

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910779085003321
Titolo	Forgetting faith? [[electronic resource]] : negotiating confessional conflict in early modern Europe // edited by Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwielerlein, Inga Mai Grootte
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berlin, : de Gruyter, 2012
ISBN	1-280-59738-0 9786613627216 3-11-027005-6
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (296 p.)
Collana	Pluralisierung & Autoritat, , 2076-8281 ; ; Bd. 28
Classificazione	EC 2420
Altri autori (Persone)	Karremanns Isabel Zwielerlein Cornel Grootte Inga Mai
Disciplina	210 274.06
Soggetti	Religion and civil society - Europe Religion and sociology - Europe Europe Church history
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
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Sommario/riassunto

For the last decade, early modern studies have significantly been reshaped by raising new and different questions on the uses of religion. This 'religious turn' has generated new discussion of the social processes at work in early modern Europe and their cultural effects - from the struggle over religious rites and doctrines to the persecution of secret adherents to forbidden practices. The issue of religious pluralisation has been mostly debated in terms of dissent and escalation. But confessional controversy did not always erupt into hostilities over how to symbolize and perform the sacred nor lead to a paralysis of social agency. The order of the day may often have been to suspend confessional allegiances rather than enforce religious conflict, suggesting a pragmatic rather than polemic handling of religious plurality. This raises the urgent question of how 'normal' transconfessional and even transreligious interaction was produced in a context of highly sharpened and always present reflexivity on religious differences. Our volume takes up this question and explores it from an interdisciplinary and interconfessional perspective. The title "Forgetting Faith?" raises the question whether it was necessary or indeed possible to sidestep religious issues in specific contexts and for specific purposes. This does not mean, however, to describe early modern culture as a process of secularization. Rather, the collection invites discussion of the specific ways available to deal with confessional conflict in an oblivional mode, precisely because faith still mattered more than many other social paradigms emerging at that time, such as nationhood, ethnic origin or class defined through property.
