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Masculinity in the Reformation Era

Mentzer, "Masculinity and the Reformed Tradition in France"

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Contents

Masculinity and the Reformed Tradition in France

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The notion that the Reformation contributed to the intensification of masculinity in early modern Europe now seems a commonplace. Scholars working in history and literature have made this point on numerous occasions and for a variety of linguistic and civic cultures. In her discussion of events in sixteenth-century Augsburg, Lyndal Roper argues vigorously that "gender relations... were at the crux of the Reformation." Within Roper's interpretative framework, the German Protestant male leaders, both clerical and lay, resolutely advanced "a vision of women's incorporation within the household under the leadership of their husbands."[1] Scott Hendrix's examination of the pamphlet literature that German Lutheran preachers composed on the subject of marriage draws attention to the theological underpinnings of their views on husband and household. The question is straightforward. What in this prescriptive literature were men's approved roles and their responsibilities within the family?[2] The contributors to a recent collection focusing on masculine authority in the world of early modern French letters offer an especially nuanced perspective as they emphasize a general anxiety over gender roles.

[1]Roper, *The Holy Household*, 1–5.

[2]Hendrix, "Masculinity and Patriarchy."

They nonetheless reaffirm continuing masculine attempts to control the feminine.[3] Yet another commentator characterizes the Reformation in England as "men taking on women—and winning."[4] Few specialists, however, have examined the development and enhancement of masculinity within the context of local churches, the people who constituted these communities of faith, and their life of worship. What, in the case of the early modern French Reformed churches, were the institutional and liturgical vectors for the advance of masculinity? How did the changing constructions and circumstances differ from late medieval ecclesiastical forms and the corresponding arrangements for religious devotion? Were there major shifts in the function and position assigned men, on the one hand, and women, on the other? How were the transformations, such as they were, perceived? What was the reaction of ordinary people? Finally, how did the faithful mediate what modern scholars have generally understood as the extension and strengthening of masculinity by the leadership of the French Reformed movement?

Let us begin by focusing on the two Reformed sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Within these sacred rituals, ecclesiastical officials systematically expanded masculine participation, often to the disadvantage of traditional female roles. Baptism in the late Middle Ages possessed a strong element of feminine involvement. Many infants, perhaps the majority according to recent scholarship on the subject, were given emergency baptism, the so-called *ondoiement* in the francophone world, immediately upon birth.[5] This swift and urgent action would have taken place in the home—the acknowledged feminine sphere. The administrator was typically the midwife or another of the women who attended and aided in the birth. Medieval and later post-Tridentine Roman Catholic parents believed the ceremony was essential for the protection and salvation of their children. Infants were often sickly, and, in any event, their survival was always precarious. Those who died unbaptized were, according to the medieval church, forever consigned to limbo and thus denied entry into heaven. For their part, the Reformed churches of France vigorously rejected the medieval notion of limbo as the dwelling place for innocent

[3]Long, *High Anxiety*, ix–xvii.

[4]Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, 308. Swanson draws upon the work of Richmond, "The English Gentry," 140–42.

[5]Emergency baptisms had become "standard practice during the later Middle Ages" according to Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 67. See also Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 63–65; Taglia, "Delivering a Christian Identity," 80–87; and Wiesner, "Early Modern Midwifery," 106–7.

souls kept from heaven by lack of baptism.[6] At the same time, Reformed religious authorities wished to underscore the father as the head of the family and simultaneously curtail women's sacral roles.

Baptism in French Reformed circles occurred in the temple and was deeply embedded in the congregation's worship. A vigorous public element permeated the ceremony, which ordinarily occurred toward the conclusion of the principal Sunday sermon service. Infants could no longer be baptized privately in the birthing chamber. Nor would the ceremony take place separately from major communal religious services and be limited to relatively few persons, mostly family members, as was the case in the late Middle Ages. The entire body of the faithful now witnessed the event and welcomed its newest member. In addition, the pastor alone was authorized to baptize. Midwives, helpful neighbors, and other individuals could no longer perform the ceremony, even in a crisis when the baby appeared to be gravely ill and in danger of dying. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin was adamantly against the practice of emergency baptism, maintaining that it was "wrong for private persons to assume the administration of baptism." He added that "Christ did not command women, or men of every sort to baptize, but gave this command to those whom he had appointed apostles." Baptizing was a "function of the ecclesiastical ministry." He continued at some length in the *Institutes* to develop his view that women, in particular, were not permitted to baptize: "Concerning women, it was decreed...that they should not presume to baptize at all."[7] From Calvin's perspective, the prohibition of women's administration of baptism was absolute. Indeed, he tied it to the first centuries of the Christian church and ancient commentators such as Epiphanius (ca. 315–403) and Tertullian (ca. 160–220). Early practice, as Calvin understood it, "held that a woman was not allowed to speak in the church, and also not to teach, to baptize, or to offer." Permission to baptize "was not even given to the holy mother of Christ."[8] Not surprisingly, Calvin's followers in France labored arduously to prevent midwives and other women from baptizing newborns, while simultaneously bolstering the place of men, above all the newborn's father and godfather, in the baptismal ceremony.

