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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

THE LIMITS OF SECULARIZATION: ON THE PROBLEM OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY*

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I. THE PUZZLE AND THE LITERATURE

A catholic revival in the nineteenth century? The growing secularization of the European mind in the century of Darwin and Marx has long been a truism – especially for the general educated public, but also as a kind of background assumption for German historians working in social, economic, even political topics. Yet consider the following three contemporary observations.

The first is from Macaulay in 1840. At the close of his review of Ranke's *History of the popes*, Macaulay noted that the great task of the future would be to bring Ranke's story up to date: to 'trace the progress of the Catholic revival of the nineteenth century'. In 1799 the church had appeared dead. Yet 'even before the funeral rites had been performed over... Pius the Sixth, a great reaction had commenced'.

No person who calmly reflects on what, within the last few years, has passed in Spain, in Italy, in South America, in Ireland, in the Netherlands, in Prussia, even in France, can doubt that the power of this Church over the hearts and minds of men is now greater far than it was when the Encyclopaedia... appeared...'

Macaulay offered no explanation for the reversal. But he thought that

It is impossible to deny that the polity of the Church of Rome is the very masterpiece of human wisdom.... Among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind,... [the Roman Church] occupies the highest place.¹

Let us now move forward forty years, and to the other side of Europe, where Dostoevsky was expressing similar astonishment at the power of the Roman church over the minds of men. His cardinal grand inquisitor, the embodiment of the church, mocks the Christ who had come with a message of freedom.

Now, and particularly in the days we are currently living through, the people are even more certain than ever that they are completely free, and indeed they themselves have brought us their freedom and have laid it humbly at our feet...

* The following is an expanded version of a paper given at the conference on 'Secularization, De-Christianization, Re-Christianization in Europe' at the Max-Planck Institute for History in Göttingen, January 1994. Since the talk was an argument with my colleagues, the conversational tone has been retained. For much friendly criticism and bibliographical help, thanks are due to Wolfgang Schieder (Cologne), Edith Saurer (Vienna), Paul Misner (Marquette), and especially Otto Weiss (Comunità di Sant'Alfonso, Rome). They are not to blame for the remaining mistakes, nor for my persistent wrong-headedness.

¹ 'Ranke's history of the popes', written in October 1840, in *Critical and historical essays*, Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay (New York, 1965), pp. 275–314, quotes on pp. 300, 312, 313. The German title of Ranke's work was *Die Römischen Päpste* (3 vols., 1834–9).

Whereas Macaulay had left the task of explaining this prodigy to a 'future historian', Dostoevsky's explanation was at hand. 'We have corrected your great deed,' the inquisitor says to the Saviour, 'and founded it upon *miracle, mystery, and authority*. And the people were glad that they had been... brought together into a flock.'²

Finally let us turn to Germany, thirty years later, in 1907. The Left Liberal political hopeful (and protestant pastor), Friedrich Naumann, discussing Adolf von Harnack's optimistic prediction that 'modern methods' were gaining ground in catholic theology, exclaimed,

What good will that do us? Will the weakening of theological concepts diminish the power of the priest over hearts and minds? ... it is downright incredible how the priest succeeds in keeping even the unwilling and the indifferent on his string.³

All three of these observers would have been amazed to learn that they had lived in a century of secularization.⁴ Their own eyes had seen the opposite, even if they could not name or understand it properly. They had no doubt of the continued vitality of the catholic church, a vitality that lay not in the church's wealth or its institutional power, which never recovered their pre-revolutionary levels, nor in the church's influence on the arts, philosophy, or even theology, which was now practically nil. It lay, as all three testify, in the perverse willingness of the 'people', in a century whose economy and institutions were offering unprecedented freedom of thought, movement, and decision, to ally themselves with the church; in their own words, to offer up their freedom to the most authoritarian structure around. This phenomenon is surely a puzzle. And yet for decades historians have written as if the nineteenth century were simply a part of the grand narrative of secularization that began with Voltaire's remarking (of God) that he had no need of that hypothesis. Not the secularization of Europe in the nineteenth, but only the secularization of scholarship in the twentieth century can account for the absence of the catholic revival from our research agendas for so long.

Historians of other national experiences, admittedly, have been much quicker than those writing on Germany to recognize in nineteenth-century religion an important *datum*. As early as 1962 Kitson Clark noted that the years following the publication of the *Origin of species* in England were characterized not by 'an acute crisis of mind' but by a great religious quickening, catholic and protestant. Evangelicalism was recognized, even by Marxists, as a phenomenon of major significance.⁵ As for America, a pioneer of the 'new social history' asserted in 1971 that 'the most revolutionary change in nineteenth-century America was' (not the civil war or the end of slavery!) 'the conversion of the nation from a largely dechristianized land in 1789 to a

² Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The brothers Karamazov*, trans. by David McDuff (London, 1993), pp. 288–9, 295. Italics in original. *Brothers* was written in 1878 and published in 1880.

³ F[riedrich] Naumann, 'Das Zentrum', *Die Hilfe*, xiii, 8 (24 Feb. 1907), 114–15.

⁴ Here is Sybel: 'One still hears naive liberals saying that in our enlightened age, clerical rule cannot last for long. Our eventful century certainly has many great pages, but in religious matters, as the facts have shown, it counts not among the enlightened, but among the reactionary ages. Scholarly literature has surely become more critical and oppositional, but in Germany it has in equal measure lost its following.' Heinrich von Sybel, *Klerikale Politik im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* [1874], in *Kleine Historische Schriften*, iii (Stuttgart, 1880), 452.

⁵ George Kitson Clark, 'The religion of the people', in *The making of Victorian England* (London, 1962), pp. 147–96; quote, pp. 147–8; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Methodism and the threat of revolution', in *Labouring men* (London, 1964), pp. 22–33; E. P. Thompson, 'The transforming power of the cross', in *The making of the English working class* (New York, 1963), pp. 350–400. Both men were stimulated by the interpretation in Elie Halévy, *England in 1815* (London, 1924), pp. 410–59.

stronghold of Protestantism by mid-century'.⁶ The following year Emmet Larkin discovered in Ireland a veritable 'Devotional Revolution'.⁷ And in France, scholarship on 're-Christianization' began earlier and has been broader, deeper, and more searching than that of any other national enterprise.⁸

Why German historiography waited so long to join these efforts would be an interesting topic in itself. Certainly the Reformation, so crucial not only to Germany's history but also to German national identity, has always siphoned off the attention of scholars who come to history with an interest in religious questions from the nineteenth century – and especially the attention of protestant scholars, who still make up the mainstream of Germany's academic establishment. More generally, Germany's academic culture, which is markedly *kulturprotestantisch*, has had a hard time recognizing in the forms of catholic piety that *Innerlichkeit* which to the German protestant mind is the essence of 'religion'. Catholic historians of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, have been preoccupied with the catholic struggle for political autonomy and social parity.⁹ Moreover, unlike France, de-Christianization was never the point of departure for the nineteenth-century German church. Even 'secularization', in the German context, referred to the state's appropriation during the Napoleonic wars of much of the church's authority and especially its property, but not to anything that happened to the catholic people.¹⁰ Thus, finding nothing strange in the survival of their faith, catholic historians were not pushed to ask the larger questions about secularization, in Max Weber's sense of *Entzäuberung*, much less about 're-Christianization'. Finally, and most important, the long-standing confessional division of German culture has prevented the kind of interaction between catholic and protestant scholarship that would have been fruitful for both. For all these reasons the

⁶ Richard J. Jensen, *The winning of the Midwest. Social and political conflict, 1888–96* (Chicago, 1971), p. 63.

⁷ Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–1878', *American Historical Review*, LXXVII (1972), 627–52. The revival in protestant Ireland puts some pressure on Larkin's periodization and explanation: cf. David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* (London and New York, 1992).

⁸ An excellent critical discussion of the topic as well as a superb overview of the French-language literature: Ralph Gibson, *A social history of French catholicism 1789–1914* (London and New York, 1989).

⁹ Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Br., 1929), Bd. 4 *Die Religiöse Kräfte*, which is concerned primarily with institutional and intellectual developments, is only a partial exception. The same is true, especially in the chapters on Germany, for the excellent volumes in the seven-volume *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 1962–79), edited by Hubert Jedin: cf. Wolfgang Müller et al., *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. v. *Die Kirche im Zeitalter des Absolutismus und der Aufklärung* (1970); Roger Aubert et al., *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. vi. *Die Kirche in der Gegenwart. Erster Halbband: Die Kirche zwischen Revolution und Restauration* (1971); Roger Aubert et al., *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. vi. *Die Kirche in der Gegenwart. Zweiter Halbband: Die Kirche zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand (1878 bis 1914)* (1973). Italian historiography has also neglected religion. Cf. Derek Beales' sharp remarks in 'Italy and her church', *Historical Journal*, xxv, 1 (1982), 238. Owen Chadwick's magnificent *The popes and the European revolution* (Oxford, 1981), which treats the religion of the people and mentalities as well as catholic institutions and politics c. 1700–1830, and draws its examples from Italy, Spain, and the German states as well as the more usual France, is a model of how religious history should be written.

¹⁰ Useful: Rudolf Lill, 'Reichskirche – Säkularisation – Katholische Bewegung. Zur historischen Ausgangssituation des deutschen katholizismus im 19. Jahrhundert', in Anton Rauscher, ed., *Der soziale und politische Katholizismus. Entwicklungslinien in Deutschland 1803–1963* (Munich and Vienna, 1981), pp. 15–45.

presence of the church in German historiography has been almost exclusively a political one: visible in its quarrels with the state; in its representatives in the (catholic) Centre party; in the social organizations that made up the catholic 'milieu'.

