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Jérôme Loiseau, «*Elle fera ce que l'on voudra*» *La noblesse aux états de Bourgogne et la monarchie d'Henri IV à Louis XIV (1602-1715)*. Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2014. 408 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography and index of names. €15 (pb). ISBN 978-2-84867-489-6.

Review by Mack P. Holt, George Mason University.

This book is a slightly revised version of Jérôme Loiseau's *thèse de doctorat* submitted in 2008 to the Université de Bourgogne. It contains a preface written by his doctoral supervisor, Christine Lamarre, as well as a postface written by Julian Swann, a well-known specialist on the provincial estates of Burgundy in the eighteenth century. The bulk of the book, however, consists of 242 pages of text and footnotes, 79 pages of appendices, and 47 pages of bibliography. The focus of the volume is the men of the second estate—the nobility—in the provincial estates of Burgundy, which traditionally met once every three years in the province's capital of Dijon in order, among other things, to levy the taxation from the province to be turned over to the royal treasury. And in order to study these men, Loiseau has put together a prosopography of 456 noble families in the province over the course of the seventeenth century—a total of 2,776 nobles—using a variety of archival materials in Paris and in Dijon, and especially the records of the estates themselves located in the Archives départementales de la Côte d'Or, supplemented by a wealth of printed sources. The main argument of the book is that over the course of the seventeenth century the nobility, at least as represented in the provincial estates, remained loyal to the crown in return for the king's recognition and maintenance of the provincial estates and the nobles' rights within it. In short, the relationship between crown and nobility was one of cooperation and collaboration rather than opposition and competition. In this sense the book echoes and supplements the revisionist research over the last three decades of Bill Beik, Jim Collins, Fanny Cosandey, and Robert Descimon, among others, that has revised our understanding of how the absolute monarchy worked in practice.[1] Above all, Loiseau wants to show that the political outlook of nobles in the period was not dominated in Burgundy by “the duty to revolt,” as Arlette Jouanna has previously suggested.[2]

Although Loiseau tends to engage with the work of other historians indirectly in the footnotes, he actually engages with three distinct recent historiographical traditions concerning absolute monarchy in early modern France: the revisionist tradition of Beik and others already mentioned, the historiography of the provincial estates championed initially by Russell Major and more recently by Julian Swann [3], and the Kantorowicz school of historians that has focused on the ceremonial and ritualistic aspects of politics, represented in the work of a pupil of Kantorowicz, Ralph Giesey and his own many students.[4] Burgundy was a province in France that was a *pays d'état*, that is, a province that had local estates to assess and levy taxation, as opposed to the *pays d'élection*, those provinces that had royal officials, tax farmers, or other outside tax collectors. The *pays d'état* were generally on the periphery of the kingdom and were those provinces that had most recently been added to the French realm since the end of the Hundred Years' War: Normandy, Brittany, Languedoc, etc. And the right to levy and collect their own taxes was, in fact, a privilege they had negotiated upon their incorporation into the kingdom of France. Needless to say, this was a privilege that these provinces wanted to cling on to at all costs, and Burgundy was no exception.

Loiseau begins the book by suggesting that a social contract existed between the monarchy and the provincial estates. Moreover, he believes that the fact that there was no serious popular revolt in Burgundy after the Lanturlu uprising of 1630 for the rest of the seventeenth century suggests that the monarchy and the nobility of the province had reached a kind of political “compromise” (p. 20). Chapter one outlines the total number of noble families and individual nobles that make up his database. Interestingly, he notes that the nobles’ own perception of themselves as “*une république oligarchique*” united for the good of the province in the face of royal power was in many ways just an illusion (pp. 52-53). Indeed, Loiseau demonstrates that most noble families actually served in the estates only once or twice, and in total only about one-fourth of the families were regularly in attendance (p. 59). Chapter two lays out the tensions that led to Louis XIII’s attempt to replace the provincial estates in Burgundy in June 1629 with royal tax officials called *élus*, thereby undermining the province’s right to assess and collect its own taxes as a *pays d’état*. When a popular uprising occurred in February 1630 in Dijon led by the city’s *vignerons*, culminating in the ransacking and burning of the contents of the homes of seven of the wealthiest royal officers in the city, including the home of the First President of the Parlement of Dijon, it might appear that there was significant popular resistance to the introduction of the *élus*. In fact, the *vignerons* were much more motivated by the king’s increasing the *octroi*, a tax on all outside wine brought into the city that had been set in 1428 at 20 *sous* per queue (a barrel of approximately 456 liters) and had never gone higher than that in the two hundred years since.