The *Discipline of the Reformed Churches of France*, an official, regularly updated statement of ecclesiastical polity, laid out the guidelines and, in

[6]Spierling, "Daring Insolence toward God?" 101–3; Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 67–83; and Mentzer, "Laity and Liturgy."

[7]Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.20, 1320–21.

[8]Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15.21, 1321–22.

particular, established the obligations of parents and godparents. An infant typically had at baptism both a godfather and godmother who, along with the father, presented the baby for the ceremony at the temple. The godparents answered in the child's stead basic questions about the Christian faith—the essentials for induction into the Christian community. A spiritual responsibility obliged these sponsors to watch over the godchild's proper religious training; together with the father they made a "promise to instruct the infant in the religion."[9] Provision of other support, principally material and financial, in the event of the parents' death may have also been expected. Consequently, sponsors had to be of suitable age and circumstances. Deaf-mute persons, for example, could not serve because the church most likely viewed their condition as an impediment to instilling in children the rudiments of the faith. More commonly, sponsors had to be old enough to assume their potential duties. Fourteen years was the minimum age, and the individual had already to have begun participation in the Lord's Supper; that is to say, the individual needed to be a full, active member of the congregation. Finally, the Reformed churches would not permit women alone to present children for baptism; they were presumably incapable of fulfilling the godparents' charge on their own. A man, however, could act alone as godfather, thus suggesting the church's acceptance of a male godparent's capacity for the spiritual nurturing and religious instruction of children.[10]

The same viewpoint applied, naturally enough, to the biological parents. The father seems not to have necessarily been present for baptism at the church during the medieval period.[11] In some cases, he may have been attending to the details of the subsequent family festivities. The French Reformed churches took a strong position on this matter. Although the mother continued typically to remain at home, recovering from the birth, the father's presence was now obligatory.[12] Local churches were quite firm about enforcing the requirement. The church of Monbazillac in the French southwest, for instance, explicitly declared than no child could be

[9]AD, Tarn, I 1, 217.

[10]Garrisson, *Protestants du Midi*, 46–47; Méjan, *Discipline de l'Église*, 262–74; Félice, *Les protestants d'autrefois*, 175–94.

[11]Spierling (*Infant Baptism*, 91) notes Genevan fathers' "deep-seated habit of not attending baptismal ceremonies." Karant-Nunn (*Reformation of Ritual*, 64) indicated that in Saxony fathers did not wish to attend the ceremony. On the other hand, at Nuremberg the father seems to have been present at the baptismal ceremony; Wiesner, "Early Modern Midwifery," 106.

[12]For practice at Geneva, see Spierling, "Daring Insolence toward God?" 99–100, 118–19; and Spierling, *Infant Baptism*, 38, 91–93, 111–12, 220–21.

baptized unless the father was present to "promise jointly with the godfather and godmother that the infant would be raised in the fear of God." Along similar lines, the church enjoined men who had married Catholic women to ensure the baptism of their children in the Reformed faith.[13] Conversely, men who had been "suspended" or excommunicated and thereby barred from the Lord's Supper were prevented from presenting their infants for christening. The *Discipline* was unequivocal on this point: "The children ... of excommunicates may not be received for baptism...." Individual churches enforced the rule closely. At Saint-Amans, the church forbade a number of excommunicated men from presenting their infants for baptism until they "submitted to the judgment" of the church. Other Protestant communities, Montauban and Nîmes for example, acted similarly.[14] The father acted on behalf of the family in its dealing with the greater community. His exclusion from the sacramental life of the church shaped the religious experience of all family members, even newborns.

These various requirements certainly reinforced the role of the father, who was generally understood to be the male head of household, as the public voice and representative of the family. The Reformed churches of France even held him accountable for proper registration of the baptism in the local church's *livre de baptêmes*, an early modern precursor to contemporary records of vital statistics. The father and godfather informed the pastor of the child's name; they also provided those of the father and mother, godfather and godmother. Following the baptismal ceremony, the administering pastor, father, and godfather signed the register and thereby established the infant's religious and civil standing.[15] The masculine authority attributed to the father was sufficiently strong that some churches, that of Viane for instance, recognized "his right" to consent to the infant's baptism. The issue arose in the case of mixed marriages where a Reformed woman had wed a Catholic man. Thus, the consistory of Viane requested that Anthoine Amen affirm, in the presence of its secretary and several witnesses who subsequently signed the consent agreement, that he would not "prevent" his daughter's baptism in the Reformed church. The mother was obviously Protestant. Another man, again Catholic, "relinquished his right, consenting that [his] infant [boy] be baptized at the sermon service" by the

[13]AM, Bergerac, Registre de l'Église réformée de Monbazillac, 29 octobre 1629.

