

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910485585003321
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Titolo	Between state and church : confessional relations from reformation to enlightenment : Poland - Lithuania - Germany - Netherlands // Wojciech Kriegseisen ; translated by Bartosz Wojcik ; and copy-edited by Alexa Shannon
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Bern, : Peter Lang International Academic Publishing Group, 2016 Frank am Main : , : Peter Lang, , [2016] ©2016
ISBN	3-653-99902-2 3-653-02375-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (628 p.)
Collana	Polish studies - transdisciplinary perspectives ; ; Volume 16
Disciplina	322/.109409031
Soggetti	Church and state - Poland Church and state - Lithuania Church and state - Germany Church and state - Netherlands Poland Church history Lithuania Church history Germany Church history Netherlands Church history
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di contenuto	Cover; Table of Contents; Part I. Introduction; Chapter 1: Terminology and periodization; a)Terminological problems; b) Problems of periodization; Chapter 2: Before the Reformation; Part II: Conceptions; Chapter 1: Reformers, or Salvation ; a) Martin Luther and Lutherans; b) Philipp Melanchthon; c) Ulrich Zwingli; d) John Calvin and Calvinists; e) Catholic Reformers; Chapter 2: Humanists, or Understanding ; Chapter 3:Politicians, or ""ius resistentiae versus ratio status""; Part III: Religious Relations in Western European Federal States; Chapter 1: The Holy Roman Empire Chapter 2:The United Provinces of the Northern Netherlands Part IV:

The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania- The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Chapter 1: The Twilight of the Middle Ages; a) The Kingdom of Poland; b) The Grand Duchy of Lithuania; Chapter 2: On the Eve of the Reformation (1520-1548) ; Chapter 3: The Reformation (1548-1573); Chapter 4: Political Programmes of the Reformation; Chapter 5: Equal Rights (1573-1606); Chapter 6: Toleration of non-Catholic Minorities (1606-1658); Chapter 7: The Belated Catholic Confessionalization After 1658; Conclusion

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Sommario/riassunto

"The different theoretical notions and practices of the relations between the state and religious communities in early modern Europe constitute one of the most interesting problems in historiography. Moving away from a simple "toleration" versus "non-toleration" dichotomy, the author sets out to analyse the inter-confessional relations in selected European territories in a "longue duree" perspective, between Reformation and Enlightenment. Outlining the relations between the state and the different Churches (confessions) in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Holy Roman Empire of Germany, and the Northern Netherlands serves to highlight the specificity of "free" (non-absolutist) composite states, where the particularly complex process of defining the *raison d'etat* determined the level of religious toleration that was politically feasible and socially acceptable."

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