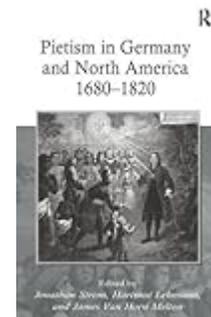


Jonathan Strom, Hartmut Lehmann, James Van Horn Melton, eds. *Pietism in Germany and North America, 1680-1820*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. x + 289 pp. \$114.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7546-6401-7.



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Pietism and the Atlantic World

Scholarship on international Pietism has flourished over the past decade. Three International Congresses on Pietism Research have been held in Halle since 2001, and recent years have seen several academic conferences in the United States devoted to the subject. In 2004 appeared the final installment of the *Geschichte des Pietismus*, which is likely to remain the standard reference work on the topic for years to come.[1] On both sides of the Atlantic the monograph literature on Pietism continues to expand apace.

The present collection of essays both reflects and adds significantly to this new scholarship. The fruit of a 2004 conference at Emory University, the work is billed as an exploration of Pietism in the long eighteenth century from a transatlantic perspective. In his introduction Jonathan Strom invokes Bernard Bailyn's concept of an Atlantic World to frame the volume's agenda. German immigration brought a sizable Pietist presence to North America, establishing diverse communities that stayed tied to like-minded groups in the Old World through a variety of personal, institutional, and economic networks

that would shape religious and social life on both continents. Strom casts the volume as a challenge to the parochialism of much previous scholarship. While German work has largely persisted in seeing Pietism as a mainly German phenomenon, historians of North American religion have tended to focus on radical forms of Pietism at the expense of more mainstream varieties and have not integrated Pietism adequately into their broader narratives. The length and quality of the following seventeen essays vary, and not all fit the announced theme neatly, but many of them suggest how some of these defects may be remedied. Penned mainly by U.S. and German historians, but also including contributions from Canadian, British, and Swiss scholars, some pieces take a historiographical or theoretical approach, while others draw on empirical studies to challenge entrenched paradigms and open up new lines of inquiry.

How to define Pietism remains a vexed question, so it is fitting that co-editor Hartmut Lehmann addresses the problem head on in a manifesto for future inquiry. In line with recent approaches—most notably W. R. Ward's

Protestant Evangelical Awakening (1992), which Lehmann inexplicably slights for “fail[ing] to discuss Pietism explicitly” (p. 15)—Lehmann depicts Pietism as a distinct wave within a vast Protestant renewal movement that extended back to English Puritanism and forward to Methodism, the Great Awakenings, and beyond.[1] The interconnected and complex nature of this movement, contends Lehmann, means that scholars should eschew both national traditions of interpretation and rigid research agendas guided by terms like “Puritanism” and “Pietism” and instead “attempt to analyze the causes, the character, and the consequences of the sequence of waves of revivals and awakening since the seventeenth century in various European countries and in North America” (p. 16). Noting that Pietism has “deeply influenced the genesis of the modern world,” Lehmann posits that “[i]nternational and interdisciplinary Pietism research ... may be the first step toward a new history of the Western world that, in turn, may provide a means to reconsider the whole of modern history” (p. 21). These are high hopes indeed—perhaps impossibly high—to pin on any single subfield of early modern history. But Lehmann’s capacious view of Pietism and its role as an agent of change underlines the significance of the present studies and gives conceptual orientation to the volume as a whole. Lehmann’s caveat about using term “Pietism” to frame research agendas goes mostly unheeded in a volume devoted to the subject, but many of the essays draw attention to links among branches of the evangelical awakening in central Europe, England, and the New World.

Lehmann’s statement is complemented by a proposal by Stephen J. Stein highlighting the gains of integrating Pietism more fully into the American religious narrative. According to Stein, these include, among others, a greater sensitivity to the transatlantic dimensions of America’s religious history, a new emphasis on non-English-speaking communities in the New World, and a shift of focus away from New England and towards the Middle Colonies, the South, and the trans-Appalachian regions. The volume ends with another manifesto for future work, this one from Ulrike Gleixner on how to incorporate gender more fully into narratives of German Lutheran Pietism. Gleixner underlines the prominence of women throughout the early Pietist movement, something often noted by contemporaries but mostly overlooked in later accounts. She suggests how sources may be mined to construct counternarratives that restore women’s historical role and to probe the construction of gender in Pietist circles. A fine example of such

work appears in Ruth Albrecht’s chapter on Johanna Eleonora Petersen, early Lutheran Pietism’s most prominent woman. Albrecht argues that Petersen’s case calls into question common notions about women and laity in the movement. She contends that Petersen should be seen not mainly as a mystic or visionary, as she often has been, but as a lay theological author who purposefully sought public argument by pronouncing on theologically disputed subjects. While Albrecht concedes that Petersen accepted traditional views of gender relations, she maintains that Petersen’s publishing activity nevertheless challenged those norms in the long run.[2]