[14]Méjan, *Discipline*, 262–63; AD, Tarn, I 8, 13 mai 1588, 6 février 1591; AD, Tarn-et-Garonne, I 1, fols. 223–24; and BN, MS fr. 8667, fol. 351.

[15]Méjan, *Discipline*, 266.

Reformed pastor.[16] Again, the mother was Protestant. In the end, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Reformed tradition in France transformed what had been a highly feminine and often private sacrament into a masculine, wholly public ceremony.

The transformation was consonant with the view of Calvin and his followers concerning the family and the place of the father and husband within it. Calvin likened the household to a small individual church where the pious father, as the head and master of his family, supervised and instructed the members in accordance with the talents and capabilities that he had received from God.[17] The father, the ancient and revered *paterfamilias*, assumed a sacerdotal role at the very heart of the family. Much as he directed other aspects of family life, the father became its spiritual and ethical guide. Ideally, he conducted himself with firm benevolence. Among the literate bourgeoisie and nobility in particular, the father officiated over household religious services. He led the family in giving thanks to God before meals and, each evening after supper, directed his wife, children, and servants in reading from scripture, saying prayers, and jointly singing several psalms.[18] The French Protestant tendency to assign much of the burden of piety to the home—the *culte familial*—had the obvious effect of concentrating considerable religious influence in the hands of the father. At the same time, the husband and father represented the family in the civic sphere. He bore, as noted above, primary responsibility for a newborn's baptism and, as a result, controlled the child's initiation into the community of believers.

Fathers and husbands were accountable in other ways too. Local consistories frequently summoned them to answer for the misdeeds of their wives, offspring, and servants. Heads of household had to explain when family members failed to attend sermon services and catechism, married someone from the Catholic community, quarreled with .neighbors, or uttered scandalous blasphemies. The elders from the small town of Saint-Gervais sternly scolded a man for allowing his wife to swear on the devil. In the early seventeenth century, the church of Layrac chastised a tailor and several other men for permitting their daughters to marry Catholics or, more pointedly, for "delivering them to Satan."[19] The consistory of Saint-

[16]AD, Tarn, B 1280, fols. 83v, 101.

[17]Aymon, *Tous les synodes*, 1:85.

[18]Félice, *Les protestants d'autrefois*, 85–90; and Garrisson, *Les protestants*, 37–39, 88–91.

[19]AN, TT 269, fol. 953v; and AD, Gers, 23067, 29 décembre 1607, 26 mars 1608. See Mentzer, "Le consistoire," 389; and Mentzer, "Persistence," 220–21.

Amans, to take yet another example, summoned a woman and accused her of participating in the "debauchery" of dancing and masked balls. She denied the entire matter and refused to submit to correction. Her defiance and insubordination led to immediate suspension from the Lord's Supper. The pastor and elders then pointedly told her husband, himself an elder, to take control of his disobedient wife and ensure her appearance before the consistory. Failing this, he too would be suspended from the sacrament and dismissed from the office of elder.[20] In a more positive vein, consistories occasionally counseled women to obey their husbands according to the "word of God." Finally, some pastors and elders implicitly recognized a Catholic husband's right to prevent his Protestant wife from attending Reformed services or appearing before the consistory, even though they generally dispatched a delegation to persuade him otherwise.[21] Masculine patriarchal authority, its recognition, and acceptance were profound, substantial, and pervasive.

Reformed liturgical innovations and modifications led as well to dramatically increased lay male involvement in the celebration of the Eucharist. The greater influence and participation assigned to laymen in the procedures surrounding the Lord's Supper had both indirect and direct elements. The pastors, elders, and deacons who sat on the consistory, an administrative and supervisory body within every local French Reformed church, had responsibility for monitoring proper behavior within the community. According to the *Discipline*, the elders, in particular, were to "watch over" the faithful, ensuring that they participated in the worship services and lived in accord with approved moral standards. Above all, they were to report whatever "scandals and faults" as well as devotional laxities had occurred in the community.[22] Each elder had an assigned neighborhood in the town and regularly informed the consistory of the various misdeeds that had taken place in his district since the group's previous meeting. The moral offenses included verbal disputes and physical quarrels, abusive and scandalous language, blasphemy, sorcery and magic, sexual misconduct such as fornication and adultery, dancing and games, excesses of food and drink, and participation in charivaris, masquerades, and carnival. The elders, in addition, kept track of absences from catechism lessons,

[20]AD, Tarn, I 8, 3 juin 1603, 20 septembre 1603.

[21]AD, Gers, 23015 (H25, Hôtel de Condom), 1 mars 1613, 3 avril 1613, 12 juin 1613; AN, TT 269, dossier 25, fol. 964; and BN, MS fr. 8666, fol. 28.

