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Michael Driedger. *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age.* Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2002. xiii + 224 pp. $99.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7546-0292-7.

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Michael Driedger's *Obedient Heretics* traces the development of the Mennonite community in Hamburg and Altona from the later sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Driedger's analysis of the Mennonites has two clear goals: to expand our knowledge of dissenter communities beyond their sixteenth-century foundations–the period most commonly treated–and to nuance the social discipline and confessionalization paradigms that have dominated recent Reformation historiography. In both goals he is indebted to the work of Hans-Juergen Goertz and other German scholars, a debt Driedger acknowledges readily. By providing a narrow, slice-of-life of this Mennonite community, Driedger fulfills the promises made in the introduction while also offering an engaging study of an era and a community that is somewhat neglected in English-language scholarship.

To set the scene for his interpretation of confessional formation, Driedger begins by describing how the Mennonite community in Hamburg-Altona was formed and the complex relationships between the two cities. Much of the first three chapters is devoted to the immigration of Mennonites into the region, their establishment in Hamburg and Altona, their financial and professional resources, their controversies (particularly over ceremonies), and the personal and marital relationships among leading families in the community. Although Driedger carefully tries to explain the community's geography so that it will be clear to non-specialists, his success is mixed. Maps or other images would have been helpful. Despite his description, some of the political and economic details are difficult to follow, and Driedger occasionally assumes too much about readers' knowledge of the intricacies that characterized the region and the Mennonite community.

As described by Driedger, Hamburg and Altona's Mennonites were originally Dutch and would remain primarily so until the nineteenth century. Although Hamburg was a Lutheran stronghold, Mennonites began settling there in the later sixteenth century, and in 1601 Count Ernst von Schauenberg granted privileges to Mennonites who moved to neighboring Altona, a policy designed to attract businessmen, and their tax revenues, away from Hamburg. As the count's strategy suggests, Mennonites played a disproportionately influential economic role in both communities. Their numbers grew in both Hamburg and Altona during the seventeenth century because of the benign political environment, good economic conditions, and wartime destruction in other territories. While Mennonites in both communities maintained separate neighborhoods and generally married other Mennonites, the seventeenth century saw more and more Mennonites becoming citizens in both cities. Even the prohibitions against Mennonite worship within Hamburg did not hinder the community's growth; instead, they traveled one to two miles west to Danish Altona to worship.

At the same time that Driedger sketches these unifying themes, he also argues that the Mennonite community was divided from its outset. According to Driedger, dissenter communities that fall under the umbrella term "Anabaptist," such as the Mennonites, were more fragmented in practice that most scholarship suggests: "Diversity was a part of Anabaptist life from the very beginning in the early Reformation, and little changed after the forces of institutionalization took hold by the end of the sixteenth century" (p. 14). Driedger argues that the focus on top-down confession formation and social discipline aggravates this tendency to ignore variations in Anabaptist doctrines and communities. In addition, repeated migration, like that occurring in Hamburg-Altona, kept differences alive for Mennonite communities who faced new factional disputes imported from regions such as the Netherlands as well as tensions between established Mennonites and recent arrivals.

In fact, Hamburg-Altona's Mennonites were repeatedly riven with factions, especially during the seventeenth century when the communities were establishing their confessional identity. Chapters 2 and 3 de-

scribe key moments in Mennonite confession formation in the region, beginning with the Dompelaar schism, which came to Hamburg-Altona with Dutch immigrants in the mid-seventeenth century. Dompelaars demanded full immersion baptism and communion celebrations "in the evening with unleavened bread, after the washing of feet" (p. 31). Despite promising beginnings, the Dompelaars would fade from the Hamburg-Altona community within a century, victims, according to Driedger, of theological changes and the social composition of the Dompelaars themselves. Prominent Mennonites in Hamburg-Altona generally opposed them, and one member of the Mennonite leadership, Geeritt Roosen, played a key role in most of the debates Driedger discusses.

The Dompelaar controversy is just one of the many disputes and doctrinal tensions that Driedger sees as key to developing Mennonite identity in this region. Two examples are particularly noteworthy. In chapter 7 Driedger explores mixed marriages between Mennonites and Reformed or Lutheran spouses as an example of the lack of cohesion among Mennonite groups. Following the conclusions of other scholars of dissenter communities, Driedger concludes that these mixed marriages were one among many signs that "secular as well as clerical authorities were slowly abandoning the intolerant attitudes which their predecessors had held towards earlier generations of Mennonites" (p. 171). One of chapter 5's themes also deals with complications in Mennonite doctrine and identity: the justifications given by Mennonite merchants for measures taken to protect their goods despite their antiviolent principles. In the seventeenth century Mennonites armed their merchant ships, and made and sold gunpowder, despite their pacifist ideals. Facing claims of hypocrisy, Mennonites such as Roosen argued that in defending their goods they were defending the legitimate authority whose reign their commerce supported. In both circumstances, as well as others Driedger develops, Mennonite acceptance of secular authorities led to their toleration by the community at large.

