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Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Copyright page -- Dedication -- Preface -- Notes on the Text -- Figures and Acknowledgements -- Abbreviations -- Approaches -- Politics 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.