[22]Méjan, *Discipline*, 224, 303.

sermon services and the quarterly celebrations of the Lord's Supper in addition to sabbath breach, polluting contacts with Catholicism, and irregularities surrounding marriage. These guardians of the communal welfare were also expected to visit each and every family within their supervisory sectors on an annual basis.[23] The arrangements accorded the elders enormous influence and prestige as they became responsible for the spiritual and moral well-being of the faithful.

The elders' supervision of the community was ultimately connected to the necessity of screening people for the Eucharist. Only those persons living a proper Christian life and possessing a sound understanding of the faith could participate in the Lord's Supper. Individuals who had been excommunicated or who had gravely transgressed the strict morals standards of the Reformed church needed to seek forgiveness and reconciliation before they could be admitted to the communion celebration. The sacral meal was the appropriate moment for repentance and the restoration of communal harmony. The faithful also had to attend catechism and demonstrate a basic knowledge of Christian beliefs and prayers. Catechism was a prerequisite for anyone—adult or adolescent—who wished to participate in the Eucharist. The assumption was that communicants ought to comprehend the essentials of the faith and, at a minimum, know the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed. Toward these ends, the elders and deacons frequently shared with the pastor the task of conducting the general, obligatory adult catechism lessons in the several weeks before the celebration of the sacrament.[24] Notwithstanding the primary responsibility of pastors to offer catechetical instruction, many local congregations enlisted elders and deacons to help with the discharge of these duties. The church of Nîmes, perhaps because of a shortage of pastors during the initial decade, entrusted catechism to the deacons, assisted by the elders. Only later did the pastors assume catechizing duties, and, even then, elders appear to have taught people living in the suburbs.[25] The consistory of Saint-Amans, to borrow another example, habitually chose three elders to conduct catechism. The church of Saint-André-de-Sangonis similarly appointed two elders to catechize the faithful. Catechism lessons at Troyes also took place under the direction of deacons and were apparently

[23]Chareyre, "'Great Difficulties'"; Garrisson, *Protestants du Midi*, 229–316; and Mentzer, "*Disciplina nervus ecclesiae*."

[24]For practice at the churches of Layrac and Montagnac in Gascony, see AD, Gers, 23015, 20 mai 1594, 24 février 1596, 25 mai 1596, 25–26 novembre 1596; 23067, 3 mars 1579.

[25]Chareyre, "Consistoire et catéchèse," 404.

held in private homes. The consistory of Layrac initially divided the town into three districts and in each secured a house in which the elders would teach catechism. Not until much later did the pastor take charge and move the instruction into the temple.[26] In short, laymen—elders as well as deacons—enjoyed a substantial role in imparting to other believers the basic truths and indispensable prayers of Christianity.

The catechizing process, along with the ongoing monitoring of people's behavior, effectively distinguished worthy from unworthy participants in the eucharistic celebration. Upon completion of catechism, each person received from the appropriate elder an entry token that he or she subsequently presented for admittance to the communion service. The tokens were collected at the temple. During the earliest years in some churches, "each of the faithful placed his token on the [communion] table."[27] Later, larger communities such as Castres had two communion tables and assigned an elder to each. The elder held a basin or plate in which the communicant placed her or his token.[28] Alternatively, an elder would collect the tokens at the temple door. In either case, no one could participate without the token that he or she had obtained from the elder. The overt purpose of this highly invasive system was to ensure that those who participated were fit by virtue of correct belief and proper behavior. At the same time, the responsibility shouldered by the lay male elders—these communal moral sentinels who monitored behavior, taught the rudiments of the faith, and screened participation in the eucharistic meal—must have been energizing, empowering, and gratifying.

The very celebration of the Lord's Supper reinforced the stature of these otherwise unexceptional men—sons, husbands, and fathers who were largely members of the bourgeoisie and professional elite. The elders, to be sure, occupied an important ecclesiastical office but were not part of the ordained priestly or pastoral order. In fact, they served no more than annual terms. Still, as churches prepared for the central ritual of the Eucharist, they assigned each of the elders a specific critical task. One elder, as has already been noted, distributed the entry tokens to the members of the community in good standing. These individuals had attended catechism and were thereby qualified to receive the bread and wine. Another elder

[26]AD, Gers, 23067, 3 mars 1579, 22 février 1587, 18 mars 1588, 4 février 1603, 6 mars 1618; AD, Tarn, I 8, 21 mars 1593; AN, TT 268, dossier 9, fol. 647; and Roberts, "Demands and Dangers," 167.

[27]Anjubault and Chardon, "Papier et registre," 35–36.

