

life in Cluj. Szegedi focuses on the remarkable urban Reformation in Cluj. The town became a refuge for thinkers such as Jacobus Palaeologus, who was engaged in a search for a syncretism of monotheistic religions. From German Reformed backgrounds, Adam Neuser and Matthias Vehe-Glirius also moved to live and teach in Cluj. Vehe-Glirius published a work on the knowledge of God that combined Jewish and Anti-Trinitarian ideas and literature.

Debates and disputes continued to bubble up among different Anti-Trinitarian writers and preachers about the nature of Christ and about whether the invocation of Christ detracted from the true worship of God. However, in 1578 the law against theological innovation was renewed and the city council of Cluj expelled Vehe-Glirius. In June 1579 Dávid was questioned about whether he accepted non-adorantism and had therefore broken the law against theological innovation. Dávid died while in prison, and Giorgio Biandrata drew up an adorantist creed for the Anti-Trinitarian Church. The church superintendents Demeter Hunyadi and György Enyedi then worked to legitimise this adorantist Anti-Trinitarianism as a Church operating within Transylvania's laws. More radical Sabbatarian voices were not formally expelled from the Unitarian Church until 1606. Szegedi indeed argues that the real winner from the confessional politics of this period was the Reformed Church. She traces how the small Reformed community in Cluj was able to secure control of the former Dominican church (then vacant). In challenging Unitarians in Cluj and elsewhere, the Reformed were quick to deploy the charge of Sabbatarianism to discredit their rivals. While the Unitarian Church maintained its legal rights as a received religion during the seventeenth century, as Szegedi writes the Reformed Church was fast becoming the first among equals in the practice of Transylvanian religious politics.

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Anti-Anabaptist polemics. Dutch Anabaptism and the devil in England, 1531–1660.

By Gary K. Waite. (*Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies*, n.s 1.) Pp. xxvi + 241 incl. 11 colour and black-and-white ills. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2023. \$39.95 (paper). 978 1 926599 99 1

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Gary Waite's book is the first volume in the recently launched series *Anabaptism and Mennonite Studies* from Pandora Press, now based in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Waite, who is professor emeritus in the department of history at the University of New Brunswick, has been involved in 'Amsterdammified!', a research programme begun in 2015 which has contributed significantly to our understanding of how heterodox religious groups in seventeenth-century England influenced religious discourse on the eve of the Enlightenment. The present volume builds on that research and extends Waite's already impressive previous work on religious movements and figures of especially the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That body of work includes significant contributions to understanding heresy and witchcraft (and witch-hunting) as well as the inconsistent development of religious diversity. Much of Waite's work focuses on these and other matters by way of studying

Anabaptism and figures such as David Joris. Here Waite continues his life's work by investigating anti-Anabaptist polemics used in England from 1531 to 1660 as a weapon in debates regarding religious diversity, understood during this historical period primarily as a threat to English society. Reading these English polemical publications targeting continental Anabaptism provides Waite with a 'lens to peer at broader attitudes toward religious dissent, toleration, witchcraft, and God and the devil, among other things' (p. xviii). This polemical literature was designed to inspire revulsion and fear, and the specific attacks on Anabaptism shaped the larger discourse on English nonconformist groups.

As is the case with Waite's previous publications, he proceeds by way of examining a host of primary sources, including print material along with a series of historical images which both illustrate and serve to generate Waite's arguments throughout the book. Waite draws on the *Early English Books Online* database of all English books printed to 1700 for his source material, acknowledging that his is 'not a comprehensive overview, but merely a preliminary analysis of key works on the subject' that he hopes will inspire further research (p. 26).

