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MEMORIAL

Mack Walker (1929–2021)*[1]

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Mack Walker, a leading historian of early modern Germany, died of Covid-19 in February 2021. He was best known for *German Home Towns*, published in 1971, which is still a starting point for explorations of early modern German urban history. He spent most of his career at Johns Hopkins University, where he mentored dozens of students.[2] Post World War II Germany and evolving German-American relations shaped his life and career, and he in turn came to shape those relations. His first, formative experience of Germany came in the early 1950s when he was stationed in Bavaria and then Württemberg with the U.S. military. He met his wife Irma in Württemberg. While explaining the genesis of the Third Reich was the underlying impetus for *German Home Towns*, Walker later engaged in a sustained building of academic bridges between West Germany and the U.S. that has strengthened both German and American historical culture.

Life and Career

Walker was born near Springfield, Massachusetts, one of five children. His father was a teacher, basketball coach, orchardist, and chicken farmer.[3] Walker spent summers at his grandparents' farm near Londonderry, New Hampshire, which dated to the 1730s. He retained a reserved, understated New England manner that masked a somewhat shy personality. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1950, then briefly worked in commercial gardening with his brother and attended Yale Law School for one semester before enlisting in the army. He was sent to Germany, where U.S. military bases were burgeoning as Germany became a waystation for traffic to and from the Korean conflict. After a year at Augsburg/Gersthofen, he was transferred to Göppingen, near Stuttgart. There he met Irma, who was working on the base; they began dating in spring 1953. When Germans in the community heard that she was dating an American, singers in her church choir "no longer talked to me, looked the other way when I met them on the street: I was a 'bad girl.'" Likewise, the church Sunday school teacher

* The article has been updated since original publication to add missing author name. A notice detailing the change has also been published.

[1] Many thanks to Philip Benedict, Christine Johnson, David Luebke, David Sabean, Magdalena Sánchez, Barbara Walker and Irma Walker for sharing their recollections of Walker, his work and his times. Thanks to these contributors as well as Anthony LaVopa, Paul Steege and *CEH* editors Monica Ann Black, Benjamin Marschke, and Jared Poley for their helpful comments on drafts.

[2] *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648–1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); paperback, with preface by James Sheehan, 2014.

[3] On Walker's biography, see Anthony LaVopa and Tanya Kevorkian, "Mack Walker, 1929–2021, Historian of Germany," AHA *Perspectives* 59, no. 5 (May 2021); William Bowman, Kathleen Canning, Kenneth Ledford, & John Theibault, "In Memoriam: Mack Walker (1929–2021)," German Studies Association Newsletter XLVI (Spring 2021), https://www.thegsa.org/sites/default/files/2021%20Spring%20GSA%20Newsletter%20final.pdf; Hartmut Lehmann, "In memoriam: Mack Walker (1929–2021)," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 69 (Fall 2021/Spring 2022): 223–225.

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with whom she volunteered told her that she could choose between teaching the children and dating an American. She found the choice easy.[4]

Mack and Irma Walker married soon after his return to the U.S. He entered graduate school at Harvard, studied with Franklin Ford as well as William Langer, and completed his dissertation on nineteenth-century emigration from Germany in 1959. He taught for two years at the Rhode Island School of Design before returning to Harvard from 1959–66 as an instructor and then assistant professor.[5] Walker spent 1964–65 on leave doing research in Weissenburg. A local newspaper article profiled both Mack and Irma, who had been born and raised there, noting that they worked together in the archive. Attitudes had changed since the '50s: the article celebrated the marriage and young family of the Harvard professor (including children Barbara and Gilbert, later joined by Benjamin) and Irma's return to her hometown.[6]

Walker moved from Harvard to Cornell in 1966. His eight years there were important in several ways. He discussed new research methods with colleagues including Helmut Koenigsberger, who helped shape early modern history as a distinct field and taught at Cornell almost the same years as Walker.[7] He mentored graduate students, including David Crew and Anthony LaVopa. He taught an eclectic two-semester Western Civilization course to large undergraduate classes, assigning a mix of books that was eye-opening and memorable to freshmen, including Erik Erikson's 1958 *Young Man Luther*, Benedetto Croce's *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* and Lin Piao's *Long Live the Victory of the People's War*.[8] Social history began to arrive. Historian Philip Benedict, a history major who graduated in 1970 and returned as an instructor for the 1975–76 academic year, recalls Koenigsberger telling him and other students about the Annales School and Natalie Zemon Davis's pioneering (and still relevant) 1965 article "Strikes and Salvation at Lyons" around 1968 – Benedict's first real exposure to social history.[9]

