

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910793672603321
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Titolo	Imperial villages : cultures of political freedom in the German lands, c. 1300-1800 // by Beat Kumin
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden ; ; Boston : , : Brill, , [2019]
ISBN	90-04-39660-8
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (293 pages)
Collana	Studies in Central European histories, , 1547-1217 ; ; volume 65
Disciplina	320.80943
Soggetti	Imperial villages (Holy Roman Empire) Political culture - Holy Roman Empire Country life - Holy Roman Empire Holy Roman Empire Politics and government
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Copyright page -- Dedication -- Preface -- Notes on the Text -- Figures and Acknowledgements -- Abbreviations -- Approaches -- Polities without a Prince: an Introduction -- Origins, Evolutions and Settings -- Regimes -- Domestic Affairs: Co-Operation and Conflict -- External Relations: Protectors and Predators -- Religious Life: Heaven and Earth -- Perspectives -- Representations and Perceptions -- Conclusions -- Back Matter -- Communities Possessing, Claiming or Attributed Imperial Village Status (Pre-1803) -- Senior Officials and Clergymen in Five Imperial Villages c. 1300–1800 -- Bibliography -- Index.
Sommario/riassunto	Hundreds of rural communities tasted political freedom in the Holy Roman Empire. For shorter or longer periods, villagers managed local affairs without subjection to territorial overlords. In this first book-length study, Beat Kumin focuses on the five case studies of Gochsheim and Sennfeld (in present-day Bavaria), Sulzbach and Soden (Hesse) and Gersau (Switzerland). Adopting a comparative perspective across the late medieval and early modern periods, the analysis of multiple sources reveals distinct extents of rural self-government, the forging of communalized confessions and an enduring attachment to the empire. Negotiating inner tensions as well as mounting centralization

pressures, Reichsdörfer provide privileged insights into rural micro-political cultures while their stories resonate with resurgent desires for greater local autonomy in Europe today.

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