Drawing liberally on these primary sources (including numerous lengthy direct quotations), Waite patiently displays the various wide-ranging dimensions and impacts of these anti-Anabaptist polemics. Anabaptism stands accused of rejection of infant baptism, of embracing the heterodox doctrine of the Celestial Flesh of Christ, of polygamy, of practising community of goods, of sectarianism and pacifism, along with rejection of civil offices for true Christians (p. 41). Further, readers were warned of the work of the devil in Anabaptism, leading to increased anxiety about the activity of witchcraft, and thus contributing to the revival of large-scale witchcraft trials (a subject Waite has previously dealt with at length in his book *Eradicating the devil's minions*, Toronto 2007 [p. 54]). Overall, Anabaptism was characterised as an assault on true faith, and therefore a menace to English society.

These polemics were 'successful' to varying degrees, both in spreading suspicions regarding Anabaptists, but also other dissident groups, such as the Quakers. Waite's research also brings to view important and perhaps counter-intuitive observations concerning the unanticipated and unintended consequences of anti-Anabaptist polemics. That is, 'the ideas portrayed in the controversial pamphlets and books proved attractive rather than repulsive' (p. 20), a dynamic observed already by some seventeenth-century writers, as is the case with John Saltmarsh, writing in 1677, who accuses Thomas Edward of 'making *Hereticks* by writing against *them*' (p. 21). Waite highlights these kinds of ironic effects at numerous places in the book, arguing that polemical works 'inadvertently offered the discontented a number of innovative ideas to draw from, helping in fact to inspire the surge in new religious movements of the 1640s, even though the intention of the authors was to suppress, not encourage dissent' (p. 4). Indeed, as polemicists demonised Anabaptist thought and practices, it seems that the more detail they offered, the more interest was raised in those very ideas.

The obvious strength of Waite's book is his close perceptive reading of primary sources, interpreted carefully within the broader historical contexts in which these sources were generated. Waite's references, along with his extensive direct quotation of primary sources, serve as the engine of his arguments. His display of these sources means that nearly every page includes not only brief phrases but extensive

quotations both in the body of the text and in long content footnotes. These inclusions provide the reader with historical evidence to consider, and, as Waite hopes, guide the reader to other possible research which can still be undertaken in the field. At the risk of being churlish, I think there are times when these lengthy direct quotations almost seem excessive, as they can not infrequently take up nearly a full page, which when combined with equally lengthy content footnotes, can make the text unnecessarily choppy, as is the case where Waite includes a lengthy title of a publication in the body of the text only to reproduce it in an equally lengthy footnote on the same page.

This book serves as a fine contribution to our understanding of English and Anabaptist religious history, the development and erosion of religious authority and the uneven expansion of religious diversity on the eve of the Enlightenment. The close reading of polemical literature also provides Waite with an opportunity to consider what might be learned as it applies to our current situation, where issues such as polarisation, hate literature and indirect and direct violence abound. These connections between the polemical literature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and our situation seem pregnant with possibility for understanding our own time, and learning lessons that might make the earlier period relevant for our time. Waite does not develop these possibilities at any length, and rightly so, since to do so requires much more work; work that would give an account of differences between the two eras and show the significance of the developments in religious practices and political realities; work that needs to be done before direct causal lines and analogies are asserted as plausible. Waite's book inspires the possibility that such work ought to be pursued while taking seriously English polemics of 1531 to 1660 on their own terms.

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Navigating reformed identity in the rural Dutch republic. Communities, belief, and piety. By Kyle J. Dieleman. Pp. 263. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023. €117. 978 94 6372 762 4
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Kyle J. Dieleman sets out to study the establishment of a Reformed Protestant confessional identity as well as the 'lived religious experience' of members of Reformed congregations in the Dutch countryside. By doing so, Dieleman aims to add to the historiography on the Dutch Reformed Church which, as he rightly asserts, has focused mainly, albeit not exclusively, on urban churches and congregations. The six case studies that are central in this book – Arnemuiden, Huissen, IJzendijke, Serooskerke, Sluis and Wemeldinge – include places that were formally cities (such as Arnemuiden) but which had a small population, thus markedly differing from more populous urban centres such as Amsterdam and Utrecht. The size of these places is of key importance: the book's central premise is that 'lived religious experience as a whole was complicated by the small size and geographical isolation of rural communities in the early modern Low Countries' (p. 41).