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Robert Morrissey, *The Economy of Glory: From Ancien Régime France to the Fall of Napoleon*. Translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 272 pp. References, index, illustrations. \$45.00 (cl). ISBN 978-0-226-92458-8 (cloth); ISBN 978-0-226-92459-5 (e-book).

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The *Economy of Glory* is a gift to all readers interested in the endlessly fascinating Napoleonic saga, an erudite though never pedantic journey through the French past, seeking to uncover the lineage of glory, that quintessential Napoleonic attribute. The book is built around the thesis that the Napoleonic moment, for all its aura of new beginning, encouraged the French to reconnect with key elements of their history, overcoming in this way the revolutionary fracture. Brandishing glory as its foundational value, the Napoleonic regime was the culmination of a long historical process. Ceaselessly reappraised and redefined, glory irrigated all aspects of French life from institutions to social structures, from philosophical inquiries to political alignments. Like the era to which he gave his name, Napoleon himself embodied a blend of traditions as his glory placed him in a long line of heroes, at once saviors of the nation and exemplary figures above the common sort. As such, he represented a prototype French people could recognize well enough to entrust the destiny of the nation to him in spite of his unremarkable background. What, then, is this mighty and resilient quality named glory? The first three chapters, practically the first half of the book, are dedicated to answering this question.

It was not solely a French attribute, but rather, something that the French absorbed from the Ancients and which subsequently became one point of contention in the lengthy quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. The French had to reconcile the Aristotelian notion of glory as reward for personal excellence with the Ciceronian ideal of glory as public recognition for superior civic engagement and moral uprightness. Morrissey offers a concept of economy of glory: "Like money, glory is accumulated and saved because it is useful. It constitutes symbolic capital" (p. 16). This definition makes it even harder to define glory, however, bound as it is with a number of equally slippery and contradictory notions such as pride, courage, benevolence, abnegation, genius, or virtue. Early Christian philosophers wrestled mightily with yet another contradiction as they struggled to reconcile self-denial and human ambition for a post-Roman, Christian understanding of glory. All these threads, after meandering through several centuries of debate and reassessment, contributed to the medieval ideal of gallant heroism (with a nod to the valiant Roland of the *Chanson de Roland* fame) and culminated, gloriously, one might say, in the iconic figure of Charlemagne. Charlemagne added yet another element to the composite concept of glory: immortality guaranteed not only by a people's memory but also, and especially, by poets and artists. It is this kind of glory, magnified and exalted by artistic panegyrics, that connects Charlemagne to the Sun King by way of the Renaissance and its élan for human greatness.

If the many tributes composed by court artists are to be believed (pp. 40-43), Louis XIV reached a yet unattained level of glory and accomplished the supreme feat of settling the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns resolutely on the side of the Moderns. In the figure of Louis XIV, glory crowned a warrior who transcended his own martial preeminence to become, at the same time, the very model of great kingship. To complicate the issue even further, the poet who sang the hero's praises and the *honnête homme* who served the hero claimed their share of glory as well. This material is rich and

captivating and beautifully presented via subtle readings of judiciously chosen literary texts. The analysis, however, lacks sufficient depth. For one thing, texts belonging to sycophants are given too much unquestioned authority. Certainly, there was steep competition to glorify the king beyond the accepted standard of excellence represented by the Ancients. Authors and audience alike understood the implications perfectly. Still, court artists may simply have hoped that praising the king above the Ancients offered the best prospects for commissions and careers without giving all that much thought to the philosophical underpinnings of the quarrel itself (which, incidentally, is mentioned several times without a full analysis). Moreover, not all of the king's entourage saw him as a hero surpassing the Ancients. The acid remarks of Saint-Simon (confined, it is true, to his memoirs) or the understated sighs of the Palatine Princess come to mind. The discussion of Louis XIV's Great Century also leaves out the calculated strategy of glory, enacted through carefully devised commission policies directed by Colbert himself.[1] Louis XIV's glory was meant to unite under a common vision a country divided by internal strife, a long-term political effort that can be seen as foreshadowing Napoleon's endeavors. This line of reasoning is implied but never fully developed while the author marches ahead towards the Enlightenment's ambivalence about glory and heroism.

