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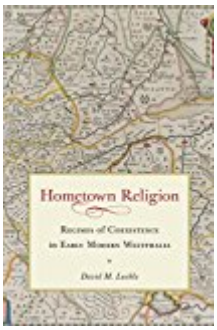


**David M. Luebke.** *Hometown Religion: Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia.* Studies in Early Modern German History Series. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016. 328 pp. $45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8139-3840-0.

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In 2010, the noted political scientist Robert Putnam coauthored a seminal book on modern religious toleration with fellow political scientist David Campbell, titled *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* The book took as its main theme the hyper pluralism and polarization that characterizes the contemporary American religious landscape, posing this central question: "how can religious pluralism coexist with religious polarization?" That is, how can a community, national or otherwise, remain cohesive in the face of religious and cultural fragmentation? Foremost among the answers uncovered by Putnam and Campbell is that the antidote to polarization's potentially corrosive effect on the social fabric lies within pluralism itself. The incredible religious diversity that Americans encounter in their everyday lives breeds a familiarity and acceptance of religious difference. In technical terms, "religiously diverse networks lead to a more positive assessment of specific religious groups."[1] In an illustrative example of how this dynamic works in practice, the authors offer what they term the "Aunt Susan Principle." Most Americans know someone in their close circle of relatives or friends ("Aunt Susan") who is of a different faith but who they know to be moral, upstanding, and respect worthy.[2] If anyone is going to heaven, so the reasoning goes, it is Aunt Susan. Personal familiarity encourages both a type of cognitive bracketing of one's own exclusivist religious dogma and a pragmatism that allows, despite whatever the ultimate truth may be, people of different faiths and traditions to agree on shared principles and live more or less in harmony.

Applying such modern sociological insights on the robustness of personal and local social networks to an earlier moment of intense religious polarization—Reformation Europe—runs the risk of anachronism and transhistoricism. But as David M. Luebke displays in his 2016 book, *Hometown Religion: Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia*, it can also prove very rewarding. Luebke's bottom-up, cultural history of early modern toleration poses a similar question to Putnam and Campbell in order to discover how

the small towns and villages of one unique German territory, that of the officially Catholic Prince-Bishopric of Westphalia, managed to maintain social cohesion in the face of increasing religious pluralization. And, in similar fashion to Putnam and Campbell (and to Mack Walker, the historian of local, everyday German life, to whose 1971 book, ***German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648–1871***, his own title alludes), Luebke finds that "the ecumenicity of everyday life" and the face-to-face nature of local communities, in large part, is the answer to why religious differences did not tear Westphalia apart during the sixteenth century (p. 206). Much like Putnam and Campbell's "Aunt Susan" principle, Luebke argues that sixteenth-century priests, magistrates, and townsfok in northwest Germany were able to temper pluralization's explosiveness by "suspending indefinitely the question of theological truth.... In an age of black and white, the townsmen and women of Westphalia painted in shades of gray" (p. 72). Luebke's detailed studies of what early modern rural Germans did when neighbors, kin, and friends left the ancestral and civic religion furnishes us with a treasure trove of new theoretical and factual insights into the practice of religious accommodation in early modern Europe.

In contrast to modern American life, the feat is even more remarkable when you consider that in Westphalia, as in many sixteenth-century locales, members of different faiths had to share not only the same civic spaces but the same sacred ones as well, since the church and civic community were one and the same. It is this fact—the particularly cohesive, corporate nature of early modern towns and villages—that gave rise to a "discernible set of practices," or a shared, civic ritual order that Luebke sees as the unique way in which early modern Westphalians dealt with pluralization in the wake of the Reformation. Specifically, this novel type of toleration took the form of a "hybrid" liturgy of two confessions, an amalgmation of Lutheran and Catholic practices to serve members of the community with different needs but who all shared one space.

