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Beyond Belief: Surviving the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France

Christie Sample Wilson

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Beyond Belief: Surviving the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France Christie Sample Wilson *Beyond Belief: Surviving the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France* presents a demographic study of the behaviors of Protestants and Catholics in a town in southeastern France between 1650 and 1715. The Protestants in Loriol did not endure the full array of horrors experienced by so many French Protestants and survived pressure to convert until the Revocation itself. The entire community managed to minimize the interference of the crown and the Catholic Church in their affairs through the end of Louis XIV's reign. Their story speaks of compromises by individuals and groups of both confessions that buffered the community from royal force. It sheds light on the layers of cooperation by elites and those of more humble backgrounds, upon which the government of Louis XIV relied to achieve the outward appearance of conformity.

Beyond Belief addresses current and continuing debates into the nature of confessionalization and the nature of royal authority under Louis XIV. Examination of the behaviors of Catholics and Protestants and analysis of the degree to which their behaviors corresponded with the teachings of their respective church reveal that the people of Loriol, particularly Protestants, understood the expectations of their religion and behaved accordingly prior to the Revocation. In the aftermath of the Revocation, former members of the Protestant congregation conformed their behavior to the requirements of the Catholic Church and the crown without fully compromising their Protestant beliefs.

Beyond Belief shows that the extension of state power, and its limitations, resulted from the cooperation of a broad range of people, rather than focusing on elites. The experience of Loriol shows that a large portion of the community was involved in the tacit acceptance of Protestants, a position that served those of both confessions by minimizing the interference of outside civil and religious authorities.

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