

experts were invited into high society to cure maladies, to instruct and to entertain, but they were not regarded as members of that society. This conclusion is borne out by the results of Sturdy's second quest. The academicians came largely from office-holding or bourgeois backgrounds, and later on from medical households as well, but they arranged marriages for themselves and their children into the same middling social levels. Membership of the Académie was not a route to upward mobility, and Sturdy admits that his attempt to gauge the social status of the members has led only to 'uncertainty'. Many of these scientists were conventionally religious, sometimes Jansenists, and took little or no part in the philosophical debates of the day. The terminal date of 1750 precludes a consideration of the growing onslaught by Enlightened philosophers on the elitism and old-fashioned science of the Académie. So, despite such painstaking research, Sturdy offers his readers few conclusions. The copy-editing is sometimes poor, with inconsistencies in the rendering of proper names, while in the Index two princes de Condé, both of them ducs de Bourbon, are separated, one appearing under Bourbon, the other under Condé.

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*Dorf und Religion. Reformierte Sittenzucht in Berner Landgemeinden der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart/Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1995; pp. xvi + 425. DM128) is in essence Heinrich Richard Schmidt's *Habilitationsschrift* (super-doctorate) in the University of Berne. The basic question he addresses is familiar: what was the socio-cultural impact of the Reformation? Unlike many of his predecessors, however, he seeks his answers, not in the didactic and theoretical writings of the Reformers, but by looking at the outworkings of the Reformation on the ground, as it was lived in terms of everyday life. He thus joins the band of those (Schilling, Kingdon) who are currently exploring consistorial and Church court records in the early modern period. However, this is not an edition of the records, but an exhaustive analysis, based on the unpublished proceedings of two consistories (*Chorgerichte*) in the cantons of Berne, Vechigen and Stettlen, where records covering the period 1572–1800 are complete. Dr Schmidt also incorporates some information from earlier records from Biel/Bienne in order to throw light on the period before 1572. The German text is followed by an extensive summary in English (pp. 377–400), which is useful though not always entirely clear: when we read (p. 393) that 'Christian goals launched the end of the idea of partnership', we need to correct 'end' to 'aim' by reference to the German text (pp. 288–9). The study begins with a demographic and socio-economic description of the two communities, Vechigen being a large and well-off rural community covering some 25 square kilometres, Stettlen being much smaller, 3.5 square kilometres and poorer. The role, personalities, and manner of election of the elders are treated in detail; it emerges that service as an elder could be a stepping stone to selection as *Ammann* (chief local representative of the Berne government). Under Bernese law, the consistory could impose minor fines or other punishments, but not excommunication. The bulk of the study is the analysis of the cases brought before the two consistories of Vechigen and Stettlen. While anecdotal examples (quoted in Bernese dialect) abound, the major thrust of the work is statistical: a total of 19,358 offences came before the consistories, involving 12,113 individuals, of whom one-third were women.

There were 5,589 cases involving religious questions as such (magic, cursing, failure to attend catechism); 3,114 cases involved extramarital sex, 1,811 cases concerned aspects of marriage and marital relations, 2,771 turned on relations between neighbours, and so on. The immense amount of material assembled by Dr Schmidt constitutes a database which enables him to generate computerized graphs (87 of them), analysing each category of case in each of the two communities by social class, by sex, by profession and, most importantly, by chronology, thus highlighting the changing preoccupations of the consistories in the long term. The database is also supplied in the form of a disquette, which includes statistics on population, grain prices, and – mainly – the consistory cases, broken down into no less than fifty-seven categories of ‘sins’. Certain clear trends over time appear in the records. The *Chorgericht* tended in the eighteenth century to see far more non-citizens and ‘lower-class’ individuals than previously; it seems that, towards the end of its existence, the court became more and more a marriage tribunal for the underprivileged. Cases involving absenteeism from church services or catechism reach a peak around 1670–1690, and fade almost entirely after 1735. Dr Schmidt explains the peak as a sign of alienation from the Church, perceived as a ‘limb of the authorities’. He ascribes the decrease in cases after 1735 not to a reduction in the number of transgressions but, more probably, to a decline in religious fervour. This brings us to the major problem of interpretation of the data. What do the figures mean? Thus (p. 388) three-quarters of all cases of sexual misbehaviour appear in the eighteenth century; ‘they indicate that propriety in relations between the sexes had relaxed’ – or is it that the courts became more vigilant? In this case Dr Schmidt has sound reasons for his interpretation, but frequently he is obliged to surmise on changing attitudes – to marital fidelity, or to alcohol abuse, or the growing importance of love in the eighteenth century. What is the significance of the differences between the two neighbouring communities of Vechigen and Stettlen? What lessons can be reliably learned concerning conflict among neighbours, given that serious crimes were not a matter for the consistory and did not appear there? What about the contribution of individual pastors, here only touched on, but possibly very significant? And how far can the evidence of these two rural communities be taken to represent a wider picture? The virtue of statistical analyses is often not that they answer questions, but that they pose them with particular clarity. This is the case with Dr Schmidt’s thesis, notably as concerns these specific questions of interpretation. Insofar as there is a general conclusion to be drawn, as an answer to our initial question, it is negative: ‘On the surface, if anything, a development towards greater discipline is not revealed. Tendencies that are better described as individualization, as emotionalizing, decommunalizing and secularizing, are much clearer. As far as the results of this study ascertain, no smooth victory for moral discipline can be determined.’ None the less, on the way, Dr Schmidt has provided us with a great deal of insight into the social history of the communities he has studied.

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Madrid definitively became the capital of the Spanish monarchy in 1606. Mauro Hernández’s *A la sombra de la corona. Poder local y oligarquía urbana. Madrid, 1606–1808* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, 1995; pp. xix +