

**Die Grenzen im Kopf:  
Imagining walls, borders, frontiers, and national identity in  
Alsace/Elsaß**

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*Political geographers draw distinctions in English between borders, usually conceived of as lines on a map, and frontiers, which are seen as zones. In German, Grenze, a word borrowed from Slavic, and reflecting ethnic differences is often used for both. In French frontière with its roots in medieval warfare, covers both concepts. Beginning with some considerations of Alsace/Elsaß as a frontier zone between Germany and France, this paper will review ongoing debates among historians of nationalism on the definitions of nations, states, and frontiers. It will then trace the historical development in Europe of these concepts from antiquity into the early modern period. It was during the dynastic power struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the concepts of nation and state took on fundamental political significance as rulers made claims to sovereignty in the name of historical nations and borders became enshrined in “international” law as the result of the peace treaties signed in Westphalia in 1648. The essay questions both the historical depth of nations, states, and borders and the teleological assumption of their inevitability and permanence in human political relations. Nations, states, and borders are mental constructs. They were imagined and can be reimagined. A close examination of Alsatian history shows the bloody historical effects of applying these concepts arbitrarily in a cultural borderland and the potential for a different political future for Europe by reimagining borders.*

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Although banned from entering the kingdom of France, Voltaire spent six unpleasant months in the Alsatian town of Colmar in 1753-54, where he planned to write a historical work, *Les Annales de l'Empire*, from his new perch at this

“window open to Germany.” Colmar and in fact all of Alsace was part of the French kingdom in its form as a composite state subject to Louis XV, but in ways distinct from *l'intérieur*, a phrase still used by Alsatians today. Voltaire's stay at Colmar proved a disaster, and when he left the city, he referred to the Colmarians as “half-French, half-German, and totally Iroquois.”<sup>1</sup> I have shared this quip in a number of settings; but when I cited it to an Alsatian friend, he replied, “we are totally French, totally Alsatian, and Voltaire was a fool.” His tone informed me that he counted me with Voltaire for having cited him. Alsatian history since 1754 is littered with the victims of wars fought over its “national” identity – wars instigated far from Alsace – and it has been difficult to study its more distant past – as I do – without recognizing the filters of 1870, 1914, and 1940.<sup>2</sup> These dates mark the outbreak of wars between France and Germany that have highlighted the political dilemma of Alsace, caught between two imagined national identities: French and German.<sup>3</sup>

In 1932, Edmond Vermeil, a noted French professor of German history, reflected on religion and politics in Alsace as part of his personal campaign to awaken France to the degree to which Alsatians were alienated from their fellow countrymen. He described the world of the rural Alsatian parishes in terms not unlike Voltaire's:

Let us turn...away from the beaten roads and make a brief examination of the Alsatian rural parish, which alone can give an understanding of what one may call Alsatian ‘confessionalism’ in all of its peculiar flavor, all of its diffident narrow-mindedness, all of its pitiless localism. This confessionalism tends like everything Alsatian to cut itself off from the life of the outer world and to stand aloof in a separate unit, compact, circumscribed, and humdrum.

For Vermeil Alsace was a small territory wedged between two great national civilizations. It was a borderland between two conceptions of life and religion: a German confessional world-view, which regarded civil authority and religious authority as one and which held that the duty of the state was to Christianize society thoroughly; and the “Western,” French view, where culture and the state

were thoroughly secularized and in civil society the Church comprised one of many forms of free association. For Vermeil Alsace was part of France but stood apart from France because the laws of the Third Republic, including the Law of Separation of Church and State of 1905, which had shut down religious education, had not been applied to Alsace when reintegrated into France in 1919.<sup>4</sup> Vermeil feared that the degree of autonomy, which French officials had permitted Alsace, would drive it from France and draw it to Germany. The Maginot line – a massive network of bunkers, fortresses, and tunnels dug into the Alsatian plain since 1919 had created a defensive frontier in depth against Germany, but Vermeil feared that the *frontières invisibles* or in German the “unsichtbare Grenzen” (invisible borders) or “die Grenzen im Kopf” (mental borders) would continue to separate the Alsatians from their French national identity.<sup>5</sup>

I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to participate in this interdisciplinary conference on walls sponsored by the University of Oregon’s German Studies Committee. I earned my doctorate here in History in 1983, and I am thrilled to be back within this intellectual community. Many of the presentations for this conference address the impact of real walls – the Berlin Wall, the Great Wall of China, the Wall separating Israel from the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and the growing ‘fence’ between the United States and Mexico. The seventeenth-century fortresses of Vauban and the Maginot Line might resemble such physical barriers in Alsatian political geography, but what I think that I can best contribute to this conference are some reflections on the relatively recent historical construction of borders as invisible boundaries – even in Europe – which in turn offers the possibility for their deconstruction. I will draw briefly from my thirty years of research in the Upper Rhine valley, but the bulk of this presentation will be a macro-historical overview of the inter-related development of nations, borders, and states in pre-modern Europe – a process which has come to justify walled borders whether visible or invisible. I offer this approach because belief in the normative character of nations, borders, and states in geo-political discourse remains quite influential. What I share may

already be well known to many of you, but I would hope that this historical overview offers a helpful context for the other papers from this symposium.

### **I. Theoretical models: State, Nation, and Borders**

War is the most dynamic force of historical change. Armies depopulate the countryside, devastate towns, disrupt economic relations, and scatter refugees to the winds. Peace treaties redraw political boundaries turning neighbors into foreigners and strangers into compatriots. Scholars in political geography argue that the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and the Peace of Westphalia that concluded it served as the nursery of the modern “post-Westphalian” state, a form of political organization that assigns legal sovereignty over a broad and impermeable territorial space to a centralized political body at the expense of local authorities and in contrast to and often conflict with other sovereign territorial states whose boundaries are contiguous to it.<sup>6</sup> Once conceptually grounded in this first European-wide treaty, the model became the norm in inter-dynastic European politics and then spread with European power across the globe.<sup>7</sup>

In the nineteenth century when the academic disciplines of history and geography became professionalized, scholars in political history and political geography came to treat the post-Westphalian state as an autonomous subject – to reify the state or even to anthropomorphize it – animating and legitimating the will of the state as the self-conscious mask for the will of those in power within it.<sup>8</sup> We might reflect on the problems that this normative assumption has presented to international agencies seeking to intervene in the now sovereign Sudans, or the obstacles to mustering the collective international will to interfere even in “failed states.” Moreover, a second assumption that the sovereign state is *the* territorial unit in mapping the globe has meant that in modern times the state has been the only legitimate player in international relations. These assumptions have reinforced each other and have formed the core of modern analyses of the state; however, the growing role of non-state actors in international relations, from Doctors without Borders, to multi-national corporations, to terrorist

organizations, suggests that the modern state is one historical construct for global political relations rather than the normative form for political systems.

In his recent book, the historian, Daniel Nexon, has argued that power politics involves an interplay between various institutions of which the state is only one possible configuration. His analytical approach, which he calls “relational institutionalism,” shifts focus away from states as the unique legitimate entity in international relations and sees all institutions, including states, as networks of social relations of power.<sup>9</sup> Post-modern political geographers have also come to analyze states “not as autonomous subjects but as processes of subject-making” in which the claim to sovereignty justified by whatever legitimate authority – God or the people – provided political cover for territorial acquisition and state-building by power elites.<sup>10</sup> These processes become clearer when we examine early modern history as states and nations acquired their normative cloaks.

