

a chance to modify the structures that had been handed down from the era of the Bildungsbürgertum. Change threatened the scientific and cultural context in which the MGH operated not only in the era of totalitarian regimes, but already at the time of the First World War: In the place of negotiation between the knowledge elite and governmental administration came subordination to a powerful state. Since its foundation in 1819, the MGH had come to owe a great deal to the autonomy of learned aristocratic networks—an autonomy that waned in the further course of the twentieth century.