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Peter G. Wallace. *Communities and Conflict in Early Modern Colmar, 1575-1730*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1995. xiv + 299 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-391-03822-6.

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The title of this work immediately indicates its scope. We are met not with one community, but with *communities* in early modern Colmar. From 1575, when Protestant worship was first authorized by the town government, the most obvious split within the town was confessional, with a minority Catholic community continuing to share urban space with the new majority Protestant establishment. Unlike some other examples, including Hagenau in Alsace, this division was never coterminous with a socioeconomic fissure in Colmarian society, a fact that explains the absence of some of the more bitter altercations found in other German towns during this same period. Economic standing does, nonetheless, provide another of the communities studied in Peter Wallace's work. A third aspect of community is the geographical organization of the town into neighborhoods.

When the town government of Colmar authorized Protestant worship in 1575, it was not able at the same time to suppress Catholic worship, in part because of the presence in the town of Catholic religious foundations protected by imperial law, and (perhaps more significantly) because of Habsburg presence on Colmar's borders. Hence, although a majority of the population, and of the wealthy families, joined the Protestant congregation, there remained a significant Catholic minority at all economic levels. The presence of this minority, and the inclusion in it of at least some of the economically and politically significant families of Colmar, had two important results. First, "Catholics had a voice in the civic regime ... openness in council recruitment extended confessionally" (p. 33). Second, "public peace, unity, and commonweal were desacralized in order to preserve them" (p. 3). This state of affairs remained more or less constant despite a brief Catholic restoration during the years 1627-33, the Swedish insistence on the Protestant community affiliating with Lutheran Strassburg rather than Reformed Basel, and the French demand for "parity" of the confessions after 1680.

The economic communities discussed in Wallace's

study are drawn primarily from tax and guild records. There is some minimal coverage of the economic activities of the population, but virtually no treatment of the lifestyles of the citizens. We are given statistical information based on taxable wealth and guild membership as they changed over the generations, but the reader searches in vain for any feel for what this may mean in terms of the lives of the Colmarians. Few individuals emerge from the charts. The privileged few who paid no taxes and the underprivileged many who were too poor to find a place on the tax rolls or purchase guild membership are virtually invisible.

The neighborhoods of Colmar are so only in a limited sense. Wallace finds most useful for his purposes the twenty-three tax districts of the city, and provides the reader with confessional information by district for the years 1620, 1670, and 1720. Only two areas emerge from these maps, charts, and statistics with any individual character: the core of the town, which was dominated by fairly well-to-do Protestants, and the northern districts around the Dominican religious foundations, which were populated largely by working-class Catholics.

The real changes in Colmarian society took place after the imposition of direct French rule in 1673. The ruling elements became increasingly separated from the citizen body, basing their authority on the favor of the king rather than that of the community (p. 138). These elements separated themselves economically and socially as well as politically, leading to "sharpening social stratification" (p. 170). The magistrates under French rule saw themselves less as civic politicians than as royal administrators (p. 188). When economic growth came to Colmar in the early eighteenth century, it benefited primarily the privileged few, who increasingly gained exemption from taxation. This resulted in increasing social tensions (p. 233). By 1730 Colmar had thoroughly adapted to its status as a French provincial center, abandoning its earlier identity as a German imperial city.

This study, which grew out of Wallace's doctoral dis-

sertation, has managed to avoid many of the disadvantages of such a birth. The notes, for example, while predictably lengthy, have been placed at the end of the chapters, thus not distracting the reader unnecessarily from the text. There are adequate graphs, maps, and statistics to support the conclusions drawn by the author, who at several points challenges previously received opinions, in particular those of Georges Bardot, Georges Livet, and Lucien Sittler (pp. 5, 122, and passim). These French authors saw Louis XIV's acquisition as freeing an oppressed population from a narrow and self-serving oligarchy, an interpretation not supported by Wallace's researches. There is nothing really startling in the conclusions reached in this work. Rather, it documents with a wealth of detail a pattern of development that would be expected, given the information already available through the studies of Mack Walker, Gerald Soliday, Franklin Ford, Christopher Friedrichs, et al., and given the conditions acting within and upon Colmar during these years.

With its many advantages, this book nonetheless contains a number of minor but irritating lapses. The au-

thor has chosen to use the modern French forms of place names in Alsace, so that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Horburg and Reichenweier become Horbourg and Riquewihir (frequent references). Wallace writes on page 107, "In 1656 ... in the wake of French failure to deny Leopold I the Imperial throne," but on the next page correctly acknowledges that Leopold became Emperor in 1658. The Treaty of Ryswick was signed in 1697, not 1698 (p. 201). Charles II of Spain died in 1700, not 1702 (p. 209). Many would be surprised to learn that "the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 ended war in Europe until 1740" (p. 210). These errors become more frequent in the later pages of the book, reflecting, perhaps, an understandable but nevertheless reprehensible editorial weariness.

These minor irritants notwithstanding, Peter Wallace has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge about and understanding of this early modern town on the frontiers between German and French cultures.

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