These examples suggest how Driedger's reconstruction of the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite community underlies his second theme: the nuancing of social discipline and confession formation paradigms. Although aspects of this debate appear throughout his book, they are addressed more directly in its second half. Driedger's book is a part of recent scholarship which stresses the need to see social discipline as arising from the community as much as, if not more than, the state. He argues that Hamburg-Altona's Mennonites make a particularly good test of this hypothesis because Mennonites have often been falsely seen as non-confessional. For Driedger Hamburg-Altona's Mennonites take the lead in developing a confessional identity to distinguish themselves from other, less legitimate dissenters. In Hamburg-Altona during the seventeenth century, "confessionalists" began to elaborate confessions in part so they would not be mistaken for Quakers, but their texts had unintended consequences. These confessions led to splits within Hamburg-Altona's Mennonites which in turn led to the adoption of a Dutch Zonist program by the majority.

Driedger argues that these developments should not be particularly surprising given that scholars such as Heinz Schilling and Hans-Juergen Goertz have argued that Anabaptists of most kinds were increasingly integrated into state and society by the later sixteenth century. In fact, like Goertz, Driedger believes that the Mennonites were actually "political conformists" (p. 81). "While Goertz has provided a general framework for thinking about Mennonite discipline and obedience in terms of the confessionalization paradigm, a detailed micro-study remains to be done on the subject. The value of such a study is to reveal the mechanisms which encouraged and sustained Mennonite self-regulation and, perhaps by extension, self-regulation in other confessional groups" (p. 83). Driedger has provided just such a study.

"Threats" from other confessions also contributed to the formation of Mennonite identity in Hamburg-Altona. As Driedger notes, from the beginning of Mennonite residence in the region, Hamburg's Lutherans had distrusted the community and called for its removal. In response Mennonite leaders, as represented by Roosen, consolidated their ideas about faith and community. According to Driedger, Hamburg-Altona's Mennonites cleared themselves of accusations of heresy by loudly protesting their orthodoxy *and* their loyalty and obedience to Christian rulers (p. 100). In this situation, Mennonite identity was formed in a traditional manner: in opposition to outsiders.

Key to Driedger's argument, however, is the idea that oppositional identity formation also occurred within the community itself and that this identity formation is the essence of Mennonite confessionalization. Although not the most sophisticated use of confessionalization, it does seem to best fit the circumstances in Hamburg-Altona. To make this point, Driedger provides a detailed analysis of several events, the most dramatic of which was the trial of Hans Plus, merchant captain and Mennonite, in the 1650s and 1660s. Plus was accused of not selling the goods of a non-Mennonite client, Johann Jacob Huebner,

for the best possible price. The standard trial formula required Plus to swear by God, which Plus was unwilling to do. Instead Plus proposed that he swear using the standard Mennonite formula, *bei Mannen Wahrheit* (by the truth of men). After years of dodging trial dates and prevarication before judges, Plus was allowed to use the Mennonite formula. At this time he swore that he acted correctly, and the trial was apparently over. Huebner appealed, however, and the city of Hamburg became the primary defendant in the appeal because it had accepted the Mennonite oath and, with that, the city apparently endorsed the illegal Anabaptists. Eventually Hamburg won the appeal; in the meanwhile Plus had been happily and effectively conducting business.

Cases such as the Plus trial are key for Driedger because they illustrate the complex, individual factors that contribute to social discipline and confession formation. Although Hamburg's government became involved in establishing the correct formula for oaths (a form of social discipline), it would not have done so unless individuals, like Plus and Huebner, became involved in a lawsuit. In fact, "confessional identity was most fixed, clearest and most significant amid public controversies" (p. 173). Moreover, these controversies point to the importance of negotiation between individuals in forming confessional identity, challenging the assumed power of government dictates.

As such, Driedger's argument compliments a wide body of recent scholarship on confession formation and social identity. His book is thoroughly researched, indebted to recent German scholarship, and well versed in classic themes in confessionalization. It is, however, clearly a first book project, focusing on a narrow topic to test a much broader paradigm, and needs to be read with this recognition in mind. [While the appendices provide information that compliments the book, Driedger does not integrate them well into the text itself. Moreover, they frequently seem like mere English-language transcriptions of single documents from the archives or printed sources. Given that there are eight appendices, their significance to the book and scholarly significance more generally should have been made more explicit, but that is as much an editorial as an authorial problem. That being said, I look forward to Driedger's future work, where he can apply his archival skills, clear writing, and sensible treatment of confession formation to a broader topic.

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