[28]AD, Tarn, I 1, 94; I 2, fols. 180, 224.

collected the tokens at the service. A third elder supervised the faithful as they moved toward the table. Two or three furnished the bread, wine, and linens. Sometimes an elder would offer a scriptural reading while the faithful communed; others collected offerings for the poor.[29] Altogether, ordinary men assumed extraordinary roles, particularly when compared to medieval practices, in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The elders also entered into the liturgy in profound fashion by virtue of their frequent administration of the cup. Although customs varied from one church to another, the overall effect seems to have been unambiguous. In principle, the pastor distributed the cup. An elder handed him the cup and he presented it to the faithful. Yet in both urban and rural churches, an elder often presented the cup directly to the people. The *Discipline* insisted that the pastor present the cup to the faithful and then hastily added "insofar as possible."[30] By the early seventeenth century, some churches developed a system whereby "the minister distributes the bread for the Lord's Supper and the senior elder, the cup."[31] Large urban churches advanced a practical argument. If the elders did not distribute the cup, the service would be interminable.[32] The logic did not prevent smaller churches in the rural landscape from observing analogous customs, judging by seventeenth-century procedures. The church at Viane, much like all Reformed congregations in the realm, celebrated the Lord's Supper four times each year—on Easter, Pentecost, sometime in September, and during the Christmas season. On each occasion, most churches conducted the service on two successive Sundays. Accordingly, the consistory of Viane habitually designated two elders, one for each Sunday, to "give the cup." The elders of Aubenas also "administered" the wine, and likewise at the village of Saint-Roman-de-Codières, an elder, aided by a second elder, "distributed" the communion cup.[33] As with other aspects of liturgical life, the changes introduced by Reformed authorities underscored the position of laymen who were at once heads of families and leaders within the community.

A final element of the Lord's Supper that underscored masculine privilege was the order of reception. Most medieval churches acknowledged the

[29]AD, Tarn, I 1, 35; I 8, 31 mars 1589; B 1280, fol. 74; and Garrisson, *Protestants du Midi*, 241–46.

[30]Aymon, *Tous les synodes*, 1:57; and Méjan, *Discipline*, 277.

[31]AD, Gers, 23067, 19 juin 1587, 1 avril 1588, 31 août 1591, 11 juin 1593, 25 mars 1594, 24 mars 1606.

[32]Méjan, *Discipline*, 277; and Roussel, "Faire la Cène," 109–10.

[33]AD, Tarn, B 1280, fols. 74, 87–87v, 90v, 91, 94v, 99, 104v, 106v; AD, Gard, 5 E 295/5, fols. 1–5 and 27–28; I 6, 9 avril 1659, 30 mai 1659; and AD, Ardèche, 65 J Non coté, fols. 3v–10.

privilege and distinction of a few people in the communion service. The politically and socially distinguished generally received first. Gender differences were likely also taken into account. The Reformed churches maintained and, in some ways, heightened this preferential treatment in the celebration of the Eucharist. Once the pastor had prepared the bread and wine, the members of the congregation proceeded two by two toward the communion table. Still, they followed a carefully delineated order for approaching the table. Pastors, elders, and deacons went first, then local nobles, members of the judiciary, city consuls and, finally, the remaining members of the faithful. The faithful were also segregated according to gender. The men, not surprisingly, preceded the women, who also came forward by rank. According to one commentator, the men received first owing to the "prerogative of their sex."[34] Some churches, Castres for instance, carried these distinctions even further and used separate communion tables that were gender specific: one for the men, the other for the women.[35] The arrangement unquestionably reiterated, amplified, and reified the principle of male preeminence.

Other aspects of the liturgy also displayed a strong sense of masculine authority. The enormous weight placed on holy scripture as the sole source of God's revealed truth meant the regular explanation of the Bible through the vehicle of the pastor's sermon. The centrality of the sermon led, in turn, to a thorough reassessment of architectural arrangements for worship. French Reformed Protestants used the term "temple" to designate the building in which they worshiped. It was in conscious imitation of what they took to be ancient Christian nomenclature. These temples were auditory spaces where pastors conscientiously communicated the word of God to the faithful. Among the more striking architectural innovations was the introduction of pewing. It was part of an ambitious plan to make the faithful sit quietly and listen attentively to the sermon with its crucial elucidation of the divine truth contained in holy writ. The pulpit occupied a central position in the temple, and around it the Reformed authorities positioned benches. Seating was segregated according to social status, age, and gender. Ecclesiastical and political officials—pastors, elders, and deacons along with nobles, political officials, judges, and other members of the elite—occupied prominent places close to the pulpit. Women

[34]From Moise Amyraut, *Apologie pour ceux de la religion* (Saumur, 1647), quoted in Mours, *Le protestantisme*, 95. See also AD, Gers, 23015, 11, 21, 28 novembre 1612; 2301, 2 février 1614.

[35]AD, Tarn, I 1, 94; I 2, fols. 180, 224.

and children also gathered close to the preacher, although their location had more to do with a perceived need for supervision than the recognition of prominence. The church of Sedan, for example, situated pews for the women alongside the pulpit, while children occupied a special section called the *parquet des petits*. At Die, women again sat on the benches closest to the pulpit.[36] Almost every French temple had a well-defined women's section. Men, for their part, occupied the space along the walls of the temple, toward the back, and in the galleries.[37] These arrangements seem as well to have satisfied a need for ritual purity. The separation of the sexes, whether at the reception of the Lord's Supper or at more routine parts of prayer and worship, led to the assertion of male ascendancy and protection from contamination by women. The congregation of Castres in the French southwest even cut a special "women's door" in the local temple.[38] Presumably, men could thereby avoid coming into physical and psychological, real and imagined contact with women as they entered and exited the sermon service and participated in the many other ceremonies associated with worship and devotion. Altogether, men placed themselves in a decidedly supervisory and segregated position over women within the liturgical life of the French Reformed communities.

