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Didier Boisson et Yves Krumenacker, eds. *Justice et protestantisme*. Lyon: Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes, 2011. Collection Chrétiens et Sociétés, Documents et Mémoires No. 14. 187 pp. 22€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-9537928-4-3.

Review by Diane C. Margolf, Colorado State University.

This collection of eight essays brings together the results of a *journée d'études* held at Angers in May 2010. As the title suggests, the volume focuses on the theme of justice in relation to the history of Protestantism in France from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. One of the strengths of this collection is that it encourages readers to consider the many forms, meanings, practices, and institutions associated with justice in early modern France, as well as the ways that this justice affected the fortunes of France's Protestant minority during this period.

Introduced by Michelle Magdelaine of the CNRS, the essays are organized roughly in chronological order, beginning with the two that address issues of justice and Protestants' experiences during the sixteenth century. David El Kenz analyzes Jean Crespin's *Histoire des martyrs* for its depiction of judicial responses to Protestant acts of religious violence during the Wars of Religion. According to El Kenz, the *Histoire* contained much accurate information about judicial procedures and penalties which would have influenced Huguenot readers' expectations about the treatment they would receive in royal law courts. Royal justice emerges as an ambiguous force, its administration aimed primarily at the practical goal of keeping the peace and maintaining order during a time of civil and religious war.

Michel Nassiet's study of pardons issued during the period 1563-1567 offers observations in a similar vein. Following the Edict of Amboise of 1563, Nassiet argues, tensions emerged between the justice meted out by local judicial officials, who might assign penalties or pardons based on their knowledge of the crimes and the perpetrators, and royal magistrates, who sought an impartial application of the edict's terms. In this case, the locality is Guyenne, where the Parlement of Bordeaux's use of pardons as well as punishments reflected a pragmatic approach to justice and balanced the need for rigor and impartiality. Interestingly, Nassiet concludes that this approach changed when open hostilities between Huguenots and Catholics resumed in 1567: after that, Huguenots were identified as enemies of the crown and justice, and were perhaps less likely to be pardoned by royal judges.

The Edict of Nantes, issued in 1598, hovers in the background of the four essays which analyze justice and French Protestants' experiences in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Here the true focus is the Edict of Fontainebleau, by which Louis XIV officially revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. By that time, of course, a series of royal declarations and initiatives had already attenuated most of the legal privileges and protections that French Protestants had claimed under the 1598 edict. Luc Daireaux analyzes *arrêts* issued by the Conseil du Roi during the period 1640-1685 to show that the council played an important role in the crown's repressive policy toward French Protestants, especially after 1656. His essay concludes with a lengthy appendix (pp. 63-80) which includes documents showing the council's decisions regarding Reformed churches and communities in Poitou in 1665, well before the Revocation.

By comparison, Gwenaëlle Léonus-Lieppe turns to a different archival source—the records of the Lieutenant Général de Police in Paris—for insight into the Revocation’s enforcement. Noting the combination of administrative and judicial power that this royal official exercised, Léonus-Lieppe concludes that his ability to order the arrest, imprisonment, or expulsion of transgressors was especially well-suited to implementing the crown’s policy toward French Protestants in the capital city. Didier Boisson places the Revocation in the context of subsequent royal legislation against relapsed Protestant converts (that is, those who abjured reformed religion for Catholicism and then repudiated their conversion). Those who committed this crime on their deathbeds could end up being tried and punished anyway, but Boisson argues that royal judges tended to pursue the trial of cadavers selectively. Their goal was to use individual cases to make examples, rather than to punish all who violated the laws condemning the relapsed. Finally, Yves Krumenacker focuses on the identity and roles of Protestant lawyers in their churches and communities. Noting that in the sixteenth century “les avocats constituent une catégorie sociale intermédiaire . . . en pleine ascension sociale” (p. 103), he outlines the increasing restrictions that Protestant lawyers faced as the seventeenth century unfolded. Several individual case studies show, however, that such men often used their knowledge of the law to defend Protestant churches and communities—and sometimes to clarify when those churches and communities were themselves in violation of royal edicts.

Olivier Cogne and Céline Borello pursue questions about justice and the French Protestants' history into the eighteenth century. Cogne’s study of criminal cases adjudicated by the Parlement of Grenoble from the 1720s to the 1780s offers us another local perspective on French Protestants’ encounters with royal justice, this time in the province of Dauphiné. The essay provides a thorough analysis of the litigants, the charges brought against them, and the penalties issued by the court. Cogne emphasizes that the parlement’s severity toward Protestants in the region had declined significantly by the 1770s and early 1780s. Yet he also demonstrates that throughout the period, few Protestants who were brought before the court were acquitted. This situation may help to explain why Jean Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne, the pastor from Nîmes who represented the Third Estate from that region during the French Revolution, advocated judicial reform as well as religious toleration in his novel, *Le Vieux Cévanol*. Céline Borello analyzes this text thoroughly, describing its links to Enlightenment critiques of injustice and prejudice and tracing its evolution through various editions issued from 1779 through the nineteenth century. Most of all, she argues convincingly that Rabaut Saint-Etienne combined a historical account of the French Protestants' sufferings with a specific critique of the laws that had criminalized their actions and beliefs. His fictional account of Ambroise Borély's life from 1671 to 1774, therefore, offered a powerful indictment of injustice toward French Protestants based on both rational arguments and emotional appeal.

As Benoît Garnot notes in his conclusion to the volume, these essays illustrate the flexibility and adaptability of justice in Ancien Régime France, especially as it was applied to France's Protestants. The goals of royal policy toward this group fluctuated over time and the implementation of royal edicts or magistrates' decisions was often tempered by local conditions. Garnot's assertion that public opinion, rather than the state or judicial institutions, ultimately explains the French Protestants' treatment (pp. 180–181) is perhaps more open to question, since "public opinion" can be as difficult to define as "justice" during the early modern period. However, these essays do show that legal mandates about the treatment of French Protestants—as heretics, criminals, martyrs, rebellious subjects, or victims of unjust repression—were frequently in tension with many other factors, including the actions and perceptions of those who were expected to enforce or obey the law. Thus, the picture that emerges from this *journal d'études* is richly complex, directing our attention to future avenues for research and adding to our knowledge of the history of both justice and Protestantism in France.

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