Not least, Walker was a witness to and minor participant in academic upheavals related to civil rights, Black student activism, and student demands for a greater voice in course offerings. These upheavals were among the most dramatic in the country and remain etched into the memories of the students, faculty, and staff who experienced them. The "Crisis Week" of April 1969 started during a parents' weekend, when eighty Afro-American Society students occupied the student union building and left it the next day, crossing the campus brandishing arms that SDS students had brought them against a backdrop of observant police. Two faculty votes in the following days on whether to grant the students amnesty split the faculty. The first vote, reflecting the faculty's position against giving in to intimidation, was against granting amnesty. The second, after heated meetings and impending violence between students and hundreds of sheriffs' deputies amassed just off campus, was for amnesty.

[4] Irma Walker, emails of Jan. 21 and March 6, 2024. Such hostility was not uncommon in the 1950s, although generally less than that directed at women who dated Black GIs: Maria Höhn, "*Heimat* in Turmoil: African-American GIs in 1950s West Germany," in Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 145–63.

[5] During this time, he published his revised dissertation as *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885* and started work on *German Home Towns*, teaching at least one graduate seminar on the topic, in 1966 (*German Home Towns*, 218 fn 1).

[6] "Kleinstadt-Analyse: Der amerikanische Historiker ist mit einer Weissenburgerin verheiratet – Mit den beiden Kindern seit August in der Stadt – Die Hauptfundgrube: das Archiv." Newspaper clipping, courtesy of Irma Walker.

[7] From 1966 to 1973. Koenigsberger commented on drafts of part of *German Home Towns*: see the acknowledgements of *German Home Towns*, vii. Walker did much of the research for, wrote, and published *German Home Towns* during his time at Cornell.

[8] Philip Benedict took both semesters of this class with Walker as a freshman in 1966–67 and recalls the books. Email of Dec. 29, 2023.

[9] Conversation with Benedict, Dec. 30, 2023. Davis's "Strikes and Salvation" was first published in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* in 1965 and reprinted as Chapter 1 of *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 1–16. Historians elsewhere, including David Sabean as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin between 1962 and 1964, also came to gradually appreciate social history's transformational potential. Sabean notes that in those years, amidst a growing interest, "nobody seemed to know what it was" (email of Jan. 11, 2024).

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The history and government departments, housed in the same building, were dominated by conservatives who opposed granting amnesty.[10] These departments became the focus of student hostility. Faculty members had a "growing dread" in the course of the spring, including the fear of being physically attacked. Along with students, they guarded the academic buildings at nighttime for several weeks; one said that "[a]ll of us had looked into the pit."[11] Walker, although "not a visible campus presence,"[12] partly because his field was not American history, was among the few moderates among his colleagues. He attempted to mediate between factions but found this a "thankless task."[13]

In the wake of the events of April 1969, many professors left. Some "conservatives fled immediately."[14] One charismatic government professor who voted in favor of amnesty in the second round, Clinton Rossiter, was "ostracized by colleagues who had refused to budge," which worsened his severe depression; he committed suicide fifteen months later.[15] Philip Benedict recalls that the history and government departments became a "difficult, unpleasant place to be [for] anyone who had been through those events."[16] Walker eventually joined those who departed, leaving Cornell for Hopkins in 1974, partly on account of hostility from some colleagues. Another arrival at Hopkins around the same time was Cornell government professor Steven Muller, an émigré from Hamburg who like Walker had been a mediator during the "Crisis Week."[17]