Following the Peace of Westphalia, the state-building power elites were the noble agents of monarchical dynasties, who used the princes’ claims to sovereignty by divine right over their subjects to build “absolutist” states.<sup>11</sup> As the eighteenth century progressed, claims to sovereignty by kings and the noble privileges that sustained them came under attack by competing political values, which championed the source of sovereignty in the people as a reified and often anthropomorphized body called “the nation.”<sup>12</sup> In a great and bloody revolutionary struggle that began in 1789 and extended through much of the nineteenth century, the nation overthrew the king as the perceived legitimate source of sovereignty, even in states that retained kings, and the modern nation-state emerged.<sup>13</sup> The political agents for this victory were nationalists who according to John Breuilly legitimized their claims with three axioms:

1. There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
2. The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
3. The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty.<sup>14</sup>

But what is a nation, and how had it achieved this new political status?

There are as many theories on what comprises nations as there are scholars working the field, which has produced what the political scientist, Walker Connor, calls “terminological chaos.”<sup>15</sup> One error that he notes in many analyses is the mistake of equating nationalism with loyalty to the state rather than loyalty to the nation. It may seem at first glance that for Japan and the Japanese or Iceland and the Icelanders, the state and the nation are identical, but Connor notes that countries like these represented only 12 of the 132 “nation-states” recognized by the United Nations in 1971. At that time there were twenty-five others (19%) in which the dominant ethnic community represented over 90% of the population. Including this group, only 1/3 of the world’s nation-states were nations with their own states prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.<sup>16</sup> I would note that the United States might be the world’s poorest ethnic model for a nation-state. With the addition of South Sudan in 2011 there are now 193 members in the United Nations; and though I don’t have the data, I would argue that the percentage of classic nation-states in 2009 (and now 2012) is lower rather than higher.<sup>17</sup> Ethnic cleansing and the contemporary walls that we are discussing at this symposium reflect both the desire to monopolize the state for the officially circumscribed “nation” and the near impossibility of realizing that goal.<sup>18</sup> If we accept the nationalists’ claim that every nation or potential nation should have its own state as a norm for geopolitics, then we are faced with a new century of bloody and irresolvable conflicts in future Bosnias, Chechnyas, and Kurdistans.

Nationalism thus has been the most dynamic and corrosive force in twentieth-century global politics. All of the walls we are considering at the symposium, even in Berlin, reflect the effort to define and secure nation-states.<sup>19</sup> In our globalizing twenty-first century, the contradictions between state boundaries and ethnic and national identities furnish the tinder for political violence. Nationalists seek a sovereign territorial state to shelter their nations, however defined. Ethnic nationalists view their national identity as “natural” and primordial, yet historical research debates the depth of national self-

consciousness among pre-modern elites, with some, known as modernists, arguing that it is perhaps no more than two centuries old, and only learned and internalized by the “common folk” much later.<sup>20</sup> Benedict Anderson’s conception of modern nations as “imagined political communities,” first articulated in the 1980s, still serves as a dominant model in the field. He identifies the roots of modern national self-consciousness first in the administrative “pilgrimages” of early modern royal officials from the provinces to the capital and back and second in emerging language communities defined by the growth of print vernaculars. For Anderson, nations were the secular successors to pre-modern imagined religious communities offering worldly salvation in the inheritance of a national past and the legacy of a national future. Politically, he argues that modern nations were first imagined “from above” by the elite and then gradually absorbed by a widening reading public in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Anthony D. Smith has argued that modern nations find their histories “from below” in linguistically, symbolically, and historically knitted pre-modern cultural communities, which he refers to as “ethnies,” the residue of whose pasts provide modern nationalists with a quiver of ethno-historical symbols to employ internally to reinforce the legitimacy of their cause among party members and then to broadcast externally to achieve public resonance and rally followers to their cause.<sup>22</sup> For Smith, national consciousness existed as a political force before nationalism and played a critical role in framing the legitimacy of nationalist discourse. Thus the two dominant schools of thought regarding modern nationalism build their arguments on different analyses of early modern European political communities. So if the modern state and modern nation emerged in the early modern period, what of borders?

English has a number of words associated with borders. In the Merriam Webster On-line dictionary, a border is an outer part or edge; a frontier is a border between two countries or a line of division between two different and opposed things; a boundary is something that limits or fixes a limit or extent; and a borderland is a territory at or near a border.<sup>23</sup> This diversity can lend itself to its

own form of terminological chaos. In German, *Grenze* currently covers all of the English equivalents, as does *frontière* for French, though both of these terms assumed their conceptual coherency in the modern era. Günther Lottes argues that this recent semantic inclusiveness, however, masks the complexity of the subject, and scholars in both languages have resorted to a “wealth of adjectives” to sharpen their analyses.<sup>24</sup> If we consider the myriad of possibilities, we might start our own analysis by distinguishing between borders as lines and borders as zones.

In classic political geography, borders are imaginary *lines* that enclose the territory and define the spatial edge of sovereignty for the post-Westphalian state.<sup>25</sup> Thus borders operate in two ways: they enclose the monopoly of state power within; and they keep the power of foreign states out. English scholarship usually uses the term *frontier* to define a zone or region where two distinct cultures meet. A frontier can be relatively stable serving as a buffer zone between two opposing cultures or values where they may meet, interact, and engage in various economic and cultural exchanges. Sometimes such a zone has its own distinct culture. A frontier may also define a region where one superior culture is expanding into another “barbarous” one, such as Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier. Most historians assume that pre-modern political zonal frontiers eventually coalesced in modern linear borders.<sup>26</sup> I would note that historically Alsace has served as both types of frontier, a unique land between Germany and France and a region that neighboring powers sought to make French or German. It would seem then that the history of frontiers is complex and intertwined with the history of nations and states.<sup>27</sup> I now turn to these interconnected histories.

## II. Historical Development in Europe

As we have seen European nationalists claim primordial roots for their nations, and the modern nation-state emerged in theory and in practice as the teleological end product of European political history, at least until the emergence of the European Union, which has helped re-historicize the nation-state.<sup>28</sup> The nation

as a concept in European political imagination can be traced back to Old Testament Judaism and Greco-Roman civilization. The story of the Jews recounted in the Bible seems to confirm the antiquity of nations, and in a recent essay Anthony D. Smith considers the Jews, Armenians, and Egyptians as potential case studies of national consciousness in Antiquity.<sup>29</sup> The biblical Jews were the chosen people of their God, sharing common descent from Abraham, distinct from other and lesser peoples, with a manifest destiny plotted out in history. As part of their covenant with God, they had conquered a territorially bound kingdom – their promised land. Their covenant was a collective pact between the Jews and their God and was to a degree egalitarian, as under Jewish law all Jewish men were equal. When they failed to maintain their covenant, God providentially intervened and deprived them of their sovereignty over the Promised Land, and they had to wait for a messiah to restore that kingdom. This is the classic story of a nation.