A couple of essays illustrate how the study of communication networks can shed light on the dynamic of transatlantic Pietism. The late Donald F. Durnbaugh (to whom the volume is dedicated) focuses on three radical groups—the Philadelphians, the Ephrata Society, and the Separatists—to make clear that Pietism must be understood as a self-consciously ecumenical and international movement focused on “heart religion.” Durnbaugh shows that Pietists, both churchly and sectarian, agreed that true Christians could be found in many confessions, denominations, and ethnic groups, a conviction reflected in and reinforced by the many letters, publications, and travelers that crossed the Atlantic in both directions. Alexander Pyrges examines the Ebenezer settlement in Georgia and its century-long correspondence with the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in London as well as with Lutheran Pietists in Halle, Augsburg, and elsewhere in the German Empire. Drawing on this correspondence, Pyrges challenges the view of Ebenezer as an outpost of Halle Pietism that gradually became Americanized and instead depicts it as the hub of an intricate socioreligious network that helped establish the Atlantic system and shape religious developments on both continents. Durnbaugh’s and Pyrges’s contributions underscore the ecumenical nature of the awakened communities and suggest the historiographical riches yet to be mined from reading their mail.

Migration of both people and ideas forms a central theme in another set of essays. Douglas H. Shantz deploys Peter Berger’s sociology of knowledge, particularly his theories about mobility and intellectual rootlessness, to analyze the embattled careers of two radical German clergymen, Andreas Achilles (a Lutheran), and Heinrich Horch (Reformed). Shantz draws connections between both figures’ experience of homelessness, their attachment to conventicles, and their theologies, particularly their chiliasm. In a too-brief article, Willi Temme illustrates relations between radical groups in England

and Germany by sketching out the “transmigration and transformation” of the concept of Divine Sophia from the theosophist Jakob Böhme via Jane Leade and the English Philadelphians back to Germany, to Eva von Buttlar’s Mother Eve Society, notorious for its apocalypticism and sexual practices. Literary scholar Hans-Jürgen Schrader focuses on the peripatetic life of the radical Inspirationists and their missionary leaders, demonstrating that their experience of persecution became essential to their self-understanding and their aim of gathering scattered believers for the coming Kingdom of God; the Inspirationists would emigrate *en masse* to North America in the nineteenth century.

Another group of essays explores the experience of Pietist communities in the New World and the effects of the North American context on Pietist identity, organization, and mission. In a piece too brief to ground its claims adequately (a mere six pages), Hermann Wellenreuther uses the American experience of Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg to highlight conflicts among Moravian, independent, and Hallensian Pietists over church governance and to argue that, along with rejecting the structure of the institutional Lutheran church in Germany, American Pietists gave a more prominent and active role to the laity in congregational affairs. In the volume’s longest essay (twenty-nine pages), Beverly Prior Smaby tells the sorry tale of how, after Nikolaus von Zinzendorf’s death in 1760, Moravians in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, following the lead of their European brethren, systematically curtailed women’s activities and excluded them from leadership positions. The Bethlehem community is also the focus of an astute and well-documented study by Katherine Cartwright Engel, one with broader ramifications for the study of American Pietism and questions of assimilation and secularization. Engel analyzes, via a scrutiny of Bethlehem’s communal economic system (*Oeconomy*), its shift in identity from the 1740s to the 1760s, from being a *Pilgergemeinde*, an outwardly-focused base of missionary activity, to becoming an *Ortsgemeine*, a closed Moravian community focused on the spiritual up-building of its members. The fact that the old-style *Oeconomy* ended, argues Engel, testifies to a shift in the identity of the Moravian community in Pennsylvania. In an interesting narrative that regrettably skirts larger historiographical questions, Helene M. Kastinger Riley treats the challenges faced by rival Pietist communities in Georgia, as a group of Salzburger refugees settled in an area with a sizable Moravian presence. Riley describes missionary efforts of the Moravians among the Indians and tells the remarkable story

of Christian Gottlieb Priber’s aim to create a utopian society among the Cherokee before running afoul of James Oglethorpe’s colonial policies.

