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Philippe Büttgen and Christophe Duhamelle, eds., *Religion ou confession: Un bilan franco-allemand sur l'époque moderne (XVI – XVIII siècles)*. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2010, 609 pp. 35.00€. (pb). ISBN 2735112691.

Review by Charles Lipp, University of West Georgia.

Philippe Büttgen's and Christophe Duhamelle's 600-page-plus collection of essays provides an informative, if narrowly focused, assessment of French and German historiography on early modern religious issues. Originating in a 2006 conference held in Göttingen, Germany under the auspices of the Mission historique française en Allemagne, the book revolves around two broad related questions: how do French and German historians understand religion in early modern Europe and how do they study the topic? Büttgen and Duhamelle comment that "les Allemands entrent dans le religieux par les 'confessions'; les Français rencontrent le fait confessionnel dans une histoire religieuse. Travaillent-ils vraiment sur la même chose?" (p.1). Almost all the various pieces trace scholarly developments over the nineteenth and twentieth century, then evaluate the state of current research, and finally propose future avenues for study. In so doing, the collection offers Anglo-American scholars points of comparison with their own work and contributes to the longstanding conversation about how to best understand the central place of religion in early modern Europe.

The collection includes twenty-five essays, not including Büttgen's and Duhamelle's introduction and a critical conclusion by Étienne François. Most notably for American historians of France, contributors include Dominique Julia and Denis Crouzet besides Duhamelle and François. Prominent scholars like Kaspar von Greyerz and Thomas Kaufmann number among the German participants. Büttgen and Duhamelle organize the collection into three parts. The first and shortest contains pieces by Julia, von Greyerz, Volker Leppin, and Hubert Bost exploring the historiography of religion in France and Germany. Together, they provide précis of their own views and establish the foundations for the debates and approaches examined by the other contributors. [1]

Part two contains thirteen essays divided into three subsections. The first subsection, "Penser les pratiques religieuses," has pieces by Andreas Holzem, Philippe Martin, Duhamelle, and Helmut Kühne on topics including popular piety and interiority versus exteriority. Subsection two, "Encadrements," explores issues including the clergy, law, and madness through contributions by Manfred Jakabowski-Tiessen, Bernard Dompnier, Nicolas Lyon-Caen, Axel Gothard, and Claire Gantet. Pieces by Birgit Emich, Alain Tallon, Anne Bonzon, and Claudia Ulbrich on topics ranging from international relations to the place of the parish make up the third subsection of part two, "Entre État et village." Part three also has three subsections: "Le tornant réflexif de l'histoire religieuse," with historiographical contributions by Büttgen and Christian Grosse; "Lieux, réseaux et instances du vrai," with essays by Kaufmann, Stefan Ehrenpreis, and Patrice Veit on education and music; "Inclusions, exclusions," which includes essays from Crouzet, Pierre-Anoine Fabre, and Angelika Schaser on a diverse array of issues: the French Wars of Religion, Christian missions in the early modern world, and conversions in the Holy Roman Empire.

In order to organize their sprawling collection, Büttgen and Duhamelle employ a mathematical concept: the binomial, or the algebraic combination of two terms. Although not intending it as a general model, they argue their usage “avait pour but de mettre en évidence à la fois les différences et les proximités entre les historiographies. Chacun des termes de ces binômes était donc spécifique à l’un des champs de recherche, mais le rapprochement entre les deux termes permettait, par un effet tout à la fois de similarité et de contraste, de mettre au jour un aspect de cette croisée qui constituait l’objectif du colloque” (p. 5). In his conclusion, Étienne François states that the book’s binomials function like a mirror, allowing readers to “mieux saisir dans leurs expressions multiples les différences entre recherche française et recherche allemande” (p. 595).

