more sure of the strength of his arguments. One wonders, for example, about the fact that the ransacking of houses in Rennes appears to have been led, at least initially, by ''students of the Jesuit *collège*''. Collins does argue that some members of the elites of Brittany saw revolt as serving their interests, but the nature of the relationships between them and the rebels they encouraged might profitably have been presented and examined at greater length.

One would like to be able to recommend this book to undergraduates interested in the increase in monarchial authority and the effects of royal absolutism on the provincial nobility. Unfortunately several factors make this improbable if not impossible. Although there is a glossary at the beginning of the book, far too many terms unlikely to be familiar to non-specialists are omitted (such as *amortissements*, *arrière-ban*, *écuyer*, *étapes*, royal *greffes*, *impôts*, *octrois*, and *rentes* for loans). Some of these are defined or explained when they first appear in the text, but this is not always the case, and the contexts in which they are used often leave the meaning hazy. A novice will have to resort regularly to the index to find earlier references and explanations of such terms. In addition, much of Collins's thesis is advanced by the presentation of carefully organized and detailed evidence. While commendable, this will tend to overwhelm the non-specialist, particularly since Collins does not summarize or recapitulate his arguments at the beginning or end of each chapter.

These reservations do not diminish the value of this sensitive and intelligent study as an explication of the process by which royal authority was extended in France, or as a portrait of a regional society in the years extending from the Wars of Religion into the reign of Louis XIV. They merely indicate the limits of its usefulness to beginning students of early modern France. These, presumably, will be able to approach most of the arguments developed here by looking at the author's more recent general work, *The State in Early Modern France*, also published by Cambridge University Press.

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Raymond A. Mentzer, Jr. — *Blood and Belief: Family Survival and Confessional Identity among the Provincial Huguenot Nobility*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1994. Pp. viii, 272.

In the tradition of Jack Goody, Raymond Mentzer has produced a well-crafted study of a French family, the Lacgers, and their evolution over a period of two and a half centuries. From the 1530s to the French Revolution, the family succeeded in entering the ranks of the minor nobility, converted to Protestantism, and lived through the trauma of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. While this could have been just a run-of-the-mill descriptive study of a minor French noble family, Mentzer has elevated his analysis of the Lacgers' evolution to that of a model treatment through excellent use of structuralist and comparative methods.

Mentzer's goal in writing the book was to reply to a set of questions which go well beyond the history of the Lacger family. He sought to understand how the early modern European family confronted the social and economic transformations that began in the sixteenth century, developed under the absolutist state, and culminated in the 1685 Revocation. He sought to understand how, in particular, the Lacger family adapted to these changes.

Blood and Belief begins with a comparison between the de Lacgers and the other noble Protestant families in the Castrais region where they developed their power base. He thereby establishes the family as a good test case, relatively typical of the minor Protestant nobility of the region. Mentzer shows that the Lacgers, just like the others, acquired rural land holdings in the early sixteenth century, sent their children to university, and subsequently placed them in the law courts associated with the county or provincial parliament. An important step was taken in the early 1560s when three sons of Guy de Lacger, Antoine I, *parlementaire*, Jean, *lieutenant particulier*, and Antoine II, *juge d'appeaulx*, all converted to Protestantism. For Mentzer, these conversions indelibly marked the next two centuries of the family's history.

Mentzer's book examines the Lacger family by analyzing different variables which modern family historians have identified as critical for family survival: patrimony (land, *rentes*, offices), marriage patterns, inheritance systems, educational structures, allegiances and kinship ties. This analysis is fascinating, for it brings out both the strengths and the weaknesses of Lacger strategy. On patrimony, Mentzer shows how family planning changed after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Before 1685 the Lacgers had advanced through the purchase of offices and an active presence in the urban judicial structures of the kingdom. After the Revocation, with the imposition of a religious oath, many of the more well-to-do members of the family retired to their country estates, placing more of their assets in property management; others turned away from judicial positions to military commissions where questions of religion were less prevalent, while still others converted to Catholicism. On inheritance, the Lacgers corresponded perfectly to the early modern patriarchal model, as the family wills gave a privileged position to the eldest son, granting him half to two-thirds of the land holdings of the deceased. This context avoided the dispersal of the family domaines, concentrating property and power in the hands of the ''patriarch''.

Marriage strategy, too, shows the conscious planning of family survival and prosperity. Mentzer cites a letter from Jean de Lacger, judge of Castelnaudary, to his father in the late 1550s. Jean questioned whether he should marry a girl from the Meynuiguet family, noting that marriages of this type usually brought a dowry of 3,000 *livres*. He wrote that he had been offered a third less, but could eventually expect to receive a profitable judicial office from her brother the criminal judge for the *sénéchaussée* of Carcassonne. In the case of Pierre de Lacger in the early seventeenth century, family records also prove that the chief attraction of his future wife, Roze de Correch, was the valuable landed estates that composed her dowry. The Lacgers were very active players in the local marriage market up to 1685, using these unions to extend their capital and landed holdings. The Revocation

constituted a break in this pattern, and after 1685 they did not always conclude marriages for economic advancement. According to Mentzer, confessional compatibility, physical security, and psychological comfort became new and important factors in making marriage arrangements (p. 86).

Allegiances and kinship ties constituted one of the variables which Mentzer sees as particularly important in maintaining the prominence of the Lacger family after 1685. As previously mentioned, some of the family converted to maintain their offices and commissions. One of these, François de Lacger, was a decorated senior officer who had abjured Protestantism. At his death in 1758, he left to his closest male relative, Marc-Antoine II, a fortune of close to 200,000 *livres*, enough to re-establish the dwindling fortunes of the Protestant family. Mentzer notes that the kinship ties that bound together early modern families like the Lacgers transcended the superimposed religious ''conversions'' of the period after 1685.

The conclusions of *Blood and Belief* indicate that the Lacger family corresponded to the general comportment of minor noble families during the early modern period. They achieved noble status through holding office, expanded their fortune and holdings through astute management of their capital and land as well as through inheritance customs and marriage alliances. They deviated from these general patterns, however, by their adherence to Protestantism. Their religious beliefs, especially after 1685, put them on a different track from the majority of the minor noble families in France and excluded them from certain of the typical paths to social and economic advancement.

Mentzer's book is well structured, well written, and generally very convincing. One quibble might be with his assumption that the Lacgers' initial conversions to Protestantism in the 1560s were inconsistent with the family's desire for social, economic, and political advancement (pp. 46–47). In fact, they were following a general trend at that time among judicial officeholders. Certainly, in Dauphiné during the 1560s there were a series of such conversions among the judges at Romans, Vienne, and Valence. Were the Lacger actions such a paradox in this context? As to the structure of the book, its thematic approach avoids the long and boring descriptive method, but does lead to annoying repetitions of people and cases, like François de Lacger who is mentioned in almost every chapter.

This is an excellent case study which transcends a simple treatment of one family. It is another interesting and useful contribution to the growing school of research on family history.

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Biancamaria Fontana, ed. — *The Invention of the Modern Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xii, 234.

This is a fascinating work, both for what it is and what it is not. Assuredly it is a stimulating collection of scholarly essays on the intellectual history of the republic