deism was equally if not more threatening than Pietism, and Michael Printy (chapter 8) highlights Lutheran historians' move beyond voluminous evidentiary rebuttals to reshaping broad historical narratives. Johann Lorenz von Mosheim's study of exemplary heresies sought to demonstrate that Lutheranism was the truly tolerant and rational confession. His *History of Michael Servetus* reinterpreted an infamous act of the Genevan Reformation led by John Calvin, the execution of Michael Servetus for heresy. Servetus's anti-Trinitarianism and his resistance to institutional authority required judicious treatment, as both positions were easily interpretable as precursors of deism or Pietism. Mosheim reconstructed Servetus's life, writings, and trial with careful source evaluation but a strongly confessionalized narrative. Both Servetus and Calvin were guilty of intolerant and hotheaded willfulness, in contrast to the moderate Protestant rationalism that Mosheim advocated. Overzealous pursuit of exclusionary truths, an all too human failing, led to Servetus's execution. Despite this evaluation, Mosheim recuperated both sixteenth-century actors by emphasizing their final acts of forgiveness as devout Christians. For Mosheim, the shaping of historical narrative rather than the silencing of facts provided a route to confessional validation.

These forms of Enlightenment-era historical production, while allied with the interests of states and confessions, did not result in the erasures so evident in the nineteenth century. Rather, in this final century of the Holy Roman Empire, we see the acknowledgment, albeit without endorsement, of religious diversity. In the early Enlightenment, recording religious diversity extended beyond the Christian confessions to chroniclers of Jewish peoples and religious identities. Dean Phillip Bell's exploration of religious plurality in Frankfurt am Main (chapter 9) reveals a functioning Jewish-Christian coexistence in the face of a terrible disaster, the great fire of 1711. This example stands in contrast to the dominant histories of Jewish-Christian dynamics in the empire from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, which have largely focused on hostile oppositions, when they have been written at all.<sup>19</sup> In Frankfurt, accounts of the fire itself, imperial and local legislative prescriptions, and rebuilding projects in the following decade delineate a civic community that planned for the continuing presence of a Jewish topography under much the same terms as Christian neighborhoods. The cooperative aspects of interreligious relationships in the wake of disaster also figured prominently in Jewish accounts such as that of David ben Simon Souger. Christians in Frankfurt opened their houses and charitable spaces to the Jewish population, even as Jewish and Christian religious identities remained distinct. Commentary on the continu-

ation of a Jewish presence in the city was not without Christian confessional bias; the archbishop of Mainz and some burgers deployed anti-Jewish rhetoric to lobby for their interests. Christian Hebraist Johann Jacob Schudt offered judgmental translations of Jewish prayers and Jewish religious practices. Yet during the intermural period, before a more distanced coexistence was re-established, Schudt also authored a detailed multivolume account of Jewish life that documented religious plurality.

Bell's study strips away cultural memories and historiographical preoccupations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, revealing dynamics and experiences of interreligious relationships. This methodological approach depends on the close examination of multiple sources for their multivalent and sometimes competing evidence. Deploying similar methods, the essays of part III, "Excavating Histories of Religion," expose sixteenth- and seventeenth-century histories forgotten or buried soon after their occurrences. Natalie Krentz, Robert Christman, and Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer examine the rewriting of the formative first decade of Reformation history by early reformers and their opponents while participants and eyewitnesses still lived, breathed, and wrote. In those decades, revisions often excluded the plurality of actors or motives. Mid-sixteenth-century confessionalizing historians accepted those early erasures of multiple actors and ambiguous events, perhaps finding the history of the early Reformation better served by definitive agents and definitive events.

