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Quentin Deluermoz, *Policiers dans la ville. La construction d'un ordre public à Paris, 1854-1914*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012. 408 pp. 38.00€. (pb). ISBN-978-2-85944-7.

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“This sidewalk belongs to me more than it does to you and if there weren’t three of you and one of me, I’d drop you like that” (p. 11). These words (and a few more), directed at uniformed policemen on the beat in 1873, were enough to arrest the thirty-two year-old worker from Belleville, Martial Vialle, and send him down to the station. This anecdote, one of many retrieved from the archives of the police prefecture by Deluermoz, is symptomatic of a relationship that defined the everyday relations between Parisians, their police, urban space and the state from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. In Deluermoz’s story, the uniformed police officer extended out into the city and the quotidian lives of the capital’s population, generating new dynamics, confrontations, and exchanges between a modernizing state apparatus and its population. Through a reading of these newly regular interactions, what emerges is, in the words of Dominique Kalifa (who has prefaced the book) “a social world” (*le monde social*) (p. 9). Deluermoz captures this social world by moving beyond an anemic vision of the social as opposed to the political; indeed, we are far from a social-institutional history of the *sergents de ville*, which were created in 1854 or the *gardiens de la paix*, as they later became during the Third Republic. Rather, we are confronted with the extraordinary number of ways that the social imaginary gave form to the political through these key agents of the modern state.

From this perspective, the insults Vialle leveled at the policemen on the rue Pali-Kao were so many sparks, the visible sign of a hitherto unseen transformation between the state and its citizens. Indeed, the question of visibility is at the heart of this history. A city landscape dotted with some type of police or guardians of the peace was hardly new to Paris. Paris had famously enjoyed various forms of police presence since the late seventeenth century. But this police force had been politicized and militarized [*Garde Nationale, Garde Républicaine*, etc.] as well as pushed underground [the famous *mouchard*] in the revolutionary era from 1789-1852 in an attempt to root out potential revolutionaries and confront political opposition in the streets when necessary. So what was new about the *sergent de ville*? It was precisely his visibility, his routine, and the fact that he became a fixture of the city, standing alone, distributed throughout the capital like its gas lamps and omnibuses. They became such a mainstay of the capital of modernity that, as Deluermoz explains, they found their way into visitor’s guide books. This new visibility invited new opportunities for both citizens and for officers to reveal themselves to one another, leading, for example, to the introduction of games of self-presentation that Deluermoz effectively analyzes through the works of Goffman. So these interactions should not be understood as just one more attempt to control the modern metropolis. They also provided new opportunities to represent the state in this *ère médiatique* that marked the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, as Deluermoz shows, images of the police began filling the pages of *Le Petit Journal* and its competitors. As a result, a vast new idiom emerged for projecting these agents of the state. This construction of a “social imaginary” ultimately became an essential vector in the social appropriation of the modern state.

The transformation between these representatives of the state and the population, Deluermoz argues, took place primarily in two phases. The first occurred from 1854 to 1890 when the day-to-day contact

between the police and the Parisian people became a common feature of everyday Parisian life. This period was followed by a second era 1890-1914, which the author refers to as “la cristallization d’un ordre public,” when a new urban order emerged marked by great professionalization and judiciarization in these relationships, and the slow emergence of the notion of public service (p. 169). With an introduction, eight chapters and a conclusion, this account provides an important contribution to the historiography of the police in France. Since the pioneering works of Jean-Marc Berlière, Jean-Noel Luc, Clive Emsley, the history of the police has benefitted from more recent works by Vincent Denis, Pierre Karila-Cohen, John Merriman and Dominique Kalifa, to name but a few.[1]

Thus, our understanding of the police has expanded greatly. However, a history of the police during the Second Empire in Paris, the age of its great infrastructural transformation, has remained wanting. This is strange considering the amount of work on Haussmannian Paris. However it is less strange from the perspective of the history of the state in the nineteenth century and especially during the Second Empire—a history that has yet to be fully explored (although the broader political history of the period has been the object of an increasing number of histories in recent years). The current narratives of the history of the state during this period have tended to focus on its authoritarian tendencies. And yet, Deleuermoz has filled the gap in this historiography by presenting a very different history of the state.

First of all, he integrates it into the larger metamorphosis of the modern state from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I. As a result, in spite of the ostensible differences between an authoritarian empire and a liberal republic, he is able to highlight the relative continuities in the relationship between the uniformed policemen and the city between the Second Empire and the Third Republic. Second, and equally surprisingly, Deleuermoz highlights the fact that the model for uniformed police officers was imported from Britain. Thus, while the introduction of the new police force continued a long tradition of policing the city, it was largely inspired by the London Bobbies who had made such a name for themselves during the Universal Exposition of 1851. These continuities across the supposed imperial/republican divide, as well as the heavy and lasting influence of the British liberal model on one of the emblematic shifts of the modern French state should invite us to reconsider some of our assumptions about the origins of the Third Republican state.

Deleuermoz provides an ambitious and welcome push toward a theoretical synthesis in his conclusion where he briefly considers how his history might be seen through the lens of two social theorists of modernity, Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. Here, his appreciation that Elias’ civilizing process provides an important reference for understanding the development of a police force in the heart of a colonial civilization is tempered by his observation that the positive valences of this civilizing process in Elias’s work are particularly problematic, especially in the context of the police and the keeping of public order. While he is equally convinced that Foucault provides a useful set of tools, he suggests that here too, Foucault’s analysis has its limits. In particular, he seems convinced that the resistance of a figure like Vialle might be evidence that the process of *disciplinarisation* described by Foucault had its limits.

Since he also makes brief mention of Foucault’s notion of pastoral power, this critique strikes an odd cord. While he may be right that the disciplines do not provide an ideal framework, one must still line up the right tools for understanding the material at hand. A discussion of the uniformed policeman would seem to fall closer to the discussions of power presented in *Society Must Be Defended* than *Discipline and Punish*, for example.[2] Most importantly, to recognize that the power relations in Foucault’s work are “without substance and without a center, a pure relationship diffused between people” does not prevent them, as he suggests afterward, from being situated in time and space or being structured by political forms (p. 322).

In fact, the introduction of the uniformed police officer within the increasingly democratic context of the period would seem to provide one of the best examples of how power relations were created in liberal democratic societies along the lines suggested by Foucault. Moreover, one of the great insights of

Deluermoz's work is the way he shows the generative, and not simply repressive, effect of sending visible representatives of the state into the heart of the city. In the end, however, such interrogations only confirm the originality and pertinence of Deluermoz's book for all who are interested in the fields of urban history, the history of the state, and political culture. This book provides an important contribution to the political and social history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

NOTES

[1] See Jean-Marc Berlière, Catherine Denys, Dominique Kalifa, Vincent Millot, eds., *Métiers de police, être policier en Europe, XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Rennes: PUR, 2008); Jean-Marc Berlière, *La Police des moeurs sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); Jean-Noel Luc, ed., *Gendarmerie, État et société en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002); Clive Emsley, *The English Police. A Political and Social History* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1991); John Merriman, *Police Stories: Building the French State 1815-1851* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Dominique Kalifa and Pierre Karila-Cohen, eds., *Le Commissaire de police au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008).

[2] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995); and Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, eds., *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (London: Picador, 2003).

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