The Enlightenment began to break down glory's martial core. Throughout the eighteenth century, following the Great Century's broadening access to glory and with public opinion becoming the normative authority, all those who labored for the public good were deemed worthy of public recognition, hence of glory. If some voices, like that of Fénelon, dared question the Sun King's model of absolutism, there was no doubt that France still needed heroes, albeit a new brand of heroes, capable of merging noble chivalry and public service into the "ideology of public disinterestedness [which] gained durable and efficient traction in very different realms" (p. 54). The economy of glory proves here its potential to question, soften, and amend both the liberal economy based on greed and the mechanics of selfish ambition which only produce "false glory." This is, again, a very promising and satisfying line of inquiry that tackles weighty topics such as the changing images of martial heroism and the emergent public sphere, the eighteenth century's economic debates centered on mercantilism versus free-trade, the feverish discussions on commerce and luxury, and the connected issue of nobility redefined as a paradigm for patriotism. In Morrissey's telling, the economy of glory permeated politics and commercial activities to the point of generating an all-embracing culture of glory. Intertwined with the essential noble attribute of honor, it grew beyond the confines of aristocracy into a national aspiration, a common ground where thinkers as dissimilar as Montesquieu, Mirabeau and Marat could meet. Again, judiciously chosen and beautifully interpreted literary texts come to support this thesis, and again, the reader is left yearning for more in-depth treatment. The issue of noble identity and the ethos of honor in eighteenth century France have been discussed in a number of outstanding studies, some of which are mentioned in the notes, but not fully engaged. As a result, these chapters often read like an unnecessarily rushed gallop through one exciting topic after another.[2]

A thoughtful commentary on Count Guibert's much read and admired *Essai général de tactique* (1770, 1772) introduces the chapters dedicated to Napoleon. Guibert's panegyric to Frederic II, at once hero, enlightened ruler, wise mentor, and energetic redeemer of a society fallen into morass, is convincingly presented as an inspiration for Napoleon's trajectory. Here too, however, the reviewer must quibble with the lack of supporting evidence. Did Napoleon actually read Guibert and if so, how? Was he inspired or, on the contrary, indifferent, or even critical? It turns out Napoleon did read Guibert's book only to disparage it as too clever (*trop d'esprit*) to be of any use to him: "*J'ai cherché plusieurs choses dans son ouvrage et je n'y ai rien vu de positif.*"[3] Of course, it is entirely possible that Napoleon chose to express disdain for a celebrated military treatise in order to highlight his own brilliance, which, he would suggest, owed nothing to the likes of Guibert, while in fact absorbing much of the work's substance. The reader is left to speculate on his/her own.

Chapters four and five more clearly unpack the workings of the economy of glory, focusing on Napoleon's concept of glory as supreme foundational value. The analysis relies heavily on several

contemporary texts eulogizing the hero who, by identifying what all the French valued, closed the era of bloody internecine bitterness and struggle. The discussion of the shrewdly calibrated Napoleonic political vision is the most captivating section of the book. In celebrating Napoleon's glory, contemporaries extolled Napoleon's greatest feat, that of bringing closure to a traumatized, disoriented nation. Napoleon achieved this by expertly handling the dynamics of forgetfulness (of most of the recent revolutionary past) and remembrance (of heroes going as far back as Charlemagne). Charlemagne, the ideal figure of bravery and wisdom, the model of greatness all kings aspired to emulate for a thousand years, was the obvious point of reference for Bonaparte growing into Napoleon.

As heir of Charlemagne's legacy, the new great ruler could ignore all France's kings, great and less great, while claiming to revive the country's historic grandeur. Napoleon's flatterers structured their praise on the same dynamics. The example analyzed here is Dominique-Joseph Garat's *Eloge*, delivered on the occasion of the *Fête de la République*, an IX (23 September 1801) in the presence of the First Consul. Garat's task was to frame the victories of the second Italian campaign—the Marengo moment—as generators of the new era's legitimacy, a legitimacy rooted simultaneously in continuity with France's epic history (as opposed to the discarded dynastic legitimacy) and in the daring innovations of a leader unlike any other. The perceptive fine grain reading of Garat's text reveals this novel configuration of legitimacy that offered the public useful conceptual tools for coming to terms with extraordinary, if not alarming, political developments.