This neglect is ending. In 1984 the themes of secularization, re-Christianization, and revival were explicitly explored by Jonathan Sperber, whose *Popular catholicism in nineteenth-century Germany* won the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize for the best first book by an American historian.¹¹ Sperber transposed Emmet Larkin's model for 'the devotional revolution in Ireland' to Germany. He drew on ideas about church and state agendas from Wolfgang Schieder's famous article on the Trier pilgrimage of 1844, which more than any single publication has stimulated the interest of German historians outside the gild of church history in nineteenth-century religion.¹² Sperber conceded that it would be 'inappropriate' to describe the German situation in the early nineteenth century as 'de-Christianization'. 'Easter communion was the general rule, regular Sunday church attendance the practice of the majority...' Nevertheless, he argued, from roughly 1830 to 1850, catholics were becoming more and more secular. At mid-century, however, political and subsistence crises reversed the trends. Preachers evangelized the countryside in missions (*Volksmissionen*) that set unprecedented attendance records. Pilgrimages revived; illegitimacy declined. Catholics withdrew from inter-confessional clubs and joined devotional confraternities instead, sealing themselves off from protestant fellow-citizens. By 1870 the catholic population was characterized by its sobriety and piety. And its leisure was spent in a thoroughly confessionalized, clericalized *milieu*.¹³

Although no one has sailed German catholicism so far into the mainstream of the western religious revival as Sperber, he is not the only recent historian to have made important contributions to the question. On the contrary: Christoph Weber, Gottfried Korff, Otto Weiss, Werner K. Blessing, Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen, among others, have added significantly to our understanding of nineteenth-century catholicism.¹⁴

¹¹ J. Sperber, *Popular catholicism in nineteenth-century Germany* (Princeton, 1984).

¹² By rediscovering the most important mass mobilization in Germany before 1848, Schieder demonstrated the existence of a religious subject-matter to social historians of Germany. W. Schieder, 'Kirche und Revolution. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, xiv [1974], 419–54; an English translation, 'Church and revolution. Aspects of the Trier pilgrimage of 1844', is in Clive Emsley, ed., *Conflict and stability in Europe* (London, 1979), pp. 65–95. Schieder's interpretation of his evidence has been sharply criticized, inter alios by Rudolf Lill, 'Kirche und Revolution', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, xviii (1978), 565–75; by Eduard Lichter, 'Die Wallfahrt der Maria Fröhlich aus Neuwied zum Hl. Rock in Trier im Jahre 1844', in *Kurtierisches Jahrbuch*, xviii (1978), 86–104; and his general direction, by Wolfgang Altgeld, *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum. Zur Bedeutung religiös begründeter Gegensätze und nationalreligiöser Ideen in der Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus* (Mainz, 1992), pp. 16–17.

¹³ Sperber, *Popular catholicism*, quote: p. 36. Secularity, secularization: e.g. pp. 13, 18, 35–6. The concept of a catholic social-moral milieu, with a negative valuation, was brought to prominence in Carl Amery's *Die Kapitulation oder Deutscher Katholizismus heute* (Reinbek, 1963) and imported into academic discussion by M. Rainer Lepsius, 'Parteisystem und Sozialstruktur: zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gesellschaft', in Wilhelm Abel et al., *Wirtschaft, Geschichte und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Friedrich Lütge* (Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 371–93, reprinted in Gerhard A. Ritter, ed., *Deutsche Parteien vor 1918* (Cologne, 1973), pp. 56–80. The 'milieu' has become a research field in itself.

¹⁴ Sperber's periodization is questionable. The same processes are described as continuous in Werner K. Blessing's brilliant social history of Bavarian catholicism, *Staat und Kirche in der Gesellschaft: Institutionelle Autorität und mentaler Wandel in Bayern während des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1982). Christoph Weber's stimulating institutional and intellectual history of

This welcome burst of scholarship shares a feature, however, that causes me some misgivings. Although the works themselves claim to be social, not church history (in Germany a distinction with important institutional consequences), the assumption underlying many of them seems to be that things happened as they did because that was how 'the church' (that is, the clergy) wanted them to happen. That is a very intentionalistic, indeed a very clerical, understanding of historical causation and agency.¹⁵ And an inevitable consequence of this conception is that the catholic people often appear to be putty in the clergy's hands, too dumb to know what is good for them. In this respect recent German historiography, for all its brilliance and sophistication, seems closer in spirit to Macaulay, Dostoevsky, and Naumann than to the newer social history of religion in England, Ireland, America, and France.¹⁶

II. THE CLERGY

'Clergy' and 'Ultramontanism': these are indeed the keys to the church's success – but perhaps more as symptoms than as agents. In the following pages I shall risk some provisional observations on these two themes.

The detailed study of individual dioceses that forms the basis of the social history of the French clergy is in Germany in its infancy.¹⁷ (New work by Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen on Baden is a hopeful sign that this may be changing.)¹⁸ In so far as

catholicism in the Koblenz region, *Aufklärung und Orthodoxie am Mittelrhein, 1820–1850* (Munich, 1973), sees the revival beginning around 1830. My own critique of Sperber, Schieder, Blessing et al.: 'Piety and politics: recent work on German catholicism', *Journal of Modern History*, LXIII (Dec. 1991), 681–716, esp. pp. 682–9.

¹⁵ E.g. Sperber, *Popular catholicism*, p. 55. Blessing is a welcome exception to intentionalism, and recently Otto Weiss has offered a more nuanced picture of the political side of ultramontanism than appeared in his earlier work. Cf. 'Katholiken in der Auseinandersetzung mit der kirchlichen Autorität. Zur Situation des katholischen Wien und des Wiener Katholikenvereins in den Jahren 1848 bis 1850', *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte*, x (1991), 23–54, esp. pp. 29, 52–4. Ch. Weber's latest contribution to the study of ultramontanism, on the other hand, goes in the opposite direction. 'Ultramontanismus als katholischer Fundamentalismus', in Wilfried Loth, ed., *Deutscher Katholizismus im Umbruch zur Moderne* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, 1991), pp. 20–45.

¹⁶ Similar misgivings: Andreas Holzem, 'Geßlerhüte der Theorie? Zu Stand und Relevanz des Theoretischen in der Katholizismusforschung', *Tübinger Theologischer Quartalschrift*, CLXXIII, 4 (1993), 273–87; Altgeld, *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum*, introduction.

¹⁷ See, however, on Cologne: Eduard Hegel, *Das Erzbistum Köln: Zwischen der Restauration des 19. Jahrhunderts und der Restauration des 20. Jahrhunderts 1815–1962* (Cologne, 1987); on Berlin: Kaspar Elm and Hans-Dietrich Loock, ed., *Seelsorge und Diakonie in Berlin. Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kirche und Großstadt im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and New York, 1990), as well as the important articles on the dioceses of Passau by Herbert Wurster, Speyer by Hans Ammerich, Hildesheim by Hans-Georg Aschoff, Dresden–Meissen by Heinrich Meier, Cologne and the French-influenced districts on the left side of the Rhine, by Erwin Gatz, in Gatz, ed., *Pfarr- und Gemeindeorganisation. Studien zu ihrer Entwicklung in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 1987).

¹⁸ Essays drawn from her Habilitationsschrift on the Baden clergy, *Klerus und abweichendes Verhalten. Zur Sozialgeschichte der katholischen Priester im 19. Jahrhundert: die Erzdiözese Freiburg 1821–1914* (Göttingen, 1994), are: 'Die Ultramontanisierung des Klerus. Das Beispiel der Erzdiözese Freiburg', in Loth, ed., *Deutscher Katholizismus im Umbruch*, pp. 46–75, and 'Klerus und Ultramontanismus in der Erzdiözese Freiburg. Entbürgerlichung und Klerikalisierung des Katholizismus nach der Revolution von 1848/49', in W. Schieder, ed., *Religion und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 113–43. The only other social analyses of the secular clergy

Table 1. *Catholics per priest, Prussian dioceses, round figures*

Diocese	1873	1881
Hildesheim	493	1,584.00
Münster	656	845.25
Osnabrück	675	849.46
Paderborn	718.8	884.56
Cologne	888	1,049.99
Trier	945	1,236.38
Fulda	1,021	1,169.35
Ermland	1,052	1,266.96
Posen	1,222	1,795.33
Limburg	1,255	1,485.14
Kulm	1,618	2,250.30
Breslau	1,643.6	2,099.56

generalizations are possible at this preliminary stage, we can say that the clergy in Germany underwent processes that were astonishingly similar to those of other countries – but with characteristic differences.

Let us consider first a few numbers. Theodore Hoppen has explained the enormous influence of the clergy in Ireland as an almost automatic result of profound demographic change: vocations rose in the course of the century while population fell drastically. In 1800, there had been only one priest for every 2,676 catholics. By 1901, the ratio of priest to layman was one for 1,126.¹⁹ If that ratio expresses and explains the power of the Irish Church by the end of the nineteenth century, then the generally even more favourable ratios for the German church, as early as 1871, at least in Bavaria and Prussia (Table 1), indicate a position of great strength indeed.²⁰ Even at the height of

of which I am aware are also devoted to Baden: Barbara Richter, 'Der Priestermangel in der Erzdiözese Freiburg um 1850. Ursachen und Lösungsversuche durch Pastoralvertretungen aus der Diözese Rottenburg', *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv*, cviii (1988), 429–47, and Gerhard Merkel, 'Studien zum Priesternachwuchs der Erzdiözese Freiburg, 1870–1914', *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv*, xciv (1974), 4–169.

¹⁹ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 171. France was better supplied with priests than Prussia or Ireland: with one priest to every 657 laymen in 1877 – a ratio that in 1891 had worsened only slightly. Gibson, *A social history*, pp. 65, 67, 73.

²⁰ I calculate a ratio of 1:1,015.5 in 1873 for Prussia as a whole, but authoritative statistics are lacking. The royal bureau of statistics, which in 1884 compiled seventeen pages of statistics on the protestant church as of 1881, dealt in two pages with the catholic church – but only as of 1867! An asterisk leads to the laconic footnote: 'More recent data are unobtainable in sufficient completeness.' Undoubtedly some civil servant decided that, after ten years of *Kulturkampf*, such information as ratio of priests to parishioners was politically too sensitive to publish. *Jahrbuch für die amtliche Statistik des Preussischen Staates*, herausgegeben vom Königlichen Statistischen Bureau, V. Jahrgang (Berlin, 1883), 356–7. My table is compiled from figures given in Paul Majunke, *Geschichte des 'Kulturkampfes' in Preußen-Deutschland* ([1886], Paderborn, 1902), p. 184. The relatively high ratio of priests to souls in 1881 (except in the eastern dioceses) is especially telling because Fr. Majunke collected these numbers to demonstrate the emergency caused by the

the *Kulturkampf*, in 1881, when approximately one third of the parishes in Prussia had lost their priests to government persecution, the ratio (except for Limburg) remained high in all those Prussian dioceses without significant Polish populations.