Krentz's essay (chapter 10) exposes Martin Luther's role as mythomancer in what would become known, by the nineteenth century, as Luther's burning of the papal bull. In 1520, Johann Agricola and Philipp Melanchthon planned a bonfire of canon law, with a procession of students ensuring its visibility. Luther played only a subsidiary role. The day after the bonfire, Luther's morning lecture actively re-narrated the event, heightening his prominence in the event's significance. Spreading quickly, his account was readily accepted by his contemporaries and, after his death, by Johannes Sleidanus. In the nineteenth century, Luther's version was embraced by scholars for whom Luther symbolized the spirit of German nationalism. The enthusiasm for Luther as German hero would converge with late nineteenth-century historical method to produce the Weimar edition of Luther's writings, a critical edition that began the recuperation of the 1520 bonfire's forgotten plurality of actors. Delineating the swift development of this hegemonic narrative, and its subsequent deployments by mid-sixteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century scholars, Krentz offers a nuanced reinterpretation of authorial responsibility for Luther's transformation into saintly hero.

Through the histories of the 1523 executions of Augustinians Henrik Voes and Johann van den Esschen as unrepentant heretics, Christman (chapter 11) unpacks another case of conflicting, manifold accounts and interpretations. Immediately after the event in Brussels, reform-minded eyewitnesses

memorialized the two men as martyrs, and Luther composed his first printed song to explain the cosmic significance of their deaths. In contrast, jurist and inquisitor Frans van der Hulst and others publicized claims that the men recanted at the moment of death, while still other commentators including Desiderius Erasmus rejected miraculous interpretations and rather focused on the executions' human consequences as triggers for widespread defiance of the unreformed church in the Low Countries. Unlike the case of the 1520 bonfire, all of these interpretations of the executions appeared in subsequent histories and chronicles; even among Protestant historians some events did not so easily lend themselves to a univalent interpretation. With this study, Christman reevaluates the historiography of martyrdom. Christman's evidence argues that while typologies of sixteenth-century martyrdom can stand much as Brad Gregory proposed, Gregory's reading of martyrdom accounts as the experiential truth does not.<sup>20</sup> Accounts of Voes and van den Esschen's martyrdom depend on conflicting eyewitnesses, rather than the truths as experienced by the martyrs themselves. Christman demonstrates these authors' engagements with contradictory narratives of the events they had witnessed. Arguably this multivalency of interpretation was a crucial process of the early Reformation itself, as theologians and uneducated alike debated the source and location of true religiosity.

Plummer's essay (chapter 12) on the events and multiple histories of early reformer Stephen Castenbauer's life illustrates the malleability of early Reformation history. Through the careful recovery of broadly scattered archival material, Plummer probes the forging of Protestant identity during a forty-year span in the sixteenth century. Archival evidence of Castenbauer's likely prison recantation highlights his conspicuous silence on this point in his own writings. By the 1560s, the template for Protestant martyrdom had been established, as had the need for historical evidence to bolster the new confessional histories; Castenbauer's harrowing experience was recast. Citing the authority of Castenbauer's oral account, Cyriacus Spangenberg described him as a steadfast near-martyr rescued by divine intervention. Even as Plummer's essay calls for a chronologically nuanced understanding of early Protestant biographical histories, her archival evidence reveals another level of sixteenth-century silencing. In their efforts to shape the account of a Reformation hero, Castenbauer and Spangenberg both failed to acknowledge the social communities and collectivities whose protests influenced the course of Castenbauer's fate in the 1520s. Instead, they allowed these protesting commoners to fade from historical memory as the Reformation became the work of heroic men, not social movements. This narrowed focus dovetailed with nineteenth-century imperatives. Nineteenth-century historical methodologies did not fully recuperate these erased historical agents; while historians on both Catholic and Lutheran sides of the confessional divide rejected the possibility

of Castenbauer's miraculous escape, they saw no need to look beyond the individual reformer to the complex social and political pressures that contributed to Castenbauer's, and other recanting priests', survival.

