



were not accurate have been proved, which provides the basis for the conclusion of some facts. Some studies at the previous stage suggested that the Jews in Harbin were relatively closed and had little contact with the Chinese and local authorities. A study of the ruins, especially the Confucian Temple in Harbin, found that it was built in 1926 by the local government with donations from society, many of them from Jews. Confucian temple is a manifestation of national culture, and the Jewish people's donation to build Confucian temple reflects the Jewish people's identification with Chinese culture, and also shows that they are connected and intersected with the local authorities and society.

The Jewish nation has been well treated in China, whether in ancient Kaifeng, modern Harbin or Shanghai, which demonstrates the tolerance and kindness of the Chinese nation and civilization, and advocates and promotes equal exchanges and harmonious coexistence among all ethnic groups. Harbin Jewish archives have become important historical and cultural heritage and memory heritage due to their rarity and completeness. It witnessed the birth and reproduction of the Jews in Harbin, which is a valuable historical memory in the history of Jewish development and memory. Its publication, not only has the significance of excavating historical documents, but also provides important reference materials for research, and helps us to understand the diversity and complexity of history.

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Pang Guanqun, *Justice and Royalty: The Parlements under the Absolute Monarchy in France* (宠冠群:《司法与王权: 法国绝对君主制下的高等法院》), Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2020, ISBN: 9787010216737.

In the Middle Ages, the monarch was regarded as the arbitrator and mediator of the kingdom. His primary responsibility was to maintain justice, which was one of the main sources of the monarch's power. The Parlements, deriving from the King's Council in the Later Middle Age, became the most important sovereign courts of the monarchy and the main institution for upholding justice in France in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. In practice, this jurisdiction penetrated into all areas of political and social life. Therefore, to understand the characteristics of the French absolute monarchy, firstly we should know the ways “*État de justice*” works, as mentioned by Pierre Chaunu, as well as its effect on the different groups of society. Secondly, we should be aware of the gradualness and complexity of the



transition from the so-called “Judicial monarchy” to the “Administrative monarchy” in early modern France. Especially, the reforms at the end of the Ancien Régime had intensified to a large extent the contradiction between the Nobles of the Robe of the Parlements and the royal government, and became a thread running through the political life in the eighteenth century France. In that sense, it is quite necessary to study the Parlements and its relationship with the monarchy and other social groups, in order to understand the disintegration of the Ancien Régime and the judicial-political origins of the French Revolution.

The book under review is the first monograph in China to study the Parlements under the Ancien Régime in France. The author divides the book into two parts, exploring the Parlements from the macro- and micro- levels respectively. The first part mainly discusses the functions and roles of the Parlements, clarifying clearly their judicial, social and political functions, as well as the theoretical resources of the Parlements against the royal government. The author emphasizes in particular its social function, that is to say *policing* in the cities where the sovereign courts are located, which was ignored by most historians. But it is essential to comprehend the relationship between the Parlements, the citizens and the monarchy. On the one hand, the judicial aristocrats of the Parlements had close contact with the common people in the cities, and they shaped themselves as guardians of the common good for the urban community, such as their participation in the poor system, therefore they could get public opinion behind them in their struggle with the monarchy. On the other hand, the social function of the Parlements also represents one of outstanding characteristics of the monarchy government. Although historians generally believe that the administrative monarchy has taken a big step to become more professional and more specialized during the seventeenth century, this high-efficient image of the absolute monarchy is actually shaped by historians who are in favor of the “modernization theory” and linear historiography. In fact, the judicial and administrative functions of the monarchy coexisted and intertwined with each other for a long time, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of the French absolute monarchy.

The second part of the book takes Maupeou’s reform in 1771-1774 as a micro-case, studying thoroughly this reform and its impacts from multiple levels and perspectives, including the judicial, economic and political reform promoted by Maupeou and his supporters, as well as the ideological conflicts and public opinions triggered by the reform. Maupeou’s effort to reassert royal power by suppressing the Parlements changed the political relationship between the crown and the Parlements dramatically, and also deepened the divisions within the elite class. Among them, the seventh chapter is the most original one of this part, it compares the thoughts of Maupeou with those of Malesherbes about the reform. The dispute between them reflects the



long-standing coexistence and conflict of judicial power and executive power, as one of the fundamental characteristics of the French monarchy. The author emphasizes that we should not simplistically condemn the “authoritative monarchy” advocated by Maupeou or praise the “liberal monarchy” endorsed by Malesherbes. In fact, both of these two judicial aristocrats have had recourse to the traditional arguments, but their thoughts also reflected the spirit of the times, or even transcended the times. It was Maupeou’s reform that showed to the public that the tradition could be changed, and Malesherbes’s attack on Maupeou hollowed out the sacredness and legitimacy of the monarchy. The author reveals the ideological divergence and irreconcilable opposition among the elite class, which could help us better understand the dilemma of reforms at the end of the Ancien Régime. Maupeou’s reform triggered the fierce public debate, helping forge the pre-revolutionary political culture and accelerate undoubtedly the collapse of the absolute monarchy.

In my opinion, this book has several virtues that make it a monograph worth reading in the field of French history and European history in China.