We now know that ancient Jewish scribes created or at least refashioned much of this history – including Abraham and maybe even Moses – when they reconstructed the Torah during the Babylonian captivity in the sixth century BCE.<sup>30</sup> The Jews, who actually conquered the Promised Land, were a hodge-podge of extended clans, who followed their conquest by intermarriage and integration, eventually consolidating into kingdoms. In the wake of the political collapse of those kingdoms, the scribes associated the demise of the kingdoms of Israel and Judea with Jewish acculturation with Canaanites and Philistines. These scribes called for communal purity to restore the kingdom, and to support this goal they reconstructed their history with a pure line of descent from Abraham through Moses to themselves as Prophets.<sup>31</sup> The seminal place of the Bible in European civilization would enshrine this historically constructed account as a divinely-inscribed model of political culture.

If the Bible helped Europeans imagine a nation, Greco-Roman civilization offered two models for constituting its membership. The ancient Greeks referred to extended kinship groups as *ethnoi*, which is the source for our term, ethnic and where Anthony D. Smith draws his term “ethnies.” Classical Greeks normally

applied the term to their Greek enemies, but they unconsciously cherished their own ethnicity. Only males from the *ethnos* could claim full membership in the polis through the myth of common heritage from a founding father, such as Theseus for Athens. Members of the polis reinforced their ethnic identity through exclusive participation in common religious rites and territorialized it through claims of autochthony (nativism).<sup>32</sup> To be an Athenian citizen in the age of Pericles, one had to have a citizen mother and father. Naturalization was impossible, and Athenian males literally locked up their wives to ensure their own paternity and the citizenship rights of their sons. Slaves, who comprised the majority of the residents of Athens, and resident guest workers, such as Aristotle, could never claim full status as citizens.<sup>33</sup> Thus from Greek traditions Europeans have drawn the close association between ethnic identity and membership in the political community. This would be the model embraced by German and other European nationalists who saw and see ethnicity as the *unsichtbare Grenze* between nations.<sup>34</sup>

The Greeks reserved a special antipathy and violence for fellow Greeks and enslaved them when they could. The broader and, what nineteenth-century writers saw as, the national sense of “Greek-ness” (Pan-Hellenism) emerged in the wake of war with the Persian Empire and was enshrined and calcified in literature – although not as often believed by Herodotus.<sup>35</sup> The Greeks – or rather the Athenians – saw in their victory a superiority of language and culture, lumping together the highly sophisticated Persians with other non-Greek speakers as “barbarians” defined initially by how they spoke. Barbarism in its full sense, however, implied a dichotomy to Greek-ness, which could not be undone by learning to speak Greek. Benjamin Isaac has argued that defining barbarism carried with it an early discourse of racism.<sup>36</sup> Whether his assertion is true or not, Asia was a source of myths for Greeks to define themselves against. In the wake of the Persian wars, Greek authors recalled the myth of Europa, an Asian princess from Tyre, who was abducted by Zeus/Greeks, raped, and abandoned on Crete where her twin sons became the first Europeans. The Athenians juxtaposed Europa’s story with the abduction of Helen. Europa’s male relatives

left her to her captors; Homer's Greeks did not. For the Greeks and later Europeans, the different responses distinguished European masculinity from the effeminate indolence of their male Asian neighbors. Yet Greek poleis peppered the coastline and islands of Asia Minor, and the borders between these continents and their peoples were not natural but invisible cultural boundaries defined by Greek writers.<sup>37</sup> This discourse of Europe and Asia endures, and tensions over participation of Turkey in the European Union or in the Europa Cup reflect the strength of these Greek myths of separation.<sup>38</sup>

The Romans provide a different legacy for European political culture. From the foundation of the Republic, ethnic Romans integrated many of their conquered enemies into the Roman state as allies and then as citizens. Together, Roman citizens – native and naturalized – built the Roman Empire. By the third century CE, almost all free males could claim citizenship.<sup>39</sup> For most Romans, however, citizenship was passive and limited to a set of legal rights, tax obligations, and military responsibilities. From the beginning only a small group of male householders actively participated in *res publica* (public matters). In the early Republic they were known as Patricians and later they were known as “honest men” (*honestiores*), a status which gave these men distinctive legal rights over citizens of Plebeian or later *humiliores* status.<sup>40</sup> Administratively Rome, as a state, was a polyglot federation of nearly 400 city-states (*civitates*). Roman citizens spoke all sorts of languages; yet their interactions with the Roman state occurred in Latin at institutions housed in their local *civitas*.<sup>41</sup>

Once they had conquered their Empire and after a failed foray into the North German forests, the Romans built walls called *limes*, which enclosed the limits of Roman sovereignty and civilization. The Romans fortified all their frontiers even in the North African Sahara where there was no military threat, for the Romans also used the walls to supervise migrants and to funnel and tax commerce, which remains a critical role for modern borders today.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, despite the physical line of the walls, C. R. Whittaker and others have argued that the Roman *limes* remained a frontier, sometimes of expansion against barbarian forces and other times as a zone of exchange.<sup>43</sup> In general,

however, the Romans viewed people living beyond the walls as uncivilized – not belonging to a *civitas* – and whose only political association was as a *natio* (nation) from the Latin verb *nascor* – to be born from.<sup>44</sup> For Romans descent from a common ancestor, so valued by the Greeks, was not the foundation of political culture. Citizenship made one Roman; and Romanization was a civilizing experience available to all. Personal commitment to religious or ethnic communities among Roman citizens was tolerated, so long as it did not interfere with loyalty to the Republic.<sup>45</sup> Here we have the second model for an imagined political community derived from citizenship, one that Vermeil identified as Western and French in contrast to Germanic ethnicity.

With the fall of the Roman Empire, medieval Germanic kingdoms, including the Franks, became Europeanized and civilized by becoming Christianized through the ministrations of the Roman Catholic Church, the institutional midwife to the rebirth of ancient traditions of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Medieval Christian political theorists nurtured the memory of the Roman Empire and transformed the imagery of the Roman political community to the *Respublica Christiana* – the Christian Republic, or Christendom.<sup>46</sup> This immense imagined religious-political community was bound by shared faith with Latin as its common language. Gestures and words associated with Christian religious practice quickly connected strangers, whether noble or serf, as the community of God's chosen people equally liable to salvation in the eyes of God.<sup>47</sup> Christendom also possessed frontier zones beyond which non-Christian outsiders both pagans and later Muslims resided, but Christians also perceived invisible internal boundaries that separated them from Jews living within Christendom.<sup>48</sup>

In medieval Europe, political relations were inter-personal, and one was incorporated (from the Latin *corpus* for body) into the body politic. People were “members” – consider what we mean by a dismembered corpse – in all sorts of corporate bodies from guilds, to confraternities, to communes, to kingdoms, and to the Church itself as the mystical body of Christ on earth. Medieval law even recognized commercial corporations as legal individuals in contractual relations

and suits.<sup>49</sup> Two theories justified authority within corporate bodies. The first, hierarchical and rooted in Roman imperial law, saw sovereign authority descending from God through the pope, emperor, or king downward to the people. Medieval rulers initially claimed sovereignty over their subjects, not specific territories. Clovis was king of the Franks not of France, and even the “Father of Europe,” Charlemagne, was crowned “Imperator Romanorum” (emperor of the Romans) by Pope Leo III on Christmas day in 800.<sup>50</sup> The second theory was communal and rooted in Germanic conventions. It grounded sovereign authority in mutual oaths sworn among relative equals. Italian and Flemish civic communes and Swiss Eidgenossenschaften (oath associations) selected members from the community of “oath swearers” as temporary representatives of their collective will.<sup>51</sup> Both models spelled out a code of conduct for their adherents, though neither accurately depicted political reality. Communal assemblies generated hierarchies, and royal charters called on the community of the realm as often as on divine authority.