Plummer's excavation of the layers of historical evidence requires careful parsing of archival evidence to recuperate forgotten diversity in the early Reformation. Using similar methods, Jesse Spohnholz (chapter 13) exposes the role of the archive in the production of confessionalized knowledge through a study of the archival and historiographical fate of the so-called Convent of Wesel of 1568. The document's archival classification, naming, eventual renaming, and publication in a nineteenth-century critical edition of Dutch Reformed sources all highlight the importance of confessional origin-stories for scholars of Reformation history.<sup>21</sup> Even with the application of increasingly rigorous analysis to the document, opportunities to discredit this fabulous document were sidestepped in favor of the seductive power of the archive. The consequences of acceding to seventeenth-century Simeon Ruytinck's confessionally informed interpretation of the 1568 manuscript lasted until the close of twentieth century. Seventeenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century historians on this emerging border between the Netherlands and the German lands redeployed the idea of the Convent of Wesel in the service of different confessional or nationalist projects. The Convent of Wesel serves as a cautionary tale of archival mislabeling and willful or accidental misinterpretation by historians, as well as the contingency of history writing.

*Archeologies of Confession* concludes with Thomas A. Brady, Jr.'s long view of the enduring importance of religious plurality in the German lands from the sixteenth century to the present (chapter 14). This plurality, in the form of the legal confessions, was rarely understood as positive after the Peace of Westphalia's resolutions. Eighteenth-century thinkers condemned the messy religious disunities of the Holy Roman Empire as monstrous, and nineteenth-century philosophers mourned the confessions as barriers to rationality, whether the rationality of Prussia or of Marxist revolution. Cultural memory, rather than exhaustive consultation of the archivally-stored evidence, animated these nineteenth-century authors' ideas. As philosophers were replaced by professors of history, a nationalist Luther only became more robust, culminating in his 1883 lionization, on the occasion of his four hundredth birthday during the Kulturkampf, as the surgeon who lanced Germany's wound of Catholicism. The rejection of religious plurality in favor of nationalism proved disastrous. The cultural memories promoted by philosophers, historians, and politicians in support of an increasingly racialized nationalism led to devastating consequences in the twentieth century. Brady's analysis ends with a denationalized Luther on the eve of the Ninety-Five Theses' quincentenary in 2017. Reminding us that historians in the twenty-first century are still embroiled in the strictures of confessionally channeled frames, he leaves open

the fate of religious plurality's history in the twenty-first century but offers no doubt that the history of confessionalization must be coupled with the study of religious plurality.

## Conclusion

To interrogate the historicization of the Reformation, and of its early actors, agents and subjects, is to open rather than close the door on the proposition that the Reformation, or rather the Reformations, mark a radical break that is the beginning of modernity.<sup>22</sup> By focusing on the uses of power in history-making and telling and on the layers and practices of silencing, this volume draws attention to the ways that the Reformation attained and then maintained that status. Only by further examining the uses of silence and erasure in the history of the Reformation and by delimiting historical memory freed from confessional concerns can we meaningfully evaluate the role of the Reformation in the history of modernity.

Our authors warn against accepting patterns of thought and uses of historical production too complacently. Writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, they remind us that the historical legacies of the Reformations and of confessionalizing projects endure. The essays in this volume characterize the shape of silencing and occlusion in sixteenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century histories of the confessional era. The following essays suggest that it is time to go back to the archives, to the repositories of personal papers, to the critical editions and ask what has been left out and why.<sup>23</sup> Trouillot's theory of silence and historical writing emerged out of the school of Caribbean archipelagic history, which values historical divergence, distinctiveness, and diversity. In common with archipelagic history, the history of the Reformations within the Holy Roman Empire occurs across a landscape that demands attention to religious and other forms of diversity. The interrogation of silence need not stop with the boundaries of the German-speaking lands. The production of history has served as a tool for and against the processes of confessionalization, for and against religious plurality and confessional coexistence throughout post-Reformation Europe.<sup>24</sup> Our intention is to reveal, through the fruits of power, actors busy in the making of sources, in the making of archives, and in the making of narratives about confessional history. To the extent that this approach allows our authors to engage with familiar or neglected historical explanations and stories in eye-opening or disruptive ways, this volume has succeeded in answering Trouillot's call to expose silence and power in the writing of history.