After laying out the historical and political context of the Prince-Bishopric of Münster and showing how it became a de facto biconfessional territory in the second, third, and sixth chapters, Luebke describes the various rites of this hybrid, pluralized ritual order. He sees these as falling into two categories: the first being "rites of passage" celebrating an individual's entrance into the community, such as marriage and baptism; and the second being "rituals of community" consecrating the community as a whole, such as the Eucharist. He explains, in chapter 2, how in Westphalia, Protestant-leaning townsfolk continued to be married and baptized almost exclusively by Catholic priests, a fact that is explained by these rituals possessing a meaning that went beyond simple theology. They were "festive displays of rank, status, and newly forged bonds of kinship" in which as many relatives, neighbors, and friends participated as possible, and it was this primacy of social solidarity over theological truth that allowed Protestants to receive such rites from Catholic priests (p. 66). In chapter 3, he looks at hybrid Eucharist rituals as a "rite of community" and shows that a majority of Westphalian priests administered the Eucharist in both the Catholic (just the wafer) and Lutheran fashion (both wafer and wine), side by side in the same mass (p. 74). Likewise, in chapter 6, the fact that Catholics and Protestants continued to be buried alongside each other (despite the violence this often provoked elsewhere) is a manifestation that civic belonging and social status often trumped theological differences. For Luebke, these arrangements were an indication of the particular form of social belonging in premodern local communities where "alternative forms of belonging could supersede religion among the motivations for individual behavior" (p. 206). Social and political standing, kinship networks, shared business, and tradition often trumped a rigid adherence to abstract religious doctrine. Luebke's other two chapters are devoted

to a profile of the territory's clerics, who presided over these ritual arrangements (chapter 5), and to revisiting the well-researched practice of *Auslauf* (chapter 4), whereby minority confessions would leave one jurisdiction for a day to worship in a neighboring territory where their faith was permitted.

Luebke's book on such supra-confessional and local "rituals of accommodation" is, for a number of reasons, an important intervention in the ever-expanding literature on early modern toleration. First, Luebke builds off the important revisionist insights from Benjamin Kaplan (***Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*** [2007]) and Alexandra Walsham (***Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700*** [2006]) about practical arrangements for confessional coexistence in post-Reformation Germany. He gives a much more in-depth, textured look at how such accommodation practices worked in a specific regional context (Westphalia), with all the local political and social dynamics that is often lacking in Kaplan or Walsham in their more theoretical approach. Out of this more localist approach, we learn about practices and dynamics—for example, hybrid Eucharist liturgies or the political struggle between local town councils and a bishop—that go unmentioned in the other works. Second, Luebke's spatial and temporal specificity also gives us the ability to see real change over time, in contrast to the accounts of Kaplan and Walsham, where events and practices blend together across three centuries. In Luebke's approach, with its laser-like focus on the second half of the sixteenth century, we can see the pressure on local communities building by the end of the sixteenth century to take a stronger stand on confessional questions, which disrupted the burying of Protestants in Catholic churchyards, and led to the punishment of priests who gave the Eucharist in both kinds. We therefore come away with a much better understanding of the temporal progression of the ebb and flow of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the onset of a more hardened type of confessionalism in the build-up to the Thirty Years' War.

Finally, and most importantly, Luebke can be considered the first contributor to what I would consider a post-revisionist literature on the history of European religious toleration. Earlier revisionist authors (like Kaplan and Walsham) labored valiantly to undo the teleological and moralistic accounts of toleration present in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. In doing so, however, they unwittingly attached themselves too strongly to a simplistic theoretical model that placed "practical rationality" (toleration practices as spontaneous, practical necessities) against early modern ideological constructs that considered pluralism and toleration as wholly negative. Lutherans and Catholics, when they found themselves forced to share spaces, would begrudgingly work to find practical solutions to keep the peace, but never by surrendering their commitment to doctrinal purity. This opposition between belief and practice forms the "two-faced Janus" nature of early modern toleration for Kaplan and Walsham as it contained within it the explosive possibility of violence or peace.[3] Luebke implicitly and ingeniously moves beyond this dichotomy by destabilizing this fixed relationship between belief and practice as he strives to show the ambiguity of confessional identity and ritual behavior. Facing the historical reality that Westphalian priests and parishioners regularly participated in rituals contrary to prescribed doctrine of their confessions, Luebke argues that ritual action was not solely "driven by belief" but that a whole range of motivations beyond dogma is implicit in any ritual act (p. 12). Marriage, for example, constitutes a public display of union, in which two individuals enter into full adulthood and membership of the community, a meaning that supercedes narrow confessional connotations. This uncoupling of social and religious ritual and confessional doctrine allows Luebke a space to show that early modern pluralism (or at the least the rituals

