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Grégory Champeaud, *Le Parlement de Bordeaux et les paix de religion (1563-1600). Une genèse de l'Édit de Nantes*. Nérac: Éditions d'Albret, 2008. 440 pp. Appendices, chronology, and bibliography. 23 € (pb). ISBN 978-2-913055-22-3.

Review by Penny Roberts, University of Warwick.

The four-hundredth anniversary of the Edict of Nantes in 1998 stimulated extensive reconsideration of the significance of this legislative act in the wider context of religious toleration in early modern Europe and the legacy of the French wars of religion in particular. At the same time, the emergence of this irenic approach and the resulting royal edicts which preceded Nantes have been subject to much greater scrutiny than hitherto, and the consequent task of pacifying the realm subjected to rigorous analysis. This current shows no signs at present of abating, as historians have delved back through the period of the wars and beyond to consider the development and characteristics of these efforts carried out by a range of royal officials in the face of considerable opposition. Grégory Champeaud's contribution to this debate focuses primarily on the role of the members of the parlement of Bordeaux in enforcing the peace in their region whilst obstructing certain aspects of crown policy embodied in successive edicts of pacification.

In the first chapter, Champeaud provides a comprehensive overview of the pacification process and the recent trends in its historiography. In particular, he cites the work of Olivier Christin in placing emphasis on the secularization or "deconfessionalization" of the process, as has been further emphasised by other scholars. This was achieved, he argues, through the conscious separation of spiritual and temporal concerns in the institutionalization of coexistence by the crown. Thus, the Edict of Nantes, which consciously looms over the narrative here, is seen as the heir of a double tradition: of an Erasmian dream of religious concord (or perhaps neo-platonic *pace* Denis Crouzet) and a political ideology of *raison d'état* (although Champeaud does not use that specific phrase). To assist the reader in navigating his/her way through the complexities of the edicts, he identifies six principal themes, which provide a useful schema or *aide-mémoire*. Here, Champeaud principally focuses on the language of the edicts' preambles and the details of the expanding list of clauses which followed. Thereafter, he provides a detailed and fairly traditional account of the genesis of royal policy, from the more moderate tone taken after the 1560 Conspiracy of Amboise, through the characteristics of the different edicts themselves.

Whilst sounding a note of caution with regard to the short-lived Edict of January 1562, Champeaud describes the first of the edicts of pacification proper, that of Amboise (March 1563), as a "coup d'essai" (p. 40) which nevertheless set the standard for later legislation. Indeed, the tracing of the lineages of various developments in the wars through the edicts is one of his prevailing concerns; such as the "coexistence constructive" (p. 57) of the alliance between the Catholic malcontents and the Huguenots in the 1570s, through to the so-called *politiques*, who promoted civil concord and the reformation of the state, a decade later. He places particular emphases on the essentially Catholic character of the legislation, contrary to some contemporary views, and the ways in which the benefit of experience contributed to the elaboration of certain clauses as well as of the edicts themselves. There are some interesting observations, too, with regard to the novel elements that each edict provided, including the development of the increasingly-important judicial provision resulting from the often overlooked negotiations at Fleix in 1580. The section, inevitably, ends with a consideration of the contribution of its predecessors to the form and content of the Edict of Nantes.

After this broad introductory section, Champeaud's focus turns to the position of the *parlement* in Bordeaux and its region; from its establishment in 1462 after the Hundred Years War, through a discussion of the extent of its jurisdiction and control, to its tense relations with the dominant

Bourbon-Albret family. He particularly highlights the central role that the body played during the religious wars, whether the emphasis was on war or negotiation, or the crucial issue of religious division. He demonstrates that the *parlementaires* were typical of the judicial elite to which they belonged, in their social make-up, education and ideology, here confirming the well-trodden historiography on this topic. Champeaud underlines the tension between the *parlement's* traditional obedience and deference to the crown, and its own pretensions which sometimes cut across the enforcement of royal authority. He identifies its primary collective motivation as the desire to limit the threat of disunity within its jurisdiction and, thus, the destabilisation of the realm. Those who opposed the considerable Huguenot presence in the city and region could then present it as perpetuating division and, thus, disrupting law and order. Rumour fed the fears of the population that their city might be surprised, an actuality in many major French towns in 1562, and the need to shore up weaknesses in the city's defences. Champeaud demonstrates how the authorities chose to manipulate or suppress such rumours according to how it fit with their political interests.