No doubt the First Consul appreciated Garat's efforts, which calls to mind the question of Garat's obvious wish to please. It is not entirely incidental that Desaix and Kléber, the two heroes warmly acknowledged in the *Eloge* in a prelude to the exalted homage reserved for THE hero, were both dead at the time—in the case of Kléber, quite fortunately so, given his wrath at Bonaparte's swift exit from Egypt which left a colossal task on his hands. Garat, like Lucien Bonaparte and other advocates of the new regime, had to smooth over quite a few wrinkles and silence many doubts.[4] A fuller analysis complete with at least a few hints of politics *tout court* would have made this stimulating discussion even richer, although the absence of historical context might be a narrative choice meant to keep the focus on the production of new ideas and concepts.

The last two chapters offer insightful examinations of the literary fortunes of glory as envisioned, deployed, and exploited by Napoleon. It speaks to Napoleon's long shadow that Madame de Stael, the object of Napoleon's scorn, spent so much intellectual energy to redefine glory, which prompted her to revisit the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. And it was not just writers like Madame de Stael and Chateaubriand who succumbed, almost in spite of themselves, to the sublime promises of Napoleonic glory. The discourse of glory became as ubiquitous as the air the French breathed, for it was everywhere, from scholarly treatises to memoirs, newspapers, popular entertainment shows, and even private letters sent from battlefields. This was the supreme accomplishment of the Napoleonic politics of fusion. It brought national unity by replacing freedom, which had proved divisive, with "a collective fascination for the exercise of a certain national freedom, that of imposing one's will on others" (p. 142). When it was all over, glory remained, shining through the debris.

The Emperor saw to it that his glory, his greatness, and his uniqueness—a brilliant though problematic legacy—would be enshrined at the very heart of the national narrative. The superb analysis of the writing of the *Memorial de Saint-Hélène* (chapter six) brings to life what the author calls "the struggle to the death for recognition." (p. 176). It was a struggle that demanded a great deal not only from Napoleon himself, but also, and perhaps mainly, from those who chose to share in it and accept the sacrifices such service implied. Recognition if not glory would be their reward, if we think only of Las Cases' name, forever tied with that of Napoleon. And so, in spite of the two abdications and the humiliations of Saint-Helena, the glory of the Emperor, seamlessly assimilated to the glory of the nation that could elevate the great and the humble alike, continued to live in the national consciousness and in

the finest works of nineteenth century French literature that articulated the final triumph of the Moderns.

In conclusion, this book is, as stated in the introduction, a gift. One closes it with the grateful feeling of having been part of a sparkling, learned conversation. The critical remarks in this review in no way detract from the value of the work, since it is a historian's professional obligation to point to matters of historical context. The elegant and deeply thought out reflections on the development of key French cultural concepts make this essay a pleasure to read and a valuable contribution to our understanding of Napoleon's profound imprint on the French cultural consciousness.

NOTES

[1] The essential work on this topic is Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), especially chapters four to seven.

[2] Key titles on the topic include Rafe Blaufarb, *The French Army. Careers, Talent, Merit. 1750-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Jay M. Smith, *Nobility Reimagined. The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2005); John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2007); and William Doyle, *Aristocracy and Its Enemies in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2009). A more thorough engagement with these works would have illuminated and nuanced the central argument of the book.

[3] Quoted in Bruno Colson, *Napoléon. L'art de la guerre* (Paris; Perrin, 2011), p. 113. The entire discussion on Napoleon's reading of Guibert is on pp. 111-114 and 310-311. I am grateful to Patrice Gueniffey for bringing Colson's work to my attention.

[4] Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York: Norton, 2001) offers a compelling examination of the inner struggles that tormented many moderate revolutionaries, *idéologues* like Garat and Daunou included, called to reconcile their loyalty to Napoleon's regime with their republican ethos and commitment to liberal values.

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