This volume represents a well-deserved Festschrift produced by his graduate students for Prof. Dr. Manfred Groten on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Dr. Groten has led a distinguished and very productive career as an archivist at the Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln (1979–1998), professor of medieval history and historical auxiliary sciences at the University of Cologne (1998), and finally as professor of medieval, modern, and Rhineland regional history and director of the Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande at the University of Bonn (1999-present), the latter known since 2006 as the Abteilung für Rheinische Landesgeschichte des Instituts für Geschichtswissenschaft.

Though the eleven articles contained in this volume provide a wide range of content (drawn from the late Middle Ages to the early twentieth century), the methodologies employed serve as a fitting homage to the disciplinary expertise and interests of Dr. Groten himself. Linking social, constitutional, ecclesiastical, cultural, and intellectual history through prosopographical analysis of human networks within the Landesgeschichte of the Cologne-Aachen-Bonn-Bergisches Land vicinity (including the universities of Cologne and Bonn) has been the core legacy of his historical and archival research and university teaching.

The first three articles focus on later medieval Cologne: Manuel Hagemann’s on the student contingent from the Duchy of Cleves that attended the newly founded University of Cologne (1389–1450); Frank Engel’s on the political impact of the Great Schism on the archdiocese of Cologne and its archbishop Friedrich III as a result of his participation at the Council of Pisa (1409); Tobias Wulf’s on the implications of parochial development for Cologne’s urban history as seen through the parish of Klein St. Martin. These are among the more thoroughly researched essays, and though turgid academic German prose sometimes contributes unnecessary opacity most readers will be enriched by the insights and implications of these articles. Wulf’s article stands out among this group as having the most cultivated topic.

The next five articles consider aspects of early modern Cologne and its Kurkölnisch ties to the wider Rhineland region: Jochen Hermel’s on the extent of migration and civic resettlement between the great Rhine trading centers of Cologne and Frankfurt am Main in the 15th and early 16th century; Hideyuki Takatsu’s on the role of Syndici (legal experts) in the professionalization of the ruling elite and the development of its paternalistic concept of governance von oben in late 16th-century Cologne; Frank
Bartsch’s on the propagandistic memorializing of the siege of Lechenich (1642) during the Thirty Years War and long after; Andreas Rutz’s on the social and demographic composition as well as the regional network of a very popular Catholic female women's movement known as the *Ursulagesellschaft* (1606–1791); Yuki Ikari’s on the complex interaction of ideological, religious, economic, and political forces that ultimately resulted in a failed attempt to found an institution in Cologne to meet the spiritual and educational needs of Protestants during the so-called »Toleranzstreit« (1787–1789). This collection provides a rich tapestry of early modern Rhineland history, with a deft – one could even say Grotenesque – handling of the social networks that underlay the broader economic, intellectual, political, and religious trends of this eventful time period. Those by Takatsu, Rutz, and Ikari in particular are very well crafted pieces of historical research.

The final three articles share a focus on the Rhineland from the long 19th century up to 1921: Christian George’s on the gradual overcoming of Cologne’s civic and ecclesiastical resentments over the Prussian founding of the University of Bonn in 1818; Helmut Rönz's on the impact of French and Prussian territorial restructuring of the Cologne and Trier archbishoprics on priestly careers and ecclesiastical orientations (1802 and 1821); Martin Schlemmer’s on the symbolic embodiment of political radicalism on both right and left displayed in two simultaneous civic parades in Weimar-era Remscheid (1921). There is a remarkable continuity between these three studies in terms of the function of intellectual and religious history to illuminate the depth of human experience and value-formation as preconditions for a holistic political history. Christian George’s article deserves specific recognition for such an effective historiographical approach.

That so many of Dr. Groten’s students have made their way into careers as archivists, editors, researchers, and university lecturers is another testament to his enduring legacy since he has fulfilled all these roles with distinction over his very productive career. We may now add to his public record of scholarly publications the successful education of a generation of scholars who now in turn have produced their own work to honor him. In addition to the articles, the patrons of the volume itself are also a testament to Dr. Groten’s own extensive professional network based on a career rich in service to many: Landschaftsverband Rheinland, Erzbistum Köln, Philosophische Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Kölnischer Geschichtsverein, Verein für Geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande, and Kölnisches Stadtmuseum.