Central European History 47 (2014), 496–504.
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doi:10.1017/S0008938914001605

Ritual, Religion, and German Home Towns

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German Home Towns is a very forward-looking book. I say that not because it proved so influential—although it certainly had a profound impact on my generation of historians. My point is more prosaic, namely that *German Home Towns* occupies a set point in time and social milieu, the inaugural moment of an attenuated phase of stability for a peculiar type of human community in central Europe. That moment, of course, is 1648; the milieu is that of walled and privileged towns—large and differentiated enough for self-sufficiency in most economic functions, but not so large or so differentiated as to generate the degrees of stratification and anonymity that characterized larger commercial or manufacturing cities. In contrast to metropolitan centers, "home towns" embraced all inhabitants in a web of face-to-face relations, at once integrating, enabling, and controlling all inhabitants through guilds and the political systems built around them. Usually, almost all hometown inhabitants were citizens, too—again in contrast to larger cities, with their substrates of noncitizen residents. From the vantage of 1648, and within the stream of early modern German history, *German Home Towns* peers into a future of confrontation with "movers and doers"—those vanguards of the "general estate," as Walker called them, who trampled idiosyncrasy, leveled difference, and, with some help from Napoleon, replaced both local corporatism and the imperial "incubator" with provincial and national systems of general, liberal delegation.

There is no small irony in this. In 1648, German home towns stood at the *conclusion* of what arguably had been the most sustained, state-driven intervention into their internal affairs. Here I refer to the process of confessionalization: the codification of doctrines and liturgies that flowed from a close and increasingly militant alliance among secular rulers, theologians, and ecclesiastical authorities on both sides of the religious divide, which had as its aim the imposition of uniform beliefs and liturgical practices on what had been highly idiosyncratic, often pluralistic religious cultures. Implicitly, *German Home Towns* takes for granted the success of that transformation: Walker's home towns are monoconfessional—so much so that the words "Catholic" or "Lutheran" or "Reformed" seldom appear in its pages, and even then only in passing. Indeed, the presumptive religious uniformity of home towns registers a central premise of the "confessionalization thesis": that as a cultural operation there was no fundamental, structural

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938914001605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

distinction between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" manifestations of confessionalization. All this lends *German Home Towns* its oddly secular feel: religion was largely absent from Walker's portrayal, and religious conflict registered even less.

A similar point could be made about the constitutional "incubator." From the 1520s on, the pluralization of religion in Germany had taxed severely the capacity of imperial consultative and judicial institutions to absorb conflict and mediate differences. Indeed, religious conflict was so corrosive, according to one interpretation, that that Empire's outstanding effort to achieve peace—the 1555 Peace of Augsburg—was "preprogrammed" to fail.[1] After 1648, arguably, the constitutional "incubator" that in Walker's interpretation nurtured home towns also guaranteed confessional stasis: under the "normative year" clause of the Peace of Westphalia, all territories reverted to and froze in place the state of religion that had been in place on January 1, 1624.[2] Thus the Peace of Westphalia sealed in public law the outcome of a century of pressure to conform in creed and rite.

These observations are not meant as criticism; we all have to start somewhere, and besides, Walker's attention lay elsewhere. My purpose, rather, is to pose a series of questions about ritual and religion in the hometown milieu *before* the watershed of 1648 and ask how answers to them might qualify or reinforce the hometown model. What were the ritual dimensions of religion in the hometown milieu during the era of pluralization? What concept of ritual can account for the responses of home towns to that trend? What can we say about the "incubator" as it pertained to religious conflicts in home towns before the Peace of Westphalia, and how did that relationship change after 1648?

Home Towns and Religious Pluralization

It is an article of faith that on the eve of the Reformation, the claims of urban elites to govern religious life were predicated on a corporatist understanding of the city as an all-embracing "sacred society" that bore responsibility both for the eternal salvation as well as the material well-being of its members.[3] As a normative

[1] Axel Gotthard, *Der Augsburger Religionsfrieden* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004), 271–80.

