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Charles Dupin (1784-1873). *Ingénieur, savant, économiste, pédagogue et parlementaire du Premier au Second Empire*. Sous la direction de Carole Christen et François Vatin, préface de Robert Fox, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009. 20€. (pb). ISBN 978-2-7535-0831-6.

Review by Judith DeGroat, St. Lawrence University.

One cannot study the July Monarchy without encountering Charles Dupin. Undertaking doctoral research on women's labor, I read his series, *Le Petit Producteur*, as well as followed his interventions in the Chamber of Peers on behalf of restrictions for child and female labor on the eve of the Revolution of 1848. His views reflected bourgeois constructions of workers of both sexes as children in need of firm guidance and discipline and he offered vivid examples of a paternalism that appeared not so benign from the perspective of labor. However, this collection of essays that resulted from an October 2007 colloquium sponsored by the universities of Paris 7 Diderot and Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense reveals an individual whose interests extended across the wide field of industrializing France from science to politics, tax policy to social reform, a *touché à tout*, as Robert Fox calls him in the preface (p. 9), whose activities and accomplishments influenced even when they did not convince his contemporaries.

The editors, Carole Christen and François Vatin, have both written important studies of the social and economic history of the period and so provide useful context as well as identify the key themes of the collection in their introduction.[1] They state that the goal of the contributors is to come to understand Dupin as a figure very much of his time who played a significant role in the development of scientific, economic and social knowledge of the Restoration, July Monarchy, Second Republic and, less so, the Second Empire. The emphasis is firmly on the public life of Dupin, about which more below. That life (1784-1873) spanned both Empires and included a stint as a maritime engineer and membership in the Académie Royale des sciences and in that quintessential institution, the Académie des sciences morales et politiques. Dupin published extensively on mathematics, geometry and statistics and taught courses on applied mechanics at the Conservatoire des arts et métiers that included a general one open to workers. He held brief positions in government and from the Chamber of Peers worked to enact legislation from the reform of child labor conditions to protection of the sugar industry in the Antilles.

A liberal, Dupin's participation in the debates over protectionism found him on various sides at different moments, always reflecting his engagement with Great Britain as both a model and warning. The four-page bibliography of his publications included at the end of the collection reflects this wide range of interests and activities. One of the questions taken up in the collection is whether to understand him as a dilettante, an opportunist or as a son of the Enlightenment who strove to use this wide knowledge for the improvement of France. The editors note that study of this individual offers a chance to examine the ties between science and politics that generated the emergence of the social sciences in the nineteenth century (p. 25).

The examination is organized into four sections, the first of which, "Les Vies de Charles Dupin," is the least cohesive. Sophie-Anne Leterrier examines the attributes reflected in lithographs representing Dupin in his various roles and concludes that, while men of science and politics were identifiable, political economy had not generated an archetype. Catherine Junges surveys Dupin's career as a naval engineer, which included a period observing England that began his long fascination with that nation as

well as his political independence: the study he produced from that mission was judged too liberal by the government in 1824 (on what grounds is unclear). Benoît Agnès makes a strong case for the continuing influence of Dupin's experiences in Great Britain on his political views. Impressed by the technological innovations made possible through a less restrictive system of legislation, Agnès argues that Dupin promoted a model of constitutional monarchy unpopular with both Bourbons and eventually Orléanists that at the same time resisted an uncritical embrace of the British system. Finally, Corinne Delmas explores Dupin's legacy at the Academie des sciences morales et politiques, his membership in which he used to promote his agenda of social reform. She concludes that his *posture académique ambiguë* led to his erasure from the academy's history to the extent that he received neither an elegy at his death nor published biographical note (p. 69), to which his only moderate protectionist stance or early hostility to colonization or perhaps even stance of limited public and private benevolence may have contributed.

"Charles Dupin, savant" is taken up in the second part. Bruno Belhoste presents his work in geometry, continuing the work of Monge with whom he shared an imaginative and inventive approach to mathematics. Equally, Dupin was an innovator in the emerging science of statistics. As Antoine de Falgeurolles shows, he developed the choropleth map that permits representation of variations in quantitative data through shaded blocks. Pierre Karila-Cohen describes how Dupin brought together these areas of knowledge to present an early map of public opinion. Inspired by studies that identified the division of France by level of education along a line from Saint Malô to Geneva, Dupin posited a similar distinction drawn from the electoral results of 1827 that revealed a strengthening anti-royalist "public opinion," which Karila-Cohen notes, *contre* Habermas, did not actually develop until the later Restoration and fragmented into liberal, Bonapartist and republican, although a challenge to absolutism just the same. Dupin, in this analysis, became the first to make the link between numbers and partisan politics even as he over-emphasized what we would call the bi-partisan nature of the division, reflecting Dupin's admiration for the British political scene.

