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Pascal Bastien, ed., *Policing and Urban Society in Eighteenth-Century Paris.* Oxford: Liverpool University Press for the Voltaire Foundation, 2024. xiii + 402 pp. Notes, references, and index. $99.00 U.S. (pb). ISBN 9781835536766.

Review by Nicole Bauer, University of Tulsa.

This excellent volume edited by Pascal Bastien brings together diverse perspectives on the police and urban history in the eighteenth century, though some essays reach back into the late seventeenth century. The contributing authors discuss everything from religion and the mesmerism fad to the Terror, but three main themes quickly emerge: sociability, surveillance, and the complex, constant negotiation between police and populace, one that was not simply a relationship of attempted control or dominance on one side and resistance on the other. Many of the authors mine the traditional but rich sources of the police archives in the Archives nationales or the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, while others examine pamphlets and treatises written both for and against the police.

In his introduction, Bastien claims that this volume is history from below and from above, that it is a "new history of Paris in the eighteenth century that we offer here" (p. 4). That is a bold claim, but the research here certainly complicates and enriches previous understandings of the police. On the one hand, the argument that the police continually relied on the cooperation of the public shows how revolutionaries exaggerated the "despotism" of the police and how scholars are recognizing this relationship more and more. On the other hand, these essays illustrate how inefficient the overlapping authorities could be (even while they embraced Enlightenment utilitarianism, belief in urban security, and confidence in progress), which confirms the critiques of the police during the Revolution and in existing scholarship. Additionally, the discussions of space and overlapping jurisdiction reinforce the problem of inefficiency. The many maps and diagrams provided in the introduction and essays are extremely helpful, both in showcasing the complexity of the police in the eighteenth century and in the wealth of information they provide. Numerous maps, diagrams, and tables throughout the volume are an extremely helpful supplement that provide a wealth of information.

The conflicts over space among authorities and members of the public could be violent and long-lasting, as Julie Allard and Christine Métayer show in their essays on the Place de Grève and the Marché Neuf respectively. As Allard explains, the Place de Grève was a space both shared and contested, not only by quarreling peddlers and workers but by competing authorities: the

commissaires of the police and the Bureau de la Ville had jurisdiction over that space, and sometimes that competition could lead to woeful lack of efficiency. One example was the crowd stampede that led to over a hundred deaths at the 1770 celebration of Marie-Antoinette's marriage to the dauphin. The public expected a swift and thorough response to the disaster and an identification of the culprits (as well as better preventive measures), but officers from the city and the Châtelet offered different explanations. Métayer, beginning her essay in the seventeenth century, also illustrates how complicated the act of policing Paris could be with so many different agents such as the *archers*, *the prévot de la ville*, *the bailli du Palais,* the Bureau de la ville, and the new, "modern" police force established in the 1660s under the *lieutenant générale*. This could be especially difficult when policing the supply of food to markets which came from all the different regions of France in a steady stream towards the capital.

The theme of sociability appears in several essays, and their authors examine the fascinating implications of socializing both for the commissaires and for members of the public whom the police monitored with apprehension. The police both expected and encouraged sociability and looked on it with suspicion. For example, Laurence Croq presents a thorough investigation of the sociability of commissaires, including well-researched tables showing their memberships in Freemason lodges and the number of family members who joined the Church. She concludes that spirituality was more attractive to bourgeois commissaires than political engagement, though they seemed to lean more royalist after 1760. One wonders what explanation she might offer for this shift and a discussion of their politics on the eve of the Revolution would be much appreciated.

On the other side of the police-public divide, as David Garrioch shows, was the questionable religious sociability of members of the lower classes such as the Jansenist *convulsionnaires,* working-class women who converged near the grave of a Jansenist "saint" and began having convulsions and reporting miraculous healings in the 1730s. The police viewed these goings-on with intense suspicion and closed the cemetery, though the activities continued in private homes and included socializing and prayer. Besides the strange convulsions, the police were on alert because these gatherings "recruited from a wide social range, yet they were apparently highly egalitarian, both in their theology and in their interaction" (p. 187). The citizens of Paris were expected to attend religious services and participate in various forms of devotion, but some religious gatherings thus alarmed the police. Garrioch provides examples such as a group of fan makers in the 1770s who attracted the attention of the police by living and working together in the rue Quincampoix, cohabiting without marrying, and taught "by an intellectual who came from time to time to lecture and encourage them" (p. 174). In another example, the police received an anonymous denunciation when over a hundred workers and servants gathered regularly near the university to attend a sermon and church services on Sundays and holy days. As Garrioch writes, "Such mobilization of working people rang alarm bells..." (p. 191).

Touching the themes of both spirituality and sociability, Bruno Belhoste examines the short fad of mesmerism and how it overlapped with discourses of science and medicine. The popularity of mesmerism in the 1780s, according to Belhoste, seemed to concern the police both because of the strange gatherings of believers in mesmerism and the potential for medical fraud. Later in the century, sociability could even alarm the new police of the Revolution and Vincent Denis reveals the difficulty police faced when confronted with spontaneous, late-night socializing during the

Terror when many would gather for feasts in the streets called *soupers fraternels.* As Denis explains, both the police and the Jacobins found exuberant socializing suspicious, but authorities remained largely silent on this grassroots movement and the police cautious. Thus the late-night gatherings continued though they were closely watched.

Lastly, the theme and practice of surveillance is prominent in several essays, unsurprisingly. Jeffrey Ravel focuses on playing cards since they were a source of tax revenue, and the police were very careful to surveil cards sold on the black market. Lisa Jane Graham dives into the contradictions of the *lettres de cachet*, secret orders for immediate arrest that were often requested by families to hide away a debauched or deviant black sheep. Many families desired police intervention even while pamphleteers in later decades of the eighteenth century decried the *lettres de cachet* as police despotism. Graham's nuanced essay masterfully reveals and plays on the main themes of the volume overall: the cooperation between police and citizens, since citizens solicited these arrests and expected police aid and secrecy to safeguard families' reputations and honor; the use of surveillance to maintain moral order, preferring prevention to more visible and cumbersome punishments through the law courts; and the problematic nature of sex for authorities. Like sociability, sex has the potential to subvert social hierarchies. Vincent Milliot also complicates the picture of police surveillance, asserting that, despite their large network of spies or *mouches,* police surveillance could differ widely depending on the situation, and once again relied on the often-unpaid cooperation of members of the public.

In general, the police preferred secrecy and surveillance to force, relied on the cooperation of the public, and regarded sociability with suspicion, revealing its revolutionary potential. This volume is a valuable addition to the scholarship on the Paris police as well as urban history, and scholars of either field will benefit from these thorough and well-researched essays.

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Nicole Bauer
University of Tulsa
Nicole-bauer@utulsa.edu

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