[2] On the normative year, see Ralf-Peter Fuchs, *Ein "Medium" zum Frieden. Die Normaljahrsregel und die Beendigung des Dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010).

[3] Bernd Moeller made the seminal argument in *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1962), translated by Thomas A. Brady Jr. and H. C. Erik Midelfort as *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1982), 44, 48. The thesis that the communalization of religious life lay at the heart of urban Reformation has been argued most forcefully by Peter Blickle, *Gemeindereformation. Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1987), translated by Thomas Dunlap as *Communal Reformation: The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1992). For a socially more nuanced interpretation than either Moeller or Blickle provides, see Thomas A. Brady Jr., "In Search of the Godly City: The Domestication of Religion in the German Urban Reformation," in *The German People and the Reformation*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,1988), 14–31.

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framework, the "sacred society" was inimical to confessional pluralism, especially during the Reformation's initial phases, and because of this, historians tend to assume that concessions made to religious minorities could be nothing more than temporary expedients along a path that would lead eventually to the uniformity of religious belief and practice proper to any *corpus Christianum*.[4] Like all walled and privileged polities, sixteenth-century home towns fit the bill—the more so, arguably, because of the stratified but inclusive manner in which their councils were chosen to govern.

But as Scott Dixon has argued, this interpretation is ill equipped to account for adaptations to the pluriconfessional realities of the mid- and late-sixteenth century.[5] Dixon stresses the difficulty that urban polities of all sizes experienced in accommodating public manifestations of religious pluralism. I would like to offer an additional possibility—one that takes its cues from the hometown model. In a nutshell, the argument is that the distinctive attributes of home towns—their political exposure, their dependence on the imperial "incubator," the absence of noncitizen residents, and the face-to-face quality of social and political life within them—all encouraged hometown elites to place a greater emphasis on civic *concord* as a means to preserve unity against the tidal forces of religious pluralization.

How this played out varied tremendously from place to place. In his recent study of Wesel, for example, Jesse Spohnholz shows how civic magistrates tried to manage the disruptive effects that Calvinist refugees were having on the town's confessional complexion by obligating all inhabitants to attend a common, composite communion rite. Its liturgical framework was "doctrinally indecisive yet recognizably Lutheran": the communion host, much to the chagrin of parishioners inclined toward Calvinism, was distributed in the form of a wafer, rather than the plain table bread they preferred. There were also Catholic elements thrown in: hymns sung in Latin, for example, or the elevation of the host. The town council tried, in short, to solve the problem by herding everyone—Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists—into one and the same observance.[6]

The crucial point is that Wesel's town council insisted on preserving Sunday worship as a ritual enactment of the corpus Christianum. Determined to preserve civic concord, the council sought to overcome confessional division by abandoning all expectation of credal unity among parishioners, and by negotiating

[4]Thus according to Andrew Pettegree's memorable verdict, toleration was a "loser's creed," advocated only from the margins of power. See Andrew Pettegree, "The Politics of Toleration in the Free Netherlands, 1572–1620," in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 182–98.

[5]C. Scott Dixon, "Urban Order and Religious Coexistence in the German Imperial City: Augsburg and Donauwörth, 1548–1608," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 1–33.

[6]Jesse Spohnholz, "Multiconfessional Celebration of the Eucharist in Sixteenth-Century Wesel," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 39 (2008): 705–29, here 711; Jesse Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 36–42, 67–68. Only Wesel's tiny population of Anabaptists, presumably, recused themselves.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938914001605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

liturgical solutions to conflicts over doctrine that otherwise seemed unbridgeable. Thus in 1574, for example, Wesel's Calvinists, having protested against the manner in which the communion host was distributed, were allowed to receive the wafer in their own hands rather than the mouth, as Catholics and Lutherans did.[7] They did not receive table bread, as they might have preferred, but at least the minister's gestures, and their ritual actions in response, did not imply adhesion to any doctrine of physical presence.