Medieval states were assemblies of people, identified in the sources as *gens*, *populus*, or *natio*, where invisible borders separated members from non-members;<sup>52</sup> nevertheless, the Europeans were also beginning to think territorially.<sup>53</sup> As with models of sovereignty, boundaries began to define the European landscape from above and below. The medieval church was the first European political institution to define its authority territorially. Beginning in the Carolingian era, church officials divided Europe’s religious landscape into diocese and parishes, whose boundaries encompassed legal authority and regulated tax collection through tithes.<sup>54</sup> At the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the noble advisors for Charlemagne’s three warring grandsons were able to draw up surprisingly precise boundaries for the three kingdoms, though Lothar’s middle kingdom, which included Alsace, would eventually be conquered and partitioned by his brothers’ successors in the French and German kingdoms to the west and east.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the most significant push for borders came from below. Towns and villages built walls to defend themselves and regulate commerce. Villagers laid out boundary stones to claim usufruct of forests and fields, and

peasants referred to landmarks in defining their strips of plough-land. Medieval borders first emerged to delineate private and collective properties and to mark the jurisdictional limits of lordship.<sup>56</sup> In the feudal political system control over justice was the source of power; over time these jurisdictional boundaries would gel to fashion firmer, if invisible, boundaries between lordships, counties, duchies, and ultimately kingdoms.

By the age of the Reformation, Europe's principalities, as the predecessors of the post-Westphalian state, were composite assemblies of distinct legal bodies bound to the king by inter-personal contracts. The character and scope of sovereignty varied from region to region within the dynastic domain.<sup>57</sup> Early modern states functioned through networks of aristocratic families bound together by personal ties rather than through institutional structures. Royal councils, central and regional law courts, and fiscal chambers would eventually provide the skeleton of a state, but the human muscle that moved it responded to other neurological stimuli than modern bureaucrats. Politics entailed a welding of private interest onto royal service. Officials treated their posts as personal property, allocated to them as members of a distinct and privileged class. They governed through a distribution of favors, both personal and official, and by calling in debts and obligations from clients. Devotion to a superior and generosity to subordinates were honorable and ethical traits.<sup>58</sup> These aristocratic elites envisioned themselves as the community of the realm, and they jealously defended the "public" interest, which meant their collective private rights grounded in local and regional properties.<sup>59</sup> To be effective in this system, rulers had to play a double game, first to employ networks of social relations across institutional borders through regional power brokers to realize regal will but then also to maintain power by preserving regional and social distinctions to prevent consolidated resistance from their subjects.<sup>60</sup> Benedict Anderson argues that within these early modern dynastic states a cadre of officials came to see the kingdom as a whole through what he calls administrative "pilgrimages." Royal agents moved outward to the outlying districts of the kingdom, and officials from those regions also came to court. Both began

to imagine a political community – but not yet the nation – within the borders of the realm.<sup>61</sup>

It was the Reformation that would transform European political culture and provide the framework for nations initially from below and later from above. The reformers conceptualized their new churches in the biblical model of the chosen people of Israel. Though Luther and others preached and ministered in local settings, they were able to spread their message, through the innovation of print, in pamphlets and broadsheets to a broader yet still linguistically circumscribed imagined community of believers.<sup>62</sup> The Word of God, preached and printed in the vernacular, was central to all Protestant denominations, and the growing demand for vernacular publications dried up the market for Latin texts, in time even in Catholic regions, and relegated many regional mother tongues to dialects.<sup>63</sup> In the century and a half before the Reformation, the papacy had barely weathered a schism that had cost it much of its political clout. Fifteenth-century popes signed concordats with various European princes that gave those princes significant control over ecclesiastical institutions and officials within their domains. As a result individual cities, duchies, and kingdoms responded to the call for Reformation differently. Some embraced specific territorial Protestant confessions, while even princes who remained Catholic did so on their own terms, embracing Papal-centric Tridentine Catholicism, belatedly, partially, or not at all, creating – if you will – territorial “Catholicisms.”<sup>64</sup> The initial round of religious wars fought within the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation resulted in stalemate embodied in the religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which granted the Empire’s lay princes the right to determine the official faith of their subjects, later encapsulated under the phrase, *cuius regio eius religio*.<sup>65</sup>

As Vermeil noted in his critique of Alsatian German-ness, this new model of religious politics bound the emerging state to a Christianizing mission, which modern Reformation scholars refer to as confessionalization; that is, enforced religious conformity by the authorities on fellow citizens or subjects.<sup>66</sup> Those subjects, who could not accept the prince’s religion, could claim the *ius emigrandi* (the right to emigrate), and became Europe’s first political refugees.<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere

the Inquisition enforced religious conformity in the Spanish kingdoms, while in England Henry VIII's successors assumed the title Supreme Governor of the Church of England. In France after a series of bitter and bloody religious civil wars, Henry IV converted to Catholicism and signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which granted religious rights to a Protestant minority – the Huguenots – confined to certain regions of the kingdom. In all, the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth century saw “confessional cleansing” drive religious minorities, as communities of faith, out of many kingdoms and smaller territories or into small enclaves.<sup>68</sup> The Reformation thus not only concentrated sovereign power in the hands of the monarch at the expense of regional interests, but also created imagined communities of faith circumscribed spatially by print vernaculars and increasingly engaged in the political process.<sup>69</sup>

In 1618 a religious rebellion of the regional, Bohemian, Czech-speaking Hussites against their Catholic, German-speaking, Austrian Habsburg monarch, Ferdinand II, ushered in the Thirty Years War. The ensuing conflict that engaged most of Europe was fueled in part by the dynastic struggle between the Catholic Bourbon kings of France and the Catholic Habsburgs with one branch in Austria holding the Imperial Crown in Germany and the other in Spain. Despite the inter-dynastic framework of the conflict, confessional affiliation played a critical role in the depth and violence of the war, especially in Germany (including Alsace), which was the main battlefield.<sup>70</sup> In the end, the five years spent negotiating in the Westphalian cities of Münster for the Catholic ambassadors and Osnabruck for the Protestants established the protocols for future interstate peace negotiations.<sup>71</sup> The peacemakers sought resolution of conflicts and satisfaction of dynastic claims by drawing borders as lines – not arbitrarily but rather respecting earlier local jurisdictional boundaries. The new state borders were designed to secure peace by “satisfying” dynastic claims. The signatories also agreed to honor the peace in perpetuity, at least regarding the settlement within Holy Roman Empire, and as late as 1779, Russia would have to sign the Peace of Westphalia as a prerequisite for participating in the negotiations to end the war of Bavarian succession.<sup>72</sup> The Peace of Westphalia reaffirmed the principle of

*cuius regio eius religio*, but also established 1624 as the normative year for claims of confessional rights within the Empire and allowed private worship for religious minorities – thus weakening the overlap of territorial sovereignty and confessional conformity.<sup>73</sup> When German princes converted to Catholicism in the ensuing decades, their subjects retained their rights to practice their Protestant faith in state-supported churches;<sup>74</sup> such state-sponsorship of officially-sanctioned religion remained in effect in Alsace as late as 1932 and was detested by Vermeil. Though religion remained politically significant in Europe and within European states after 1648, the ability of established churches to nurture potent political communities was weakened.