But the provincial estates essentially gave Richelieu and the king what they had wanted all along—more revenue and regulation over it—by a “donation” to the king of 2,000,000 *livres* in return for the right to keep the provincial estates intact. Indeed, as Loiseau makes clear, “the political model that best defined the relations between the royal state and the provincial estates up to 1658 was that of transaction” (p. 81). After that date, the estates simply offered Louis XIV a million *livres* every three years and financed this sum through increasing the public debt. Chapter three analyzes the period of the governorship dominated by the Condés beginning in 1631. And chapter four examines the ways in which the growth of the “nobility of the robe” through the sovereign courts in Burgundy not only impacted the definition of who was a noble, but it also had significant fiscal implications for the estates. Chapter five assesses the military role of the nobility in the province and shows how this reinforced the nobles’ loyalty to the crown during this period.

The last part of the book examines how the fragile ideal of serving both the king as well as the good of the province came under pressure. As noted in chapter six, the amount of fiscal receipts and expenses of the estates exploded in the seventeenth century, more than doubling between 1670 and 1690. Second, the nobles themselves ultimately came to pay the *gabelle*, an indirect tax on salt, after 1659. Moreover, from that point on, the privileged came to contribute more and more toward what the monarchy required through this and other indirect taxes from which their status as nobles did not exempt them. And as Loiseau notes, they came to pay these amounts without much complaint or resistance, largely because they were allowed to hold on to their annual revenues from *rentes* (long term interest-only loans that were in theory perpetual). As he concludes chapter seven, “in accepting the increase in indirect taxation, they limited that of the *taille* [the direct personal property tax] and thus protected their own managers [of *rentes*]; in accepting the recourse to loans and indebtedness, they served the royal cause” (p. 228). Thus, Loiseau concludes, in many ways the nobles were simply unable to disobey the king. In short, their loyalty was constructed on two foundations: “repression and celebration” (p. 231). And it is the latter that is more interesting and perhaps the most novel contribution made by the author. In yet another collaboration with the king, Louis XIV ceded the ducal palace in Dijon, originally constructed by the Dukes of Burgundy for their own quarters, to the estates for their own special meeting place, who then constructed a grand new palace around the older edifice “to the glory of the king and to themselves” (p. 236). No expense was spared and the new construction marked the estates’ incorporation into the absolutist monarchy of the king. Its decorations and amenities made explicit that all the corporations of the city if Dijon—the provincial estates, the city government, as well as the *intendants*

working in concert with the Condés--were all part of this absolutist construction. To celebrate one was to celebrate all; it was "obedience as celebration (*l'obéissance comme fête*)" (p. 244).

The bibliography contains all the recent work on absolutism in seventeenth-century France in both French and in English, and it is as impressive as the rich base of archival sources. If there are still some unanswered questions remaining by the end of the book--above all, the nature of the roles played by the clergy and third estate in the provincial estates, and how the nobility interacted with them--this is still a very useful book. Indeed it provides for the seventeenth-century estates of Burgundy what Julian Swann has done for the eighteenth-century estates. And that is a pretty impressive achievement.

## NOTES

[1] William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); James B. Collins, *Classes, Estates, and Order in Early Modern Brittany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Fanny Cosandey and Robert Descimon, *L'Absolutisme en France: Histoire et historiographie* (Paris: Seuil, 2002). And most recently, also see Arlette Jouanna, *Le pouvoir absolu: Naissance de l'imaginaire politique de la royauté* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

[2] Arlette Jouranna, *Le devoir de révolte: La noblesse française et la gestation de l'État moderne, 1559-1661* (Paris: Fayard, 1989).

[3] J. Russell Major, *Representative Government in Early Modern France* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980) and the same author's *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles, and Estates* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); and Julian Swann, *Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy: The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[4] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957); Ralph E. Giesey, *Cérémonial et puissance souveraine: France, XVe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Armand Collin, 1987) and the same author's *Rulership in France, 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004).

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