With around 7,000 inhabitants prior to the immigration of refugees, Wesel sat at the large end of the hometown spectrum. But in my own research on the smaller towns situated within the Westphalian prince-bishopric of Münster—all of them at the lower end of the hometown range—I find much the same thing. To cite one example among many: beginning in the 1600s, priests and town councils throughout the prince-bishopric came under pressure to exclude from churchyard burial anyone who had not confessed to a Catholic priest and received communion in the Catholic rite. At that point, most of the hometown parishes had adopted a hybrid form of the Eucharistic rite that allowed Catholics to receive the host in one kind and non-Catholics to communicate *sub utraque specie*. Similarly, parish churchyards were regarded as a supraconfessional commons, available by right of citizenship to anyone who could afford the fees for grave digging and the tolling of church bells. Under pressure from diocesan authorities to enforce the prince-bishop's mandate against the burial of heretics, the town councils—most of which by then included Protestants—responded with displays of indifference, claiming that because they possessed no official knowledge of any particular citizen's religious leanings, they were incapable of intervening against the churchyard interment of non-Catholics.[8] Instead, they insisted that the burial of "heretics" should proceed as normal.

The governing councils of Westphalian home towns, in other words, adopted a deliberately neutral stance in confessional matters and insisted that the benefits of citizenship be meted out according to non-confessional criteria, such as honor, social rank, and probity. It is easy to see why: as a corporation, the town councils typically functioned as the provisors of nominally Catholic parishes—or they appointed churchwardens to exercise those offices on their behalf, even though in most towns many, if not a majority of, council members were Lutheran or Calvinist by inclination. This is not to say that they adopted a self-consciously

[7]Spohnholz, "Multiconfessional Celebration," 718–19.

[8]David M. Luebke, "Confessions of the Dead: Interpreting Burial Practice in the Late Reformation," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte/Archive for Reformation History* 101 (2010): 55–79; David M. Luebke, "Churchyard and Confession: Grave Desecration, Burial Practice, and Social Order during the Confessional Age—The Case of Warendorf," in *Leben bei den Toten. Kirchhöfe in der ländlichen Gesellschaft der Vormoderne*, ed. Werner Freitag and Jan Brademann (Münster: Rhema, 2007), 193–211. For the response of the town council in Warendorf, see Kreisarchiv Warendorf (KAW) Stadt Warendorf A 94, 9r-12r, June 30, 1597.

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secularist stance or embraced religious toleration on principle—far from it. Rather, they adopted a neutral position toward religious controversy and promoted pluriconfessional cohabitation as the *least* disruptive means of preserving the civic concord after the ideal of religious unity had set behind a horizon of realistic expectations. This was a potent position. In every confrontation over the burial of "heretics" for which I have been able to discover the outcome, the hometown solution prevailed: non-Catholics got a churchyard burial—*sine lux, sine crux, sine ceremoniis*—in the very soil that had absorbed their ancestors.[9] Thus the Westphalian towns conserved the unity of the corpus Christianum, or at least a vestige of it, by keeping burial grounds generally accessible, despite the radically divergent concepts of spatial sacrality that distinguished Reformed parishioners from Catholics and Lutherans. Here, as in Wesel, the ideal of Christian unity did not tear parishes apart, but was deployed *against* the forces of division.

Home Towns as "Face-to-Face" Societies

In the decades after 1612, Prince-Bishop Ferdinand I and his successors in office managed to convert most Protestants, at least nominally, by making the benefits of citizenship contingent on active participation in the Catholic rite. Wesel, by contrast, evolved toward a Reformed Protestantism that aligned well with the creed of their new overlords, the house of Hohenzollern.

An underlying conceptual issue transcends these divergent outcomes. Since we cannot account for the domestication of religion, as Tom Brady put it, if we assume that the corpus Christianum was inherently inimical to plural religious practice, what concepts of ritual and community might serve us better? Mack Walker's hometown model recalls few recent theoretical developments so much as the idea, developed by Rudolf Schlögl and others, of the "community of the present" (*Anwesenheitsgesellschaft*). All home towns were, by Walker's definition, urban environments small enough that every inhabitant might personally know every other inhabitant. Their forms of association, to put the point in Schlögl's terms, were structured and sustained by face-to-face communication, through the spoken word, performance, and ritual act.[10] In "communities of

