In 2001 authors of a review of Australian religious history referred to Anglicanism as a ‘sleeping giant’ in which ‘large tracts lay unexplored’. This was somewhat mysterious since it flew in the face of the indisputable significance of Anglicanism as a numerical force in Australian history. Until recent census returns, adherents of the Church of England constituted not only the largest Christian denomination in Australia, but also the largest Australian institution of any kind. As Brian Fletcher illustrates, Anglican traditions and assumptions have dominated Australian civic religion, such as it was, and asserted themselves in the interpretation of Australia’s colonial and post-colonial relationships with England. For these reasons, the need for a book such as this excellent collection, edited with care to the thematic and chronological coherence of the Anglican story, has long been felt. In answer to the call, Bruce Kaye and fellow associate editors have provided a fat (408pp.) and comprehensive account of Australian Anglicanism, elegantly produced by Melbourne University Press, with good pictures, full bibliography and the promise of a collection of images and sources available at a dedicated web site (www.archive.anglican.org.au). There are two parts, a set of six narrative chapters dealing with successive periods from 1788 to the present, partnered to seven thematic chapters dealing with identity, theology, gender and other broad issues. The collection has many pleasures, including Ruth Frappell’s witty and occasionally acidulous account of Anglican imperial fervour, Colin Holden’s reflection on Anglican visual arts and architecture, the latter supported by a rich online archive of images, and Brian Fletcher and David Hilliard’s contributions to the narrative overview. Bruce Kaye’s presiding genius is felt throughout the volume in the disciplined adherence to the organising themes and chronology, the careful framing of the general introduction, the generous notes and images, and the conscious engagement with contemporary academic scholarship which defies the venial limitations of less ambitious denominational histories. On the critical side, John Harris’s account of Anglicanism and indigenous peoples would have benefited from engagement with recent writing on Anglican missions by Noel Loos, and other missionary encounters by Henry Reynolds, Bain Attwood and Aboriginal writers. The issue of anti-Catholic sectarianism is barely touched upon, though it provides an important theme in Australian religious history. Frappell’s reference to the ‘anti-British sentiments of Roman Catholic prelates, especially Archbishop Daniel Mannix’ (p. 78) is not tenable in the light of Mannix’s published statements to the contrary. When asked in an interview late in life, whether he was ‘anti-British’, Mannix replied: ‘My feelings then and now were always favourable to the British. I opposed their policy in Ireland, and I think for a good reason … but otherwise I’ve no hatred or hostility towards the British people, or the British Empire, or the British Crown’ (cited by Santamaria in Daniel Mannix, p. 244). While it might not reasonably have been explained in less detail, the great struggle to achieve a constitution for Australian Anglicans and formal separation of the Australian dioceses from Canterbury was covered with some repetition by a number of contributors. And though it does not seem reasonable to ask for more when so much is already crammed in, it might have been interesting to have pursued the impact of Anglicanism on Australian literature. I am recalling here Patrick White’s account of the Anglican
communion service in his novel, The tree of man, in which a ritual act is sublimated into Stan’s experience as the archetypal Australian man. Overall, Anglicanism in Australia represents a major contribution to Australian religious and social history and a model for collaborative historical enterprises which might seek to follow in its wake.

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In early 2002 the Institute for European History in Mainz held a conference in anticipation of the bicentennial of the event mentioned in the title: the abolition on 25 February 1803 of territorial rule by prince-bishops throughout the German-speaking lands. Overnight twenty-three prince-bishops or archbishops, and forty-four princely abbots, ruling (on the whole benevolently and efficiently) over some three million subjects were stripped of all civil authority. Suppressed also were most of the religious houses in their domains, and the Catholic schools and universities which they maintained. Without anyone having changed confessional allegiance, more than half the Catholics in German lands became subjects of Protestant princes. Karl Otmar von Aretin calls this secularisation “The greatest catastrophe ever to befall German Catholicism. … Never before had a land experienced such fundamental spiritual change. It was a total victory for the modern secular state spawned by the Enlightenment.” Von Aretin’s description of the pre-1803 Reichskirche is full of interesting details. From the Peace of Westphalia (1648) until 1803 the bishops of Osnabrück were alternately Catholic and Protestant. The cathedral chapters, which elected the bishops in their respective dioceses, were firmly in aristocratic hands. Membership was restricted to those able to demonstrate at least sixteen noble ancestors, in some places thirty-two. Pluralism (the holding of more than one church office by a single person) was common. The dispensations needed for this practice (forbidden by the Council of Trent) were a welcome source of income for the Roman Curia. Many prince-bishops were unsuited for their spiritual office: some never advanced beyond minor orders. Pastoral work was carried out by auxiliary bishops. To this bleak picture there were exceptions, however. “At the end of the eighteenth century there were a number of outstanding pastors among the noble bishops and archbishops. … Most of the religious houses of this period were flourishing institutions.” Other contributors to this volume examine the history of the term ‘secularization’; earlier attempts at secularisation, starting with the demand of the sixteenth-century Reformers for suppression of religious houses; regulation and suppression of religious houses in the lower Rhineland in the eighteenth century; financial and administrative aspects of the secularisation; the only prince-bishop to escape the debacle (Karl Theodor von Dalberg of Mainz, 1744–1817); and the attempts of German bishops after 1803 to adapt to their new role. An example of