Walker taught at Hopkins until his retirement in 1999. He was part of a close-knit group of early modernists that included Robert Forster, Orest Ranum, J.G.A. Pocock, Richard Goldthwaite, and Richard Kagan. In a reflection of Walker's abiding interest in modern German history, his closest colleague was the nineteenth-century labor historian Vernon Lidtke. Advising one another's students in tandem, these men mentored generations of graduate students. Walker and Steven Muller, who were contemporaries, were also close. Walker served as department chair for three years. His commitment to building strong ties between American and German students and scholars flowered during his twenty-five years at Hopkins. He shared this interest with colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic such as Muller, Lidtke, and Hartmut Lehmann. Walker continued his ongoing involvement with the Central European History Society, with which he had worked from its establishment in 1958. He contributed an article to the second volume of its journal in 1969 and served as president in 1987, when it was still known as the Conference Group for Central European History. He likewise supported the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. from its founding in 1987, serving as a member of its first Academic Advisory Board. When he attended GHI seminars, he often gave graduate students a ride to Washington with him. Walker co-founded the Friends of the German Historical Institute, which awards the annual Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize. An exchange with the University of Bielefeld brought advanced German undergraduate history majors to Hopkins for a year of study. Their students'-eye views of giants such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka, their matter-of-fact, social-science approach to German history, and their command of the German-language literature was enlightening to my 1990s generation of graduate students and helped us see through lines from early modern

[10] Conversation with Philip Benedict, Dec. 30, 2023; Donald Alexander Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), esp. 214–218; LaVopa and Kevorkian, "Walker."

[11] Frederick Marcham, then history professor, quoted in Downs, *Cornell '69*, 215.

[12] Conversation with Benedict, Dec., 30, 2023.

[13] LaVopa and Kevorkian, "Walker."

[14] Conversation with Benedict, Dec. 30, 2023.

[15] Downs, *Cornell '69*, 321; Caleb Rossiter, *The Chimes of Freedom Flashing: A Personal History of the Vietnam Anti-War Movement and the 1960s* (Washington, D.C.: TCA Press, 1996), 133–150.

[16] Conversation with Benedict, Dec. 30, 2023.

[17] Muller, who became Hopkins provost in 1971 and president from 1972 to 1990, co-founded the Hopkins-affiliated American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, now the American-German Institute, with Robert Gerald Livingston in 1983. https://hub.jhu.edu/gazette/2013/february/steven-muller-obituary/.

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to modern German history. Walker also spent fellowship years at the former Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.[18]

Walker had a steady stream of graduate students, and many of Lidtke's advisees and those of the other Hopkins early modernists considered Walker a second adviser. Walker was open to the development of dissertation topics in various directions, although his critique was clear if he thought a student was getting off track. Mentoring continued well after students defended their dissertations. Students especially valued his close attention to their writing; he quickly turned around well marked up drafts.[19] Warm thanks for careful reading and perceptive critique also appear in the works of former students and colleagues.[20]

Mack and Irma's generous hospitality was part and parcel of his and their mentorship. Former students hold it up as a high standard to be emulated. In Ithaca and Baltimore, the Walkers regularly invited graduate students to their home. Magdalena Sánchez recalls that during a year when Walker led the Hopkins history seminar in Florence, he and Irma "hosted all the graduate students … [a]fter dinner, all the students were chatting away, oblivious to the clean-up that Irma had already begun, until Mack came over and told us all to get up and help … I appreciated his consideration for his wife and his assumption that graduate students should be more aware of mundane responsibilities."[21] In the same spirit, Walker welcomed David Luebke as a visiting graduate student with an interest in the history of peasant revolts, showing him around the campus and talking with him about his dissertation.[22] The Walkers also hosted colleagues such as David Sabean.[23]

I first met Mack and Irma in Göttingen, where he was spending a sabbatical year at the Max Planck Institute, in March 1990, in the midst of the *Wende*. He had invited me to visit from Munich, where I was studying for the year, after my acceptance to the graduate program. Mack encouraged me to take advantage of my time in Germany to do research for the seminar paper required of first-year students at Hopkins, without going into much detail about the form that research should take. Back at the State and University Library in Munich, I searched the encyclopedia *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* for a promising town to do research, settling on Leipzig, where I did three memorable weeks of research.