The contributions by Nicolas Lyon-Caen and Axel Gotthard together provide a useful example of this binomial approach. Their essays, “La justice ecclésiastique en France à l’époque moderne: laïcisation ou sécularisation?” and “La paix par la droit? Division confessionnelle et juridiction dans le Saint Empire,” study the relationship between religion, law, and political culture in France and the Holy Roman Empire. Lyon-Caen argues that although the Catholic Church’s canon courts lost power and voice to royal tribunals over the early modern era, there were benefits to be gained for French bishops, asserting that “les évêques trouvent largement leur avantage dans cette transformation des puissants tribunaux d’Église en simples organes administratifs beaucoup plus dépendants de leurs propres personnes” (p. 279).

In his essay, Gotthard asserts that the history of the Empire remains a history of its law. Though seemingly rigid, imperial law was open to multiple interpretations, thereby affording the diverse confederation a means of conflict management. Emerging confessional divisions threatened legal division and, so, crisis. The Thirty Years’ War, Gotthard argues, should be understood not merely as a religious struggle, but also as a conflict over the imperial constitution.^[2] Each of the two essays remains focused on its particular subject and related historiography without reference to the other. Their being placed together as a binomial, however, enables readers to see clearly core aspects of French and German scholarship, especially the role of political formation in shaping the history of religion. Lyon-Caen’s piece, like others on France in the volume, stresses the centrality of Catholic Church/French crown relations and, by extension, debates on the growth of monarchical power. Gotthard, in contrast, emphasizes the issue of confessionalization at the imperial estate level.

Other binomials share these foci and underline the importance of the Reformations in Germany and the French Revolution in shaping the institutional development and scholarly agenda of religious studies in the two countries. Taken together, the essays underline the contrast between the division of church and state in France and the related effects of republican secularization in the twentieth century and the continued importance of confession in Germany, where the study of religion remains shared between departments of history and departments of theology. Despite these differences, the French and German essays all reflect the impact of the postwar interdisciplinary turn that accelerated in the 1990s. Running through the volume, as Étienne François notes in his conclusion, is a concern with defining terms as well as reviewing historiographic trends. Many essays owe debts to approaches borrowed from sociology and anthropology. In essence then, the binomials offer a series of review articles that force readers to reflect on the convergences and divergences of French and German scholarship.

A number of essays do not fit this binomial approach as well as Lyon-Caen’s and Gotthard’s. Claire Gantet, in her piece, “Figures de l’Irrationnel: Délires, visions, charismes comme Critères du vrai,” argues that French historians need to borrow approaches from their German counterparts because more work on the connections between madness and the sacred has been done in Germany than France. Alain Tallon makes a similar point about borrowing in “Raison d’état, religion monarchique et religion du roi: Un aperçu de l’historiographie française et ses évolutions,” stating that study of the connections between religious and political ideas is more developed in Germany and, thus, French historians should

turn to the work of their German colleagues. Tallon notes that Kantorowicz's classic *The King's Two Bodies* appeared in French only in 1989.[3]

Three essays, those by Duhamelle on historiographical approaches in France and Germany, Grosse's application of historical anthropology to early modern religion, and Ehrenpreis' study of the connection between scholarship on religion and academic culture in France and Germany, take an explicitly comparative approach. In so doing, they break away from the volume's overall vision of binomials as pairings of distinct and separate explorations of French and German scholarship. Only one contribution, Pierre-Antoine Fabre's examination of early modern Christian missions, discusses areas outside of western and central Europe. It also provides the only reflection by a contributor on the book's larger project itself. Fabre ends his piece with a consideration of one of the questions he received at Göttingen concerning whether a scholar should declare a confessional allegiance in professional work. He concludes "[u]ne chose est en tout as certaine: l'exposition directe, frontale à cette question...est pour moi un attrait majeur de l'histoire des missions d'évangélisation et des déplacements qu'elle provoque vers les terres chaudes du christianisme contemporain" (p. 576).

