

“Führ uns an der Hand bis ins Vaterland!” Die Auwanderung preussischer Altlutheraner nach Südaustralien Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts

**By Johannes Boxdörfer. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020.
Pp. 369. Paper €62.00. ISBN 978-3515127851.**

Felicity Jenz

Exzellenzcluster Religion und Politik, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Johannes Boxdörfer's monograph examines the history of a heterogeneous group of Prussian Altlutheraner (Old Lutherans) in the mid-nineteenth century, the group's migration to Australia, and subsequent settlement in the colony of South Australia. The Altlutheraner who migrated to Australia consolidated around Pastor August Kavel and perceived themselves as religiously persecuted under the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm III, who wished to unite the Lutheran and Reformed Churches under his rule. Initially this unification was on a voluntary basis, however it gradually became more forceful, with measures such as fines and imprisonment used against people who did not cooperate. To extract themselves from this situation, some dogmatic believers looked to migrate from Prussia to places such as the United States of America. A very small number also looked towards Australia, especially to the newly established colony of South Australia.

The monograph, which is an adaption of Boxdörfer's doctoral thesis, examines the background and motivations of these people, and particularly of Kavel. The introduction follows a standard structure for a doctoral thesis and informs us that the sources for the topic are at times sparse. The first of two sections (chapters 1–5) focuses on Europe and provides information as to the situation that forced people to move as well as exploring Kavel's networks, including in England, where he spent some two years drumming up support for his endeavour. The second section (chapter 6–10) examines the period once the Altlutheraner had reached Australia. Each of the ten chapters focuses on a theme, such as “Transformation Processes” (chapter 1), “Old Lutheran Identity” (chapter 3), “Socio-Cultural Changes” (chapter 7), or “The Old Lutheran School System,” (chapter 9). Boxdörfer states in the introduction that he does not wish to foreground the history of events, rather that his main focus is on thematic and structural aspects. This is an unfortunate decision that proves detrimental to the book, for without a historical narrative around which to place his thematic sections, the book often lacks a broader framework and the text lacks narrative connection. Moreover, it makes reading the book very fragmented, as Boxdörfer often provides contextual information as a separate section before working through his analytical categories, which themselves often do not connect back to the contextual information.

A significant problem for the book is that Boxdörfer is not able to clearly identify who was part of the group. He notes that it is difficult to discern who was an Altlutheraner and who wasn't, and that other scholars have suggested a number somewhere between 750 and 2000 people. There were a number of distinct periods in which people connected to this movement migrated to Australia, with the first and most significant being between 1838 and 1841. The broader group of Altlutheraner included people of various cultural backgrounds such as from Sorbish (Wendish) cultural heritage. Within South Australia, the Altlutheraner were always a small minority amongst the local German population. The sources and secondary literature which could provide clarity on who exactly constituted this group of Altlutheraner seem to be lacking. This problem makes it difficult to draw connections or find relevance to broader structural changes. The book fluctuates between providing excessive, and at times irrelevant, detail about people loosely connected to the group and not providing enough detail pertinent to the Altlutheraner themselves. At

times Boxdörfer provides short case studies of people, however it is often difficult to know how representative these people were or how to place them in the broader context of the Altlutheraner. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book is the placement of the South Australian Altlutheraner in the broader context of religious and social mobility of the period and the alternatives that were open to Kavel in his endeavours to seek a safe religious space for his followers. The description of Kavel's period in London also contributes to broader understandings of religious and social networks of the period.

Boxdörfer uses a wide range of sources including various archives. It is obvious that he has enjoyed digging for details. Some of the sources he uses are very apt to demonstrate Kavel's background and the broader historical context from which he and the group departed. However, Boxdörfer also relies heavily on Internet sources, some of dubious scholarly quality, without critically analysing them. He provides tables of interesting data, but without any reference to the source material it is impossible for a researcher to undertake further research on this material.

In summary, this book will appeal to the specialist who is interested in specific details. The interested generalist may have difficulty following the structure, whilst the general public, which may include the descendants of these Altlutheraner, will most likely not be able to access the book, as it is in German and most of the descendants have lost their connection to that language used by the Altlutheraner generations ago.

doi:10.1017/S0008938922000796

Blut und Eisen. Wie Preussen Deutschland erzwang 1864–1871

By Christoph Jahr. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2020. Pp. 368. Cloth €26.95. ISBN 978-3406755422.

Michael V. Leggiere

University of North Texas

This is a revisionist work based on published primary sources and the pertinent secondary literature that straddles the border of popular and scholarly writing. Christoph Jahr's front matter offers no explanation of where his work fits in the historiography of either the Wars of German Unification or the Sonderweg, yielding the latter to "Golo Mann's judgment that the founding of the empire was a peculiar process in which 'nothing can be clearly identified'" (295). Be that as it may, Jahr acknowledges that any discussion of German unification must recognize the roles played by monarchs and their soldiers. However, he brings into focus Anton von Werner's masterpiece of Prusso-German military art, *Die Kaiserproklamation*, noting: "reproduced hundreds of times in school books, it is the icon of the establishment of an empire. According to this painting, bearded, uniformed men brought about what generations before had failed to do" (7). He informs us that something is missing from the scene captured in Werner's painting and, in general, from the mainstream narrative of the Wars of Unification. "But it was not only a handful of aristocratic men in uniform who accomplished the founding of the empire," continues Jahr. "Those who are missing in Werner's picture, the women, the civilians, the politicians, the poets, the peacemakers, the powerless, and the poor: they were not missing from the history itself. This book makes their voices heard" (7). For that reason, the roles of Bismarck and other Prussian decisionmakers are recognized but sidelined in Jahr's account.