Paula Sutter Fichtner. *Protestantism and Primogeniture in Early Modern Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. Pp. 125.

Some good things come in small packages. *Protestantism and Primogeniture* is one small booklet that deserves the attention of anyone interested in the history of early modern Germany.

The study builds on a paper given at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, in 1979. Its maturing into book form ten years later suggests both the complexity of the topic and the difficulty of researching for even a limited geographical area the relation of partible inheritance and primogeniture in noble houses to ideas promoted by Protestant Reformers in the course of the sixteenth century.

Paula Sutter Fichtner advances the argument that Luther's reforms, though innovative in "church organization and sacerdotal function," also "owed a great deal to medieval piety," and as a result upheld traditional notions as well. Not surprisingly then, the practice of partible inheritance continued well into the seventeenth century and was not wholly replaced by primogeniture until 1700, more reluctantly in Protestant areas than in Roman Catholic ones, as the author shows. Fichtner argues that religious conviction alone did not determine the move to primogeniture, though Protestant princes may have slowed down developments in that direction. She suggests that a dominant factor in triggering the shift toward preserving territories intact was the "economic and political consequences of the Thirty Years' War" rather than radical differences in religious values and views.

The author packs a great deal of detail into 85 closely written pages, at times taxing her reader's comprehension. Nonetheless, Fichtner's argument deserves attention, since she has undertaken to show that traditional values and political patterns often prevailed despite radical shifts in theological understanding. Significant changes that did take place were generally the result of a number of complex causes, that make it difficult, if not impossible, to establish direct links between "religious discipline and political discipline."

Fichtner's well-documented argument should stimulate a renewed wave of research and discussion on above topic. Her booklet makes a valuable contribution to that discussion. Ten pages of Bibliographical material and six pages of a General Index greatly enhance her study and make it readily accessible.

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