These same men, particularly those who acted as elders, also shouldered enormous responsibility for the moral and spiritual well-being of their fellow believers. It must have been an intoxicating and burdensome experience to attempt a transformation of society in order to make it ever godlier. Their efforts to regulate sexuality and exercise greater supervision over marriage merit special attention. Both were key features of the Calvinist endeavors toward morals control and social discipline. The ways in which these developments unfolded offer important clues for a discussion of masculinity within the Reformed community. Consistorial interest in detecting and punishing people who engaged in sexual misconduct, mostly fornication, has frequently been exaggerated. Still, the struggle against that which ecclesiastical authorities considered sinful sexual activity was real and relentless.

The members of the consistory often found it easier to identify female offenders than their masculine companions. An unmarried woman who was pregnant or had recently given birth offered, in their view, unmistakable

[36]Sapin, *L'Église réformée de Sedan*, 73–74; BSHPF, MS 666bis, 23 mai 1613; AD, Ardennes, 31 J 4, 1 juillet 1627; and AD, Drôme, D 63.

[37]Mentzer, "Le débat des bancs."

[38]AD, Tarn, I 1, 234.

evidence of having committed fornication. Consistories throughout France typically summoned more women than men to answer for this and related sins. At the same time, the Reformed churches were determined to discover and chastise the women's male partners.[39] Consistorial resolve on this point related, in part, to the notion that all sinners deserved punishment, especially for scandalous public wrongdoing such as fornication. Given the prevailing views of masculine preeminence, men bore special responsibility for these improper sexual activities. Reformed leaders during the early modern period would have articulated male accountability in terms of physical, intellectual, and moral ascendancy. They would have been far less attentive to the woeful imbalance of power in relationships that we tend to recognize today. Nonetheless, men were liable for women's involvement in these sinful acts. The daughters of Eve may have been temptresses, but men were supposed to have the virtue and strength to resist their sexual allure. More importantly, men had an obligation to instruct and guide women, above all their wives and daughters, in recognizing and abiding by the correct standards of Christian behavior.

On a closely related subject, the control that the French Reformed churches assigned fathers and husbands within marriage extended to the very processes by which people formed matrimonial unions. The ensuing treatment is by no means exhaustive or encompassing. Rather, it concentrates on the elements that bear directly on this discussion of masculinity. Accordingly, the assertion of masculine domination began with the selection of marriage partners. The father had a commanding voice in this matter, and the Reformed church stood ready to endorse his influence. When a young woman of Nîmes actively resisted her father's efforts to have her marry a military captain, the consistory very much took her father's side. In the end, she was excommunicated for her obstinacy in opposing paternal and consistorial directives.[40]

A second element in the reinforcement of paternal control over marriage procedures was the vigorous attempt to prevent clandestine marriage, a practice that was not uncommon in the late Middle Ages.[41] Marriage among French Protestants involved a complicated, two-step public process, which in some ways built upon the medieval system. The first stage was the

[39]Mentzer, "*Disciplina nervus ecclesiae*," 103–4, 110–11.

[40]BN, MS fr. 8667, fols. 156, 157, 160v, 187, 190v, 194v, 290, 333, 366v, 372, 372v.

[41]According to Helmholz (*Marriage Litigation*, 31) there were a "large number" of clandestine marriages in the late medieval world.

betrothal, in which the couple exchanged reciprocal and, within the French Reformed orbit, compulsory promises to wed. The promises were sometimes formalized in a notarial contract; it elucidated the economic provisions between bride and groom and their respective families. The insistence upon the indissolubility of these promises to a future marriage represented a distinct departure from late-medieval practice. Reformed ecclesiastical authorities sought to avoid what they regarded as the overly subtle and confusing medieval distinction between the betrothal (the words of the future tense) and the solemnization of the marriage (the words of the present tense). When a young woman sought to annul her engagement to a goldsmith, the consistory pointed out that she had signed written betrothal promises. Unless she ceased further postponement and married her fiancé, she would be excommunicated. The woman complied. In addition, the Protestant engagement ceremony with its solemn, binding promises to a future marriage was public in that it took place in the presence of witnesses. The absence of the prescribed witnesses, construed as two adults, invalidated the arrangement. The consistory declared null and void promises exchanged by couples privately and secretly.[42] Once again, families, parents, and especially fathers found control over their sons and daughters' marriages measurably increased. Clandestine unions, whose purpose was often to skirt family objections, were strictly prohibited.

