Westphalian prince-bishopric of Münster. Chapter I lays out the complex political topography of Münster’s confessional dynamics, where a relatively autonomous aristocracy kept the bishop’s more autocratic tendencies in check, and the violent legacy of the failed Anabaptist kingdom (1534–5) served to warn Catholics and Protestants alike of the dangers of confessional hostility. Chapters II–VI constitute deep dives into rituals and religious practices across the region. Where other historians have examined rituals as markers of confessional division, Luebke argues that rituals like baptism, marriage and burial were rites of passage for the whole community. As such, he stresses the multiplicity of and variation between the minutiae of ritual practices as conducted by parishioners and celebrants. In the case of baptism, for example, ‘priests’ freewheeling acceptance of all infant baptisands, regardless of their parents’ beliefs, was both widespread and of long standing (p. 52), while different denominational beliefs posed no obstacle to marriage. Luebke pays close attention to the theological as well as the social implications of such liturgical differences. In following patterns of accommodation to liturgical differences, he focuses down on Münster’s clergy. A compelling section within the chapter on ‘Spaces’ examines their reading practices. The heterodox mix of books owned by Catholic and Protestant clergy provides a clear view of the lateral way in which doctrinal viewpoints developed. At the same time, there was a clear shift towards the end of the century both within the kinds of books being published, which emphasised doctrinal unity, and the patterns of ownership, which were more confessionally coherent. This pattern rehearses the overall trajectory for Hometown religion. Diversity between and within confessions became more problematic over the course of the century. In 1601 Bishop Ernst decreed that only candidates who had confessed their sins to a Catholic priest and received the eucharist according to the Catholic rite would be eligible for public office, whether elective or appointive. In 1623 Prince-Bishop Ferdinand revoked the corporate privileges of towns. Henceforth, the benefits of citizenship depended upon conformity to post-Tridentine Catholicism. In the wake of the Thirty Years War, a mono-confessional regime calcified. Or did it? In his conclusion Luebke describes six ‘modes’ of coexistence – hybrid, subcutaneous, entrenched, liminal, coequal, concentric – and their afterlife. As his complex terminology only serves to reinforce, the ‘elasticity of social being’ fails to conform neatly to any model. Belief and political system remain fitful components of early modern community. Ritual, in all its many guises, remains key to understanding it.

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In this highly anticipated tome, Elsie McKee presents the culmination of decades of scholarly attention to Calvin and the Genevan Reformation. The result is an invaluable contribution to scholarship on Calvin and Geneva: a far more detailed and precise picture than previously existed of how worship operated in Reformation
Geneva. McKee present a clear and thoughtful narrative and discussion of Genevan worship and, just as importantly, more than 200 pages of appendices providing extensive data about Genevan worship services during Calvin’s lifetime, including information such as the number of services that happened in which church, the ministers present, the type of services performed and the order in which Calvin preached his sermons. These appendices will be crucial tools for all subsequent scholarship examining the ‘meeting point between teaching and practice’ (p. 13) in Reformation Geneva. She has also crafted a sort of pastoral biography of Calvin, bringing together an impressive array of primary sources – including Calvin’s printed works, catechisms, sermons, letters and baptismal and marriage records – to explain Calvin’s pastoral thinking and intentions. In her discussion, McKee addresses the work of several scholars on the Genevan Reformation, including that of Thomas Lambert, Christian Grosse and my own work on baptism. Her thorough mining of her various sources allows her to flesh out and clarify some points made in those earlier works, further improving our understanding of Calvin and the dynamics of reforming Genevan worship practices. Overall, however, this volume focuses on the remarkable breadth of McKee’s primary source research. For the most part, it is left to readers to incorporate McKee’s achievements into ongoing discussions among historians, historical theologians and theologians. This is as it should be, as it allows McKee to focus on providing the most comprehensive picture to date of Calvin’s understanding of the pastoral goals of the Church and the ways that worship structured the daily lives of the Genevans who were committed to following the Reformation. For example, the chapter on ‘Calvin the preacher of Geneva’ is a rich, detailed description of Calvin’s preaching practices that brings to life Calvin’s experiences and intentions as a preacher. While Calvin has long been famed for his energy and dedication, as McKee lays out his preaching schedule and the variety of Calvin’s goals in his preaching – for example, his attention to a variety of concerns and interests within his audiences – even those most familiar with Calvin’s work will be left wondering how he got everything done. Despite McKee’s interest in examining the intersection between teaching and practice, she still runs up against the common problem of the lack of significant evidence on reception. But this does not diminish her extraordinary accomplishment in creating a more detailed and precise picture than ever before of how worship operated in Reformation Geneva. This is a truly invaluable contribution that any serious library needs to own. It brings us to a new phase of understanding Calvin and the Genevan Reformation and serves as a crucial building block for further Reformation research.

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In his introduction Ryan Reeves clearly sets out the aim of his book as to examine the English evangelical doctrine of obedience by tracing the development of these