

be appreciated by literary scholars and historians alike. It will be required reading for anyone wanting to study this extraordinary source of information about the lives and deaths of men and women in early modern Germany.

Kenneth G. Appold. *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung. Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. XII + 359 pp. 84,00 €. Review by SUSAN R. BOETTCHER, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.

A colleague remarked to me recently that modern historical inquiry demands that once a particular argument has become established, eventually another scholar writes to argue exactly the opposite. This is how scholars make names for themselves; one could even argue that such professional dialectic pulls the field forward. How one feels about it as a reader is another matter; the person arguing the contrarian case is often liable to charges of grandstanding, revisionism, or casuistry. Not so Kenneth Appold's *Habilitationsschrift*: it argues the opposite case with modest bravura, plenty of data, and convincing results. Appold also revises our perspective on how dialectical processes worked in the early modern confessional university.

Appold aims to examine the applicability of the confessionalization thesis; to study late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran ecclesiology; and to rehabilitate study of university elites against a research agenda currently much more occupied with popular piety and territorial politics. Most importantly, however, as signalled by the order of his arguments, he seeks to argue against a still-common stereotype of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lutheran theological culture: that Lutheran orthodoxy (the period between the Book of Concord and the beginning of pietism) was characterized by contentious theologians who engaged in meaningless polemic over obscure issues at the drop of a hat. Interpretively, the period suffers from the double whammy of the pietists, who found it emotionally sterile, and the Luther Renaissance, which termed its leading lights unoriginal epigones. This picture has been changing over the last few years, as theologians interested in confessionalization have increasingly called into question stereotypes about this period. Appold significantly expands this new work, however, by arguing

that one of the central means by which confessional orthodoxy developed a theological position was via the disputation, a process that, although it typically produced a published result, otherwise took place outside of wider public view. Moreover, he argues, while the point of disputation was the establishment of an orthodox teaching, this process was not characterized by belligerent, aggressive boundary-marking but rather by the gradual formation, through these highly disciplined disagreements, of an “open consensus.”

After a short terminological, source-critical and methodological introduction, Appold turns in part 1 of his book to the background, context and structure of the art of disputation as practiced at the University of Wittenberg, the leading Lutheran university of the sixteenth century. The narrative begins with Jakob Andreae’s inaugural lecture in 1577, just after the purge of crypto-Calvinist scholars from Wittenberg theological faculty. Appold traces Andreae’s efforts, with Saxon Elector August I, to establish a new method of theological education and its outcomes for the practice of disputations. Interest in disputations waxed and waned, but eventually was sustained, not because it served as a means of indoctrination, because rather because the theological faculty saw disputation as a way to control theological discourse itself while protecting it from the influences of outsiders. This standpoint also suggests, as Appold notes, that the Book of Concord was not seen as a final statement, but as a point of departure—another argument that challenges scholarship that has long argued that the statement’s definitive nature undermined the legitimacy of the many subsequent theological controversies, even at the time. A great deal of the argumentation here is based on insights from speech-act theory, and conservative theological readers may take issue with its application here. Probably sensing that readers will either accept or reject this strategy, Appold does not bother to justify it except by stating that a communicative theory of language is an appropriate tool for the examination of disputation as a communicative process. While such an insight turns some traditional assumptions about the nature of theological disagreement on their heads, it also makes disputations into an object more easily susceptible to comparison with other confessional age communication processes such as preaching, teaching, education, and polemic.

Part 2 discusses disputations at Wittenberg, showing convincingly that the chestnut that Philip Melancthon was the last faculty member interested in disputation is erroneous. Appold distinguishes five phases of focus in

Wittenberg disputations up till the triumph of pietism and discusses normative boundaries on innovative processes in disputations, such as the scriptures and confessional statements. Appold suggests that disputants revealed a wide-ranging series of interests in their premises that diverged from the merely theological or biblical, an openness that they extended to Lutheran interlocutors but which they restricted in controversialist positions directed at members of other confessions. Part 3 then turns to ecclesiology (the teaching on the nature of the Church), traced both through a series of theological positions and a discussion of (sometimes competing) theoretical models. Appold chose ecclesiology as the test case because he views it as the theological realm with the largest broader social consequences; while we might disagree, this choice thus functions as a proof of his assertion that theology professors participated in disputations not as a means of supporting the territorial state (a central moment of the confessionalization thesis), but rather as a means of engaging with supra-territorial and supra-confessional discussions in western Christianity. Ecclesiology also spawned significant disagreement with both Catholics and Calvinists, and is thus a good barometer for discussing confessionalization as a process that marks boundaries toward the outside. Appold establishes a fairly wide spectrum of theological opinions grouped around Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession; what emerges less clearly from his discussion is exactly where the boundaries of Lutheran teaching lay—perhaps because his sources, the printed theses of disputations, were censored before they were printed, so that interpretations beyond the pale were weeded out in a previous step. Appold also examines archival materials related to censorship of disputations, suggesting that participants considered this a positive rather than an interfering process. But I found myself wondering if the reason that a study of ecclesiological disputations produced a result of relative consensus was because while Lutherans disputed with non-Lutherans about the definition of the true church, the matter was relatively less controversial within the Lutheran camp itself. I wondered whether the same result would have applied to disputations about Christology, the divisive issue among Lutheran theologians in the period just before Appold's study starts.

Regardless of how we view Appold's evidence or theoretical choices, however, this book takes several important steps for further studies of theology—considering its communicative aspects, viewing it as an academic system with potential comparisons to other disciplines, and treating the unifying po-

tential of theological arguments. Moreover, somewhat atypically for a *Habilitationsschrift*, this displays an innate sense for knowing when an argument has been made and further discussion will only deaden our interest. This admirable book is a model of hyperbole-free argumentation that quietly makes a persuasive case not only about the development of dogmatic theology, but also about the ways in which that development was couched in communicative processes. It should be read not only by those with interests in ecclesiology, but by any scholar with interests in Lutheran theology, the confessional age, university culture, early modern theological polemic, and the communicative aspects of confessionalization.

Laurence Lux-Sterritt. *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. viii + 236 pp. + 9 illus. \$99.95. Review by GEOFF BAKER, KEELE UNIVERSITY.

Redefining Female Religious Life is a comparative study of two pioneering post-Reformation female movements: the English Institute of Mary Ward, which established houses in England and continental Europe, and the French Ursulines. Both focussed their energies on teaching girls outside the cloister, activity that the Church did not consider suitable for women religious, which meant that their fate rested primarily on the status that they adopted. Shortly after France received the Decrees of the Council of Trent in 1615, the Ursulines accepted enclosure, after which their houses proliferated throughout the country. Mary Ward and the English Ladies, on the other hand, fought against enclosure, which contributed to the Institute being disbanded and Ward being branded a heretic in 1631 by Pope Urban VIII. In her analysis of the underlying motivations of the two groups and the reasons why they were received so differently by contemporaries, Lux-Sterritt provides an insight into the changing position of women in the early modern Catholic Church.

Early chapters consider how the English Ladies and the French Ursulines worked with traditional gender definitions. Both “perceived their vocations as an integral part of the on-going movement of the Catholic Reformation” (28). Ward maintained that the Institute was a response to the particular circumstances of English Catholicism, arguing that a more active religious life for women would be of greater benefit to the mission. The Ursulines saw