

À partir de ces postulats, il est possible de rappeler quelles étaient les responsabilités de tous les missionnaires du temps. Partout, l'Église catholique exerce une autorité égale à sa puissance publique, surveille l'obéissance aux préceptes, l'enseignement du catéchisme, l'administration des sacrements, la pratique des rites, multiplie les cérémonies, avertit, punit, fulmine contre le blasphème, contrôle, intervient même au sein de la famille, visite malades et mourants, encourage les oeuvres de miséricorde, accueille les pauvres, rassure ou, au besoin, énerve les consciences par des sanctions qui relèvent du droit canonique, d'une morale pointilleuse, dont profitent souvent bien des pasteurs trop vigilants.

Par ailleurs, nous sommes mieux servis par les contrats de mariages, les inventaires après décès, témoins des plus importants que nous livrent les minutes notariales et essentiels pour l'analyse des alliances entre familles, pour l'étude des échanges de biens et pour la transmission du patrimoine. À ce propos, le Terrier de Laprairie demeure une des sources les plus riches.

Sur la question des mariages, on évoque le cas spécial d'un jeune homme de 23 ans (145), déclaré mineur. Y a-t-il erreur sur l'âge ? Au sens canonique, le garçon est considéré comme majeur à 16 ans, la fille à 14 ans.

Nous en arrivons ainsi à l'étude du droit successoral : testament, avancement d'hoirie, abandon (ou donation), partage (ou répartition) des biens entre les héritiers, expression du morcellement du patrimoine.

On notera, sur le plan juridique, le respect du principe d'égalité lorsqu'il s'agit des intérêts des héritiers. Ces parcours dans la documentation posent le problème des hiérarchies sociales, un aspect plus délicat, faisant ici l'objet d'une intéressante exploration. Ainsi se détachent, en pleine société paysanne, les familles de notables, dont les biens ont augmenté de génération en génération, dont le prestige s'est affirmé.

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George Levitine, ed. — *Culture and Revolution. Cultural Ramifications of the French Revolution*. College Park: University of Maryland at College Park, 1989. Pp. xvi, 320.

This book is a collection of twenty-one papers given at a symposium at the University of Maryland in 1987 by American and French scholars, most of them specialists in art or history. Since the symposium was sponsored by an art department, it is not surprising that more of the contributions treat painting and architecture than any other area of culture. A handful of the papers are well illustrated. A number of others dealing with the visual arts cry out for illustration — most notably, Michel Vovelle's opening discussion of the iconography of the Revolution. In addition to the numerous papers on the fine arts, there are discussions of political debates about the army, changes in political language, religion, and republican cooking. The question of chronological delimitation is left unaddressed. The last two papers are about portraits of Napoleon's family and about Restoration paintings of revolutionaries.

Most of the papers underplay the importance of culture by treating it as merely a reflection of political events. The view of culture as constitutive of reality is generally absent. Also left unexplored is the poststructuralist view that cultural artifacts may have been read in divergent ways. Further, there is little on women and gender, and there is even less on popular culture. The individual contributions are not grouped by topic or theme, and there is neither a general introduction to them nor a conclusion.

For the most part, then, this is a collection of many fragments, mostly small ones, pieces of a difficult jigsaw puzzle left for the reader to fit together. One such piece is Françoise Brunel's detailed account of the acculturation of a notorious member of the Committee of Public Safety, J.-N. Billaud-Varenne. Without comparing him to other Terrorists, she chronicles his early reading and education, emphasizing his discovery of the idea of the "general will" and the need for all-powerful law to insure justice and rights. Beatrice Fink contributes a paper on the importance of feasting, *haute cuisine*, and civic banquets in the years of the Terror, food shortages, and official republican simplicity. Two of the papers treat Quatremère de Quincy, cultural administrator during the Revolution. Sylvia Lavin shows how his scholarship in Egyptology shaped his architectural ideas and work in transforming the church Ste. Geneviève into the Pantheon. James H. Rubin elucidates Quatremère's politics, which he characterizes as "Romantic classicism" — with emphasis on the first term. Roland Mortier tells how the Revolution was perceptively analyzed by Madame de Charrière, who corresponded with influential political figures across Europe. Charles Russell examines the politics in the pre-revolutionary opera *Le Nozzi di Figaro* and brings out the differences in revolutionary commitment between Mozart and his opportunist librettist. Finally, Frank Anderson Trapp and Diana Withee show how Napoleonic family portraits and Restoration paintings, respectively, reflected the ideologies of the postrevolutionary powerful and served their political purposes. Different specialists of the Revolution may find different nuggets here or there.