Admittedly the situation was not uniform. The diocese of Freiburg suffered from a shortage of priests throughout the century. Although Götz von Olenhusen explains this by referring to a 'crisis' in German catholicism, it seems more likely to have stemmed from political and social conflicts peculiar to Baden.²¹ Vocations in the diocese of Hildesheim, for example, were almost too numerous. When young Daniel Wilhelm Sommerwerk, from a neighbouring diocese, applied to Hildesheim's seminary in the early 1840s, the other students revolted, demanding that this 'foreigner' be turned away. With so many candidates for the priesthood already, they feared for their own prospects of employment. Young Sommerwerk (a future bishop) had to promise to confine himself to teaching and to stay clear of pastoral work.²² In 1873 one might see a priest for every 493 catholics in this diocese. Even after the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s, which sent many young priests into hiding or exile, the average ratio in Prussia in the non-Polish dioceses was more favourable than in Ireland at the turn of the century and more favourable than the Prussian *protestant* church's (Table 2).²³

The religious orders in Germany experienced spectacular growth after the 1850s, especially among women, who accounted for about 88% of the vocations.²⁴ In 1866 there were 7,794 German nuns. By 1908 there were almost 50,000. According to Helmut Smith, the 'probability that a women would enter a cloister was four times as great in 1908 as in 1866'.²⁵ Whether nuns exceeded all the male clergy combined, as they did in France (where by 1880 they numbered 130,000), I cannot say.²⁶ Even if

shortage of priests because of the *Kulturkampf*. In Bavaria, after an acute shortage of priests at the beginning of the century, the ratios became even more favourable than in Prussia. Blessing, *Staat und Kirche*, pp. 35, 240, 364 n. 231.

²¹ 'Die Ultramontanisierung', pp. 64–6. The strength of anti-clerical liberalism in Baden was unique for a state whose population was predominantly catholic. The state's shutdown in the 1870s of the seminaries' feeder schools, where at least 1/3 of the future clergy were educated, naturally affected recruitment. But see also Richter, 'Der Priestermangel', *passim*.

²² Adolf Kardinal Bertram, *Geschichte des Bistums Hildesheim* (Hildesheim and Leipzig, c. 1925), p. 310. Cf. for the diocese of Münster, Sperber, *Popular catholicism*, pp. 94–5.

²³ Compiled from *Jahrbuch für die amtliche Statistik des Preussischen Staates* (Berlin, 1883), pp. 520–1. These figures all look good compared to the great urban parishes of England. Clark, *The making of Victorian England*, p. 150; cf. also pp. 169–73, 192–3.

²⁴ Although the numbers vary, the literature is unanimous that the religious orders in Germany showed a steadily favourable ability to recruit from 1872 to 1907. In 1855 there were only 600 religious altogether in Prussia; in 1872 there were 900 men and 7,000 women. Hermann Rust, *Reichskanzler Fürst Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst und seine Brüder Herzog von Ratibor, Cardinale Hohenlohe und Prinz Constantin Hohenlohe* (Düsseldorf, 1897), pp. 703–4. In 1872 there was one religious for every 914 catholics in Prussia. After the caesura of the *Kulturkampf*, when the orders were outlawed, the ratios improved continuously: 1:843 in 1891, 1:640 in 1896; 1:448 in 1906. By 1907 there were 30,828 religious (a growth of 145.2%) in Prussia of which 26,893 (i.e. 87.28%) were women. Percentages for Bavaria are similar. Ratios and percentages calculated from the figures in Karl Bachem, *Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Politik der deutschen Zentrumspartei* (Cologne, 1927–32), VII, 360–1.

²⁵ Helmut Walser Smith, *German nationalism and religious conflict. Culture, ideology, politics* (Princeton, 1995), p. 94.

²⁶ For France: Claude Langlois, *Le catholicisme au Féminin. Les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984). The disproportion of women was obvious to contemporary

Table 2. *Prussian protestants per minister, 1881*

Prussia entire	1,937.45
East Prussia	3,557.65
West Prussia	3,155.57
Berlin	7,982.21
Brandenburg	1,761.88
Pomerania	1,947.88
Posen	2,426.21
Silesia	2,172.34
Saxony	1,281.33
Schleswig-Holstein	2,178.84
Hanover	1,529.95
Westphalia	2,182.28
Hessen-Nassau	1,415.66
Rhineland	2,797.55
Hohenzollern	740.33

they did, however, one should not assume that German catholicism was being 'feminized'.²⁷ As Macaulay noted with his characteristic mixture of malice and wonder, the Roman church had always made a place for energetic women.²⁸ But German catholicism, at least after 1871, was too intensely involved in the political struggle for catholic rights, in a country where only males had the vote, for men to have abdicated their place in the church to women.

Numbers like these indicate not only that – except in great metropolises like Berlin, where both churches found it impossible to keep up with population growth – the

catholics. When the anti-clerical Rudolf Gneist complained in the Jesuit debates that the 'head count today is already more than 20,000' (leaving it completely unclear whether he was referring to priests in Germany, Jesuits in the world, or both), he was interrupted by cries from the Centre party of 'Nuns! Nuns!' 'Die Jesuiten-Petitionen im Reichstag (Mai 1871)', *Annalen des Deutschen Reiches* (Berlin, 1872), cols. 1121–70.

²⁷ References to the piety of women may have been a convenient way for anti-clericals to use misogynist stereotypes to discredit the clergy. Cf. David Blackburn, 'Progress and piety', in *Populists and patricians. Essays in modern German history* (London, 1987), p. 158. Indications that German piety was becoming feminine: Lucian Hölscher, 'Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der statistischen Erfassung kirchlicher Bindungen', in Elm and Loock, eds., *Seelsorge*, p. 58. For the topic in general: Hugh McLeod, 'Weibliche Frömmigkeit – männlicher Unglaube? Religion und Kirchen im bürgerlichen 19. Jahrhundert', in Ute Frevert, ed., *Bürgerinnen und Bürger. Geschlechterverhältnisse im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1988), pp. 134–56.

²⁸ Here is Macaulay: 'Even for female agency there is a place in her system. To devout women, she assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies. In our country, if a noble lady is moved by more than ordinary zeal for the propagation of religion, the chance is that, though she may disapprove of no doctrine or ceremony of the Established Church, she will end by giving her name to a new schism. ... Place St. Theresa in London. Her restless enthusiasm ferments into madness, not untinctured with craft. ... Place Joanna Southcote at Rome. She founds an order of barefooted Carmelites, every one of whom is ready to suffer martyrdom for the Church; a solemn service is consecrated to her memory; and her statue, placed over the holy water, strikes the eye of every stranger who enters St. Peter's.' 'Ranke's history', p. 303.

professional services of the church were being performed.²⁹ Just as important for our purposes, the clerical estate could hardly have recruited so well had it not been held in high, perhaps growing, esteem. The availability of priests is not only an explanation for, but also a symptom of catholic vitality.

Why were the catholic clergy held in such high esteem? It is too easy simply to assume that the reasons that had traditionally accounted for the priest's high status – his literacy and education among a population that had little of either, his representation of the state in the exercise of certain important functions (e.g. marriages, recording of births, school inspection), his monopoly on the sacraments – remained the same in a century when these comparative advantages were either disappearing or being re-interpreted. One factor contributing to the prestige and morale of the parish priest in Germany was his considerable autonomy. Unlike his protestant counterpart, in Prussia (although not in Bavaria and Baden), his living was rarely in the gift of either the state or a local landlord, and he was not beholden to either. Episcopal control of the priests' activities seems also to have been relatively loose, at least compared to France and Ireland. The French church, with an estimated 38 million souls in 1906, had ninety bishops – each of whom knew how to make life miserable for the priests under his authority.³⁰ Germany, with nearly 24 million catholics (1910), had only twenty-six bishops, fewer than little Ireland, with a catholic population in 1911 of under three million souls.³¹

My suggestion that the German clergy enjoyed considerable autonomy (especially compared to their confrères elsewhere) goes against the grain of much of German scholarship. Because the church in the nineteenth century was 'ultramontane', this scholarship assumes that the parish priest became the lowest rung of a tight chain of command headed by Rome.³² This assumption accords well with the perceptions of contemporary anti-clericals – and certainly with the desires of the Holy See. Nevertheless the ultramontane party in Germany had to make its way against an ecclesiastical establishment that included well-entrenched erastians, sometimes in the lower clergy, sometimes among the bishops and his curia. This situation guaranteed two currents of opinion in every diocese, each supported by powerful outsiders.³³ While the erastians could rely on the state, the ultramontanes, usually younger, were forced to appeal to broader layers of the population. Already in

²⁹ Felix Escher, 'Pfarrgemeinden und Gemeindeorganisation in Berlin bis zur Gründung des Bistums Berlin', in Elm and Looock, eds., *Seelsorge*, pp. 265–92.

³⁰ Figures: *The catholic encyclopedia* (New York, 1909), vi, 166, 177; cf. also Jean Paul Charnay, 'L'église catholique et les élections françaises', *Politique. Revue Internationale des Doctrines et des Institutions*, Nrs. 19–20 (Jul.–Dec. 1962), 193–306; 269. According to Gibson, anti-ultramontane bishops were the most exacting, the most dictatorial. *A social history*, pp. 61, 62.

³¹ Ireland. *Statistical abstract 1992* (Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 1992), p. 54; bishops: Hoppen, *Elections*, p. 174. Figures for catholics extrapolated from Bachem, *Zentrumspartei*, vii, 360. I counted twenty-six bishops in Ernst-Rudolf Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789* Bd. iv. *Strukturen und Krisen des Kaiserreichs* (Stuttgart, 1969), 660–3. *The catholic encyclopedia* unaccountably omits the diocese of Regensburg in its ecclesiastical map of Germany. The relative paucity of German bishops has, so far as I know, been unremarked by other scholars.

³² Most recently: by Götz von Olenhusen (cf. n. 18). The surveillance and disciplinary trials that she describes, however, might just as easily be seen as an attempt – itself a sign of professionalization – to ensure 'quality control' over the profession. We in the U.S. have unfortunately recently had more than enough reason to believe that some episcopal 'surveillance' of the pastoral clergy is a necessity; which makes me much less inclined than she to view the convictions of Baden priests for paedophilia as entirely an artifact of the *Kulturkampf*.

³³ A similar argument: Gibson, *A social history*, p. 230.