As noted earlier, the scope of the Thirty Years' War had concentrated political power in the hands of central sovereign authorities, in what some historians have called "absolute" monarchy. The stimulus for "absolutist" administrative centralization and the concomitant expanding scope of governance in the daily lives of subjects derived from pressures for military modernization.<sup>75</sup> By the late seventeenth century, the increasing effectiveness of artillery made the cost of fortifications prohibitive, ending the independence of most urban republics. Gradual improvements in musketry and the development of the socket-bayonet demanded a collective battlefield discipline inculcated by regular close-order drill, which professionalized military life, first in the form of mercenary units and later in conscript standing armies drawn from the kingdom's dependent peasantry and poor, who formed the first "national" guards in Europe.<sup>76</sup> Standing armies remained in active service during peacetime and required year-round housing in barracks in place of the older practice of temporarily quartering troops in private homes. An effective organization and chain of command allowed armies to mushroom in size. Most dynastic armies exceeded 100,000 men, and by 1710 perhaps a million Europeans were under arms.<sup>77</sup> It was often the case that the army and the debts accrued in wars accounted for four-fifths of state expenditures. A significant cost was the constructions of thick networks of fortifications. Louis XIV initially had his chief engineer, Vauban, build "Alsatian" fortresses at Philipsburg, Breisach, and

Freiburg im Breisgau beyond the Rhine – France’s imagined “natural frontier” – as entry points into Germany, but once defeated in 1697, Louis retreated back across the river and built new fortresses in Alsace at Huningue, Neuf-Brisach, and Strasbourg to defend France’s natural frontier from within the kingdom against foreign German assaults.<sup>78</sup> To pay for all of this, finance ministers concocted innovative means of extracting tax revenues from royal subjects, but ultimately officials recognized that the best means of providing revenues was to encourage growth in the economy by fostering industry and regulating trade through tariffs collected at the kingdom’s border crossings. The customs’ house, with its royal coat of arms above the door, joined fortresses as markers of Europe’s borders.<sup>79</sup> Tariff boundaries existed within kingdoms too, as the residue of composite state-building from accumulated rights of lordship, but these internal divisions came to be seen as unnatural and detrimental to economic growth.

Thus Europe’s post-Westphalian kingdoms remained essentially composite states, assembled over centuries by dynastic unions and conquest, with each territorial component normally entitled to “ancient” rights and privileges. The Austrian Habsburgs faced linguistic and religious barriers in ruling a dynastic empire that included Italian-, Flemish-, and Hungarian-speaking elites and peasants who spoke a bewildering array of Slavic tongues, and so they still relied on Latin as the common administrative language.<sup>80</sup> The German-speaking ruler of the United Kingdom, George I (\*1715–27), governed Gaelic speaking Scotland and Ireland by negotiating with “national” parliaments at Edinburgh and Dublin.<sup>81</sup> Even the model absolute monarch, Louis XIV, had to appeal to provincial estates to authorize new taxes and to register laws. He also recognized independent foreign enclaves, such as the duchy of Lorraine and the papal county of Venaissin surrounding Avignon, within the “natural frontiers” of France that he had waged a half-century of war to attain.<sup>82</sup>

Whatever the territorial vision cherished by the monarchy or the growing consciousness of the scope of the state among elites, the bulk of the common folk lived their entire lives within twenty miles of their birthplace. This was their

*Heimat* or their *pays*, and beyond the invisible boundaries of perceived homeland people were *Fremde* or *étrangers* – a term still in use today. They spoke a Babel of mother tongues – local dialects learned from their mothers, which quickly identified them as highlanders, or southerners, or Florentines.<sup>83</sup> As Eugene Weber has argued the peasants would not become Frenchmen until deep into the nineteenth-century.<sup>84</sup> The awakening of national consciousness had to begin with the eighteenth-century elites.

Down to the fourteenth century clerical education at universities was a traditional pathway to governmental service, except in Italy where a new cohort of lay officials had emerged, who were educated in civic schools and who modeled their political behavior on ancient pagan statesmen such as Cicero, in a self-styled rebirth of classical values. In the writings of Livy, Polybius, and Cicero, these Renaissance humanists rediscovered the classical Roman model of citizenship and civil society. Since the ancient authors were themselves or wrote about politically active Patricians, many Renaissance scholars sought the active political life in what has been termed civic humanism.<sup>85</sup> Such values made sense in the Italy's remaining republics, such as Florence and Venice, where in principle the source of sovereignty still resided in the people. Italian humanists were proud of their Roman heritage, while humanists beyond Italy came to see their ancient national profile in the Roman ethnography of Caesar's Gallic Wars and Tacitus' description of the German and British *nationes*. The humanists began to talk of the proud historical roots of the German nation or Gallican and British values.<sup>86</sup> Luther and his followers presented their Reformation in part as a German struggle for freedom against Rome, while French Catholics defended the independence and uniqueness of their Gallican Catholic Church that had been achieved through a series of concordats with a weakened Roman pontiff. The spread of print vernaculars helped further fashion a self-conscious audience who could draw on history to imagine a political community of Frenchmen or Germans, but such imaginings resonated differently among distinct ethnic communities in the early modern composite states.<sup>87</sup> The wars of religion had also added the possibility of legitimate resistance to the despotic rule of princes

who oppressed confessional minorities, divinely justified in these communities of faith by the example of the biblical Jewish covenant.

In mid seventeenth-century England, what began as a religious struggle between Parliament and the king led to a crisis of political legitimacy.<sup>88</sup> Who had a right to rule? Both sides laid claim to that right in a social contract with the people. Derived from feudal traditions, the royal contract was not between equals, but the parliamentary model – later articulated by John Locke – posited a state of nature in which equal men formed the political community and set the framework for civil government. This community was not defined by ethnic bonds nor by religious conformity, which appeared to have been the king's goal, but rather by civility and willingness to sacrifice some private interests to share in the commonwealth of public affairs (*res publica*).<sup>89</sup> This renewed and secularized Roman model would later justify rebellion in the English colonies. During the Enlightenment, Locke's model was reworked and given an ethnic/cultural edge in French and German political discussions.<sup>90</sup> The territorially bounded monarchical states framed the discourse as French philosophes re-imagined Locke's social contract as the basis of sovereignty for the French nation, an elite, bourgeois [in the French sense of town-dwelling], French-speaking political community that was then fashioning itself in what Jürgen Habermas has called the public sphere, an urban world of capitalist consumer culture where ideas were exchanged over coffee, tea, sugared sweets, and tobacco.<sup>91</sup> Thus by 1789 the nation as the source for sovereignty in the already territorially bounded post-Westphalian state had emerged as the normative form for political relations. Over the next century and a half, Europeans would try to realize that norm through national revolutions, international wars of unprecedented violence, and horrific acts of ethnic cleansing in the pursuit of that norm.

### **III. Conclusion:**

I have moved around a lot of intellectual furniture, and I want to justify why I felt this should be my contribution to the symposium. First, my main point is that in contemporary international relations the bordered, sovereign nation-state is the

norm, but that norm is recent and teleologically justified. Frontiers, the nation, and the state have long conceptual histories in Europe, but the particular configuration was fashioned in the early modern period and has had a checkered and bloody legacy. The preamble of the European Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions begins with the statement: "Borders are 'scars of history.'"<sup>92</sup> If we accept the interlocking of these three concepts as historically constructed, then they can be historically deconstructed. The question remains what level of violence might such deconstruction entail.

