

H-Net Reviews

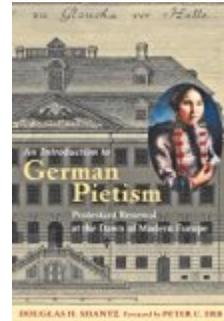
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Douglas H. Shantz. *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. xviii + 490 pp. \$70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4214-0830-9; \$35.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4214-0831-6.

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Introducing Pietism

Among North American scholars, Pietism has long endured as an understudied religious movement. Despite frequent and consistent calls for more research by a dedicated group of scholars, there remains a large gap between the numerous studies on Pietism in German scholarship and the research offered by the American academy. The lack of a recent, comprehensive English introductory text to Pietism exemplifies this problem. Since F. Ernest Stoeffler's mid-twentieth-century classics *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (1965) and *German Pietism in the Eighteenth Century* (1973), which introduced many English-language readers to the religious phenomenon, there has not been another thorough introductory text available until now. *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe* is Douglas Shantz' attempt to capture in a single volume the German- and English-language research that has occurred in the intervening years since Stoeffler's work. Shantz quite successfully provides an overview that is affordable in both print and ebook forms and represents the first book exclusively on the subject published in the Young Center Books in Anabaptist & Pietist Studies Series.

Shantz divides the book into four sections: (1) a historical overview of the seventeenth-century religious and social context; (2) snapshots of three cities which witnessed Pietist activity, namely, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Halle; (3) an examination of the relationship between Pietism and the broader social milieu; and finally (4) a

consideration of the ways that Pietism relates to modernity. In each section, he provides helpful and accessible narratives related to the particular subject matter as well as extensive footnotes. There are also four appendices that contain translations of important sources used in the book as well as discussion questions that could be valuable for classroom use.

A noticeable, and indeed helpful, divide exists between the first and second halves of the book. The first half of the book (sections 1 and 2) reads as a narrative of key figures in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the challenges of the Thirty Years War, the origins of Reformed Pietism, and the chain of events connecting Pietist developments in the cities of Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Halle. Readers see the Pietist movement spreading through a direct line of influence and establishment. Here, Shantz does an admirable job of concisely capturing the current scholarship in each area, such as his summary of the growing evidence that the early conventicles in Frankfurt were actually founded not because of a great idea by Philipp Jakob Spener, but because of the pious desire of the more radical Johann Jakob Schütz. Shantz manages in the first half of the book to create a cohesive narrative that reflects recent scholarship on the broad origins and development of the Pietist movement.

The second half of the book (sections 3 and 4), however, moves into a topical approach where Shantz discusses radical Pietism, gender issues, Pietism and the

Bible, missions, and modernity. Instead of a sustained narrative, Shantz adopts a more analytical approach. This approach perhaps stems from the fact that, as the influence of Pietists spread, their networks and connections grew; therefore, providing a cohesive narrative treatment proves difficult for the historian. Within this topical section, there are many gems that readers will find helpful. In the chapter on radical Pietism, Shantz provides an overview of different radical forms of the movement and then considers exemplars of those forms. By turning his attention to these examples, Shantz is able to go into more detail regarding Johanna Eleonora and Johann Wilhelm Petersen, Johann Friedrich Rock, and the Ephrata Cloisters in America, all of which give his readers insight into the diversity of radical Pietist individuals and groups. The chapter "Pietism and the Bible" offers a welcomed treatment of the Berleberg Bible and the impact that it had on eighteenth-century radical Pietism. Shantz also skillfully examines the mission work of various Pietists, with a particular emphasis on the Moravians. It is noticeable, though, that there are places where Shantz had to make difficult choices as to the structure of the text and the inclusion of information. Choosing not to offer a chapter devoted to Herrnhut and the Moravians means that the Pietist group mainly appears in the chapter related to missions. This seems to ignore the extensive research that has been done in the last several years on the Moravians.

The chapter on Pietism and gender offers insight into some of the ways in which the religious movement provided opportunities for women, particularly through leadership in conventicles and as members of Pietistic networks of communication. Shantz highlights these dynamics through a discussion of Pietist women in Frankfurt and then through the broader networks of communication established by Anna Maria van Schurman and Antoinette Bourignon. However, these were not the only roles open to women, as evidenced by the emergence of prophetic activity in several major Pietist centers. Finally, he considers how women were included in key Pietist biographical collections, which indicates

that women were indeed integral to the movement. This chapter encourages more research into the dimensions of female involvement in Pietism as well as reconsiderations of how understandings of masculinity changed through the religious movement. One recognizes, however, that Shantz's discussion remains particularly concerned with the early stages of Pietism; he only touches on some of the innovative research being done on Moravians and gender.

The final section of the book provides a synthesis of ways that Pietism contributed to modernity. Shantz stresses that there have been two different narratives about the legacy of Pietism and its relation to modernity. The first stresses secularization through individualization, alternative social and communication networks, and increased engagement with the world. The second narrative, offered by scholars such as the late W. R. Ward, proposes that Pietism is intimately connected to the rise of evangelicalism in America. Here Shantz thoroughly summarizes the arguments for both narratives. He also discusses some of the negative characteristics of Pietism, such as its propensity towards anti-intellectualism. Though Shantz addresses the relationship between Pietism and modernity, the work does not provide a comprehensive narrative of some of the later developments of Pietism, and thus it may require supplemental texts for persons who lack a familiarity with subsequent manifestations of the movement.

There is much in Shantz's *An Introduction to German Pietism* to admire. It would serve as a fine introduction for students inexperienced with the movement. For those wishing to teach a course on Pietism, this introduction would provide a suitable overview, and in light of its engagement with recent scholarly literature, it could serve as a starting point for research on the religious movement. As a reference tool, it should quickly find its way into the libraries of scholars of early modern religious history. Shantz has developed an important resource that will undoubtedly help to promote more American scholarship and reflection on the place and role of Pietism in the history of Christianity.

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