Walker was a scholar who placed great value on his connections with the natural world. Irma Walker recalls that during their 1964–65 sabbatical year in Weissenburg, "before he went to the archive in the morning, he usually rode his bike beyond the periphery of the town into 'nature,' in part to examine what was outside its walls, to measure the lay of the land… In Baltimore, before starting to write in the morning, he took his second cup of coffee with him outside to inspect his garden: communing with nature before shutting himself into his study which had no window near his desk so as not to distract his thoughts. He came out for lunch only [to go] back to write."[24] Walker's daughter Barbara notes that his walks were "a fascinating key to his character … he was tremendously observant of the natural world, listening for bird calls, pointing out wildflowers, berries, and animal scat … constantly considering these natural phenomena in relation to one another as parts of an unknowable but inevitable whole." She thinks "that care for growing things extended to

[18] Lehmann, "Walker"; LaVopa and Kevorkian, "Walker"; Bowman, Canning, et al., "Walker." Among other projects, the GHI organizes a fully-funded summer German archive and paleography tour and a transatlantic graduate student conference.

[19] Christine Johnson, email of Jan. 2023; author's recollection.

[20] For example, Frank Tipton, *Regional Variations in the Economic Development of Germany During the Nineteenth Century* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), xiv; Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), xi; Tanya Kevorkian, *Music and Urban Life in Baroque Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 230. Walker cited a paper on Weissenburg by Tipton written in a 1966 Harvard graduate seminar (*German Home Towns*, 218, note 1): Walker had brought home sources from his 1964–65 stay for his students to work on.

[21] Magdalena Sánchez, email of Jan. 7, 2024.

[22] David Luebke, email of Dec. 28, 2023.

[23] David Sabean, email of Jan. 11, 2024.

[24] Irma Walker, email of Dec. 19, 2023.

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his students as well – he often talked at the dinner table about his graduate students and their … talents and insights, and how he could best nurture their intellectual and career development."[25] I saw how Walker experienced these connections between walking and nature, writing and mentorship during a long walk around a lake near Baltimore that doubled as an in-depth discussion of my dissertation. During summers at his beloved Nova Scotia home, he regularly went out on a small boat and observed birds, sea animals, and local fishing activities.[26] He continued with daily mile-long walks on trails at the Walkers' retirement community until shortly before his death.

Works

Walker's four books centered on several themes: in his words, "migration, social relations and processes, and … the law and politics of the Holy Roman Empire."[27] He extended his thematic reach with each book: from the nineteenth-century migration of his dissertation and first book, *Germany and the Emigration* back into the eighteenth century, urban history, guilds, the workings of the Holy Roman Empire, the upheavals of the Napoleonic era and post-Congress Germany in *German Home Towns*; into biography with *Johann Jakob Moser*; and, again in his words, into "the history of religion, of rural society, and of the Prussian state" with *The Salzburg Transaction*.[28] In contrast to many historians' drier presentations, he consistently integrated and made relatable the experiences of ordinary and more learned individuals such as the Hildesheim tinsmith Flegel, the cameralist Moser, and Salzburg peasants. All of his books are multi-faceted explorations of how the lives of people from various walks of life were shaped by the institutions and processes of the Holy Roman Empire and nineteenth-century Germany.[29] The literary quality of Walker's writing, which employs formal turns of phrase along with occasional colloquialisms, likewise relates the specifics at hand to broader meaning and contributes to the lasting value of his work.[30]

German Home Towns

German Home Towns explores the world of inhabitants of towns under 10,000, the structures of the Holy Roman Empire, and developments through German unification, from the old regime to the twentieth century. Walker's central argument is that a specific hometown mindset survived centuries of change until finally fading in the 1950s. The book is peppered with insights on a range of issues, and Walker was ahead of his time on many of them. The face-to-face nature of social and political life, one central theme, continues to surface in urban histories, often as a primary focus.[31] Historians of women and gender came to emphasize the sexual

[25] Barbara Walker, emails of Jan. 19 and July 15, 2024.

[26] Irma Walker, email of Jan. 21, 2024; Barbara Walker, email of July 15, 2024.

[27] *The Salzburg Transaction*, xiii.

[28] *Germany and the Emigration, 1816–1885* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); *Johann Jakob Moser and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Caroline Press, 1981); *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), quoted xiii.