[9]Bischöfliches Archiv Münster (hereafter BAM) Generalvikariat (hereafter GV) Rhede St. Gudula A 1, "Protocollum Visitationis Archidiaconatus Admodum Reuerendi ac Nobilis Domini Joannis à Velen Thesaurarii Maorios Ecclesiae Diui Pauli Monasteriensis Anno 1614 20 Aprilis"; BAM GV Borken St. Remigius 7, "Status misirabilis Borckensis descriptio quoad vitam, mores, et religionem" [ca. 1620]; Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen/Abteilung Westfalen (hereafter LNRW/AW), Fürstentum Münster, Landesarchiv 295, nr. 2 1/2, 9r-v, "Berichtt wegen beschehener inquisition des vermeindten newen Warendorffischen Kirchoffs. Ist dises mit zustandt Licentiaten Velthaus Richtern durch die Beampten inquirirt," July 14, 1614.

[10]See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne. Begriffe—Thesen—Forschungsperspektiven," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004): 489–527.

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presence," Schlögl observed, association occurs to render social relations discernible to the senses; for this reason, communication exhibits a decidedly performative quality, so much so that social meanings and their performance amount to the same thing.[11] Thus rank order in communal processions, as Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger emphasized, does not merely imitate social hierarchies that are accessible by other forms of representation, but instantiates them by making them visible to everyone present.[12] In this sense, performance *is* the reality; social order acquires meaning *in the moment it is performed*.[13] In choreographed movements through civic or sacred space, communal ritual involves everyone present in the reproduction of basic social norms and relationships. By their manner of interacting, too, those present subtly altered the relations they enacted. And finally, because presence implies absence, there is no neutral position toward communal rites: if to participate is by default to endorse, then abstaining implies disdain. To bring this all down to earth, in subtly different ways, the home towns of Westphalia and the lower Rhine structured performances of community in such a way that the citizenry, in the act of attending church or burial, performed their individual and collective acquiescence in a civic regime of supraconfessional accommodation.

Confessionally Segregated Home Towns

One could argue that the responses to religious pluralization express nothing more than regional peculiarity, not the structures of hometown life. Or one could argue that weak or indifferent secular authorities made them possible. Or perhaps these responses reflected only the relative simplicity of their ecclesiopolitical structures: most Westphalian towns, after all, had only one parish church to serve a citizenry increasingly differentiated by religious inclination. I would agree to all these objections. In the confessionally indeterminate "no man's land" of northwestern Germany, as Anton Schindling called it, pressure to conform in doctrine and

[11]Rudolf Schlögl, "Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden. Formen des Sozialen und ihre Transformation in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34 (2008): 155–224, here 171–73. See also Rudolf Schlögl, "Interaktion und Herrschaft. Probleme der politischen Kommunikation in der Stadt," in *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005), 115–28; and Rudolf Schlögl, "Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden. Zur kommunikativen Form des Politischen in der vormodernen Stadt," in *Interaktion und Herrschaft. Die Politik der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*, ed. Rudolf Schlögl (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), 9–60.

[12]See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Zeremoniell als politisches Verfahren. Rangordnung und Rangstreit als Strukturmerkmale des frühneuzeitlichen Reichstags," in *Neue Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Reichsgeschichte*, ed. Johannes Kunisch (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997), 91–132.

[13]See the reflections of Jürgen Martschukat and Steffen Patzold Jürgen in the introduction to their book *Geschichtswissenschaft und "performative turn." Ritual, Inszenierung und Performanz vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), 1–31, here 10; and Bernhard Giesen, "Performing the Sacred: A Durkheimian Perspective on the Performative Turn in the Social Sciences," in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 325–67.

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liturgy was feeble at first and late in coming.[14] But this means only that in managing the religious pluralization, Westphalian home towns could exercise greater autonomy than was possible elsewhere. We should expect to see similar patterns of response in home towns similarly positioned in relation to ecclesiastical states, and in fact we do.[15] As for institutional simplicity: that, after all, is an attribute of hometown life.