1848, these tensions manifested themselves in Würzburg in the ultramontane clergy's criticism of their bishop's 'piety towards the state', a criticism that resulted in a demand to be consulted and to participate in his decisions. Political dissent surfaced again during elections to the customs parliament (*Zollparlament*) in 1868, when Passau seminarians flouted their bishop by campaigning for a democrat whom he had denounced – and rapidly found the support of their professors and the other clergy in the district. 'Of obedience and subordination there is no longer any trace', reported a shocked contemporary.³⁴ With the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s the parish clergy's sense of independence increased even further. The church's struggle with the state inevitably sparked internal disagreements over tactics, and the remaining erastians in the episcopate found themselves isolated morally, even as intransigent ultramontane bishops were removed physically. Once in jail or exile, the bishops of Germany were easy for the lower clergy to revere – and to ignore. In terms of his own scope of action, the nineteenth century was not a bad time to be a parish priest in Germany. To paraphrase the Russian muzhik's proverb about the tsar: 'The heavens are high and the bishop is far away.'

III. THE CONFESSIONAL

We must also consider the work of the priest if we are to understand the catholic success story. One area that would repay investigation is the priest's work in the confessional, the centrepiece of much recent French scholarship – as well as of contemporary anti-clerical paranoia.³⁵ A number of historians have seen in the spread of the milder pastoral theology of Saint Alphonsus of Liguori (1696–1787) a fundamental transformation of the sacrament of penance. From a dreaded, once-a-year duty, it gradually became, at least potentially, a ritual that offered some of the consolations of psychotherapy.³⁶ In the hands of a talented confessor, sacerdotal might also become psychological authority, strengthening the ties between priest and *Volk*.

We have plenty of evidence for the spread of ligorianism in France. A contemporary noted that 30,000 copies of Liguori's casuistry, *Theologica moralis*, were printed in the decade after 1832 alone. It is suggestive that in the course of the century 'Father'

³⁴ Wolfgang Graf, *Kirchliche Beeinflussungsversuche zu politischen Wahlen und Abstimmungen als Symptome für die Einstellung der katholischen Kirche zur Politik (Allgemeiner Zeitraum: Deutschland von 1848 bis zur Gegenwart)* (Diss., Mainz, 1971), pp. 185–7.

³⁵ Jean Delumeau, *Le péche et la peur. La culpabilisation en Occident XIIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1983); idem, *L'Aveu et le pardon: Les Difficultés de la confession XIIIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1990); Philippe Boutry, *Prêtres et paroisses au pays du Curé d'Ars* (Paris, 1986); Gibson, *A social history*, pp. 247–9, 262–3. The confession box as a symbol: H. J. Hanham, *Elections and party management* (Hassocks, Sussex [1959], 1978), p. 305.

³⁶ The quickest way to approach Liguori is through the collection of articles edited by Jean Delumeau: *Alphonse de Liguori. Pasteur et Docteur* (Paris, 1987). See also Marciano Vidal, *La Morale di Sant'Alfonso. Dal Rigorismo alla Benignità* (Rome, 1992). A revealing trip through the changing interpretations of Liguori is Otto Weiss, 'Alfons von Liguori und seine Biographien. Ein Heiliger zwischen hagiographischer Verklärung und historischer Wirklichkeit', *Spicilegium Historicum*, xxxvi–xxxvii (1988–9), 151–284. My suggestions about confession are inspired by Chadwick, *The popes*, pp. 133–50 and Gibson, *A social history*, pp. 247–9, 262–3. German scholars are markedly less positive. Information on German editions of Liguori's work: Klemens Jockwig, C.Ss.R., *Die Volksmission der Redemptoristen in Bayern von 1848 bis 1873. Dargestellt am Erzbistum München und Freising und an den Bistümern Passau und Regensburg. Ein Beitrag zur Pastoralgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts in Georg Schwaiger und Josef Staber (eds.), Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bistums Regensburg* (Regensburg, 1967), pp. 41–408; see p. 374.

replaced 'Monsieur' as the proper way to address the curé. What was happening in Germany? The evidence is so far slight. But already in 1821 the German confessor was being described not only as a 'judge' of the troubled conscience, but as its 'friend and physician'.³⁷ A follower of Liguori, the Austrian Clemens Maria Hofbauer (1751–1820), was represented as a confessor 'with boundless sympathy for sinners'.³⁸ A contemporary memoir of Hofbauer is revealing:

A young man who found confession difficult was skilfully induced by Hofbauer to recount the story of his life. At which point he [Hofbauer] said: 'So! You've just made your confession. All that remains are a few small matters and I will absolve you.'

It was Hofbauer who founded the German branch of the Redemptorist order, which spread Liguori's legacy throughout central Europe.³⁹

Here is perhaps the place to point out that my view that the nineteenth century saw the beginnings of a more user-friendly pastoral theology is not shared by German historians. Otto Weiss, for example, the greatest authority on the German Redemptorists, has demonstrated that ligorianism met with a very reserved reception among professors of catholic theology.⁴⁰ Their difficulties, however, seem to have had an intellectual rather than a moral basis. To my mind at least, they do not necessarily show that 'rigorism' was successfully holding back a more compassionate conception of pastoral practice. (But then catholic Germany may also have had less need for a Liguori than the French church. Germany had been spared the sharpness of Jansenism. German seminaries were under the direction, not of the ascetic Sulpician order, but of secular priests.⁴¹ In general, the German church was less puritanical.⁴² And the constant, if unacknowledged, intellectual presence of the protestant 'competition' made Germany from the outset unfavourable soil for any kind of anti-intellectual fideism.⁴³)

Even some French historians have expressed scepticism about the alleged comforts of the confessional: 'The consoling cleric undoubtedly existed', Eugen Weber allows; 'but when we meet the priest he is always saying no.'⁴⁴ German scholarship, insofar as

³⁷ A pathbreaking analysis of confession in the German-speaking world: Edith Saurer, 'Frauen und Priester. Beichtgespräche im frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in Richard von Dülmen ed., *Arbeit, Frömmigkeit und Eigensinn. Studien zu historischer Kulturforschung* (Frankfurt, 1990), pp. 141–70; quote, p. 154.

³⁸ Johann Emmanuel Veith, *Monumenta Hofbaueriana* (15 vols., Thorn–Krakau–Röm, 1915–51), xi, 30–47. Quoted in Otto Weiss, 'Wie Ultramontan War Klemens Maria Hofbauer? Überlegungen anlässlich einer neuen Hofbauerbiographie', *Spicilegium Historicum*, xxxix (1992), 41–93; 38.

³⁹ Isaac Hecker (1819–88), a major figure in the history of U.S. catholicism, also belonged to the Redemptorists. Though he eventually left to found, with four Redemptorist colleagues, an order more suited to American conditions, the Congregation of the Missionary Priests of St Paul the Apostle (Paulist Fathers), he took Liguorian pastoral theology with him.

⁴⁰ Weiss, 'Alphonse de Liguori et la théologie allemande du XIXe siècle', in Delumeau, ed., *Alphonse de Liguori*, pp. 183–229.

⁴¹ The puritanism of the French clergy and the Sulpicians: Gibson, *A social history*, pp. 22–3, 27, 82, 90–2.

⁴² Catholic club life 'stood under clerical direction, or at least clerical influence was authoritative. But in contrast to its Protestant counterparts, it was not narrow and puritan.' Thomas Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch* (München, 1988), p. 26.

⁴³ E.g. Liguori's *Gloire de Marie* was rejected by German theologians for its uncritical credulity about miracles. Weiss, 'La théologie allemande,' p. 190.

⁴⁴ E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The modernization of rural France 1870–1914* (London, 1977), pp. 364–6.

it touches on these questions at all, is so far from finding that pastoration took a therapeutic turn that it depicts the priest almost entirely as a source of anxiety and guilt.⁴⁵ And one finds more than enough support for this dark picture in the jibes of contemporary critics of catholicism – the Munich humour magazine *Simplicissimus*, for example, or the novels of Ludwig Thoma.⁴⁶ Otto Weiss has gone so far as to say that ‘in the course of the nineteenth century, especially in Germany... a strict rigorism developed out of the kindly ligorianism’.⁴⁷ That may well be. But when *I* meet the German priest, he is not always saying ‘no’. For whatever reason, the puritanical naysayer was not the image most popularly associated with the priest in Germany.⁴⁸ In fact he more often was criticized for saying ‘yes’. ‘“Sin today and tomorrow have your sins forgiven”; that’s the morality’ preached by the catholic clergy – or so a liberal newspaper complained.⁴⁹

Hellfire and damnation were never forgotten, especially when the time came to give the sermon. (The pastor, proverbially, was ‘a lion in the pulpit, a lamb in the confessional’.) No nineteenth-century preacher would have conceived of the non-existence of hell as Good News; nor would he have thought that there was anything

⁴⁵ E.g. Urs Altermatt detects a ‘theology of fear and pastoration of torment’ in Switzerland. *Katholizismus und Moderne. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der Schweizer Katholiken im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Zürich, 1989), p. 69. While acknowledging confession’s therapeutic aspects, Saurer denies that rigorism was giving way to consolation. ‘Frauen und Priester’, pp. 154, 157, 170. Cf. also Jockwig, *Die Volksmission*, pp. 276–8.

⁴⁶ E.g. L. Thoma, *Andreas Vöst* (1906). Some contemporary doctors and government officials felt that too rigorous confessors were driving people to madness: Edith Saurer, ‘Religiöse Praxis und Sinnesverwirrung. Kommentare zur religiösen Melancholiediskussion’, in Richard van Dülmen, ed., *Dynamik der Tradition. Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung* Bd. iv (Frankfurt a.M., 1992), 213–39; 232.

⁴⁷ Private communication. Similar expressions of collegial scepticism were expressed at the Göttingen conference by Edith Saurer, Alois Hahn, and Wolfgang Schieder.

⁴⁸ My considerable efforts to obtain Hans Kirchesteiger’s 1910 novel, *Der Beichtwater* and Ingeborg Fürst’s dissertation, *Die Gestalt des katholischen Pfarrers in der deutschen Literatur vom Realismus bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1953), which might have persuaded me otherwise, were in vain. Conflicts between priests and parishioners certainly arose – over the burial of unbaptized children, over Old Catholic apostates, over the sanctification of the odd mixed marriage. Most instances of clerical severity occurred within a sphere recognized as his by the community in which he lived. One priest’s refusal to ring his church’s bell at the death of an Old Catholic in Gleiwitz resulted in the police, and ultimately Uhlan, intervention. The subsequent riot, however, suggests that the parish sided with their priest (*Görlitzer Anzeiger* 1 Jan. 1874, and *Görlitzer Anzeiger* 4 Feb. 1874). Economic quarrels seem also to have been less common in the German than in the French church. Gibson, *A social history*, p. 78, quotes B. Delpal: ‘The *casuel* did more to put people off the institutional Church than did all the philosophers of the eighteenth century.’ The German priest, at least in Rhineland and Westfalia, derived most of his income from parish real estate. This cushion of support made him less rapacious than the French curé in dunning his parishioners for fees for services. And during the *Kulturkampf*, when the Prussian state cut off its own contribution to recusant priests, their congregations willingly picked up the tab for the difference. Sperber, *Popular catholicism*, p. 247; Ludwig Windthorst to Freiherr von Ungarn-Sternberg (Dresden), 29 Dec. 1880, Nachlaß Fechenbach, Bundesarchiv Koblenz. When, as in the case of Pfarrverweser Dörr in Fützen, the congregation was tired of being asked for money for renovations, they punished him politically: by voting conservative rather than for the catholic party in national elections. Amtsvorstand Bonndorf to minister of interior, 30 Jun. 1893, Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, Signatur 236, Nr. 14901.