[29] Flegel: *German Home Towns*, 73–92; *Johann Jakob Moser*; *Salzburg Transaction.*

[30] Reviewers generally lauded the quality of Walker's writing. A few noted colloquialisms in Walker's third and fourth books: *vielfach fast salopper Sprache* ("often almost sloppy language," Notker Hammerstein, review of *Johann Jakob Moser* in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 12, no. 1 (1985): 125–26, here 125); "colloquial conversational prose" (Charles Ingrao, here seen as a drawback; review of *The Salzburg Transaction* in *Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 2 (1995): 476–78, here 478); "well written, though with occasional lapses into folksiness, American jargon … and one rather good new word, 'balkiness'" (P.G.M. Dickson, review of *Johann Jakob Moser* in *English Historical Review* 100, #396 (1985): 669–70, here 670).

[31] See Rudolf Schlögl, *Urban Elections and Decision-Making in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2009); Luebke, *Hometown Religion: Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016).

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dimensions of guild life twenty and more years after Walker did.[32] Choosing population size as the criterion for the home towns took the focus away from the institutional dynamics that dominated the German-language literature and perhaps helped other scholars to think more creatively. The book served as a corrective to a common overemphasis on Prussia. Walker's emphasis on the stubborn if not admirable resistance of hometownsmen to change initiated from outside ran counter to an assumption by many historians that subjects generally obeyed the law.[33] It also contradicted an emphasis on "apolitical" Germans that was one explanation of the coming of the Third Reich.[34] Walker's observation that the very high proportion of master artisans in the central and south German population into the 1850s set the stage for Germany's rapid industrialization helped pave the way for studies such as Michael Neufeld's of Nuremberg metalworkers.[35]

There is an irony to the association of *German Home Towns* with the early modern era. Until and including that book, Walker dealt mostly with nineteenth-century Germany. This focus is evident in articles from the late 1960s, while he was working on the book, on home towns in the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic eras, and in the primary source collection *Metternich's Europe*, which Walker edited and introduced.[36] In part the chronology reflected the fact that early modern history was still developing as an area of study. When Walker conceptualized *German Home Towns* in the mid-1960s, he actually planned to focus especially on the periods from 1780 to 1820 and 1930 to 1960.[37] He mostly dropped the latter, confining his observations on the twentieth century to the last chapter, which functions as an epilogue. In any case, historians have continued to find spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to be a fruitful way to examine change over time, sometimes with reference to *German Home Towns*, publishing important studies on topics including sexuality and the state, village societies, and the removal of urban walls – Isabel Hull's *Sexuality, the State, and Civil Society*, David Sabean's Neckarhausen volumes, and Yair Mintzker's *Defortification of the German City*.[38]

Another irony is that *German Home Towns* is more about interactions between home town inhabitants (especially guild masters and elites) and groups outside the home towns than about the towns in and of themselves. However, it is Walker's insights into early modern guild life and home town political culture that have remained most cited and most relevant, along with an emphasis on the Holy Roman Empire as an "incubator" for small jurisdictions

[32] For example, Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (New York: Oxford/Clarendon, 1989); Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society.*

[33] See especially Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

[34] Peter Blickle attacked this argument in *Obedient Germans? A Rebuttal: A New View of German History*, trans. Thomas Brady (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997); German *Deutsche Untertanen: Ein Widerspruch* (Munich: Beck, 1981). See also, for example, Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Unpolitical: German Writers and the Problem of Power 1770–1871* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[35] *German Home Towns*, 409–12; Neufeld, *The Skilled Metalworkers of Nuremberg: Craft and Class in the Industrial Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

[36] "Napoleonic Germany and the Hometown Communities," *Central European History* 2, no. 2 (1969): 99–113; "Home Towns and State Administrators: South German Politics, 1815–30," *Political Science Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (1967): 35–60; *Metternich's Europe*, New York: Walker & Company, 1968.

[37] "Kleinstadt-Analyse."