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## Notes

1. Alexandra Kess, *Johann Sleidan and the Protestant Vision of History* (Aldershot, 2008), 45, 72–77; and Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven, 1998), 162–87.
2. Hermann Baumgartner, ed., *Sleidans Briefwechsel* (Strasbourg, 1881), 90; and Kess, *Johann Sleidan*, 44–45.
3. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995), xix, 28. His concept of power revealed in historical action has affinities with Michel Foucault’s networks of power; see *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York, 1978). Foucault calls attention to the importance of the “distribution of gaps, voids, absences, limits, divisions” in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York, 1972), 119.
4. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28.
5. “[Archaeology’s] problem is to define discourses in their specificity; to show in what way the set of rules that they put into operation is irreducible to any other; to follow them the whole length of their exterior ridges, in order to underline them the better.” Foucault, *Archaeology*, 139.
6. Thomas A. Brady, “Confessionalization—The Career of a Concept,” in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, 2004), 1–20, surveys the paradigm’s origins and expansion; see also Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization,” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirksville, 2008), 136–57, for critical responses.
7. Susanne Rau’s analysis crosses confessional boundaries. Her findings in *Geschichte und Konfession: Städtische Geschichtsschreibung und Erinnerungskultur im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung in Bremen, Breslau, Hamburg, und Köln* (Munich, 2002) are summarized in “Reformation, Time, and History: The Construction of (Dis)Continuities in the Historiography of the Reformation in the Early Modern Period,” in *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German-Speaking World Since 1500*, ed. Christian Emden and David Midgley (Bern, 2004), 115–38.
8. For sixteenth-century histories as Renaissance humanist projects, see Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981); and T. C. Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton, 1995).



9. For Protestant identity formation in the German lands through historical writing, see Bruce Gordon, ed., *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, 2 vols. (Aldershot, 1996), especially “The Changing Face of Protestant History and Identity in the Sixteenth Century,” vol. 1, 1–22; Irena Backus, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe: Lives of Reformers by Friends, Disciplines, and Foes* (Aldershot, 2008); Matthias Pohlig, *Zwischen Gelehrsamkeit und konfessionellen Identitätsstiftung* (Tübingen, 2007); and Kess, *Johann Sleiden*. For Catholic authors in the Germanies, see Stefan Benz, *Zwischen Tradition und Kritik* (Husum, 2003); and in Italy, Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity, and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge, 1995).
10. The recent revival of sacred history as a field of study was galvanized by Irena Backus’s *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378–1615)* (Leiden, 2003), an expository response to Pontien Polman’s *L’élément historique dans la controverse religieuse du 16e siècle* (Gembloux, 1932). The essays in Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan, ed., *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford, 2012), especially those by Anthony Grafton, Euan Cameron, and Simon Ditchfield, grapple with this historiographical legacy. Late twentieth-century attention to narratological pressures in nonreligious histories such as Natalie Z. Davis’s *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 1987) has also reduced rigid barriers between categories of polemic and history.
11. For Flacius Illyricus, useful starting points are Martina Hartmann, *Humanismus und Kirchenkritik: Matthias Flacius Illyricus als Erforscher des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 2001); Gregory B. Lyon, “Baudouin, Flacius, and the Plan for the Magdeburg Centuries,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 253–72; and for Cesare Baronio, Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, “Cesare Baronio and the Roman Catholic Vision of the Early Church,” in Van Liere, Ditchfield, and Louthan, *Sacred History*, 52–71; and Stefania Tutino, “For the Sake of the Truth of History and of the Catholic Doctrines: History, Documents, and Dogma in Cesare Baronio’s *Annales Ecclesiastici*,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 17 (2013): 125–59.
12. Anthony Grafton, “Church History in Early Modern Europe: Tradition and Innovation,” in Van Liere, Ditchfield, and Louthan, *Sacred History*, 3–26. See also Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2010).
13. Randolph Head, “Knowing Like a State: The Transformation of Political Knowledge in Swiss Archives, 1450–1770,” *Journal of Modern History* 75 (2003): 745–82; and Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs: Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich, 2013). For Jesuits, see Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge, 2008); and Markus Friedrich, “Government and Information-Management in Early Modern Europe: The Case of the Society of Jesus (1540–1773),” *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008): 539–63.
14. Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1984–92). The German response to Nora was formulated by Etienne François and Hagen Schulze, ed., *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, 3 vols. (Munich, 2001–2), with subsequent contributions including *Europäische Erinnerungsorte*, ed. Pim den Boer, Heinz Duchhardt, Georg Kreis, and Wolfgang Schmale, 3 vols. (Munich, 2012).
15. The English edition *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (New York, 2011) was a revised version of the German original *Erinne-*

- rungräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich, 1999), cf. 128–29. Jan Assmann, who developed elements of cultural memory with Aleida Assmann, notes that the concept's predecessor, collective memory, sought to exclude perilous racializing possibilities in "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125–33.
16. Wilhelm Ribhegge correlates the decline and rise of Erasmus's reputation with an opposite effect for Luther in "German or European Identity? Luther and Erasmus in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German Cultural History and Historiography," in Emden and Midgley, *Cultural Memory*, 139–63. For a broad contemporaneous critique of these nineteenth-century projects, see Michel Foucault's discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, 1977), 139–64.
  17. Some of those scripted events, including the Wartburg Festival of 1817, were further reworked after the fact for greater impact. Steven Michael Press, "False Fire: The Wartburg Book-Burning of 1817," *Central European History* 42 (2009): 621–46.
  18. C. Scott Dixon explores an early seventeenth-century example of a similar divergence between intention and historical method in "The Sense of the Past in Reformation Germany," *German History* 30 (2012): 1–21, 175–98.
  19. Helmut Walser Smith and Christopher Clark, "The Fate of Nathan," in *Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York, 2001), 3–29, problematize historians' neglect of Jewish communities in studies of nineteenth-century religious polarization.
  20. Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), dismisses what he calls a "relativized" approach to sources and descriptions of sixteenth-century martyrs and their motives.
  21. Daniela Saxer, "Archival Objects in Motion: Historians' Appropriation of Sources in Nineteenth-Century Austria and Switzerland," *Archival Science* 10 (2010): 315–31. Some nineteenth-century critical editions are more reliable than others. For the problems of the nineteenth-century edition of John Foxe, see John King, "Fiction and Fact in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot, 1997), 12–35, esp. 13–14.
  22. Constantin Fasolt offers a critique of this idea in "Hegel's Ghost: Europe, the Reformation, and the Middle Ages," *Viator* 39 (2008): 345–86. For another view on the necessity of grappling with the legacy of the Reformation, see Alexandra Walsham, "History, Memory, and the English Reformation," *Historical Journal* 55 (2012): 899–938.
  23. Even so, we recognize that some historical questions necessarily remain unresolved. For the ongoing historical debate over the story of the church-door nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses, see Joachim Ott and Martin Treu, ed., *Luthers Thesenanschlag—Faktum oder Fiktion* (Leipzig, 2008).
  24. Natalia Nowakowska examines the malleability of Reformation history in the service of Polish nationalism in "Forgetting Lutheranism: Historians and the Early Reformation in Poland (1517–1548)," *Church History and Religious Culture* 92 (2012): 281–303. The emerging scholarship on religious plurality and confessionalizing responses outside of the Holy Roman Empire suggests a much wider geographic scope for such inquiries. Influential studies in English include Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, DC, 2005); and Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester, 2006).

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