

Christopher Spehr, Siegrid Westphal, Kathrin Paasch (Hg.), Reformatio et memoria. Protestantische Erinnerungsräume und Erinnerungsstrategien in der Frühen Neuzeit, Göttingen (V&R) 2021, 536 S., 64 Abb., 1 Tab. (Refo500 academic studies, 75), ISBN 978-3-525-51702-4, EUR 150,00.

rezensiert von | compte rendu rédigé par
Kilian Harrer, München

This lavishly illustrated conference volume historicizes the commemorative impulse whose force was on full display around the five-hundred-year anniversary of Luther's ninety-five theses. 2017 has thus become an occasion not just to remember the Reformation but also to ask how it was remembered by its direct early modern heirs. After all, as Sascha Salatowsky argues in his introduction to the volume drawing on Aleida Assmann's theoretical work, identity formation relies crucially on remembrance. Hence, the study of »spaces and strategies of memory« (to quote from the subtitle of the book) promises to yield a fuller understanding of the processes that early modernists would have analyzed under the rubric of »confessionalization« in the 1980s and 1990s. Featuring insights from Church, political, intellectual, and art history as well as musicology, this volume offers uneven yet intriguing steps toward such a renewed understanding. A relatively consistent regional perspective lends cohesion to the enterprise, as most of the contributors zoom in on Saxony and Thuringia and thus on the epicenter of Lutheranism.

This geographical focus enables a compelling assertion to emerge as a major theme from many of the book's chapters: in Saxon and Thuringian territories, early modern Lutheran efforts to remember the Reformation were massively entangled with dynastic self-fashioning. Along these lines, Siegrid Westphal shows how the Ernestine branch of the House of Wettin deftly enriched their familial *memoria* with the notion that they had, since the beginnings of the Reformation, served as the foremost protectors of Lutheranism – both within and beyond their own lands. Dagmar Blaha discusses the role that the Ernestines' dynastic archive played throughout early modernity in documenting and legitimating these claims to a special protective function. Matthias Müller includes the Albertine alongside the Ernestine branch in his chapter on architecture, art, and trophies at the castles of Torgau, Dresden, and Gotha. While emphasizing the importance of »confessional architecture« (p. 271), Müller argues that worldly displays of chivalry and good princely governance pervaded sixteenth-century iconographic programs as well, sometimes to the point of relegating or veiling representations of confessional strife.

Different intersections of dynastic and religious concerns emerged after 1650, not least due to an increasing number of princely



Herausgegeben vom Deutschen
Historischen Institut Paris |
publiée par l'Institut historique
allemand



Publiziert unter | publiée sous
[CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

conversions to Catholicism. One such convert, Frederick August I, Elector of Saxony (1694–1733), had to walk a tightrope when the two-hundred-year anniversary of the ninety-five theses approached in 1717 and he faced Saxony's Lutheran ecclesiastical elites on the question of how to celebrate this bicentennial, as Wolfgang Flügel demonstrates. Overall, the volume reveals that politics and religion intermingled in uneasy dances of remembrance; the two dancers kept shifting their steps and relative positions throughout early modernity but neither ever managed to truly dominate the other.

Another strength of this volume consists in shedding light on the commemorative strategies pioneered by German Protestant members of the early modern Republic of Letters. One very interesting figure in this context, Ernst Salomon Cyprian (1673–1745), features prominently in chapters written by Kathrin Paasch, Daniel Gehrt, and Sascha Salatowsky. For instance, Paasch offers a detailed analysis of archival materials and rare books, exploring how Cyprian interwove his many roles as theologian, Church historian, ducal librarian at Gotha, private book collector, and avid letter writer to elaborate and defend his brand of late Lutheran orthodoxy. Yet books constituted only one among many media of remembrance, as Andreas Lindner's contribution on the numismatic activities of the Saxon schoolteacher Christian Juncker (1668–1714) makes clear. Then as now, erudition habitually transcended narrow territorial boundaries as well. Therefore, the volume is well complemented by Thomas Fuchs's and Thomas Klöckner's comparative insights into how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant theologians from other parts of Germany – Swabia, Franconia, and the Palatinate – (re)described the Reformation as a historical event.

As a collective scholarly effort, »Reformatio et memoria« also benefits from repeatedly fusing its two main themes of Wettin memory politics and the Republic of Letters. This fusion is accomplished in Gehrt's piece about links between the work of Cyprian and that of Frederick II of Saxony-Gotha-Altenburg for the bicentennial of 1717. Chapters by Joachim Bauer and Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele illuminate how the University of Jena became a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century site of coalescence between the memory of the Reformation and that of John Frederick I (1503–1554), Elector of Saxony and founder of that university. Christopher Spehr points out how strongly dynastic reference points and concrete princely interventions shaped early modern editions of Luther's collected works – at least in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Finally, as in most conference volumes, some of the finest contributions resist subsumption under any shared topic besides the big tent of »Reformation and Memory«. This remark applies to Stefan Laube's sweeping and entertaining reflections on how the early modern culture of drink fostered the creation of collective Protestant memories, beginning with Luther's famous table talks (Tischreden). Christiane Wiesenfeldt's essay on Lutheran views of music contextualizes how the Reformation shaped



Herausgegeben vom Deutschen
Historischen Institut Paris |
publiée par l'Institut historique
allemand



Publiziert unter | publiée sous
[CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

»praxeological memory spaces« (p. 374) of singing within (or as) worship. Meanwhile, Stefan Dornheim brings the reader closer to the local level by probing how early modern Lutheran pastors deployed origin myths, historiography, anniversaries, and other formats of Protestant remembrance in their homes and parishes.

It may be well to conclude by saying briefly what this volume does not do. It does not yield many bold and clearly stated interventions in historiographical debates, let alone a full-fledged scholarly agenda. For example, the contributors do not engage with recent ambitious attempts by Alexandra Walsham, Judith Pollmann, Andy Wood, and others to specify how memory operated in early modern European culture and Christianity. Nor do clear conceptual outlines emerge for the expression »spaces and strategies of memory«. The most canonical adjacent notion, Pierre Nora's »lieux de mémoire«, is only briefly or tacitly acknowledged by Müller, Flügel, Dornheim, and in Stefan Rhein's chapter on Luther's childhood hometown Mansfeld. (Nora's name does not appear in the otherwise extensive and helpful index either.) Finally, non-elite early modern Protestants and their own memory culture hardly show up here, except on the margins of Flügel's contribution, as a rather amorphous populace mobilized for the bicentennial in 1717. These observations are, however, mere quibbles considering the rich harvest enabled by this volume's commendable regional focus and multidisciplinary take on the dualism of »Reformatio et memoria«.



Herausgegeben vom Deutschen
Historischen Institut Paris |
publiée par l'Institut historique
allemand



Publiziert unter | publiée sous
[CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)