In one of the volume’s most striking chapters, Jon Sensbach taps his earlier research to demonstrate the key role that the Moravian missions in the West Indies played in the origins of black Protestantism.[3] Sensbach shows the threat that the Moravian mission in St. Thomas presented to slavery and racist thinking and the opposition it provoked from the planters, fatefully leading Zinzendorf to save the mission at the cost of justifying slavery. Nevertheless, embracing the radical egalitarianism of the original Moravian message, Afro-Caribbean slaves continued to convert. As black Pietism radiated outward across the Caribbean and northward to the American colonies, a small number black Moravians journeyed eastward across the Atlantic. Along with African-born Protestants in Europe, they backed missionary efforts to Africa and envisioned an “Afro-Christian community of faith encompassing America, Europe, and Africa—a sort of spiritual triangle trade that foreshadowed the African colonization movement of the late eighteenth century” (p. 197).

Pietism in Germany and North America concludes with a group of four strong essays gathered under the somewhat ill-fitting rubric “New Directions in Research.” I have already noted Ulrike Gleixner’s contribution. Benjamin Marschke summarizes his previous work challenging the standard interpretation of the nexus between Pietism and the Prussian state. Contra Klaus Deppermann and Carl Hinrichs, who emphasized cooperation and collaboration between Pietists and the Hohenzollerns, Marschke examines patronage networks to depict a more conflictual set of relationships, both within Pietism itself and between Pietists and the state. Marschke’s thesis is provocative, but for substantiating evidence one will need to read his monograph on the subject.[4] Co-editor James Van Horn Melton focuses on the twenty thousand Protestants who were expelled from the archbishopric of Salzburg in the 1730s, provoking international Protestant outrage and, as W. R. Ward argued, serving as a catalyst for the Protestant evangelical awakening. Largely due to the prominent role of Halle Pietists in identifying the refugees as co-religionists and helping settle Salzburger in North America, it has often been assumed that the Salzburger were of a Pietist ilk. But Melton analyzes interrogation records, personal library inventories, and in particular the widely circulated *Sendbrief* of Salzburger Joseph Schaitberger, to show that they retained close ties to orthodox Lutheranism until

their exile, when their association with Halle Pietism led to a dilution of Lutheran confessional identity. Drawing on his previous work, Christopher Clark contributes a rich and suggestive essay on Pietism and the Jews.[5] Clark shows how the centrality of millennial expectations and the hope for Jewish mass conversion in Philipp Jakob Spener's and August Hermann Francke's theology led to efforts to ameliorate the social and economic condition of German Jews. The Pietist mission to the Jews included attention to the impact of poverty, social isolation, and occupational discrimination as barriers to conversion. Though with limited success, Pietists also attempted to integrate converted Jews into the Christian community and broader society. Clark suggests links between Pietist critiques of Judaism and those of the *Aufklärung*, which were in turn echoed by German Idealists and conservative advocates of the "Christian state." In the vastly different socioreligious setting of North America, however, Pietist millennial ideas about the Jews are shown to have had little direct influence.

As noted, a number of the essays in *Pietism in Germany and North America* summarize contributors' previous writings, and some German-language scholarship is made available here in English for the first time. For these reasons the volume serves as a valuable guide to the current state of Pietism research. At the same time, many of these studies also open up fresh angles and raise new questions that one hopes will spawn further innovative work in this vast and vital arena of early modern history. Few of the contributors aim to scale the historiographical heights marked out in Lehmann's opening manifesto.

But taken together, these essays amply illustrate the crucial significance of Pietism for the shaping of the North Atlantic world and, by extension, of Western modernity itself. A growing recognition of that significance should continue to attract both scholarly and popular attention to this fascinating and important subject.

Notes

[1]. Martin Brecht, Klaus Deppermann, Ulrich G  bler, and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 4 vols. (G  ttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993-2004).

[2]. Albrecht's work on Petersen has since appeared in Ruth Albrecht, *Johanna Eleonora Petersen: Theologische Schriftstellerin des fr  hen Pietismus* (G  ttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

[3]. See Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[4]. Benjamin Marschke, *Absolutely Pietist: Patronage, Factionalism, and State-Building in the Early Eighteenth-Century Prussian Army Chaplaincy* (T  bingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2005).

[5]. Christopher M. Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728-1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

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