

extent, in other words, did antinomian expression in England parallel or depart from certain diverse, extreme religious discourses arising from within other European Christian denominations devoted to Reformation theology?

David J. Rempel Smucker and John L. Ruth (eds.) and James W. Lowry (intro. and trans.). *Hans Landis: Swiss Anabaptist Martyr in Seventeenth-Century Documents*. Millersburg: Ohio Amish Library, 2003. xi + 233 pp. + 18 illus. \$14.95. Review by NILES S. ILLICH, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

In 1614 Hans Landis, a leader of the Swiss Anabaptists, became a martyr. His execution by the Swiss catalyzed a Landis mythology, which as the author indicates had at least two general schools: "Hans Landis as a civilly disobedient leader of a troublesome sect; and Hans Landis as a sturdy hero of the Christian faith" (2-3). The purpose of this book is to provide "a useful tool to those who want to carry research forward in the areas that these documents touch [the life and death of Hans Landis]" (12). While this goal appears to justify the book's publication, a reader may quickly develop misgivings that other, less-scholarly motives inspired the editors. Such suspicion may be piqued early on when the author asks, "What kind of society would deem a Hans Landis as an intolerable presence?" (4). Following a broad and sometimes clumsy introduction that provides background information on the Swiss, Hans Landis, and (only briefly) the issues of early modern conflict between church and state, are twenty-five documents that are otherwise generally unavailable to scholars.

The twenty-five documents, which constitute the heart of the text, are published on opposing pages in both German and English, providing capable scholars the unusual opportunity to interpret them without the hindrances of another's translation. The final document (in the appendix) is the *Ausbund* song; composed to memorialize the interrogation and execution of Landis, it is especially interesting because instead of transcribing the document into contemporary German, the translator elected to leave this en-

tire document in its original German script, accompanied by an English translation (there are occasional passages of other documents where the editors included a portion of the document in the original German script). The documents all somehow relate to the life, but more frequently the death, of Hans Landis. Predictably, most documents address theological issues, but one can also find passages relating to civil and governmental affairs. Although one might suspect dislike between the Swiss officials and the accused, some of the documents convey affable, but firm, confrontations between the two.

Ranging from church documents to court transcripts and even some personal recollections, the twenty-five included documents come from a variety of individual sources. They do as reasonable a job as any twenty-five documents can do in chronicling a period of one's life. Broadly, they focus on the persecution of Hans Landis; some documents cover the same events from different perspectives. Although the text contains a brief description of which archives produced these documents, there is no discussion of how or why these individual documents were selected over others. Nor is there any sense that these documents are representative of the collections from which they came or were instead selected because they were in some way unique.

Generally, historians always welcome the publication and translation of documents; this collection, however, is so focused that it may only be relevant to those specifically interested in Landis. Further, it fails to answer the question posed on the fourth page: "What kind of society would deem a Hans Landis as an intolerable presence?" I suspect that the answer to the author's question would necessitate a general look at early modern Europe and the relation between religion and the state, instead of twenty-five narrowly focused documents. While there was no expectation of a broad survey of early modern history, an introduction that successfully placed the documents in their historical context would have broadened the book's appeal.

The general value of this publication is quite limited. Those specifically interested in Hans Landis and the Anabaptists should

find it worth consulting; however the publication of such a book, by a press and by individuals so closely associated with the subject, should make all readers suspicious about the selection of these specific documents. The text lacks convincing evidence of impartiality, a necessity exacerbated by the close relationship between the publisher, authors, and the subject. While there are elements in these documents that add to broader concerns such as the Swiss government and religion, generally the book is so tightly focused that its broader historical application is rather narrow.

Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley, and D.W. Hayton, eds. *The House of Commons 1690-1715*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 5 volumes. \$400. Review by VICTOR STATER, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY.

How does one review a monument to scholarship? Certainly no brief review can do justice to the work under consideration. A few statistics might help readers get a grip upon this latest installment of *The History of Parliament*. Five volumes. 5,051 pages. 1,982 biographical articles of members of Parliament. 314 constituency articles. Twenty-seven appendices. And all of these compiled by a team of fifteen dedicated and careful scholars. The first volumes of the *History*, focusing upon the years 1754-1790, appeared in 1964, under the editorship of Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke. In succeeding decades new installments have emerged, each more eagerly awaited than the last. This section of the *History* has gestated for more than thirty years, under the successive leadership of Eveline Cruickshanks, David Hayton, and Stuart Handley. These historians have built a scholarly edifice which will undoubtedly stand the test of time.

For students of Parliamentary history, these volumes, it might be argued, are the most interesting. The period it covers marks the emergence of Parliament—the House of Commons in particular—as the cornerstone of a new English (British, after 1707) constitution. Party strife, encouraged by triennial elections, a vigorous political press, and near-constant continental war, peaked during