Firstly, the author has an in-depth grasp and understanding of international historiography about the Parlements and the French absolute monarchy, and always takes a cautious attitude towards the arguments of Western scholars. She could get out of the complicated and even contradictory contention, gather up the threads and put forward her own points of view based on rich primary sources. For example, before the middle of the twentieth century, the studies of historians focus on the political relationship between the crown and the Parlements, therefore, it is inclined to be obsessed with the debates of Western scholars, either taking the Parlements as the defender of common good of the political community, or as the chief obstacles in the path of reform. The author integrates the traditional political history with the latest approaches of social history, political culture history and ideological history. This kind of multiple perspectives makes the book have a more comprehensive understanding of the roles of the Parlements under the Ancien Régime.

Another example is the discussion of Maupeou’s reform in the second part. The author points out that the previous studies are isolated from each other, for instance, some historians pay more attention to the Maupeou’s reform as a political event, disregarding its judicial significance. Some studies focus on the controversy of ideology and public opinion evoked by the reform, ignoring Maupeou’s own thoughts and his behavior. The author explores comprehensively the political, economic, judicial, ideological and religious aspects of Maupeou’s reform, and she explains well how a reform aimed at relieving the political and financial crisis of the monarchy accelerated on the contrary the collapse of the Ancien Régime.

Secondly, the author demonstrates the importance of placing the events, the



thoughts and behavior of the actors in the diachronic and synchronic context. For example, Maupeou's reform is often interpreted by historians as a short-run political event, but the author emphasizes that we need to put this event in the historical context in order to explore its deeper historical meaning behind the event. In particular, historians usually consider the 1750s as an important watershed in the evolution of French political culture, since then, the struggle between the Parlements and the crown became more ideological, and public opinion played a more important role in the political conflicts. The author considers that the Parlements and the crown had maintained a kind of balanced relationship since the 1730s, and their conflict was not as intense as it had shown. It is the radical reform initiated by Maupeou that broke the model of struggle-compromise between the Parlements and the royal government. So, according to the author, it wasn't until the 1770s that the public opinion became more radical in France, and the tension between the two sides became more intense.

The author also adopts a synchronic approach by comparing the Maupeou's reform with reforms carried out by the monarchs of European countries (Prussia, Sweden, Russia, Austria, etc.) during a period of so-called "Enlightened absolutism/Enlightened despotism", which could contribute to a better understanding of the radicalness of Maupeou's reform. Although all of these reforms are intended to strengthen the authority of the absolute monarchy, the reform taken by Maupeou was quite different from that of Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia. The former touched the interests of the aristocracy deeply, leading to an inevitable failure, while the latter both took the initiative to seek support from the nobility.

Thirdly, literature resources used in this book are extremely rich, including the royal edicts and laws, remonstrance of Parlements, diaries and memoirs, contemporary treatises, etc. Besides, the author keeps an open mind to new theories and image resources. For example, when analyzing the theoretical resources of the Parlements restricting the authority of the monarchy, the author shows that the relationship between them is not only embodied in the rights of registering royal edicts and of "remonstrance to the king", but also represented in political ceremonies. Particularly during the royal funerals, the magistrates of Parlements had the privilege of "immunity from mourning", alone wearing their red robes of office in the procession, embodying the continuity of the king's jurisdiction. The author adopts the theory of "the king's two bodies" elucidating by Ernst Kantorowicz as a resource for the Parlements to restrict the king's power. In addition to this, when discussing the failure of Maupeou's reform and Louis XVI's restoration of the Parlements, the author borrows the print images of the eighteenth century to show Louis XVI's urgent desire to become a king "loved by the people" at the beginning of his succession. It is precisely this kind of urgency that brought catastrophic consequences, it is also regarded by historians as





the monarchy's final and fatal mistake.

Nevertheless, some of arguments in the book remain to be discussed. For example, when analyzing the composition of the Parlements, the author points out that almost all magistrates of the Parlements had been the Nobles of the Robe by the end of the reign of Louis XIV. In fact, there is a time lag between purchasing the offices and being ennobled for the magistrates from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Many office-holders who purchased the judicial offices had to wait for two or three generations to obtain the title of nobility. Therefore, perhaps not all of the magistrates of the Parlements are nobles at the same time. In addition to this, the Parlements also employed many judicial assistants, as well as a lot of lawyers who had close ties with the Parlements. What was their status in Parlements? What roles did they play in the relationship between the Parlements and the crown? These issues could be further explored, so that we would not oversimplify the composition of the Parlements and understand better their influence on the French politics and society in the Early Modern Period.

Besides, while explaining the reason why the king's imposition policies were resisted in Brittany in 1762, the author emphasizes that this province is "remote, with a strong sense of provincialism". In fact, compared to the southern provinces, Brittany is not so far away from the political center of France, and its provincial estates had been very active in the court politics since the Renaissance. The most important reason for resistance might be that Brittany is a province that retained many privileges, especially no new taxes without the consent of provincial estates, which had been regarded as one of the most cherished privileges in Brittany since 1532, so the resistance to the royal imposition in 1762 should be the logical result of those privileges.

All in all, I think the readers will feel the author's refined narrative skills while reading this book, coupled with rich literature resources and solid arguments. There is no doubt that it would help us have a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Parlements and the judicial-political origins of the French Revolution from multiple perspectives.

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