⁴⁹ *Görlitzer Anzeiger* 28 Jan. 1874, 129. Granted: this charge had been an anti-catholic topos dating back to the Reformation. Cf. Josef Mausbach, *Die Katholische Moral und ihre Gegner* (Cologne, 1901, 1911).

compassionate in encouraging the souls in his charge to forget the Four Last Things. But in the instructions issued by the Redemptorist mission directors to their preachers we read that

An introductory sermon should win the people for the mission. In no way are you to scare or intimidate them, for the missionary administers 'an office of mercy and reconciliation'. (Alphonsus)... First set out, in general terms, the wideness in God's mercy in His remission of sins.... A sermon built entirely on Alphonsus could find material in the following of the saint's sermons and meditations: On the loving kindness of God; God's call and the patience with which He waits; the mercy with which He receives the sinner.⁵⁰

But it was the confession, far more than the sermon, that was the centrepiece of the missionaries' revivalist activity. People crowded to the mission sites in vast numbers in order to make a confession covering their entire life – one so complete and detailed that penitents often arrived as early as 3 a.m. (many after two hours of travel by foot) in order to get a place in line. The confession did not last the proverbial fifty-minute hour of psychoanalysis, but on average from twenty to thirty minutes. In some communities the desire for the greatest possible accuracy in the examination of their consciences drove the majority of the faithful to confess twice, many to confess three times, and some even (analysis terminal and interminable?) four times. (The confessor was supposed to reassure them that 'they shouldn't worry, they were absolved, even if later perhaps a sin that they missed still occurred to them'.)

How do we explain this phenomenon? Obviously the emphasis here was on sin. But these missions to the people were also great festivals, in which the community felt liberated from sin and experienced 'comfort through the proclamation of God's mercy'. The festival reached 'its climax' on the last day 'in a magnificent final procession'.⁵¹ A variety of impulses drove nineteenth-century Catholics to the missionary's sermons, to the confessional, and to church more generally: fear of purgatory, pressure from their neighbours, boredom (and the desire for distraction), the chance of meeting girls (or boys) on the way. In this, we find nothing new. The great Jesuit missions to urban Germany during the Counter-Reformation, after all, were spectacles whose trappings were closer to the circus than to the cloister – giving the language one of its more colourful expressions for the deflating anti-climax: 'Jetzt kommt die Zeit, wenn der große Elefant sein Wasser liebt.' But among the impulses bringing the Catholic into the arms of the church, the chance of finding a meaning in life and hope for the future must surely be included. In the Ligurian theology of the confessional, and in the Redemptorist missions that were its vehicle, we might discover parallels with some of the features of American, especially Methodist, revivalism. Here too the sinner made a kind of 'Life confession' ('Testimony') – not, indeed, whispered in the confession box, but loud before the assembled faithful. Here too there was the problem of 'backsliding', though perhaps more danger of being publicly cited as a notorious evil-liver.⁵² There was, however, one very important difference between

⁵⁰ This is Jockwig's précis, in *Die Volksmission*, pp. 351, 352ff.; the missionaries' treatment of death and hell, pp. 354–8.

⁵¹ Jockwig, *Die Volksmission*, pp. 239–44, 274–81, 323, 373–85; this and the preceding quote, pp. 242, 243; Weiss, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern (1790–1909). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ultramontanismus* (St Ottilien, 1983), pp. 298–9, 1004, 1005–7, 1017–18; Erwin Gatz, *Rheinische Volksmission im 19. Jahrhundert dargestellt am Beispiel des Erzbistums Köln: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Seelsorge im Zeitalter der katholischen Bewegung* (Düsseldorf, 1963).

⁵² 'Fear of backsliding', Jockwig, *Die Volksmission*, p. 348.

methodist and the catholic revivalism. The methodist revival tended to diminish the authority of the clergy; the ligorian elevated it even further.

IV. THE IMAGE OF THE PRIEST

In addition to an analysis of the confessional, and changes within pastoral theology more generally, we need a study of the ways in which German priests were imagined: not by the anti-clericals, which we already know, but by the pious and perhaps especially by priests themselves. How are we to find this? The analysis of hagiographies, which has proved so fruitful for medievalists, might also prove useful for modern historians of piety. As I was reading Otto Weiss's new study of the Redemptorists' founder, Klemens Maria Hofbauer, I was struck by the personality traits that were associated with this man – a figure whose canonization was incredibly swift. Although ascetic himself, he was affable, celebrated for remarks made in pubs [*im öffentlichen Wirtshause*], and 'not at all disinclined to merriment' [*dem Frohsinn nichts weniger als abgeneigt*].⁵³ The man sounded familiar. Where had I come across him before? Then I recalled a description of Mission Vicar Eduard Müller.⁵⁴ This humble Berlin chaplain from the late nineteenth century (1818–91) is now almost forgotten, but in the decade after his death his grave was visited by pilgrims in vast numbers, all expecting his canonization.⁵⁵ Like Hofbauer, Müller was described by his admirers as extremely ascetic, but at the same time as someone who was never happier than when surrounded by people (*volksgeellig*), indeed an adept at 'Club-and-Pub, Wee-Small-Hours, Around-the-Beertable Cure-of-Souls'.⁵⁶

The convivial Hofbauer ('not at all disinclined to merriment'), the 'Beertable-Curé' Eduard Müller: these are obviously topoi that indicate not so much the reality as what the nineteenth century expected of its catholic saints. They are not, moreover, so very different from those unsaintly topoi of the priest at cards, raising a glass at the inn, the active club-man, that we see when we investigate the catholic 'milieu' – that dense network of devotional practices, voluntary associations, and sociability in which the church itself became manifest in all aspects of daily life. How close these topoi accorded with reality awaits detailed research.⁵⁷ But without such a clerical *beau idéal* would the

⁵³ Contemporary quotations are from Otto Weiss, 'Wie Ultramontan...?', pp. 56, 64.

⁵⁴ Edmund Kreusch, *Eduard Müller, der priesterliche Volksfreund. Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin, 1898), which contains large stretches from Müller's youthful diaries and sermons, is an important source for nineteenth-century piety, but has little on his other activity. For that see Ernst Thrasolt, *Eduard Müller. Der Berliner Missionsvikar. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Katholizismus in Berlin, der Mark Brandenburg und Pommern* (Berlin, 1953). I am working on a book on German elections that will include a study of Müller as a popular symbol.

⁵⁵ A St Eduard's Church was built to honour him, his bones were moved there after his death, and for a long time annual memorials were held at his grave. At least as late as spring 1990 Mission Vicar Müller's portrait held pride of place in the gallery of diocesan greats in the entrance hall of St Hedwig's cathedral in East Berlin. 'Whoever really enters into the life of this man will recognize that he is stepping onto holy soil and will take his shoes off his feet. Truly here is a saint – a saint in the sense in which the people [*das Volk*], who in former times spontaneously pronounced on saintliness themselves, before and outside ecclesiastical canonization, uses this word', Thrasolt, Müller, p. 12; also p. 80.

⁵⁶ 'Vereins-Spätabend- und Nacht- und Wirtshaus- und Biertisch- Seelsorge', Thrasolt, Müller, p. 67.

⁵⁷ The repeated ban on visiting taverns cannot be decisive here, as the remark of Thrasolt, himself a priest, about 'beertable-cure-of-souls' shows. We can expect light on the quotidian work of priests in catholic associations from the forthcoming study of Raymond Sun (Washington

construction of this milieu, which in its extent was peculiar to German catholicism, have even been possible?⁵⁸

Although the ideal of the German priest, especially in its conviviality, may have differed from the ideal elsewhere, sociologically the German clergy underwent the same changes as their confrères in Ireland and France. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the church recruited mainly from the urban classes, although these classes were a tiny minority of the population as a whole. By the end of the century the clerical *Nachwuchs* in Europe was overwhelmingly rural in origin, even as the urban population (at least in Germany) was exploding.⁵⁹ It has been argued that the 'rustification' of the clergy, in a country undergoing rapid industrialization, was a sign that the church was moving counter to the spirit of the age.⁶⁰ But far from being a surprising development that demands a special explanation (such as 'ultramontanization'), the rustification of the clergy illustrates an economic truism. Where career opportunities for the urban *Bürgertum* are limited, as they were in Germany at the beginning of the century, the priesthood as a profession, if not as a vocation, will seem relatively attractive. The more rapid and thorough a country's industrialization, however, the fewer sons of this *Bürgertum*, positioned to take advantage of every new opportunity, will seek their fortunes in a calling that requires so much self-denial as the priesthood. Hence the growing preponderance of recruits from places where other opportunities did not so often knock. It may be true, as Götz von Olenhusen suggests, that if these trends continued, industrialization would eventually dry up the source of priests. But no such drying-up occurred in the nineteenth century. Vocations, at least in the diocese of Münster, continued to rise and did not reach their peak until 1935, when Hitler's Third Reich clamped down on seminaries.⁶¹ That is a very long *durée*.

According to Götz von Olenhusen, rustification and ultramontanization were mutually and balefully reinforcing, turning poorly educated peasant youngsters into credulous targets for the arrogant fantasies of reactionary Roman prelates. This interpretation finds some support in the history of the French clergy, whose level of education actually did drop during the decades in which it was in large measure won

State University at Pullman) on catholic workers' associations. In the meantime, the mere list of activities of the catholic 'Volksbureau' in Essen in 1897-8 is revealing. Cf. Frank Bajohr, *Zwischen Krupp und Kommune. Sozialdemokratie, Arbeiterschaft und Stadtverwaltung in Essen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Essen, 1988), pp. 32-4.