Of all the contributions, American scholars of early modern France may have most interest in Denis Crouzet's essay as it moves away from extensive discussions of historiography to concentrate more upon original research. "Un imaginaire au travail: le catholicisme militant pendant les guerres de Religion" takes a cultural approach to studying the intersection of religious and political cultures in sixteenth-century France. Using a variety of literary sources from three moments during the Wars of Religion—the ascension of Charles IX, the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and the Catholic League's rebellion against Henry IV—Crouzet argues that scholars need to take the religious imagination seriously as an historical actor. Doing so, in his view, not only explains the rapid explosion of violence during the ongoing conflicts, but also changing connections between politics and religion as well as and the religious support for the monarchy. Crouzet's approach here will be familiar to readers of his earlier work on religious violence in late-sixteenth-century France in general, and the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in particular.[4]

In truth, almost all the contributions and the approaches and arguments discussed herein will be familiar to Anglo-American scholars of early modern France and Germany. The familiarity reflects Büttgen's and Duhamelle's success in their main objective: providing a lengthy overview of the historiographical development of and the current state of the field of religious scholarship in the two nations. For historians of France, the German material may prove most helpful as it provides basic introductions to the nature of German research and major names in the field. These names, German and French, include not just the contributors, but also what Étienne François in his conclusion terms the "invisible authorities" behind the historiographies discussed, the unmentioned influences on German and French historiography, including Max Weber, Wolfgang Reinhard, and Heinz Schilling in Germany, and Lucien Febvre and Michel de Certeau in France (p. 596).

However, despite this strength, the collection does not offer as full a scholarly portrait as it might, for a variety of reasons. The core binomial approach proves not as elegant in operation as intended in terms of highlighting the nature of the French and German historiographies. Büttgen and Duhamelle seem to acknowledge limitations in the method, stating, as mentioned above, that "[q]u'on ne s'y trompe pas: les binômes assemblés ici ne dessinent aucun système" (p. 6). The approach places limits on the variables discussed in the essays, making them almost exclusively French or German in approach, thus creating a narrow focus to the book, despite its great length. There are other ways in which the volume presents exclusive visions of the scholarship. The essays tend to equate the term "religion" with mainstream Christian denominations. Only Angelika Schaser's contribution on conversions, for example, mentions Judaism. Few contributions discuss the Huguenots or other religious minorities to any great extent.

The collection also mutes discussion of Christian/Muslim relations, despite the connections, peaceful and bellicose, between France, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Ottomans, connections coming under increasing study in the last decade.^[5] The volume minimizes explorations of Christianity's globalization between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, as mentioned previously. The work does not raise transnational or comparative questions as much as the editors seem to want nor as much as the field of early modern religious studies on both sides of the Atlantic is moving toward. Transnational frontier areas that connected France and Germany in the early modern era, particularly the Rhineland, are largely ignored, a surprising point considering Christophe Duhamelle's role as co-editor and contributor. Looking at places where French and German culture blended would have been a useful means of evaluating the connections and distinctions between the two nations' approaches to historical study. The collection also underplays the major role postwar British and American scholars have played in shaping French and German understandings of early modern religious issues. Despite these issues concerning focus, the collection begins a conversation about the state of historiography today and makes an implicit call for all scholars to reflect on how they engage in their studies and to look for points of comparison and useful approaches from other scholars.

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NOTES

[1] For example, von Greyerz offers a summary of the arguments presented in his *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[2] This interpretation is shared by the British historian of early modern Germany, Peter H. Wilson, dominating his recent survey of the war. See, Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2011).

[3] Ernest H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997; originally published 1957).

[4] See Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu. La violence au temps des troubles de Religion (vers 1525 – vers 1610)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1990), 2 vols.; and, Denis Crouzet, *La nuit de Saint-Barthélemy. Un rêve perdu de la Renaissance* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

[5] For two basic surveys, see Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and, Dominique Faral, *La Turquie ottomane et l'Europe du XIVe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Economica, 2009). See also Géraud Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la croisade: Mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs au XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: PUF, 2004).

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