For comparison's sake, then, let us examine a home town with a relatively complex ecclesiastical structure, surrounded by confessional powerhouses: Donauwörth, a town whose confessional history is famously conflict-laden. In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg had secured its status as a biconfessional polity. But in contrast to Wesel and the Westphalian towns, religious observance was segregated along confessional lines: the parish church was reserved for Protestants, while Catholic observance was confined to the Benedictine monastery church of the Holy Cross and two smaller chapels. Catholics were permitted to conduct processions, but within agreed-upon limits on symbolic display, routes taken, and so on. These constraints recognized the public status of both Christian confessions at the same time that they acknowledged the superordinate position of Protestants and the Augsburg Confession in town. The Protestant council and the abbots of the Holy Cross monastery tended this relationship carefully; despite some tension over funerary processions in 1569–1570, it held until 1604, when a new abbot staged a procession, with banners unfurled, through Protestant lands to a shrine nearby. Tensions escalated from these innovations, with well-known results: the two camps came to blows in 1606, Emperor Rudolf II intervened to quell them, and in December 1607, Bavarian troops occupied the town.

Two points are relevant here. First, the crisis was not simply the product of internal religious differences, but provoked by "movers and doers" from outside: not only the new abbot and the dukes of Württemberg and Bavaria, but also Lutheran pastors in town such as Johann Wieland, who found Donauwörth's biconfessional regime repugnant.[16] Amid the hubbub of 1606, it was easy to forget that Donauwörth's biconfessional status quo had held for half a century. This relates to a second point, which is that the Catholic processions had not been *intrinsically* defiant or disruptive: by the ritual act of marching along, every participant in a procession that kept within bounds recognized and acknowledged the existing distribution of confessional power. Even the disturbance over funeral processions in 1569 fit this mold: in that case, contention

[14]Anton Schindling, "Konfessionalisierung und Grenzen von Konfessionalisierbarkeit," in *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung. Land und Konfession, 1500–1650*, ed. Norbert Schindling et al., 7 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1989–1997), vol. 7, 9–45, here 24–28.

[15]Johannes Merz, "Die Landstadt im geistlichen Territorium. Ein methodischer Beitrag zum Thema 'Stadt und Reformation' am Beispiel Frankens," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994): 55–82, here 69; Reinhold Kiermayr, "The Reformation in Duderstadt, 1525–1576 and the *Declaratio Ferdinandea*," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984): 234–55.

[16]Dixon, "Urban Order," 20–21.

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centered not on Catholic funerary processions per se, but rather on processions that involved more than four Catholic clergy.[17] Processions became defiant only when they ceased to reenact the politico-religious settlement on which they were based. In this sense, Catholic processions were *constitutive* of biconfessional order—until, that is, they violated some agreed-upon constraint.

The arc of Donauwörth's trajectory followed, in short, the deterioration of confessional relations along the front lines between powerful territorial monarchies. As in the Westphalian towns, local solutions came undone as a result of overwhelming external pressure. The more important point, however, is that prior to the crisis, Donauwörth—like Wesel and the Westphalian towns—had found in biconfessional segregation a tenuous, "least-worst" solution to the problem of pluralization. One could pile on many similar examples of predominantly Protestant home towns that allowed Catholics to worship in churches (or parts of them) under the protection of a powerful cathedral chapter, a monastic order, or the Teutonic Knights. Two towns in Upper Lusatia come to mind—Bautzen and Lauban, where Catholics worshiped in the choir and Protestants in the nave. Others include the Silesian towns of Sprottau, Ratibor, Oppeln, and Falkenberg; Wetzlar in Franconia; Osnabrück, where the cathedral chapter occupied the *Dom* while Protestants worshiped in the nearby Marienkirche; Dortmund; Oppenheim, near Frankfurt, where *three* confessions were distributed among the parishes and monastic churches in town; Landau in the Palatinate; Cham in the Upper Palatinate; the Imperial home towns of Worms, Heilbronn, Colmar, Regensburg, and, for shorter periods, Kaufbeuren, Ulm, Wimpfen, and Dinkelsbühl.[18] And of course there were the Imperial home towns of southern Germany in which two confessions were recognized formally: Memmingen (which reserved two parish churches for Catholics), Biberach am Riß, and Ravensberg. In many of these, such as Bautzen and Landau, biconfessional accommodations were secured by formal treaty. According to one recent survey, about two-thirds of these experiments in *Simultaneum*-like solutions proved durable over the long term.[19]

[17]Felix Stieve, *Der Ursprung des dreißigjährigen Krieges, 1607–1619. Der Kampf um Donauwörth* (Munich: Rieger, 1875), 17–18.