⁵⁸ The discussion of the catholic 'milieu' has been put on a new level by the Arbeitskreis für kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (AKKZG) in Münster. Cf. AKKZG, Münster, 'Katholiken zwischen Tradition und Moderne. Das katholische Milieu als Forschungsaufgabe', *Westfälische Forschungen*, XLIII (1993), 588-654. The graphs on pp. 646-54 are especially valuable. Exemplary: Josef Mooser, 'Das katholische Vereinswesen in der Diözese Paderborn um 1900. Vereinstypen, Organisationsumfang und innere Verfassung', in *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, cxli (1991), 447-61, esp. pp. 459-60. I was not able to obtain Ernst Heinen, *Katholizismus und Gesellschaft. Das katholische Vereinswesen zwischen Revolution und Reaktion (1848/49-1853/54)* (1993).

⁵⁹ For Baden: Götz von Olenhusen, 'Die Ultramontanisierung' and Merkel, 'Studien zum Priesternachwuchs'; France: Gibson, *A social history*, pp. 81-2 and passim; Ireland: Hoppen, *Elections*, pp. 174-7, 183-5.

⁶⁰ Götz von Olenhusen's thesis on 'De-urbanization' (*Entbürgerlichung*): 'Neither in urbanization nor in industrialization was the emerging Catholic milieu able to participate', 'Klerus und Ultramontanismus' (1993), p. 129.

⁶¹ AKKZG, Münster, 'Katholiken zwischen Tradition und Moderne', p. 639; graphs, pp. 650-1.

for ultramontanism. But given Germany's earlier advances in mass education, it seems reasonable to suppose that even a clergy increasingly recruited from villages and small towns was better educated than its counterparts in Ireland or France.⁶² It is also likely that, as the average level of education throughout the country rose as the century progressed, the gap between the educational levels of town and country narrowed. Without the kind of hard data that we have for France (for example, the inventories of the libraries priests bequeathed in their wills), I would be unwilling to assume that the German clergy's cultural level must have sunk – in order better to explain its ultramontanization.

Germany's 'urbanization' must not be exaggerated. As late as 1890, nearly 60 % of all Germans lived in communities of fewer than 2,000 residents.⁶³ Most Germans, when they spoke of 'the people', were still imagining a rural and small-town population. Under these circumstances, the clergy's origins in villages and small towns were an additional source of professional self-confidence, convincing them that, alone among Germany's notables (*Honoratiorenschicht*), they were actually representative of the *Volk*. 'The priest is taken from the people', an editorial in a periodical aimed at the parsonages, announced:

Every family of the Christian people is called to bring from its midst a priest to lay on the altar. This prevents the formation within the Christian people of a clan of priests with its own family interests and its own family traditions, excluding broad circles from the priesthood. On the contrary, we see that among the people soon no family will any longer be found who will not be related, either closely or distantly, to a priest. The Church is always knocking on the door, mostly of the simple Christian families, and in this way the people too, since it is from their midst that the priesthood is supplied and replenished, receives a kind of celestial consecration and dignity.⁶⁴

Rustification is thus only one way to look at what happened to the German clergy in the nineteenth century; democratization is another.

At the same time that the German clergy was becoming sociologically closer to the congregations it led, however, its self-image and training were differentiating it more sharply from them and from the other professional classes. Celibacy had always made the priesthood what the anthropologist Ernest Gellner has termed a 'gelded elite', one whose collective *esprit* was reinforced by the prevention of too-intimate ties to the society it led. (The editorial quoted above, by tacitly emphasizing the catholic priesthood's distance from German protestantism's proverbially almost hereditary clerical estate, was putting a democratic gloss on this 'gelding'.) By the 1860s, however, the priest even looked different from other men. At a time when a full beard was the signature of manly propriety, and even those whose tastes had been formed in an earlier era, such as William I or Bismarck, sported at least muttonchops or a mustache, the priest remained smooth-shaven – that is, epicene, even 'French'.⁶⁵ When the protestant

⁶² Even in Ireland and France the clergy found its recruits not in the poorest strata of rural society but from the ranks of 'strong farmers'. Was that the case in Germany? Götz von Olenhusen, 'Die Ultramontanisierung', puts the Baden clergy at the very bottom of the rural social scale.

⁶³ *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin, 1893), p. 1. For the way Germans imagined themselves: Mack Walker, *German home towns. State and general estate 1648–1871* (Ithaca, 1971).

⁶⁴ 'Priester und Landvolk', *Die Wahrheit*, XLIII, 14 (15 Apr. 1909), 421–26; quote on p. 423.

⁶⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983), pp. 14–16. Professor Thalhofer, 'Über den Bart der Geistlichen', *Augsburger Pastoralblatt* (1863), reprinted in the *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Oesterreich und Deutschland*, x, Neue Folge, 14 (Mainz, 1863), Heft iv: 85ff. Clean-shaven laymen born after 1825 are almost non-existent in the portraits in Bernd Haunfelder and Klaus Erich Pollmann, comp., *Reichstag des Norddeutschen Bundes 1867–1870*.

pastor was discarding the sartorial marks of his calling for the dark suit of the bourgeois professional, that same garment was being replaced on his catholic counterpart by the distinctive long black *soutane*. The French name, like the style itself, cropped up in County Cork as in the Rhineland. It marked its wearer as a uniformed soldier in a disciplined, cosmopolitan army: 'the black international', as it was called, of ultramontanism.

V. ULTRAMONTANISM IN GERMANY

As historians begin to investigate the important topic of the 'ultramontanizing' of the German church more closely, it will be important to develop a precise understanding of just what 'ultramontanism' in Germany meant. It certainly meant an international perspective. The German clergy – and indeed German catholics generally – looked not just towards Rome, but to Belgium, Ireland, and even America for inspiration and solidarity – and to France and Italy as awful warnings. The preoccupations that grew out of such a perspective were not, at the parish level, to everyone's taste. During the 1871 national elections, the following protest against a pastor's too-political sermons (which seem to have been very wide-ranging indeed) was scribbled in a peasant hand at the bottom of a (liberal) ballot:

Gambetta.

Rocheftort.

Raspail.

The Pope.

Garibaldi & the

Pastor of Büchelberg.

Of these six, one is worth about as much as another.⁶⁶

The inculcation of an international perspective among wider and wider circles of the faithful was an educational goal of the ultramontanes – as it was, *mutatis mutandis*, of the social democrats.⁶⁷ In this, German ultramontanism differed from the provincialism of French and the nationalism of Irish catholicism.⁶⁸ (Conversely, it was the self-consciously anti-ultramontane elements within the German church – those who became Old Catholics in the 1870s, the so-called 'liberal' catholics such as F. X. Kraus in the 1880s and 1890s, the 'modernist' groups around the periodical *XX. Jahrhundert* – for whom the nationalism of the protestant majority made the strongest appeal.)

Ultramontanism in the German church also signified a certain kind of personnel

Historische Photographien und biographisches Handbuch (Düsseldorf, 1989). On sartorial developments: Weber, *Aufklärung und Orthodoxie*, p. 184; Blessing, *Staat und Kirche*, pp. 39, 133; Hoppen, *Elections*, pp. 204–5.

⁶⁶ *Görlitzer Anzeiger*, 14 Mar. 1871, 521. The Marquis de Henri Rocheftort (1830–1913) was a radical French playwright, journalist, and Communard. François Vincent Raspail (1794–1878) was a French scientist, revolutionary, and anti-Jesuit polemicist.

⁶⁷ Cf. Heinz Gollwitzer, 'Der politische Katholizismus in Hohenzollernreich und die Außenpolitik', in Werner Pöls, ed., *Staat und Gesellschaft im politischen Wandel. Beiträge zur Geschichte der modernen Welt* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 224–58; 230–40. Ultramontanism in Germany, moreover (unlike France) was not hostile towards protestants. Weiss, *Redemptoristen*, pp. 1096–7, 1107.

⁶⁸ Sperber and Blessing both demonstrate the importance of the pope as a symbolic source of identification for German catholics. French catholics were little interested in the Roman question or other aspects of internationalism. Gibson, *A social history*, p. 162.

policy: a 'long march through the institutions', as neo-Thomists hostile to liberal theology succeeded in filling key ecclesiastical posts, especially in the Bavarian episcopate. Christoph Weber and Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen have given us vivid accounts of this process. But it would be mistaken to assume from the success of ultramontane personnel policy that an 'ultramontanized' German clergy adopted the culture of maximalist hotspurs in the Vatican. All too often historians simply 'read off' from curial and papal pronouncements the agenda of the German catholic church. But many German churchmen who considered themselves ultramontane had opposed the definition of papal infallibility in 1870; and after 1870 they were still thick on the ground, even in the episcopate.⁶⁹ Moreover, in Baden and Bavaria (and after 1887 even in Prussia) the state continued to play an important role in the appointment of bishops as well as of parish priests.⁷⁰ Unlike the much freer societies of England and the United States, in Germany the maximalists in the ultramontane party could never have things entirely their own way.

In my own view, the 'ultramontanism' of German catholics was chiefly characterized by two things.

The first was a particular kind of religious sensibility. Like evangelical protestantism in the English-speaking world, this new piety was less concerned with 'right behaviour' than with an immediate spiritual – or, if you prefer, emotional – experience; with the believer's personal connection to the divine. The thirst for such an experience could be expressed in various ways. In extreme cases it even led some catholics to flock to female adepts outside the regular institutions of the church. Some of these women specialized in spiritual counselling. Such, apparently, was the gift of Theres Erdt (1771–1856), the 'mother confessor' of the Allgäu awakening (and the biological mother of two children by the pastor for whom she kept house).⁷¹ Others might mediate spiritual experience through their visions, thereby exercising anti-ultramontane opinion and calling down the wrath of the secular arm (as did the three girls in Marpingen whose 'sightings' of the Virgin Mary caused the uproar about which David Blackbourn has written so brilliantly).⁷² Or they might actually embody such an experience in a particularly powerful way, as did the stigmatic nun, Anna Katharina Emmerich (1774–1824), whose visions of the life of Christ were transcribed and promoted by the poet Clemens Brentano.⁷³ We owe a great deal to Otto Weiss for drawing our attention to a phenomenon that cries out for more investigation. His own work on Luise Beck is one of the most fascinating contributions to our understanding of nineteenth-century ultramontanism in years. Now he has produced a stimulating essay of the entire

⁶⁹ Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler of Mainz and Heinrich Beckmann of Osnabrück were opponents, and even Paulus Melchers of Cologne thought the definition inopportune. Heinrich Förster of Breslau tried to resign rather than enforce conformity to the new definition in his diocese. It is often forgotten that even Ignaz von Döllinger was counted in the ultramontane party before the late sixties.