Indeed, the book is at its best when concentrating on the local context. In particular, it describes the machinations and tensions within the parlement of Bordeaux itself, between radicals and moderates, and its relationship with external bodies in the region, such as the lieutenant-governors and their representatives. It is assisted in this by extensive quotation from primary sources, principally the registers of the parlement, which are seamlessly woven into the text. Despite its dates, the book delves back into earlier events which are relevant to the response of the parlement to royal policy in particular; for instance, the *gabelle* revolt of 1548, after which the powers of the municipal authorities were severely curbed, and the formation of a militant Catholic syndicate in the 1550s. The latter, in particular, was able to benefit initially from widespread distrust of Huguenot activities in the region. Champeaud also looks at the role of key figures, such as the first president of the parlement Jacques-Benoît de Lagebaston, instrumental in steering the court in a more moderate direction, as was the presence and growing influence of Henry of Navarre from 1576. Indeed, Champeaud makes a forceful case for the importance of Navarre's period as governor as an apprenticeship for later kingship, in his promotion of peace and coexistence, culminating in his negotiation of the terms agreed at Bergerac (1577), Nérac (1579) and Fleix (1580), and his emphasis on patriotism and loyalty. This moderate stance was continued under lieutenant-governor Matignon, whose efforts prevented the later seizure of Bordeaux by the forces of the Catholic League, both military and political.

Champeaud demonstrates the extent to which the parlement was also involved in the enforcement of the edicts of pacification, alongside the regional military commanders, such as Blaise de Monluc, and the royal commissioners, whose judicial brief (though short-lived and sporadic) challenged that of the *parlementaires*. His description of the many obstacles and frustrations which the commissioners faced in trying to enforce the edicts in Guyenne echoes that which their colleagues found elsewhere. He outlines how the Bordeaux *parlement* was involved in sending out its own commissioners to deal with the mounting violations, exposing the need for local co-operation. He also looks closely at the relatively muted response of the judges to the edicts to which they were so ideologically opposed. He remarks that they only used their rights of remonstrance on two occasions, in 1591 on the restoration of the edicts by Navarre as king, and in 1598. They were far more focused on resisting the most unpalatable aspects of the edicts from their perspective: the undermining of religious unity and their judicial prerogatives, thus making the activities of the royal commissioners and the chambers set up to deal specifically with disputes arising from the edicts their principal targets. Yet they also proved quite flexible, pragmatic and humane when dealing with the provision of sites for Reformed worship and burial and in their recognition of economic, as well as public order and judicial considerations. This balanced approach is portrayed throughout as the hallmark of the *parlement's* position.

This book covers many diverse aspects of urban, judicial and political life during the French religious wars of the sixteenth century. In this sense, it is much more than a provincial study, and yet its strongest contribution is its careful reconstruction of the regional context of the wars and the local attempts at enforcing the royal legislation designed to bring them to an end. Champeaud is careful to situate his discussion of the role and nature of the *parlement* at Bordeaux, quite rightly, in

relation to Sylvie Daubresse's work on the parlement of Paris. He comes to complementary conclusions regarding its loyalty to the monarchy yet keen awareness of its own role as a body which was responsible for guiding and advising the crown when it felt that its policies were contrary to both royal interests and the well-being of the realm. This was particularly apt during the fraught and contested period of the religious wars. Champeaud demonstrates how these apparently contrary forces could be successfully reconciled, whilst outlining how that position might also be undermined by local factions and events. His work thus reinforces much of what we know already about the central role of the judiciary and the complexities of the pacification process. But that is not to detract from the detail and colour that Champeaud provides to this broader canvas, underlining the continuing importance and value of provincial studies to our understanding of the operation of internal politics in early modern France.

Penny Roberts  
University of Warwick  
[Penny.Roberts@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Penny.Roberts@warwick.ac.uk)

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