

Reformation and the Practice of Toleration: Dutch Religious History in the Early Modern Era. Benjamin J. Kaplan.

St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xii + 372 pp. €128.

When the Dutch Reformed minister Reynier Dontelock complained that “Hollanders” were by nature inclined “not to make a work of religion,” he was contributing to the growing myth of the Dutch as a tolerant people (217). In the essays gathered in *Reformation and the Practice of Toleration*, the American historian Benjamin J. Kaplan of University College London persuasively dismantles this myth while at the same time revealing how and why the Dutch did indeed develop a distinctive approach to the practice of toleration that became (in)famous across Europe.

Apart from the introduction, all of these essays were previously published; that Brill has reproduced them in this handsome volume speaks to their continuing importance. As a fellow traveler in early modern Dutch religious culture, I am an avid admirer of Kaplan’s thought-provoking scholarship and had already read most of these essays. Reading them again, however, has brought rewards of fresh insight. Kaplan’s introduction to the collection perceptively reviews the historical trends in Dutch Golden Age research coinciding with his own three-decade career. His reflections on his scholarly journey shed light on the field in general, and certainly on my own historical expedition, for our research interests have run on parallel tracks as we pursued our non-orthodox religious Reformers—Kaplan’s Libertines and my Anabaptists/Spiritualists—from the sixteenth into the eighteenth centuries. This insightful introduction also reveals Kaplan’s generosity of spirit as he evaluates the work of others; among many others I, too, have benefited from Ben’s criticism, encouragement, and friendship.

Many readers will be familiar with Kaplan’s award-winning books: *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht* (1995), *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (2007), and the fascinating microhistory *Cunegonde’s Kidnapping: A Story of Religious Conflict in the Age of Enlightenment* (2014). The collection of essays under review here supports and supplements those monographs. Each clearly argued chapter tells fascinating human stories, whether it is of the unusual Reformation in Utrecht (chapters 2 and 4–6), the complaints of moderate Reformers and Libertines against “a new Reformed inquisition” (chapters 1, 3, 8), the claims of women to be possessed by demons (chapter 6), the struggles within families over the confessional upbringing of children (chapters 12–14), or the debates over Dutch religious toleration (chapters 8, 10–11, and throughout most of the others). They are all a joy to read and stand as models of the craft for aspiring professionals.

Organized along the backbone of Kaplan’s historiographic introduction, the essays present a coherent volume on early modern Dutch religious and social history, emphasizing themes of confessionalism and anticonfessionalism, community, marriage, and

family life. Together they dispel the myth that tolerance was inherent in Dutch culture and find its origins instead within the maelstrom of the Reformation's confessional conflict. For a variety of reasons, the Dutch resisted the confessional model of other states requiring adherence to a single denomination. In one of his earliest essays, the 1994 "Remnants of the Papal Yoke" (chapter 1), Kaplan had discovered that by the end of the sixteenth century a majority of the Dutch belonged officially to no church at all, "a phenomenon without precedent or parallel in Europe" (29, and chapter 13). In explaining this unique situation, Kaplan emphasized the Dutch practice of informal toleration that distinguished between the public space of the Reformed Church and the private space where dissenters, including Catholics and for a time Jews, could worship behind the facade of ordinary canal houses. Their neighbors knew what was going on in these hidden churches (*schuilkerken*) but winked at the practice (chapter 7). Such informal tolerance of religious diversity then reshaped attitudes. This Dutch model of confessional diversity survived so well, moreover, because it was not theorized in a way to offend either Reformed or Catholic sensibilities; instead, it was based on widely beneficial connivance, which, apart from the Generality Lands to the east, worked far better to maintain public order than the biconfessionalism of neighboring states like Westphalia or France (chapters 10–11).

Kaplan is a master storyteller who foregrounds human experiences in all of his topics, such as the post-Reformation debate over closing confraternities (chapter 5), the vexed question of whether there were Muslims in the Dutch Republic (chapter 9), the quantification of the practice of religiously mixed marriages (chapters 12–14), and the application of new borderlands theory to religious encounters (chapter 11). Supplemented with maps, illustrations, and a helpful index, *Reformation and the Practice of Toleration* joins Kaplan's monographs as essential reading for early modernists.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.56

The Banishment of Beverland: Sex, Sin, and Scholarship in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic. Karen E. Hollewand.

Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 298. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvi + 310 pp. €119.

A few years ago, strolling around the galleries devoted to the glory of the Dutch Golden Age in the Rijksmuseum, I was caught by an assertive gaze. Leaning back comfortably in his chair, a man decadently dressed in an exotic gown enjoyed the pleasures of life to the fullest. Smoking his pipe, glass of wine within reach, he experiences the company of a scantily clad table guest: a prostitute sunk in one of his books on sexual libertinage. It is the startling likeness of the writer of one of the most controversial early modern treatises on mankind's original sin, Hadrianus Beverland (1650–1716). By the time this portrait