[38] Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society, 1700–1815*; Sabean, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mintzker, *Defortification of the German City, 1689–1866* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Also see, for example, Heikki Lempa, *Beyond the Gymnasium: Educating the Middle-Class Bodies in Classical Germany* (Lanham, MS: Lexington, 2007). The German-language scholarship on the *Sattelzeit* ("saddle time," a phrase coined by Reinhart Kosellek) sees this time as important in its own right. See Bodo Mrozek, "Die sogenannte Sattelzeit. Reinhart Koselleks Geschichtsmetapher im Erfahrungsraum des Krieges," in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 75, no. 2 (2023): 133–153; Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Kosellek* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

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and site of endless wrangling.[39] For example, Walker's insights help organize David Luebke's exploration of early modern cross-confessional coexistence: "the exposure to external interference ... and the face-to-face quality of social life all encouraged hometowns to smother internal discord, as far as possible, and to place a premium on civic concord." In one articulation of this smothering, the "hometown environment ... shoved people together despite their religious differences."[40] For Yair Mintzker, *German Home Towns* gives insight into trajectories from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and in telling "the history of the German lands from the bottom up and not, as had been so common beforehand, from the top down."[41]

German Home Towns has continued to shape the field. Christopher Friedrichs' 1997 assessment of the book as pacemaking, alongside his view that historians' increasing specialization can obscure important long-term trends, is still valuable, as is James Sheehan's foreword to the 1998 Cornell University Press paperback edition, which emphasizes the book's departures from the historiography of the early 1970s and its ongoing relevance.[42] A 2014 issue of *Central European History* devoted to a discussion of the book's impact on early modern German history gives a sense of its role as the field continued to expand.

Despite its lasting sway, *German Home Towns*, like Walker's other books, has not fit neatly into any one historiographical category. While he was influenced by a variety of approaches, Walker did not fully embrace, for example, social history, microhistory, or quantitative history. Rather, he "was skilled at making sense of the world his historical subjects inhabited ... one puzzle led him to the next, and he solved them brilliantly and in many respects definitively."[43] Walkers approach played out in several ways in *German Home Towns.* For example, most English-language early modern urban studies do not emphasize developments after 1789, while most historians of the nineteenth century have gone in other directions with their research.

Christopher Friedrichs has identified another way that *German Home Towns* goes against the grain of much of the literature: Walker argued in the last chapter that nineteenth- and twentieth-century nostalgia for the "organic wholeness" supposedly represented by the world of the home towns, fused with National Socialist ideology, helped lead to the Third Reich.[44] This argument was an implicit driver of the book as a whole. Some reviewers at the time of publication pointed this out; some agreed and others did not.[45] In part, Walker drew on the then-prevalent view of the Nazi voter as a petit bourgeois, a view that has since been modified.[46] He stated his view plainly although with nuance and as a hypothesis needing more research: "In the Third Reich the two paths, the longings of intellectuals for national community and hometownsmen's parochial values, came closest together ... The enemies National Socialism proclaimed to be German enemies were hometown enemies ... [although] it will not do to equate hometownsmen with National Socialism, one to one."[47]

[39] David Blackbourn frames *History of Germany 1780–1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003) with reference to Walker's interpretation of the structures of the empire (5–6, 13–14) and guild life (25). Also see references by Thomas Brady, "Suggestions for Further Reading," 115–121, here 121, in Blickle, *Obedient Germans?* and Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society*, 41, 43.

[40] Luebke, *Hometown Religion*, 14–15.

[41] Mintzker, *Defortification*, 7. Also see Mintzker, "The Paradox of Visual and Material Cultures in Mack Walker's *German Home Towns,*" in *Central European History* 47, no. 3 (2014): 505–512.

[42] Friedrichs, "But Are We Any Closer to Home?: Early Modern German Urban History Since *German Home Towns*," *Central European History* 30, no. 2 (1997): 163–185; Sheehan, 1998, xiii-xvii.

[43] Christine Johnson, email of Jan. 19, 2024.

[44] Friedrichs, "But Are We Any Closer to Home?," 163–165, quoting from Walker, 426.

[45] Reviews by Robert Scharf in *Annals of the American Academy of Politics and Social Science* 403 (1972): 194–95; G. Buchstab in *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 61, no. 2 (1974): 250–51; Gordon Mork in *The Historian* 34, no. 4 (1972): 696–698.

[46] *German Home Towns*, 418. "Nazi voter" literature available to Walker by 1971 cited in Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

[47] *German Home Towns*, 427–28.