⁷⁰ And prevented the appointment of ultramontanes in Baden: Götz von Olenhusen, 'Ultramontanisierung', pp. 66–7. ⁷¹ Weiss, 'Wie Ultramontane...?', pp. 47, 71 n. 159.

⁷² David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993; New York, 1994); Gottfried Korff, 'Kulturkampf und Volksfrömmigkeit', in W. Schieder, ed., *Volksreligiosität in der modernen Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1986), pp. 137–51.

⁷³ *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi. Nach den Betrachtungen des gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich* (Sulzbach, 1833); the modern edition is Bernhard Gajek, ed., *Clemens Brentano. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* (Stuttgart, 1980), vol. xxvi. Both Weiss, *Redemptoristen*, p. 99 and Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and prophecies in nineteenth-century France* (New Brunswick, 1983), p. 222, n. 4, emphasize the influence of this book on contemporary piety.

phenomenon.⁷⁴ Bishop Konrad Martin of Paderborn, upon viewing the stigmata of Louis Lateau, believed that he was seeing 'the living picture of the Redeemer'. And not only he. Historians of gender should be especially interested in the stigmatics, for they raise an intriguing question: Why, in the male-dominated, ultramontane church, did the doctrine of the atonement take female form?⁷⁵

We should be wary about grouping visions and stigmata under the rubric of 'popular' piety. The educated classes were at least as caught up by them as were peasants and artisans, as the examples of Brentano, Joseph von Görres, the Bavarian prime minister Karl von Abel, and numerous bishops and prelates show. The sharing of such experiences across the lines of class and education was an important part of what it meant to be a catholic in the nineteenth century. Nor was the fascination specifically German. Any one who has visited Ephesus and the site of the Virgin Mary's house will see posters announcing that it was discovered in the 1880s by a team of French archaeologists, following the directions set down in the visions of the Westfalian Anna Maria Emmerich. Ultramontanism did not demand credulousness from catholics. Indeed, the German church (unlike the French) never officially recognized any of the Marian apparitions. But the culture of ultramontanism tolerated such phenomena, legitimated them, expected them.⁷⁶

The study of the spiritual life of ordinary catholics – by which I mean all catholics who were not saints, theologians, or otherwise 'professionally' involved in the church – is still in its infancy.⁷⁷ The upheaval set in motion when the episcopal authorities in Trier decided to put its relics on display has been minutely dissected for its political motives and implications.⁷⁸ But as Joseph Görres remarked about the ensuing mass pilgrimage to Trier (this 'mass migration' [*Völkerwanderung*] set in motion by a handful

⁷⁴ *Die Redemptoristen*, pp. 551–672, 822–908; and 'Seherinnen und Stigmatisierte', forthcoming in a collection of essays on women in nineteenth-century German catholicism edited by Irmtraut Götz von Olenhusen (Schöningh, Paderborn).

⁷⁵ Martin, 'Ein Besuch bei Luise Lateau', in his *Drei Jahre aus meinem Leben* (Mainz, 1877), pp. 88–112; quotes on pp. 104 and 107. Lateau was investigated in 1873 by a commission appointed by the bishop of Tournai, headed by Pater Saraphin; by Professor Lefebvre of the University of Louvain; and by the Brussels' Academy of Medicine. Cf. Lefebvre, *Louise Lateau. Sa vie, ses extases, ses stigmates*; idem, 'Louise Lateau et l'Académie de médecine', which appeared, as did the report of M. Warlomont for the commission of the Brussels medical academy in the second April issue of the 1876 *Revue catholique*.

⁷⁶ Edith Saurer's analyses of prayer books, however, find 'a total loss of the belief in miracles'. "'Bewahrerinnen der Zucht und der Sittlichkeit". Gebetbücher für Frauen – Frauen in Gebetbüchern', *L'Homme. Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1. Jg. Heft 1 (1991), 37–58; 57. A comprehensive history of catholicism in the nineteenth century would, I am confident, be able to make sense of both these developments – the recovery of the miraculous and the apparent decline in the belief in miracles – in a way that demonstrated their fundamental compatibility.

⁷⁷ Important initiatives are: Wolfgang Schieder, 'Religion in der Sozialgeschichte', in Schieder and Volker Sellin, eds., *Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland. Entwicklungen und Perspektiven in internationalen Zusammenhang* (Göttingen, 1987); Gottfried Korff, 'Kulturkampf und Volksfrömmigkeit'; Urs Altermatt, 'Volksreligion – Neuer Mythos oder neues Konzept? Anmerkungen zu einer Sozialgeschichte des modernen Katholizismus', in Jakob Baumgartner, ed., *Wiederentdeckung der Volksreligiosität* (Regensburg, 1979), pp. 105–24; idem, 'Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte des vorkonziliaren Sonntags', in *Der Sonntag. Anspruch – Wirklichkeit – Gestalt. Festschrift für Jakob Baumgartner* (Würzburg/Freiburg i. Ue., 1986), pp. 248–89; idem, 'Leben auf dem Land nach dem Rhythmus der Glocken? Zum religiösen Mentalitätswandel im Luzerngebiet um 1950', in *Laßt hören aus neuer Zeit. Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Politik im Kanton Luzern seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Luzern, 1986), pp. 115–23.

⁷⁸ Cf. n. 12.

of lamb's wool'): 'The tremendous spiritual effect must have a commensurate and proportional spiritual cause...if it is to be grasped at all.'⁷⁹ We might take as our inspiration the 'thick descriptions' of anthropologists and the multi-layered analyses of the symbolic structure of common rituals and iconography that has so distinguished the recent work of medievalists.⁸⁰ For without trying to enter into the inner life of catholics, we can only understand what they did, not what it meant.

VI. POLITICS AND COMMUNITY

If the first characteristic I attributed to German ultramontanism, its piety, was similar to the piety of contemporary France, the second characteristic – its politics – was very different. Ultramontane politics in France was indelibly associated with monarchist restorationism, aristocratic (and *haute bourgeois*) authoritarianism, and all the reactionary by-products of the far right.⁸¹ The politics of German ultramontanism, on the other hand, began with its rejection of the presumptions of the erastian state to a say in church affairs (*Staatskirchentum*). But as the consequences of this (obviously self-serving) opposition unfolded, especially during the Bismarckian state's war against catholic culture (the *Kulturkampf*) in the 1870s and 1880s, the resistance to *Staatskirchentum* developed into a critical, independent stance towards state authority itself. The pejorative term 'ultramontane' was applied by the church's opponents to any catholic who refused to opt for the state against the church in this struggle. Catholics responded defiantly by declining to deny the black badge. 'Ultramontanism' in Germany thus inevitably took on populist and ultimately even democratic elements.⁸²

Let us look at this question of politics more closely. Ultramontanism is normally associated with clericalism and contrasted to the self-determination of the laity, the former seen as inversely related to the latter.⁸³ But in catholic Germany, the power of the clergy and that of the laity fed each other. The *Kulturkampf* raised the moral authority and the popularity of the clergy to unprecedented heights – just as it delivered the initiative in preserving the church to the laity. Thousands of kneeling catholics lined the streets in homage as their bishops went into jail and exile. Village youths supported their young chaplains by playing hide and seek with Prussian gendarmes – and made a game of flouting the authority of the state.⁸⁴

The effect of this critical, anti-authoritarian, political stance on the ability of the German church to retain its popular support – in sharp contrast to developments in the

⁷⁹ *Die Wallfahrt nach Trier* (Regensburg, 1845), p. 153.

⁸⁰ Carolyn Walker Bynum's *Holy feast, holy fast. The religious significance of food to medieval women* (Berkeley, 1987) and Eamon Duffy's, *The stripping of the altars. Traditional religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, 1992) are models for how this inner world might be entered.

⁸¹ For a differentiated view, see the collection of articles in Frank Tallet and Nicholas Atkin, eds., *Religion, politics and society in France since 1789* (Rio Grande, Ohio, 1991).

⁸² It will be apparent to readers that my own view of German ultramontanism is quite different from that of Olenhusen, ('Ultramontanisierung', esp. p. 49) and Christoph Weber, ('Ultramontanismus'), whose work I otherwise respect. Contrast to them, Nipperdey's deliberately provocative characterization: 'Ultramontanism and democracy – populist and plebiscitarian – they go together as well', *Religion im Umbruch*, p. 45.

⁸³ Likewise the sharp distinction so often made between *Amtskirche* and *Volksfrömmigkeit* (cf. Gottfried Korff, 'Kulturkampf und Volksfrömmigkeit', pp. 138–9) assumes the same dichotomy.

⁸⁴ Karl Kammer, *Trierer Kulturkampfpriester. Auswahl einiger markanten Priester-Gestalten aus den Zeiten des preußischen Kulturkampfes* (Trier, 1926), passim.

Table 3. *Percentage of Easter communicants among the population of Alsace-Lorraine*

	1842	1906	1911-13
Arrondissements in Germany			
Chateau-Salinis	72.2	88.1	—
Sarrebourg	81.6	95.6	—
Arrondissements in France			
Nancy	69.7	—	29
Lunéville	61.1	—	40
Toul	47.3	—	26

equally 'ultramontane' but reactionary and authoritarian French church – is graphically demonstrated in the following table comparing participation at Easter communion between those districts in Alsace-Lorraine that were annexed by Germany in 1871 with those that remained in France (Table 3). In those *arrondissements* that continued French, communicants decreased drastically; in those that became German, they rose significantly.⁸⁵

But the *Kulturkampf* had paradoxical consequences. At the same time that it generated tremendous catholic solidarity with their clergy, it temporarily removed that clergy from important bridgeheads of power. By 1880-1, with 3/4 of the episcopal sees and more than 1/3 of the parsonages in Prussia *verwaist*, the laity was inevitably taking over many of the administrative, pastoral, and even religious functions of their absent priests.⁸⁶ Even more important, the site of the struggle was effectively transposed from Germany's parishes to its parliaments, privileging the decisions of the Centre party over the decisions of pastors and bishops.