Let me return finally to Alsace. I would argue that Voltaire, Vermeil, and my Alsatian friend were all correct in their assessments of Alsatian political identity. We have seen that there are two ways to frame the nation: ethnic roots or active citizenship. Alsatian is a German dialect, and down to 1648, Alsace was part of the *Reich*, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Its elites had served regional power brokers within the Imperial system, read German print vernacular, prayed and sang hymns in German during church services, and could imagine themselves as historical descendants of Tacitus' Germans. The Peace of Westphalia and the wars of Louis XIV brought Alsace as a new "province" into Louis XIV's composite state. During the eighteenth century as the concept of the nation as a political source of legitimacy grew, German authors emphasized the Volk, while French authors drew on a fuzzier concept of the civilizing effects of French culture – they even coined the term *civilization*. The Alsatian elites had learned French, and Voltaire correctly sensed the tension among his Alsatian hosts about their political identity. The French Revolution embraced citizenship as the foundation for political participation, but during the wars waged by the French Revolutionaries some still questioned how French the Alsatians truly were.<sup>93</sup>

In the wake of the French Revolution, German ethnic nationalism strengthened and was a critical force in pushing toward a German nation-state, which was achieved in 1870 following the Franco-Prussian war, a conflict that also brought Alsace into Bismarck's Second German Reich. The tension between the two models remained. In a famous speech delivered in 1882 at the

Sorbonne, Ernest Renan championed the normative character of the Western French model of the civic nation, when he referred to the nation's existence as a "daily plebiscite."<sup>94</sup> Within such a model Alsatians could become French. Most Alsatians, however, remained in their villages and accepted their German-ness. The ever-present Alsatian village monuments in French to the *Victimes de Guerre 14-18* testify to the early twentieth-century Alsatians willingness to die for the *Vaterland*.<sup>95</sup> When Vermeil visited the region in 1932, he felt the continued tension between the French emphasis on civil society and the German focus on ethnicity in what remained the only loosely integrated piece in the unified French republic. When war came and the Maginot line failed to prevent the German conquest, the Alsatians were once again rejoined to the Third German Reich. France itself had fallen, and civil society there had ceased. Alsatians were conscripted into the Wehrmacht and died in German uniforms on the Russian front. By war's end, the region's German-ness tasted sour in Alsatian mouths. Since the war civil society has returned to Alsace, to France, to a united Germany, and to Europe. My Alsatian friend understands the mixed inheritance of being Alsatian differently than Voltaire or Vermeil. He embraces his regional cultural identity, his Alemannic ethnicity, but that embrace does not make his national identity any less integral. Political identities do not have to be all or nothing, and *unsichtbare Grenzen* or *frontières invisibles* are complex and, I would argue, situational.

I will finish with another anecdote – if I may – which I feel captures the issues of my talk. When I began my research in Alsace in 1980, we lived in the village Horbourg just outside of Colmar in an apartment that was a converted patisserie with floor to ceiling windows. Once a week the windows would rattle as Mirage jets flew overhead on bombing runs in a large open field near the Rhine. Rumor had it that one French pilot had flown too close to the German border and ditched his jet in the Rhine rather than enter "enemy" air space. I tell this story not because I believe that it is true, but rather because Alsatians enjoyed telling the story and the bombing practice was real. France had withdrawn from NATO joint military command in 1966 and would not rejoin until April 2009. In the story

the pilot is responding to *la frontière dans son crâne*, and his response seemed to be within the realm of possibility in the mentality of some Alsatians in 1980, because of the collective memory of 1870, 1914, and 1940. History builds invisible walls between people that can endure. However, I believe that such a rumor would make much less sense in contemporary Alsace due to changes in the nature of Europe and in the meaning of its borders. Real walls can be torn down, and so can invisible walls.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Claude Muller, *Colmar au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Colmar: Corpur, 2000), 153-5.

<sup>2</sup> Victimization remains part of the Alsatian collective memory, especially of the Nazi era. The historical record suggests a more complex past, which the Alsatians are beginning to address directly. See Laird Boswell, "Should France be Ashamed of its History? Coming to Terms with the Past in France and its Eastern Borderlands," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (June-September 2008): 237-251.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Wahl and Jean-Claude Richez, *L'Alsace entre France et Allemagne 1850-1950* (Paris: Hachette, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Edmond Vermeil, "Religion and Politics in Alsace," *Foreign Affairs* 10 (1932): 250-64, quote at 250.

<sup>5</sup> The term "unsichtbare Grenze" was employed by the French scholar, Etienne François, in his seminal study of early modern bi-confessional Augsburg. Etienne François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648-1806* (Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke, 1991). Interestingly, the French edition of his study only makes reference to borders once on p. 251; instead he discusses the "foreigner within" (l'étranger de l'intérieur). Cf. idem, *Protestants et catholiques en Allemagne: Identités et pluralisme à Augsbourg, 1646-1806* (Paris : Albin Michel, 1993), 235ff.

<sup>6</sup> "[T]he modern nation-state...is a geographic construct. Its overriding function is the organization of space. It exerts control over populations and economic actors through its exclusive control of territory." Tom Lansford, "Post Westphalian Europe? Sovereignty and the Modern Nation-State," *International Studies* 37 (2000): 1-15, here at 4.

<sup>7</sup> Merje Kuus and John Agnew, "Theorizing the State Geographically: Sovereignty, Subjectivity, Territoriality," in *The SAGE Handbook of Political Geography*, edited by Kevin R. Cox, Murray Low, and Jennifer Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 95-106. Ian McBride notes that the normative character of nation-states was already at play among natural law

scholars, such as Samuel Pufendorf (*De Jure Naturae et Gentium*, 1672), in the seventeenth century and a theoretical commonplace before the French Revolution. Ian McBride, "The Nation in the Age of Revolution," in *Power and the Nation in European History*, edited by Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 248-71, here at 254-60.

<sup>8</sup> Günther Lottes, "Frontiers between Geography and History," in *Frontiers and the Writing of History*, edited by Steven G. Ellis and Raingard Eßer (Hannover-Laatzten: Wehrhahn, 2006), 39-71, here at 54-9.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of his theoretical framework, see Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynamic Conflict & International Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), esp. Chapter Two, "Theorizing International Change," pp. 21-66.

<sup>10</sup> Kuus and Agnew, "Theorizing the State," 106.

<sup>11</sup> Perry Anderson has argued that these states married noble and royal interests to exploit their peasants, and that the system represented the last bulwark of the feudal regime. Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1979). One of the finest case studies in support of this analysis is William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, who sees nations as modern creations, a perspective known as 'modernist' in the scholarly debate, argues that nations are created by modern capitalism to mask class tensions. He presents nineteenth-century nationalism as shifting from an earlier popular phase in rebellion against governing powers to a second and more significant phase where it became the prop to support governing powers. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46-131.

<sup>14</sup> John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>15</sup> Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 89.

<sup>16</sup> Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group..." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1 (1978): 379-88. This essay is reprinted and more accessible in *Nationalism*, edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 36-46, here at 39.