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Schools of historians have contributed explanations for the coming of the Third Reich more directly by examining the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Into the 1990s, though, the question "what went wrong in Germany"[48] remained a background preoccupation for early modernists as well, even if they did not state this. Studies that on the surface have little connection to the Third Reich might, for example, deconstruct idealistic views of Protestant religious and musical culture developed by nineteenth-century bourgeois nationalists, views held through the twentieth century.[49]

In one way, Walker's multi-faceted approach facilitated the reception of *German Home Towns*. Before the publication of John Gagliardo's and Michael Hughes' overviews in the early 1990s, *German Home Towns* was sometimes read as an introductory text for the Holy Roman Empire, for which it was not intended.[50] David Luebke read it as an undergraduate because "during the early 1980s, there wasn't much in the library to help me form a better understanding" of the empire.[51] My undergraduate thesis advisor likewise assigned it as background. I gained an appreciation for the interactions of actors in different layers of the Holy Roman Empire although many dynamics remained vague. Indeed, lucidly explaining the workings of the empire for undergraduates and non-specialists has remained a challenge to which few have risen.[52]

Other Works

The hallmarks of Walker's later works – thoughtfulness, resisting of neat categories and easy explanations, careful unpacking of the complexities of causation, and lucid discussion of political dynamics across disparate territories – are already on display in *Germany and the Emigration*. Making use of a range of archival and print sources, Walker explores how emigration proceeded from and influenced political life. Several questions undergird the book: what balance of economic, political, and social factors fueled the desire to emigrate? Specifically, how much of an influence should be ascribed to socioeconomic issues? Especially in the chapter on the migrants of 1830 to 1845, there are parallels to Natalie Zemon Davis' probing of why ordinary men and women chose to follow Calvinism (or not) in Reformation France.[53] Walker also explored variations from one territory to another and reflected on the relationship between discourses around emigration and the southwest African colonies. Reviewers appreciated Walker's profiles of the migrants, the book's nuanced weighing of factors and its well-reflected writing.[54]

Walker's third book is the 1981 biography of eighteenth-century legal expert, official, political theorist, sometime Moravian and compulsive writer Johann Jakob Moser. Walker approaches the interplay of the structures of the Holy Roman Empire and individuals from the vantage point of one man who cut a wide swath, moving among various local, regional, and imperial levels. Walker also posits parallels between Moser's personality and daily routines on the one hand, and the workings of the empire on the other. Moser penned

[48] *German Home Towns*, 430.

[49] For example, Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tanya Kevorkian, *Baroque Piety: Religion, Society, and Music in Leipzig, 1650–1750* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).

[50] Holborn (Princeton University Press, 1964); Gagliardo, *Germany Under the Old Regime 1600–1790* (New York: Longman, 1991); Hughes, *Early Modern Germany, 1477–1806* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1992).

[51] David Luebke, email of Jan. 23, 2024.

[52] Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's *The Holy Roman Empire: A Short History*, trans. Yair Mintzker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018) is succinct and effective.

[53] Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford University Press, 1978).

[54] W. Carr in *English Historical Review* 81, no. 318 (1966): 188–89; Francis Feminella in *The International Migration Digest* 1, no. 2 (1964): 237–39; Rudolf Glanz in *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1964): 100–102; Walter Stern in *Economic History Review* 18, no. 3 (1965): 674–75; Helmuth Croon in *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 51, no. 4 (1964): 548–50.

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or at least compiled over 400 published and unpublished works, including an autobiography while he was imprisoned during the Seven Years' War. These sources allow for a close examination of both his life and work. Walker effectively uses his exploration to personalize the workings of the empire. As in his other books, he focuses on territories (especially Württemberg) other than Brandenburg-Prussia and Austria, even as he brings these dominant players into the story via Moser's work with and in both territories.

Reviewers found *Johann Jakob Moser* compelling as a biography. Some argued that no one person could serve as a vehicle to understand the Holy Roman Empire, or that Walker could have been more specific in drawing connections between the individual and the empire; others found that those connections were well drawn.[55] James Allen Vann noted that Walker's treatment leads to an important insight into eighteenth-century imperial political life: "the terrible dilemma faced by a law-abiding but economically and politically progressive German subject" who attempted to reconcile "'progress' and tradition within the established constitution" – because the two could not be reconciled.[56] Walker's depiction of a difficult, stubbornly independent man with well-respected talents, predisposed to butt heads with his noble employers, is reminiscent of figures such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Such life stories illustrate the power, not just the trials, of commoners at courts and might merit exploration as a group.