that performed it) could have, in some cautious sense, a positive justification. Indeed, the comingling of what we now recognize as two nascent confessional camps was an integral part of local liturgy in post-confessional society. Therefore, instead of taking confessional identity as a theoretical given and as fully coherent, Luebke argues that pluralism and accommodationist practices could only be imbued with negative connotations *in as far as accommodation was recognized as accommodation.* If ritual prescriptions and confessional identity were indeterminate in many aspects, then the local communities whose hybrid liturgies embodied such indeterminancy could hardly have perceived this state of affairs as hated "pluralism" or toleration. For example, Luebke explains that the practice of a hybrid Eucharist (to be explored shortly) came about often out of pure confusion as to what ritual forms doctrine demanded, and "the ragged indeterminancy of belief and its relationship to liturgical practice" (p. 206). Wide swaths of Catholics well into the late sixteenth century toyed with the lay chalice and many priests practiced it. If no strict and hardened confessional identities existed by the late sixteenth century, or if we abandon the assumption that confessional identity implied a rigid set of liturgical commitments, then we can understand how early modern communities could defend pluralism in the absence of any coherent confessional identities as we understand them today. Luebke does admit that, in the abstract, plurality was not a good in itself, but that it was the "practical effect of defending civic liberty against the prince-bishops' intrusions, whatever the specific forms they took" (p. 170). On this theoretical basis, Luebke is thus able to contstruct his belief that, at least in Westphalia, a type of positive and assertive plural regime came into existence within local communities.

The main point of criticism I have for the book is also what I find to be its major strength—the question of accommodation and pluralism as a positive assertion. Luebke is trying to tell the story of early modern religious accommodation that is not just, as with Kaplan and Walsham, the managing of violence by segregation, what we might term a "weak" form of modern pluralism. Rather, Luebke wants to read a stronger sense of pluralism into the fabric of early modern religious toleration where *positive* efforts were made to weave together two unlike communities, overlooking theological disagreement, in order to preserve an overarching civic identity and cohesion. He makes clear that this is not the modern celebration of pluralism for pluralism's sake, but it is also not the begruding, plug-the-gap form of toleration the revisionists have argued was the full extent of the practice in early modern times. This is a fairly risky, if interesting, undertaking in that it teeters at times on ascribing anachronistic mentalities to early modern Christians as with Luebke's repeated assertion that participants in these hybrid rites or accommodationist policies were "indifferent" to theological truth (p. 50). To be sure, he makes clear that much of the pluralistic "regime of coexistence" which came into being in Westphalia owed a great deal to contingency, political expediency, and even confusion over what was and what was not doctrine. But Luebke does often walk a fine line in his attempt to portray these rituals as more than just stop-gap measures: rituals encoding and legitimizing religious pluralism.

Additionally, a few other questions arose relating to the organization of the book and the impact of its limited geographical scope on the chronology of the development of confessionalization. On the first point, I found chapter 5 on clerical concubinage to be strangely out of place in the overall argumentation of the book. While it is somewhat clear from the introduction that Luebke wishes to present a profile of the clerical caste under which this pluralistic regime could take place, the point is rarely made in the chapter itself and the reader is often left wondering what clerical concubinage has to do with religious toleration. As for Luebke limiting his study to one terri-

tory of the Holy Roman Empire, this is another case where a major strength of the book is also perhaps a weakness. Luebke is able to give us a much more thorough temporal and political contextualization of certain practices, but we are left wondering just how generalizable his conclusions are to the rest of the empire and Europe. In particular, his timeline for the onset of inelastic confessionalized identities—something he argues did not happen until the Thirty Years' War and later in Westphalia—might not hold up in other principalities and territories with starkly different conditions. Bodo Nischan (***Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism*** [1999]) and Ronny Po-Chia Hsia (***Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750*** [1992]), for example, show that in territories like the Palatinate which saw the early onset of the "second reformation" of Calvinists in the 1570s and 1580s, Lutheran identities quickly hardened over differences in the Eucharistic and baptismal rites.

In sum, Luebke has given us a rich and thoroughly well-researched volume to nuance our understanding of early modern ritual practices and toleration, as well as numerous thought-provoking insights into how these communities successfully managed to stave off religious violence for almost a century in one of the most religiously tumultuous periods of modern European history.

Notes

[1]. Robert Putnam and David Cambell, ***American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*** (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 4.

[2]. Ibid., 526-527.

[3]. Benjamin Kaplan, ***Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*** (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 264.

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