<sup>17</sup> The Holy See (Vatican City) is the only non-member state recognized by the UN with Permanent Observer status; <http://www.un.org/en/members/>, visited 23

June, 2012. There are more than a dozen other states or areas claiming statehood that are not generally recognized as sovereign in international law, including the Republic of China (Taiwan), Kosovo, Northern Cyprus, and Palestine among others. A few states, such as Somaliland (a breakaway region in Somalia), have no *de jure* recognition at all. Different websites provide different lists of non-recognized states. Wikipedia has the fullest list of states with limited recognition; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_states\\_with\\_limited\\_recognition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_states_with_limited_recognition), visited 23 June 2012. In addition to Vatican City, the UN only acknowledges Palestine among non-recognized states as an “entity” listed among “Other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and are maintaining permanent offices at Headquarters;” <http://www.un.org/en/members/nonmembers.shtml>, visited 23 June 2012.

<sup>18</sup> George Gavrilis argues that allowing local policing of border regions by what he calls “boundary regimes” would provide more security and dampen interstate tensions. George Gavrilis, *The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-13, here at 2.

<sup>19</sup> James Sheehan, “National History and National Identity in the New Germany,” *German Studies Review*, Special Issue, German Identity (Winter, 1992): 163-74.

<sup>20</sup> For an excellent introduction to the players and the debate, see Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer, “Introduction,” *Power and the Nation*, 1-29.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]).

<sup>22</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> David Newman, “Boundaries,” in *A Companion to Political Geography*, edited by John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gerard Toal (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 123-137, here at 123.

<sup>24</sup> In pre-modern French numerous words were employed. *Frontière* originally was applied to the front line of an army and retained its military meaning throughout. It eventually combined with *fins* to form its modern political definition in the nineteenth century. Lucien Febvre, “*Frontière*: The Word and the Concept,” in *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, edited by Peter Burke (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 208-218. On the historical development of *Grenze*, which, significantly, is borrowed word in German drawn from the Slavic languages, see Günther Vogler, “Borders and Boundaries in Early Modern Europe: Problems and Possibilities,” in *Frontiers and the Writing of History*, 21-37. On the current usage, see Lottes, “Frontiers,” 43.

<sup>25</sup> A standard in the field is J. R. V. Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London: Allen Unwin, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> Lottes, “Frontiers,” 45-9.

<sup>27</sup> C. R. Whittaker notes that according to the International Boundary Research Unit at Durham University about half of the world's boundaries are less than 100 years old; [www.ibru.dur.ac.uk](http://www.ibru.dur.ac.uk). See C. R. Whittaker, *Rome and Its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

<sup>28</sup> For an introduction to the conceptual history of Europe, see Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> Smith's answer is yes and no, and he uses the exercise to suggest the need to rethink the political force of ethnic identities in Antiquity. Anthony D. Smith, "Were There Nations in Antiquity?", *Power and the Nation*, 33-53.

<sup>30</sup> Marc Zvi Brettler argues that scholars have come to treat the biblical texts as historiography rather than history. See Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-7; David M. Goodblatt does see elements of Jewish nationalism emerging out of the scribal history during the Second Temple era. See David M. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31f; cf. Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> The classic textbook on the Bible still seeks to use it as history. Henry Jackson Flanders Jr., Robert Wilson Crapps, and David Anthony Smith, *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). For a more critical text, see Victor H. Matthews, *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan M. Hall notes that this identity was not "natural," rather it needed "to be actively proclaimed, reclaimed and disclaimed through discursive channels." Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 34-55, quote on 182.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105-32.

<sup>34</sup> Echoing Vermeil, Rogers Brubaker draws a distinction between French and German senses of "nationhood." Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 1-17.

<sup>35</sup> The fourth-century Athenians, Isocrates (436-338 BCE) and Xenophon (c. 427-354 BCE), were advocates of pan-Hellenism (Greek-ness) who dichotomized Greek male honor and democracy with Persian effeminate dishonor and despotism. Herodotus of Parnassus, who was Greek native to Asia Minor, had a much more nuanced appreciation for Persians and other "barbarians." See Cartledge, *The Greeks*, 51-77. In working with imagery in pottery sources, however, H. A. Shapiro argues that Athenian depictions of Persians were ambivalent even into the fourth century BCE. H. A. Shapiro, "The Invention of Persia in Classical Athens," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, edited by

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Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Benjamin Isaac (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 57-87.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 257-303.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony Pagden, "Europe and the World Around," in *Early Modern Europe*, edited by Euan Cameron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-26, here at 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> The ancient Greeks have long been our source for myths of origins and identity. Marcel Detienne, *The Greeks and Us: A Comparative Anthropology of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)

<sup>39</sup> Universal citizenship was decreed by Emperor Caracalla in 212 CE, who was himself of Berber and Syrian descent. Emma Dench, "Domination," in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Roman World*, edited by Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109-137, here at 127.

<sup>40</sup> Greg Woolf, "An Imperial People," *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 69-89.

<sup>41</sup> Penelope M. Allison, "An Empire of Cities," *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 200-31.

<sup>42</sup> C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 148-51.

<sup>43</sup> The standard historiographical model argues that the Romans used the frontier as a zone for conquest down to the end of the reign of Augustus, when in his *Res Gestae*, he cautioned his successor, Tiberius, to shift to a defensive posture. The construction of walls at the *limes* was completed by the Emperor Hadrian. Derek Williams, *The Reach of Rome: A History of the Roman Imperial Frontier 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). The essays of C. R. Whittaker have challenged this model on all fronts arguing that they played diverse roles at diverse times and in various locations. See C. R. Whitaker, *Rome and Its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), esp. 1-27.

<sup>44</sup> Anthony Pagden, "Europe Conceptualizing a Continent," *The Idea of Europe*, 33-53, here at 38-42.

<sup>45</sup> The mixed, complicated, and often partial processes of Romanization become clear in a collection of conference papers mixing archaeologists and historians. Ray Laurence, "Introduction," in *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, edited by Ray Laurence and Joanne Barry (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 1-9.

<sup>46</sup> "Christendom" was first employed by court scholars in Alfred the Great's Wessex and was drawn from the Carolingian model of a Christian Empire. See Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 7-14.

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- <sup>47</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 434-62.
- <sup>48</sup> Teofilio F. Ruiz, "Jews, Muslims and Christians," in *Medieval Christianity*, edited by Daniel E. Bornstein, vol. 4 of *A People's History of Christianity*, general editor Denis R. Janz (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 265-299.
- <sup>49</sup> Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 59-65.
- <sup>50</sup> Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 150; cf. Alessandro Barbaro, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 44-101.
- <sup>51</sup> On urban communes, see Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 213-18; on the Swiss, *ibid.*, 239-49.
- <sup>52</sup> Susan Reynolds, who argues strongly for the political significance of medieval nations, argues that all three terms were used to define the community living in a kingdom – the community of the realm. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 250-7; see also Susan Reynolds, "The idea of the Nation as a Political Community," in *Power and Nation*, 54-66.
- <sup>53</sup> In France, for example, the transformation is associated with the scholars working with Suger of St. Denis (c. 1081-1151). See Colin Jones, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 88.
- <sup>54</sup> This was a long drawn out process with disputed claims to possessory rights at the parish level. See Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- <sup>55</sup> Ilja Mieck, "Deutschlands Westgrenze," in *Deutschlands Grenze in der Geschichte*, edited by Alexander Demandt (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 197-239, here at 199-201.
- <sup>56</sup> Vogler, "Borders and Boundaries," 31.
- <sup>57</sup> J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* no. 137 (Nov. 1992): 48-71. See also Gerald E. Aylmer, "Centre and Locality: The Nature of Power Elites," in *Power Elites and State Building*, edited by Wolfgang Reinhard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 59-77.
- <sup>58</sup> Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. 232-7; see also Wolfgang Reinhard, "Introduction: Power Elites, State Servants, Ruling Classes, and the Growth of State Power," in *Power Elites and State Building*, 1-18.
- <sup>59</sup> Neithard Bulst "Rulers, Representative Institutions and their Members as Power Elites," in *Power Elites and State Building*, 41-58; see also Antoni Maćszak, "The Nobility-State Relationship," *ibid.*, 189-206.
- <sup>60</sup> Nexon, *The Struggle for Power*, 84-97.