The celebration of the marriage—its solemnization by the pastor in the temple—occurred several weeks after the betrothal. The delay allowed for the public announcement of banns on three successive Sundays and the accompanying publicity. This procedure would presumably turn up any impediments or obstacles to the marriage. In this regard, one of the requirements was that the contracting parties needed parental consent, written if possible, for their union. Here, the monarchial state and the Reformed church wholly concurred in asserting patriarchal control over marriage. The requirement was that women younger than twenty-five and men younger than thirty needed their parents' assent. To be sure, French royal statute, notably Henry II's edict of 1556, established the specifics of this obligation. The edict permitted parents to disinherit underage daughters and sons who wed without their approval. For their part, the Reformed churches of France endorsed the obligation, readily agreeing with the crown on the need for reinforcement of parental authority over marriage. The Nîmes consistory, for example, severely censured Louise

[42]BN, MS fr. 8666, fols. 172, 188, 192.

Borrete for failure to obtain her parents' consent.[43] The same pastors and elders obliged a young agricultural worker to write his father for permission to marry, despite the fact that the father was a Catholic who lived in Normandy at the other end of the kingdom.[44]

In all of this, however, one must be cautious about evaluating the relationship between the Reformation and masculinity. The powerful articulation of masculinity that this essay seeks to portray and appreciate was not limited to the Protestant milieu and appears to have had strong roots in the late Middle Ages. Comparable conditions existed within the Catholic world with its more traditional, less scripturally oriented understanding of Christianity. If the seventeenth-century example of Pierre and Michel Terrade, notaries from Bas-Limousin, is an accurate indication, the *paterfamilias* drew considerably on pre-Reformation customs. This Catholic father and son successively watched over their family's physical and spiritual well-being through a potent combination of Christianity and folk magic.

Over some sixty-five years, they recorded in their *Livre de raison*, a domestic memoir and account book, nearly sixty recipes for treating human and animal ailments. The human illnesses covered a gamut of afflictions: toothaches, skin rashes, eye infections, boils, kidney stones, gout, fevers, coughs, and the inevitable accidental cuts and injuries inflicted by kitchen utensils and farm implements. The patriarchal remedies blended medicinal herbs with official and popular invocations, Christian and magical gestures. The men of the Terrade family made Christian signs of the cross and drew mysterious circles, beseeched the Virgin Mary and various saints, and administered sage and fennel. The prescribed treatment for a sore foot was to "make the sign of the cross on the ailing foot, while reciting 'Ante, per ante et super ante,' then 'Christus te leguat [*sic*][45] et custodiat and beata Virgo Maria' and 'beati Martini et omnium sanctorum et sanctarum.'" Terrade father and son invoked a range of saints depending on the nature of the illness, for saints had clear medical specializations in the family's view. Medications accompanied both acts and words, and these appropriate plants and herbs acquired sacred significance in the hands of their administrator. For coughs and fevers, a person should "eat the bloody herb that is known as *sanguis Christi*." The plant in question was sage, a fairly

[43]BN, MS fr. 8666, fols. 52v, 54–55, 57v–58, 62–62v, 172; MS fr. 8667, fols. 5v, 15v–16, 56, 82, 84bis, 85v, 91, 96–96v, 99v, 151, 153v, 178, 251v, 280. See Bels, *Le mariage*; and Mentzer, "The Reformed Churches," 173–81.

[44]BN, MS fr. 8667, fol. 9v.

[45]In its original form the text may have read *tueat*.

common medication, which the people of southern France regarded as the favorite of the Virgin mother. Fennel, mallow, and garlic were the next most popular items in this paternal pharmacy, followed by juniper berries, rue, fern, clover, fenugreek, and a host of other far more exotic plants and herbs. In a more religious vein, the head of the family might seek to heal the afflicted person through the use of holy water or tree branches that had been blessed by the clergy on Palm Sunday. Some prescriptions cured maladies, others warded them off. Accordingly, Pierre and Michel Terrade inscribed slips of paper with efficacious formulae. These little bits and scraps were carefully folded and placed in small cloth sacks that people wore around their necks or attached to cows and sheep. They also took the talismans and strategically placed them in the doorframe of the house or at the four corners of the granary. The family, its animals, house, and food supply required protection; and the knowledgeable patriarch had the ability to shield everyone from harm as well as offer remedies when illness and injury struck.[46]

If Terrade fathers and husbands functioned as healers among their kin and even within their village, they did so with considerable petitioning of the divine, thereby mediating for those under their charge on many levels and in many ways. Remedies did not simply function materially; they also possessed a vital spiritual, indeed magical element. The head of the household was its physician and apothecary, priest and magician. The learned patriarch recited Latin, French, and Occitan prayers and solicited assistance from priestly relatives to protect both animals and humans with thaumaturgic rites connected to the mass and feast days of the saints. Pierre Terrade pronounced blessings in which he called upon Christ, the Virgin, Saint Michael, Saint Peter, and a multitude of others for assistance. His son Michael would take "the right hand of the sick person and with it make three crosses and in each case say 'Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.'" The Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and a variety of other well-known prayers were deemed equally efficacious. Finally, father and son recited formulae that were decidedly less Christian, though the pair never ventured beyond the realm of beneficial white magic. These healing and protective rites along with their associated activities occurred under the careful orchestration of the male head of household, perhaps better characterized as the clan chieftain. He safeguarded the family and maintained its orderly