Since its founding, Germans have divided over whether the Centre was a clerical or a lay party. The debate is a sterile one because the Centre was both.⁸⁷ The clergy made up a significant number of the Centre's parliamentary deputies; and in the countryside, pastors constituted 20-25 % of its functionaries. The clergy ran the party newspapers that informed the catholic public of the insults of their opponents and the triumphs of their heroes. It distributed the Centre's ballots and chaired its election rallies. The clergy remained ever ready to pull rank. As late as 1907, Pastor Hatzfeld in County Meschede reminded 'his parish children' that they 'also owed him obedience in political things. He had spent nine years at the Gymnasium, three years at the university, and one and a half years in seminary, and the farmers were no match for

⁸⁵ The table is from Gibson, *A social history*, p. 237; see also pp. 240-1.

⁸⁶ Of twelve bishops, those of Ermland, Kulm, and Hildesheim were all that remained of the catholic hierarchy in Prussia. Lay-led church services in the Bistum Breslau: see Franz Xavier Seppelt, *Geschichte des Bistums Breslau* (Breslau, 1929), pp. 119-20. In general the *Kulturkampf* resulted in a great disordering – and levelling – of ecclesiastical functions. Thus when Bishop Robert Herzog, also jailed for several weeks, fell ill, his job had to be taken over by a 'prince regent', Adolf Franz, who was a priest but, perhaps just as important, a Reichstag deputy and editor of a party newspaper. *Ibid.* p. 121.

⁸⁷ I have commented on this theme extensively in *Windthorst: a political biography*, in 'The Kulturkampf and the course of German history', *Central European History*, xix, 1 (1986), 82-115, and in 'Inter-denominationalism, clericalism, pluralism: the *Zentrumsstreit* and the dilemma of catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany', *Central European History*, xxi, 4 (1990), 350-78.

that.⁸⁸ On the campaign trail, they were not above stooping to the scatological. At a rally in County Bitburg, Pastor Bach 'showed with a motion of his hand behind him what those present should do with a ballot of the National parties'.⁸⁹ But the Centre party depended on the votes of the laity. And its strategy was set almost exclusively by laymen, whose functionaries the clergy had become. Soon lay deputies commanded a legitimacy in catholic matters – including sometimes religious matters – that equalled that of the hierarchy.⁹⁰ Far from failing to affect the political culture of German catholicism, as Christoph Weber has argued, ultimately the *Kulturkampf* taught German catholics how to look at authority critically: the authority of the state, in the first instance, but eventually even that of the church.⁹¹

And this takes me back to my opening theme: the vitality of nineteenth-century catholicism, a vitality that makes the larger questions about secularization seem peculiarly *mal posée*. How can we account for this success story? Miracle, mystery, and authority? These were the outward signs of something even more important, something that the grand inquisitor's trinity – and all the speculations of Macaulay, Naumann, and others – leave out: community. The catholic community was not the herd of Dostoevsky's grand inquisitor. It was not egalitarian. Its strata were clearly articulated, with different functions assigned to each: clergy and lay, male and female, and every other conceivable estate. Power was never absent, nor was it distributed equally.⁹² But along with differentiation came an equally high valuation on solidarity and mutual dependence that went to the very heart of catholic culture. As Hugh McLeod put it so brilliantly:⁹³

Living and dead were made dependent on each other, the laity depended on the priests, who were themselves obligated to abdicate home, marriage and family – things, in which they could participate only by proxy, through members of the congregation and relatives. ... Characteristic for this mutual, corporative dependence was the Catholic approach to prayer. Just as the souls in purgatory were supported by the prayers of their living relatives, so too were the men who through their activity in the world faced multiple temptations and challenges to their faith strengthened by the prayers of mothers, wives, and sisters, and protected from the worst dangers.

In catholicism, when the community is strong, then religious life is vigorous. And the very signs of 'the modern' that so characterized late nineteenth-century Germany,

⁸⁸ Commission on Election Scrutiny, Report on the Second Arnsberg District, *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des ... deutschen Reichstags* (1907/9), Anlageband 19, Drucksache 636, 4305.

⁸⁹ Regierungsrat von Horn to the Ober-Präsident in Coblenz, 24 Feb. 1907, 'Report on the election activity of clergy and Beamten', Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, Signatur 403, Nr. 8806, 4v.

⁹⁰ Examples in Anderson, 'The Kulturkampf', pp. 109–15. It is notable that those dissenting catholics – the Old Catholics of the 1870s; F. X. Kraus; the 'modernist' groups around the periodical *XX. Jahrhundert* after the turn of the century – whom later historians, such as Christoph Weber, champion as modern and liberal, were characterized at least as much by their hostility to the democratically elected, lay-led Centre party as by their dislike of 'Romanism'.

⁹¹ After rightly stressing that the French conflict between church and state lasted much longer than the *Kulturkampf*, a comparatively 'short explosion', Weber then reaches the astonishing conclusion that the latter was 'actually only a smoke bomb, which passed by without causing lasting change to political culture', 'Ultramonanismus', p. 26.

⁹² It should go without saying that, as Karl Rohe warns in another context, '*Parochialitäten sind kein herrschaftsfreie Idylle*'. Cf. 'Konfession, Klasse und lokale Gesellschaft als Bestimmungsfaktoren des Wahlverhaltens. Überlegungen und Problematisierungen am Beispiel des historischen Ruhrgebiets' in Lothar Albertin and Werner Link, eds., *Politische Parteien auf dem Weg zur parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland. Entwicklungslinien bis zur Gegenwart* (Düsseldorf, 1981), pp. 109–26; quote on p. 121.

⁹³ Hugh McLeod, 'Weibliche Frömmigkeit', p. 152.

signs that our discussions of secularization inevitably include – the democratization of information and political life on the one hand, cultural conflict on the other – reinforced the vitality of the catholic community.⁹⁴

If I may paraphrase a line of John Boyer's: It was both harder – and *easier* – to be a catholic than a protestant in Germany.⁹⁵ German catholics lived in an atmosphere of constant confessional challenge, because they were – unlike protestants, and also unlike their French and Irish co-religionists – a minority within the 'national' protestant population. The *Kulturkampf* – whose name should always be taken seriously – was at bottom an attempt by Germany's protestant majority to create a homogeneous national culture across confessional lines. The project entailed, of course, forcibly assimilating catholic culture (perceived as low, or *Volk* culture) into a protestant, high culture.⁹⁶ Such a cultural environment – let us call it competitive – stimulated the maximum possible confessional consciousness.

It was also both harder and easier to be a catholic in Germany than it was in France, for if the German environment was competitive and – during the *Kulturkampf* – even aggressively hostile, the timing of that hostility maximized the stimulus to solidarity and minimized the institutional damage to the church. For the attacks on German catholicism, first by liberals and then by Bismarck and the apparatus of the state, occurred not, as in France, during a revolutionary transition from old regime corporativism into populist statism (1789ff.), but after the establishment in 1871 of liberal constitutional guarantees and a democratic franchise. This context gave the catholic community, already expressed in ritual and social life, the ability to constitute itself politically. It was not the backwardness of the conservative state that prevented these blows from being debilitating, but precisely the liberal, but imperfectly liberal, context, which both allowed the persecution, but also allowed catholics to express their dissent: in their processions that turned bishops into culture heroes and in their massive political mobilization, beginning with the 1871 elections.⁹⁷ That this mobilization then broadened and intensified protestant antagonism to catholicism was also true, encouraging that 'spiritualized hostility' that, as Nietzsche noted, was characteristic of life in Bismarck's new empire.⁹⁸ But such hostility only reinforced the solidarity within the catholic community and the commitment of catholics to their separate identity.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Catholicism's declining ability to mobilize politically in the Ruhr after 1900 was due neither to the arrival of an independent Polish party nor to the belated consequences of secularization, but because it was either no longer willing or no longer able to integrate socially and culturally the masses of immigrants from the east. Social democracy's sudden breakthrough took place not in the older urbanised, industrial areas but precisely in the newer areas populated by rural newcomers, where society had separated into locals and immigrants, into 'village' and 'colony'. Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen* (Frankfurt, 1992), p. 80.

⁹⁵ 'It was both easier and harder to be a Catholic in Austria' than in Germany. Boyer, 'Religion and political development in central Europe around 1900: a view from Vienna', *Austrian History Yearbook*, xxv (1994), 13–57; quote p. 56.

⁹⁶ As Helmut Smith's pathbreaking *German nationalism and religious conflict* argues – a work stimulated by Gellner's *Nations and nationalism*, Altgeld's *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum*, and Etienne François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze. Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648–1806* (Sigmaringen, 1991).

⁹⁷ The contrary view is argued by Ronald J. Ross, 'Enforcing the Kulturkampf in the Bismarckian state and the limits of coercion in imperial Germany', *Journal of Modern History*, LVI (Sept. 1984), 456–82.

⁹⁸ *Twilight of the idols*, in Walter Kaufmann, ed., *The portable Nietzsche* (New York, 1963), p. 489.

⁹⁹ On a similarly competitive climate in Ulster: Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical protestantism*, p. 189.

To the mocking charge in 1884 that 'the ultramontanes are by now supplying themselves with Catholic coffee and Catholic beer', a busy figure in Berlin catholic associational life retorted, 'We jolly well better look for Catholic beer, especially now when...we're scarcely allowed to raise a glass anywhere in a public place without getting anti-Catholicism sp[it] into it.'¹⁰⁰ This dynamic – outside hostility, community, identity; more hostility, tighter community, stronger identity – might be called by those friendly to the church: an *Engelskreis*.

Long after the *Kulturkampf* was over, long after the villages and small towns in which they had grown up had disappeared, the recurrence of democratic elections gave German catholics the repeated opportunity to imagine their community and to reaffirm their commitment to it.¹⁰¹ It took the massive upheavals of world war and recovery in the 1940s and 1950s to break open the existing communities and, by homogenizing 'Christians' within a new party system, to dissolve the imagined community as well. Only then do we really begin to see the secularization of catholic Germany. And even now this 'secularization' is hardly complete. As Karl Rohe has recently noted, 'To the embarrassment of analysts outside and inside Germany, it is confessional allegiance which again and again proves to be the most important factor in "explaining" electoral behavior in the Federal Republic'.¹⁰² Why this should be 'embarrassing', however, he does not say.

¹⁰⁰ Eduard Müller, "'Dann laß ich 5 Fuß tiefer graben'", *Bonafacius Kalander* (Berlin, 1883),

p. 3.

¹⁰¹ I am, of course, transposing Benedict Anderson's idea about nationalism to confessionalism. *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983).

¹⁰² Karl Rohe, 'Forward', *Elections, parties, and political traditions* (New York, 1991), p. xii. Cf. also his 'German elections and party systems in historical and regional perspective', *ibid.* p. 3, and especially his *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen*.