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<sup>61</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 54-58.

<sup>62</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005), 45-61; see also Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>63</sup> This process is critical to Benedict Anderson's argument. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37-46; cf. Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 61-88.

<sup>64</sup> Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation: Religion, Political Conflict and the Search for Conformity, 1350-1750* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 70-75 and 175-9. See also, Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 45-9. Marc Forster discusses the diverse responses within German Catholicism in Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Axel Gotthard, "Das Religionsfrieden und das politische System des Reiches," in *Der Augsburger Religionsfrieden 1555*, edited by Heinz Schilling and Heribert Smolinsky (Münster: Aschendorff, 2007), 43-58; and idem, *Die Augsburger Religionsfrieden* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004), esp. 280-315.

<sup>66</sup> The literature on this topic is immense with Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard serving as the seminal, essential, and most prolific authors. For a helpful and succinct introduction to the theory and its critics with an initial bibliography of the major works, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, edited by David M. Whitford (Kirksville MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 136-57.

<sup>67</sup> On the *ius emigrandi*, see Gotthard, *Die Augsburger Religionsfrieden*, 118-23.

<sup>68</sup> The previous sentences have covered a number of issues and regions. For an excellent introduction to the question of tolerance and intolerance in the wake of the Reformation, see the various essays in Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner, ed., *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); see also von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture*, 133-56.

<sup>69</sup> For Nexon the differing responses of the Spanish Habsburgs and Henry IV to the politicization of confessional communities set the stage for the differing trajectories of Spanish and French power in the seventeenth century. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power*, 185-264.

<sup>70</sup> Ronald Asch argues that fear of Spanish suppression of Protestantism overshadowed political considerations, see Ronald R. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe 1618-1648* (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997), 34-7; Peter Wilson sees the religious issues as exacerbated by political interests, see Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 38-43.

<sup>71</sup> Here again the recent literature marking the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia is massive. One might best begin with the collection of essays in *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, edited by Klaus Bussmann and Heinz Schilling, vol. 1 *Politics, Religion, Law and Society* (Münster?: s.n., 1998). See also Heinz Duchhardt, ed. *Der Westfälische Friede: Diplomatie – politische Zäsur – kulturelles Umfeld – Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1998).

<sup>72</sup> Lottes, "Frontiers," 59-60.

<sup>73</sup> Anton Schindling, "Neighbors of a Different Faith: Confessional Coexistence and Parity in the Territorial States and Towns of the Empire," *1648*, 465-74.

<sup>74</sup> As was the case when Augustus II the Strong, Elector of Saxony, converted to Catholicism in 1697 to advanced his candidacy to the kingship of Poland. His personal decision could not be forced on his subjects.

<sup>75</sup> Jeremy Black sees this transformation occurring after 1660. Jeremy Black, *European Warfare 1494-1660* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 212-16. Brian Downing argues that the military revolution delayed the potential democratization of European politics in place at the end of the middle ages; instead concentrating state power and monarchical autocracy. Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: The Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); for an excellent case study of France, see John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>76</sup> Gerhard Oestreich saw in military drill the core example of early modern social disciplining, combining the control of external behavior with an internalization of new behavior. Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 76-90 and 267-70.

<sup>77</sup> Downing, *The Military Revolution*, 64-74; and Lynn, *The French Army*, 32-64.

<sup>78</sup> Mieck, "Deutschlands Westgrenze," 216-8; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle*, 551-71; and Lottes, "Frontiers," 63-4.

<sup>79</sup> Reinhard, "Introduction: Power Elites," 10-11; and Lottes, "Frontiers," 53-4.

<sup>80</sup> Latin also reinforced the glues of rituals and Catholicism, especially after 1648, in the scattered empire. Paula Sutter Fichtner, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1490-1848* (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 139-47.

<sup>81</sup> Krishan Kumar argues that Protestantism served as the glue to hold together the "British nation" in the early eighteenth century. Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 121-74.

<sup>82</sup> Royal officials would use treaties in the eighteenth century to try to clarify the borders, though the process was not complete until the French Revolution. Peter Sahlins, "Natural Frontiers Revisited: France's Boundaries since the Seventeenth

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Century,” *American Historical Review* 95 (December 1990): 1423-51, here at 1435-42.

<sup>83</sup> Burke, *Language and Communities*, 35-8.

<sup>84</sup> Eugen Weber, *Peasants in Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

<sup>85</sup> Charles Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8-19 and 30-5.

<sup>86</sup> See the essays in *The Renaissance in National Context*, edited by Roy Porter and Mikulaš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>87</sup> Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 70-9.

<sup>88</sup> One might begin to explore the complexities of the English Civil War with John Adamson, “Introduction: High Roads and Blind Alleys – The English Civil War and its Historiography,” in *The English Civil War*, edited by John Adamson (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 1-35. The following thematic essays by various authors cover a wide range of issues. Recently the Civil War has been seen in a broader context as an event that affected all of the realms of Charles I. See Martin Bennett, *The Civil Wars in Britain and Ireland, 1638-1651* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) and a fascinating of regional ethnicities forged in conflict, Mark Stroyle, *Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>89</sup> Jeremy Waldron, who explores Locke as a Christian writer, shows that Locke draws a distinction – appreciated by Vermeil as “Western” -- between church membership that is purely voluntary and a free yet constrained membership in civic society. Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations of John Locke’s Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 212-4. See also Ross J. Corbett, *The Lockean Commonwealth* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 37-60.

<sup>90</sup> Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 131-40.

<sup>91</sup> David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation: Inventing Nationalism 1680-1800* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 50-77. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991), esp. 27-30.

<sup>92</sup> See <http://www.aebr.net/profil/pdfs/charta.en.pdf>, p.2. The Charter was initially adopted on 20 November 1981. It goes on to state: “Cross-border co-operation helps to reduce the disadvantages of these borders, overcome the outlying national location and improve living conditions for the population.”

<sup>93</sup> Alsace was not alone in its alienation, when the French Revolutionaries turned to language as the “revolutionary crucible.” Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*, 169-97.

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<sup>94</sup> Renan discounts race, language, and geography as factors. Moreover, he sets the daily plebiscite in opposition to any ruler's claim (here read Emperor Wilhelm I). Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?," in *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Roger Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42-55, here at 53.

<sup>95</sup> Marie-Noël Denis, "Monuments aux morts en Alsace: Entre mémoire et histoire," *Revue des sciences sociales* 30 (2003) : 22-31.

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