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Maire F. Cross and David Williams, Eds., *The French Experience from Republic to Monarchy, 1792-1824: New Dawns in Politics, Knowledge and Culture..* Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave, 2000. xii + 232 pp. Index. £42.50 UK (cl). ISBN 0-333-77265-2.

Review by Jeff Horn, Manhattan College.

This book publishes the papers of a conference held at the University of Sheffield in March 1999. Investigating the transitional period from 1792 to 1824 was the brain-child of Professors Maire Cross and David Williams in the French Department, who assembled an international cast to examine the revolutionary era from a cultural perspective focusing on the "transmission of values through representations of 'mentalities, sensibilities and emotions'" (p. 5). Part 1 of this edited collection resulting from the conference investigates some unexplored political dimensions of the period while Part 2 explores developments in education, medicine, music, art, and scientific research.

All such collections of articles suffer from an inevitable dislocation between the subjects discussed by the various authors and the dramatic variance in the quality and significance of the articles. This collection has a particularly strong polarity between the strong and the weak pieces that accentuates the natural difficulty of sustaining coherent analysis across such a long and knotty period beginning with the declaration of the First Republic in 1792 to the death of Louis XVIII in 1824. With only four pages of general introduction by Cross and Williams (pp. 3-6) and no conclusion whatsoever, this reader finished the volume with no sense of what general interpretive themes arose from the conference or whether the approach taken at this conference was fruitful.

Part 1 suffers from a notably disjointed investigation of French politics that focuses fundamentally on intellectual biography and representation. The strongest piece in this section is neither biographical nor representational. Malcolm Crook's "The Uses of Democracy: Elections and Plebiscites in Napoleonic France" is a major fruit of his follow-up project on electoral culture.[1] He successfully demonstrates that there was a significant degree of continuity in electoral participation not only among the elite, but also among the great mass of French citizens during the period from the First Republic to the Restoration that served as a model for the rest of the nineteenth century. This article is an important contribution to the field even though its focus on a formal aspect of politics sets it apart from the rest of the articles in this collection.

Intellectual biography is the subject of three chapters ranging from Gracchus Babeuf to the relatively unknown Marie Madeleine Jodin, a former actress turned *philosophe*, to the Bishop of Pamiers. Ian H. Birchall's investigation of the originality of Babeuf's thinking, "When the Revolution Had to Stop," is a straightforward resume of ideas found in his book on the subject.[2] Felicia Gordon's study of Jodin

portrays a feminist from an artisanal background—her father was a watchmaker from Geneva with ties to Diderot—who internalized much of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's view of separate spheres but subverted them using the concepts of natural law. Jodin stressed women's procreative role to justify her demands for the end of public prostitution, the establishment of a women's legislature with jurisdiction over women in family disputes, the creation of workshops and hostels for indigent women, the termination of the *police des mœurs*, and the right to divorce. Munro Price scrutinizes the Bishop of Pamiers, the most prominent political confidant of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette during the Revolution, who survived to play a role under the restored monarchy. Price believes that this bishop and the strain of pragmatic aristocratic royalism that he represents have been unjustly neglected by historians, and he has found new evidence to illustrate Pamiers's thought (pp. 72-73). This portrait, based primarily on three pamphlets, has some interesting insights into the Bishop of Pamiers's ideas but does not make a case for his impact on other royalists or that his political activities had any particular importance.

The representation of politics, or to be more precise the politics of representation, is the focus of the chapters by David Andress and David Wisner. Andress's wide-ranging essay entitled "Representing the Sovereign People in the Terror" examines how "in the discussion of both sovereignty and representation, assertions concerning the identity of 'the people' were a crucial issue" (p. 30). From a brief outline of the impact of theater on the public sphere, he concludes that the trope of melodrama was fundamental to the paranoia of revolutionary politics. By his own admission, Andress is operating within the cultural framework established by, among others, Lynn Hunt, Antoine de Baecque, and Dorinda Outram.^[3] Andress's theoretical arguments, however, require far more elucidation and far, far more evidence before they can be judged. This essay should be seen as a trial run. Wisner's study of the interaction between painters and the Ministry of the Interior is far more concrete in its investigation of artistic patronage. He looks at the emergence of this Ministry to become "nothing less than the prototypical Ministry of Cultural Affairs, especially active in the realm of artistic patronage" (p. 89). The Ministry of the Interior helped to centralize patronage and subordinated the initiative of individual artists to the needs of the republic, ultimately bequeathing a different relationship between artists and the state to the Restoration (p. 97). Despite the range of interesting ideas and solid research found in the articles of Part 1 of this collection, no interpretation or general understanding of politics, political change and political culture during this critical period emerges.

Part 2 generally is more focused and hangs together better. Jean-Claude Caron and Laurence Brockliss provide useful overviews of important aspects of higher education between the Revolution and the Restoration. Caron investigates the creation of French *université* and its system of Faculties as well as its early evolution. He believes that this system permitted the dramatic nineteenth-century "changes in the social order to be channelled, controlled and limited" (p. 116). Brockliss's thoughtful investigation of "The New Paris Medical School and the Invention of the Clinic" complements Caron's analysis. Brockliss's mastery of the subject is evident throughout this piece, in which he studies what was taught, and how, in French medical schools. He concludes that the reform of medical education begun under the Revolution helped Paris to achieve preeminence until approximately 1840, based on its emphasis on practical study in the clinics of the capital. These fine chapters provide helpful insight into the legacy of the French Revolution to higher education.