[46]Lemaitre, *Le scribe et le mage*, 227–50.

existence in an otherwise threatening and chaotic universe.[47] Masculine preeminence appears to have had a long history, which the Reformation buttressed and redirected but did not entirely originate.

Before concluding, let us return briefly to the early modern Protestant universe. Masculinity in the French Reformed tradition obviously had enormous strength and profound endurance. It could, nonetheless, be a fragile and unstable construction that was challenged from time to time. Take, for example, a widow of Montauban who publicly ridiculed masculine phallic prowess when she commented to several other women gathered near a tailor's shop that men who "are unable to father children and who do not embrace their wives six or seven times each night deserve to be impaled in the public square."[48] Presumably, those who claimed authority by virtue of sexual potency must be prepared to accept the consequences of failure. Less confrontational was the manner whereby women remained steadfast in their faith following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. They continued to instruct their children in basic Protestant devotional practices, and many were imprisoned for refusing to abandon their faith. Most famously, Catholic royal officials imprisoned Marie Durand as late as 1730; she was no more than a teenager. She and several female companions remained half-forgotten for decades in the Tour de Constance at Aigues-Mortes in southern France. Durant did not obtain her release until 1768 after thirty-eight years in prison.[49] Many other young Protestant women were confined less harshly in female convents. Nonetheless, they were continually pressured to convert to Catholicism or permitted to leave the confines of the convent only if they promised to marry Catholic men. The tactic appears to have been singularly unsuccessful. Still other women actively assumed the sacerdotal roles after 1685 as communities of faith found themselves abandoned by pastors who were forced into exile. Anne Montjoye, for instance, conducted religious services in secluded woods and private homes throughout Périgord for several years in the late 1680s. She directed the assembled faithful as they prayed, read passages from holy writ, and sang psalms. When royal authorities finally captured her in 1688, she refused to abjure and ended her life on the gallows. Another female preacher was sufficiently celebrated that she became known as the *prêcheuse*.[50] Only slowly

[47]Lemaitre, *Le scribe et le mage*, 251–81.
[48]AD, Tarn-et-Garonne, I 1, fols. 230–30v.
[49]Bost, *Les martyrs d'Aigues-Mortes*; and Danclos, *Marie Durand*.
[50]Mours and Robert, *Le protestantisme*, 59, 80.

over the course of the eighteenth century did men such as Antoine Court reestablish a formal ecclesiastical organization and thereby reassert male domination over religious devotion.[51]

As the Christian sacraments and various devotional practices (masses said privately or in near seclusion witnessed largely by clergy behind the rood-screen and baptism celebrated by women in the birthing chamber) moved from the private or semiprivate domain and entered the public sphere, they acquired a far more masculine character. Laypersons, particularly elders drawn from the urban bourgeoisie, enjoyed a degree of liturgical participation and involvement in ecclesiastical affairs that was unknown prior to the Reformation. The stature and position accorded laymen certainly increased the Reformation's appeal to midlevel professionals and those engaged in commercial activities. The elders, who as members of the consistory had enormous responsibility for enforcing proper behavior in the community, found that their role in the Lord's Supper—the social and religious center of the Reformed community—strengthened their authority and moral prestige. They effectively controlled people's access to the sacral meal and, by extension, to the saving grace that the sacrament signified.

Husbands and fathers were responsible for the spiritual and material well-being of the family. Ideally, they brought their offspring to the temple for induction into the community of believers, officiated at family prayers every evening, guided sons and daughters in their marriages, and ensured the correct belief and proper behavior of everyone living under the ancestral roof. The new Reformed ecclesiastical polity certainly underscored these innovations and the intensification of male dominance. The elders wielded enormous influence as they watched over and supervised the faithful with attention to such primary human concerns as marriage and sexuality. These church officials, who intruded broadly and deeply within people's daily activities and devotional habits, possessed all the attributes of the proper burghers, who later figured so prominently in the Reformation narrative as recounted by Max Weber.[52] Today, scholars view the religious transformations with a keen eye to changes in gender roles and the strengthening of masculinity. The Reformed churches worked to augment men's ecclesiastical authority and sacral power in significant ways, and their endeavors appear to have found sympathetic resonance within the wider contours of early modern European society.

[51]See, for example, the recent study by Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R. P. R.*
[52]Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*.

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AM Archives Municipales, France
AN Archives Nationales, Paris
BN Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
BSHPF Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, Paris

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