The last two parts of the collection examine the Dupin most familiar to social historians of the period: the economist and social reformer. The essays in the third part scrutinize the apparently contradictory positions he held on such questions as free trade, free labor and political economy as a science. Indeed, Philippe Steiner's comparison of Dupin's *arithmétique politique* with Jean-Baptiste Say's *économie politique* demonstrated the former's distinctive emphasis on what he termed productive forces, which made concrete the abstractions of political economy's capital even as Dupin insisted on the use of "facts"—that is, evidence based on statistical data—to define the parameters of liberalism. Positing that Dupin was a liberal without a doctrine, Francis Démer outlines his flexibility, rather than inconsistency, in promoting a type of protectionism for external trade but not for internal industries that he deemed archaic. Thus he could oppose Guizot's proposed customs union with Belgium and defend slavery to protect sugar interests from domestic sugar beet competition. Jean-Pascal Simon's analysis of his position on the commercial crisis of 1839 reveals his advice to increase protectionism abroad and promote association and constitutionalism at home, including support of workers' savings banks. David Todd illuminates further the contradiction between a domestic liberalism that collapsed in the face of external competition, primarily from the British. Anchored squarely in the changing political context, Todd argues that Dupin moved from liberalism under the Restoration to a sort of nationalism at the outset of the July Monarchy then to a colonial advocacy from 1840 through the first decade of the Second Empire. His desire to protect French workers from the British onslaught made him protectionist, while his immersion in statistics that supported a vision of a productive slave economy as well as becoming a representative for Martinique furthered his pro-slavery stance, even as the conquest of Algeria offered a possible solution to clashing goals of protectionism and expansionism as a site for French agricultural labor, a point more recently developed in Jennifer Session's fine study.[2]

The final section explores Dupin's responses to the social question, which Éric Anceau concisely defines as "la question de l'intégration à la société liberale en genèse de la classe ouvrière qui est en train d'émerger avec l'industrialisation..." (p. 254). Anceau presents three examples from Dupin's

parliamentary interventions to argue that his opposition to the child labor law of 1840, support of abrogation of the 1848 law limiting the work day and his vote against legalizing union in 1864 all came from the same commitment to paternalistic liberalism. François Vatin illustrates that socio-political vision in his analysis of the 1827 study of *Le Petit producteur français* and, in particular, the story of the good Monsieur Lerond, a small producer. Vatin demonstrates that Dupin valued small industry over large, feared the British competition that would destroy it and devoted himself to developing a working class that could meet the challenge. This stance required a defense of the poor that Vatin asserts inspired the very socialism Dupin fought (p. 221). One battle in that fight was to turn workers into a provident and thrifty class, an effort that Carole Christen recounts through his leadership in the development of *caisses d'épargne*, a commitment that reveals Dupin not only as a philanthropist but again at odds with contemporary notions of liberalism as he asserted a major role for the state in the establishment of these institutions. Championing women as the ideal savers and saviors of the working class, a position he argued was supported by statistics, Dupin in fact received little support from labor militants of the July Monarchy. François Jarriage's contribution presents a clear picture of the rejection his views faced from the working class, an outcome, Jarriage argues, resulting from Dupin's own evolution from a benevolent liberal under the Restoration to a far more conservative position by 1848 by when his paternalism was unacceptable. Thus, Jarriage concludes that the labor press succeeded in excluding Dupin from the history of social reform and republican history, a powerful role indeed for those journals.

This brief summary omits many fascinating elements of the studies presented in this collection. Dupin lived a varied and productive public life. It is the omission of his private life, an intentional decision (as the editors state directly), relegating that aspect to the chronology at the conclusion of the volume (n.17, p. 16) that surprised me. While it is unfair to criticize a work for not doing what it explicitly states it will not do, I believe it is fair to raise the question of why that decision was made. Certainly scholars have argued for the strict separation of the masculine public sphere from the private sphere of domesticity characterized as feminine. More recently, however, studies have shown that, in fact (a term Dupin would have appreciated), such distinctions were at least porous.<sup>[3]</sup> What would we have learned from an examination of Dupin's family life, of the marriage alliances, decisions about his son's and daughters' education? How did the death of his son influence his participation in politics? Finally, what was his understanding of masculine virtues and how did that understanding shape his approach to the economy, politics, and society? Attention to some of these questions might have added another dimension to an already impressive set of conclusions these studies reach.

In the preface, Fox calls the collection an *étude pluridisciplinaire* (p. 8), which it certainly is. Statisticians, political scientists, sociologists, and economists together with historians of science, politics, economics and society engage in the study of Dupin's public life and works with an intellectual generosity that should be a model. The notes are full of references to the works of scholars from both Europe and North America; the twenty-one-page general bibliography is valuable in its own right. The multiple sides of Charles Dupin that emerge from these essays show us the importance of, as André Gueslin states in the conclusion, individuals of the second level in illuminating a period in history. Gueslin suggests that Dupin had no desire to be known for a single accomplishment, that he was content to be *entre-deux*, (p. 279) and so more easily overlooked. That he was forgotten by the academy and dismissed by the workers he sought to teach did not prevent these scholars from seeking to understand his life. I am grateful for their efforts.

## NOTES

[1] Carole Chretien-Lécuyer, *Histoire sociale et culturelle des Caisses d'épargne en France, 1818-1881* (Paris: Economica, 2004); François Vatin, *Morale industrielle et calcul économique dans le premier XIXe siècle: L'économie industrielle de Claude Lucien Bergery* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007).

[2] Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[3] To give just one example, Victoria Thompson, *The Virtuous Marketplace: Men, Women, Money and Politics in Paris, 1830-1870* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

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