Three chapters are devoted to the evolution of cultural practices, with special attention to how to reach an audience. Barbara T. Cooper investigates "Paratextual Strategies for Restoring the Monarchy and a

Theatre" by showing how the public would benefit from the revival of an abandoned Boulevard playhouse in Paris (p. 212). Colin Lawson uses the teaching of Lefevre's *Methodes de Clarinette* (1802) to study how the Paris Conservatoire functioned. In a manner strongly reminiscent of Wisner's analysis of painting, Lawson emphasizes that the importance of music to the national festivals of the revolutionary decade meant that to serve the propagandistic needs of the state, musical styles and tastes needed to be adapted to the popular taste. The Conservatoire helped to simplify musical means and expression, which largely robbed music of its dramatic element. However, after 1801, a more theoretical teaching style became standard pedagogy leading music education in a different direction. Although large parts of this chapter are very specialized music history, this article appears to illustrate arguments made, most notably by James H. Johnson, although he is not cited.^[4] Denise Z. Davidson does not put an institution at the center of her chapter, which is largely excerpted from her excellent dissertation, but rather a genre of popular literature.^[5] Davidson concentrates on cheap prescriptive literature for women and children to understand women's reading practices and their relationship to the cult of domesticity. She demonstrates the ambivalent nature of women's reading in this literature and argues that it was a result of the Revolution's destabilization of male dominance. She concludes that the acts of reading and particularly of writing could be a form of rebellion against any prescription. These three chapters are the most theoretically based in the collection. Sadly, they do not successfully make the link between what was taught, performed or read and how it was understood, thereby highlighting the potential gap in cultural practice between how an audience was understood and the reality of popular reaction.

The two chapters looking at the evolution of scientific research are among the strongest in the collection. Patrice Bret's outstanding investigation of how the French Revolution gave rise not only to a new, yet typically French political culture but also to a distinctive scientific and technical culture dominated by middle-class elites (p. 174) makes a major contribution to understanding cultural practice. Bret investigates how scientists took advantage of the elimination of old institutions and the creation of new ones to demonstrate how this talented group was able to increase its influence during the wartime (p. 176). In addition, Bret illustrates his arguments with a detailed examination of the patronage and recruitment networks used by scientists to dominate the new institutions, focusing on the "Burgundian circle" around chemist and Conventionnel Louis-Bernard Guyton-Morveau (pp. 177-180). Finally, Bret extends his analysis to 1824 by investigating the establishment of some military research programs before concluding that the mobilization of scientists in the Year II helped lead to a thorough reorganization of the teaching of science and engineering (p. 188). Joel Felix's chapter on the patents taken by the nobility is not as wide-ranging but also makes an important contribution. He believes that the French nobility, unlike their English counterparts, directly played a small but significant part in the modernization of the nineteenth-century French economy (p. 205). This conclusion is supported by a detailed look at the patents taken out after 1791, and especially by nobles' patents between 1815 and 1848. These articles' portrayal of the world of science and technology in cultural terms is particularly successful and welcome.

The French Experience from Republic to Monarchy, 1792-1824: New Dawns in Politics, Knowledge and Culture is a fine idea. The book contains several superb articles; however, as a collection, these articles do not hang together or make a statement about the current state of research or where to go from here. Without more of a framework from Cross and Williams, this collection, particularly at its lofty price, will be attractive to few buyers, although many will be interested enough in certain of the articles to

order it for libraries. Hopefully others will take up the task of bridging the revolutionary decade and the nineteenth century because several of these short studies illustrate how successful such investigations can be.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Maire F. Cross and David Williams, "New Dawns in the Making of Modern France: the Consequences of Revolutionary Change."

Felicia Gordon, "The Gendered Citizen: Marie Madeleine Jodin (1741-90)."

David Andress, "Representing the Sovereign People in the Terror."

Ian H. Birchall, "When the Revolution Had to Stop."

Malcolm Crook, "The Uses of Democracy. Elections and Plebiscites in Napoleonic France."

Munro Price, "The Bishop of Pamiers: Political Thought and Experience from the Emigration to the Restoration."

David Wisner, "Painters and Public Patronage in the First French Republic: the Ministry of the Interior and the Art of the French Revolution."

Jean-Claude Caron, "The History of a Renaissance: the French University from the Revolution to the Restoration (1792-1824)."

Laurence Brockliss, "The New Paris Medical School and the Invention of the Clinic."

Colin Lawson, "Lefevre's *Methode de Clarinette* (1802): the Paris Conservatoire at Work."

Denise Z. Davidson, "*Bonnes lectures*: Improving Women and Society through Literature in Post-Revolutionary France."

Patrice Bret, "From Mobilisation to Normalisation: Scientific Networks and Practices for War (1792-1824)."

Joel Felix, "Avant-garde aristocrats? French Noblemen, Patents, and the Modernisation of France (1815-48)."

Barbara T. Cooper, "Inaugural Acts, Prefatory Texts: Paratextual Strategies for Restoring the Monarchy and a Theatre."

NOTES

[1] Malcolm Crook, *Elections in the French Revolution, 1789-1799: an Apprenticeship in Democracy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). His new project is entitled How France learned to Vote.

[2] Ian H. Birchall, *The Spectre of Babeuf* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

[3] Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1992); Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770-1800*, trans. by Charlotte Mandel (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997 [1993]); and Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1989).

[4] James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[5] Denise Z. Davidson, "Constructing Order in Post-Revolutionary France: Women's Identities and Cultural Practices, 1800-1830" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1997).

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