Walker's fourth book, *The Salzburg Transaction* of 1992, is part collective biography of 1730s Lutheran migrants from the Archbishopric of Salzburg to Prussia; part analysis of the machinations of Brandenburg-Prussian, Salzburg, and other leaders; and part exploration of the myths about the migrants that took hold in the nineteenth century. Walker in turn tells the story from five vantage points, starting with that of the archbishop and moving to the Prussian king, the emperor, the migrants, and the creation of the legend. Walker's discussion of a reforming archbishop's enforcement of adherence to Catholicism in the previously less policed Alpine uplands of his territory stands as an important contribution to the literature on the Catholic Reformation. The cynicism of political actors before, during, and after the expulsion is etched especially clearly, as are the political considerations shaping the timing and course of the expulsion and the factors migrants weighed when they decided whether to conform or leave.

Reviewers emphasized Walker's "decidedly political and cultural" rather than religious focus.[57] The Salzburg archbishop, Prussian king and emperor each gained politically in areas they very much wanted to in the early 1730s. Reviewers noted Walker's reassessment of Archbishop Firmian: not the fanatic he had been depicted as by generations of Protestant pastors and nationalist historians, but instead well-educated, with local political constraints and goals, and subject to orders from the imperial court. They also pointed to parallels in Walker's interpretations of the imperial contexts of Moser and the Salzburg migrants. Today, a study of this topic would likely probe more deeply into the peasants' religiosity, and it would draw on thirty additional years of scholarship on the confessions and pluralism, but it would be unlikely to draw as clear and incisive a picture of the intersections of the actors in the context of the empire.

Walker's insights into the Holy Roman Empire, Moravians and migration brought him in conversation with the small but dynamic group of historians discussing German speakers in the early modern Atlantic world. He contributed two articles on developments in the empire

[55] Notker Hammerstein, review in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*; James Allen Vann, review in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 4 (1983): 725–30; Gerhard Benecke, review in *American Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (1982): 196–97.

[56] Vann, review of *Johann Jakob Moser*, 729.

[57] William Schrader, review in *Catholic Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (1994): 167–68; Charles Ingrao, review in *Journal of Modern History*; John Gagliardo, review in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no. 2 (1994): 317–18; Gerald Soliday, review in *American Historical Review* 99, no. 2 (1994): 588–89; quote: David Luebke, review in *Central European History* 26, no. 2 (1993): 234–36, here 234.

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to volumes on this subject: one on Moravians in the Atlantic World, *Pious Pursuits*, and on settlements of German-speakers in the New World, *In Search of Peace and Prosperity*.[58]

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The English-speaking literature on the Holy Roman Empire has its own dynamics, and Mack Walker was instrumental in establishing and continuing to shape them. When he published *German Home Towns*, there was only a handful of English-language books on specific German towns, including Franklin Ford's on Strasbourg.[59] Twenty years later, when Christopher Friedrichs surveyed the state of the field of German urban history, he declared that the amount of literature had become *unübersichtlich* (unable to be surveyed), an assessment that is even more true today.[60] Despite this flood of new research, *German Home Towns* continues to serve as a touchstone and point of departure for studies of a range of topics, especially in urban history: a testament to its originality and insights. His other books exert a quieter influence. Walker's life and career were intertwined with post-1945 German history and German-American relations. He shaped his field not only through his publications but also as a builder of academic bridges and, with Irma, through generous mentorship of dozens of graduate students.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

[58] "Imperial Communities," in Michele Gillespie and Robert Beachy, eds, *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 23–32; "The Salzburger Migration to Prussia: Causes and Choices," in Hartmut Lehmann, Hermann Wellenreuther, and Renate Wilson, eds, *In Search of Peace and Prosperity: New German Settlements in Eighteenth-Century Europe and America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 68–76.

[59] Ford, *Strasbourg in Transition, 1648–1789* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[60] Friedrichs, "But Are We Any Closer to Home?" 166.

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