In late December 1652, a small army of perhaps 5,000 men under the banner of Charles IV duke of Lorraine decamped from its base in the Palatinate and marched southward upriver into Alsace.2 The Lorrainers arrived in the wintry countryside of Upper Alsace and the Sundgau in mid-January. Much of this region had been ceded by the Austrian Habsburgs to France a few years earlier at the Peace of Westphalia. Charles IV, however, had not signed the peace and was still at war with France in the service of the king of Spain. French holdings in Upper Alsace and the Sundgau bordered on the cantons and allies of the Swiss Confederacy, the remaining Austrian holdings of Further Austria (Vorderösterreich) across the Rhine in the Breisgau, and various Imperial estates on both sides of the river. As feared by all, the hardened and underpaid Lorrainers spread a swath of violence, extortion, and pillaging in their wake.

French authorities in the region were divided and incapable of mounting significant resistance as their troops huddled behind their fortifications.3 The cold winter drove the Lorrainers to seek food and shelter indiscriminately in the villages and small towns of Alsace no matter who claimed lordship. In a report to the magistrates of the

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1 I wish to thank Sigrun Haude for comments she has offered on drafts of this essay.
Swiss town of Mulhouse in mid-February, Johann Heinrich Mogg,⁴ Obristmeister of the Alsatian Imperial city of Colmar, reported that the Lorrainers “plundered, robbed, murdered, disgraced, cudgeled, and tortured in all kinds of unheard of ways.” In their search for hidden grain and hay, they had “cut off the ears and noses of many people, murdered and shot [them] dead.”⁵ As the occupation dragged on into early April, the repetition of atrocities left its mark on local observers. On 11 April when rumors of the Lorrainers’ departure proved false and they settled into villages between Mulhouse and the Württemberg county of Montbéliard, the Mulhouse authorities vented their frustration to their allies at Basel. The Lorrainers were “as annoying as the Turks, indeed as devils themselves,” having earned a reputation of such “tyranny and Godlessness” that it was only matched by the inhuman cruelty of the ancient “Goths and Huns.”⁶ Ten days later the Lorrainers finally decamped marching westward into Spanish Burgundy and ultimately to Paris for a brief appearance on the stage of the princes’ Fronde.⁷

The passage of Charles IV’s army through Alsace in the early months of 1652 exposed the workings of new political relationships among the region’s estates that were a product of the treaties of Westphalia.

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⁴ I have designated personal names in the language in which they would have considered their mother tongue, here Johann Heinrich Mogg instead of Jean Henri Mogg. For place names, I have used the modern linguistic designation, thus Mulhouse in place of Mülhausen.

⁵ Mogg identified eight towns that the Lorrainers had occupied then noted that “mit Plündern, Rauben . . . ermordern, schänden, Prüglen und Peynigen, auff allerley unerhörte Weys . . . dann solche auch viel personen neben ohren und Nasen abschneyden, ermordet und todt geschossen haben.” Staatsarchiv der Kanton Basel Stadt [henceforth StABS], Politisches V1, Krieg der Fronde, 40–1. Claire Gantet cautions modern readers about the veracity of such claims, see Claire Gantet, *La paix de Westphalie (1648): Une histoire sociale, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Belin, 2001), 97–126.

⁶ The letter begins: “ob wohl nun etlich tag einhero von deren dieser Landen eingebrochenen hohschädlichen Lotringischen Volckern, deolmente unterschiedlich gesprochen worden, daß Jedoch solches noch zur Zeyt nicht ervolgen, viel weniger darzu eynice Apparentz haben will. Sie ligen annoch Jn deren Alten Quartieren negst umb unsere Statt biß gegen Mümpelgart, und hausen nach Jhrer verfluchten Gewohnh'eit ärger alsTürcken, Ja die Teüfel selbsten, gestalten Sie Jn undern Mitlern un Obern Elsaß solche Kennzeichen Jhrer oherhörtern Tyranney und Gottlösigkheyß hinderlaßen werden, daß Sie auch die alte Gothen und Hunnen, ane ohn Menschlicher Gravsamkeit ubertroffen zu haben sich kecklich ruhmen mögen.” StABS, Politische V1, Krieg der Fronde 1651–1654, 139–40, here at 140.