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0521573084 - Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution

William Beik

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This lucid and wide-ranging survey is the first study in English to identify a distinctive urban phase in the history of the early modern crowd.

Through close analysis of the behavior of protestors and authorities in more than fifteen seventeenth-century cities, Professor Beik explores a full spectrum of urban dissidence, from spontaneous individual actions to factional conflicts, princely parties and major popular uprisings, culminating in the dramatic Ormée movement in Bordeaux. The “culture of retribution” was a form of popular politics with roots in the religious wars and implications for future democratic movements. Community-based crowds stoned and pillaged not only intrusive tax collectors but even their own magistrates, whom they viewed as civic traitors. The authorities, torn between royal dictates and the imperatives of local governance, were unable to respond effectively because of flawed local power structures. By exploring in depth this interaction of crowds and authorities, the author makes a centrally important contribution to the study of absolute monarchy, urban power structures, contentious movements, and popular culture.

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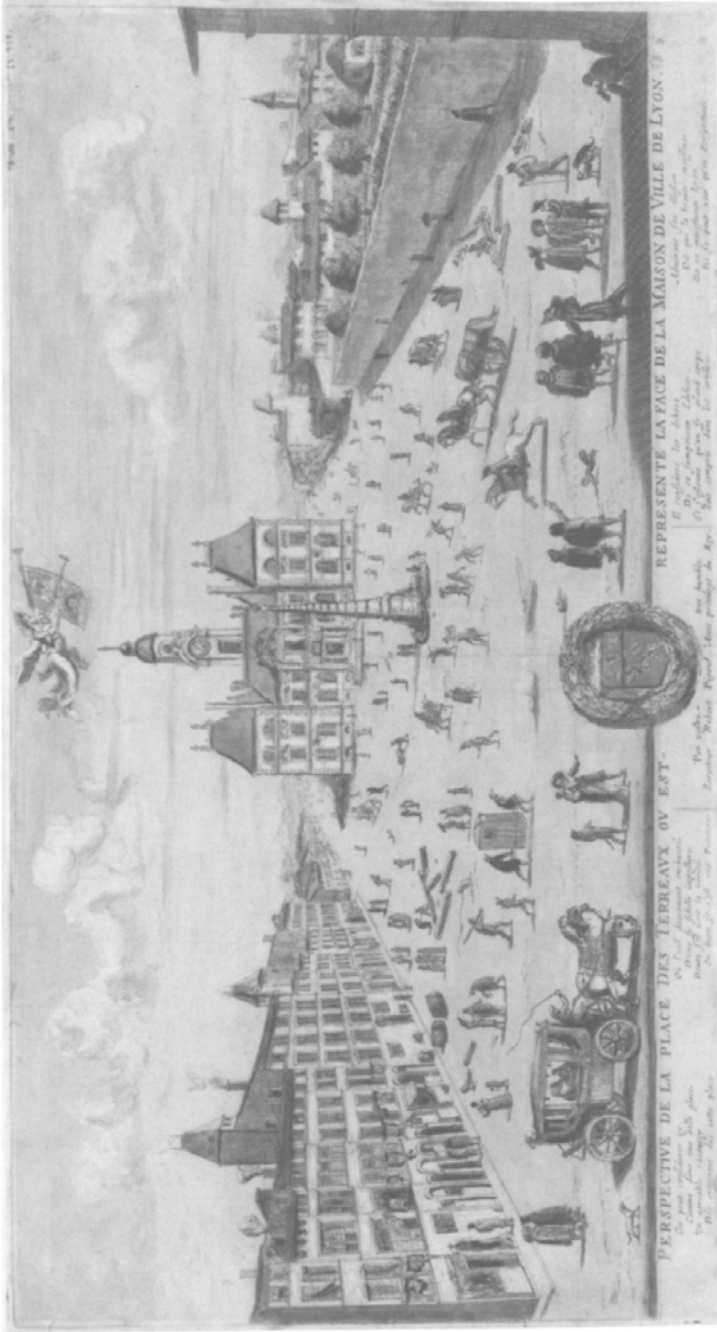
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The place des Terreaux and the hôtel de ville of Lyon in the seventeenth century, by R. Pigout. This building was completed in 1655 and modified by Mansart in 1674. Although it postdates the principal disturbances of the 1630s, the picture captures some of the bustle of Lyon's central square.

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The culture of retribution

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*Associate Professor of History, Emory University*



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For Millie

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