[18]For a useful survey, see Norbert Kersken, "Konfessionelle Behauptung und Koexistenz—Simultankirchen im 16. Jahrhundert," in *Konfessionelle Pluralität als Herausforderung. Koexistenz und Konflikt im Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke et al. (Leipzig: LUV, 2006), 287–302. On confessional coexistence in the southern German towns, see Mark Häberlein, "Konfessionelle Grenzen, religiöse Minderheiten und Herrschaftspraxis in süddeutschen Städten und Territorien der frühen Neuzeit," in *Staatsbildung als kultureller Prozess. Strukturwandel und Legitimation von Herrschaft in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ronald G. Asch and Dagmar Freist (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 151–90; Paul Warmbrunn, *Zwei Konfessionen in einer Stadt. Das Zusammenleben von Katholiken und Protestanten in den paritätischen Reichsstädten Augsburg, Biberach, Ravensburg und Dinkelsbühl von 1548 bis 1648* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983); and Peter Zschunke, *Konfession und Alltag in Oppenheim. Beiträge zur Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Gesellschaft einer gemischtkonfessionellen Kleinstadt in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1984).

[19]Kersken, "Konfessionelle Behauptung," 300–02.

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Home-town Religion?

We know how this story ended for most home towns: although a great many initiated evangelical reforms without direction from above, few were able to preserve their reforms against the sustained opposition of territorial overlords. One thinks here of the fate of reforms initiated by towns situated in the Habsburg Crown Lands, all of which had been reversed by the mid-seventeenth century.[20]

Still, it is worth inquiring about the special circumstances that defined the home-town milieu, as Mack Walker defined them, and to ask how they impinged on the ordering of civic norms and their relationship to the pluralization of religion. In light of the foregoing cases, can one assume that religious pluralization and the corpus Christianum were fundamentally at odds, and that conflict over doctrine and practice was the inevitable result? The evidence of Wesel suggests other possibilities: there, as Spohnholz shows, the imperatives of civic concord superseded unity of belief. Similarly, the Westphalian towns prevented confessional fissures by accommodating liturgically those who desired communion in both kinds. Both solutions were predicated on a measure of theological dissimulation: Wesel's magistrates required only that citizens attend services, not that they conform in all points of doctrine. Likewise the Westphalian towns were officially indifferent as to the reasons *why* any particular parishioner would want "double communion." Both solutions also reflected institutional simplicity: most of the towns in question contained only one or two parish churches, which in turn meant that segregationist solutions, such as that of Donauwörth, were simply unavailable. In none of these cases could the attitude of magistrates be called "tolerant."

Even so, a case could be made that these approaches to religious pluralization reflected the peculiarities of home towns, especially their exposure to the pressure of "movers and doers" in religious life. Ronnie Hsia wisely observed that Catholic confessionalization was often achieved at the expense of civic privileges, especially in ecclesiastical states of the Holy Roman Empire.[21] Hometown magistrates were keenly aware of this threat and strove to evade it, whether by "tergiversation" (as diocesan authorities liked to call their foot-dragging nonconformism), by litigation, or by preserving civic cohesion over and against the forces of confessional division. Whatever the solution arrived at, one thing stands clear: religious pluralization was *not* inimical, necessarily and inevitably, to the civic unity and concord of German home towns.

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[20]Johannes Merz, "Landstädte und Reformation," in *Die Territorien des Reichs*, ed. Schindling et al., vol. 7, 107–36.

[21]R. Po-chia Hsia, *Society and Religion in Münster, 1535–1618* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 201–02.

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