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The life of Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg (1711-87) spanned an era in the Atlantic world characterized by migrations and religious renewals, innovations, and organization. Formative in the creation and institutionalization of the Lutheran church in America, Mühlenberg has long been remembered and studied by American Lutheran historians and congregations. His extensive writings have also proven to be crucial primary sources for scholars of early American religion and history. The critical edition of his detailed journals, translated by Theodore Tappert and John Doberstein and published in English in the 1940s and 1950s, is invaluable to scholars of early America and the Atlantic world, particularly those focused on German Americans and religion. The more recent critical edition of his letters, edited by Kurt Aland and published in German in the 1980s, has also become an influential primary source for these fields.

*The Transatlantic World of Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg in the Eighteenth Century* contextualizes, in a sense, these significant and oft-used primary documents. The volume offers an exciting and extensive range of secondary studies, which further broaden Mühlenberg's story and significance beyond the longstanding, often too-narrow focus on the roots of American Lutheranism and the German American experience. This important collection of nineteen scholarly contributions is the result of a 2011 international colloquium honoring Mühlenberg's three hundredth birthday. The location of the colloquium, at the Francke Foundations in Halle (Saale) in Upper Saxony, where Mühlenberg began his career and received his first call, is the first hint to one of the volume's main contributions to a new direction in Mühlenberg studies: attention to the German-speaking world from which Mühlenberg emerged.

This intervention is important. As the editors (Hermann Wellenreuther, Thomas Müller-Bahlke, and A. Gregg Roeber) point out in the introduction, until recently scholarship on Mühlenberg has been mostly limited to the United States. German interest in Mühlenberg and his role in eighteenth-century Pietism finally reemerged in the
1990s, spurred both by Müller-Bahlke’s early work and by the collapse of the German Democratic Republic—and, correspondingly, improved access to the impressive Archives of the Francke Foundations in Halle.

Although the “transatlantic world” of the volume’s title points to the eighteenth-century context in which Mühlenberg lived and worked, it could just as easily refer to the diverse community of scholars who participated in the colloquium and volume. The volume helpfully highlights (although not always explicitly) the different questions and approaches of scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, the first section, with contributions from German scholars, asks important questions about the diversity of Pietism (theologically and institutionally) within the Holy Roman Empire. American scholars often miss this important variety, apart from attention to more “sectarian” Pietist communities, such as the Moravians or the community in Ephrata. Likewise, the fourth section—focused on Lutherans and revolutions—highlights some of the historical and cultural approaches to revolutions that currently dominate American scholarship, which is significant for European church historians who, as Roeber argues, often interpret “the age of revolutions as one of purely secular events” (p. 298).

The volume excels in its diversity of subject matter, approaches, and genres, and, despite this diversity, is clearly organized. Following a brief introduction, there are four sections focused on different parts of Mühlenberg’s itinerary and context, which, together, offer a richly textured portrait of his life and of the interconnections of the German-English Atlantic world of his time and after. The sections focus on: Mühlenberg’s “formative years” and the individuals who shaped him in places like Einbeck, Göttingen, Halle, and Großhennersdorf; his move and adaptation to the “new world,” alongside radical and Reformed Pietists and Moravians; his—and other Germans’—participation in the “Great Awakening” and the upheavals and changes that dominated religious communities of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world; and the response of German Americans and Lutherans to the age of revolutions, hopes of independence, and change. There are also two final chapters on later developments within American Lutheranism and on efforts to trace genealogical ties and stories in Einbeck, Mühlenberg’s place of birth.

Each section begins with an essay that provides a broad, contextual account of the context and the historiographical stakes of the era, place, and subject matter, before introducing three chapters, which serve as case studies on the section’s themes. Hartmut Lehmann introduces the first section with a contribution titled “The World according to the Christian People of Europe, 1711-1730,” while Wellenreuther’s essay, “The World according to the Christian People in North America around 1740,” foregrounds the second section. The introductions to the third and fourth sections, on Pietism and the American Great Awakening and Lutheranism and revolutions, are well crafted by Frank Lambert and Roeber, respectively. Such introductory essays by leading scholars of the field are helpful for a volume such as this, which aims not only to engage but also to bring together audiences from different scholarly backgrounds and interests.

Outside of the introductory essays, the volume focuses on case studies: a closer look at Gotthilf August Francke, the often overlooked son and heir of August Hermann Francke; Conrad Beissel and radical Pietism at Ephrata; Johann Adam Steinmetz and the reception of American revivalism among Halle Pietists; and Mühlenberg’s home life in Trappe, and his family life through the lens of the American Revolution. While the volume as a whole is excellent, these case studies are, in my opinion, the most exciting part. Many of them serve as microhistories—detailed accounts that highlight a significant part of Mühlenberg’s story or the story of eighteenth-cen-
tury Pietism and its transformation in different contexts and encounters. They also offer, together, a glimpse of new methods—or directions—for researching and writing about eighteenth-century Pietism, methods that include careful consideration of myriad topics, including theology, migration, ethnicity, economics, politics, missions, benevolence, material culture and texts, kinship networks, and music. Together, these case studies bring richness and depth to Mühlenberg's life, expand our knowledge of the religious individuals and communities of the Atlantic world, and demonstrate the many possibilities for future research and collaboration.

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