Amid this bounty of hors d'oeuvre — if I may change the metaphor — the reader will find a handful of contributions that raise large and fundamental questions. Was there a cultural revolution? Claude Mazauric, who argues "no," performs an important task of pointing up the multiple, divergent projects and varying rhythms of change underway during the decade of revolution. Other papers show that individual genres had quite different histories. University of Maryland sociologist Rémi Clignet argues that the visual arts and music underwent more change than literature; the reason, he maintains, was that the former were subject to greater public and institutional control, and the Revolution had greater impact on those exercising that control. Was there a revolution in music? Not in its forms, but in its audiences and uses, concludes Michelle Biget. Was there a revolution in painting? Philippe Bordes argues that the Revolution's wrenching changes in subjects and aesthetics worked against the creativity of painters in David's time. Udolpho van de Sandt makes clear how dangerous it was for painters to enter a contest during the Terror. The perils of that notorious period, however, seem to have stimulated some writers to produce masterpieces (notably André Chénier), contends Édouard Guitton.

In a number of the papers, one can glean some instructive observations about the long-term cultural consequences of the Revolution — and materials for further debate. Jean-Paul Bertaud finds in the first Republic's celebrations of the citizen-soldier the origins of an enduring hero cult. Focusing on other revolutionary heroes

— notably Rousseau — June Hargrove explicates the republican project of erecting statues to “great men,” a story which she follows from the First Republic to the Third. In perhaps the most provocative paper (marred by foggy language — his, the translator’s, or both), Jean-Philippe Chimot shows how painters from David and Girodet to Gros and Géricault used color in vividly depicting scenes of death and conveyed what Baudelaire later identified as a sense of modernity, a sense of the transitory present posed in an unstable relation to the past. A quite different perspective is argued by James Leith, who contributes a strong essay stressing discontinuity, or the fundamental differences between the revolutionary era and later republics. Reviving views expounded generations ago by the likes of Albert Mathiez, Leith enumerates the many ways in which the Revolution was religious in its forms and the emotions it commanded. He concludes that the revolutionary faith, an intolerant new religion, did not usher in the founding era of modern republican politics.

Such differences of judgements and perspectives may well be the most useful contribution this book offers to most readers. It is a quite heterogeneous collection, as most published proceedings are. As sketchy and disparate as many of the papers are, the work as a whole does succeed in demonstrating a rich variety of approaches and possibilities for studying culture and the Revolution. Clearly, there is plenty of work to do, and there are important debates to continue.

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Clay Ramsay — *The Ideology of the Great Fear. The Soissonnais in 1789*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Pp. xxxi, 311.

Events in the French Revolution in the months following the opening of the Estates General at the beginning of May 1789 were played out against a background of escalating violence. Growing rural unrest was followed toward the end of July 1789 by outbreaks of collective panic sweeping across various regions of France: a collective panic known as the Great Fear. Rumours of “brigands” coming to destroy their crops drove peasants to assemble and arm themselves, and scour the surrounding countryside for invaders — invaders who, it turned out, had never existed. By the first days of August, the Great Fear was over. The Great Fear may have been ephemeral and illusory. But it was not without consequence. The National Assembly, thoroughly shaken by the spectre of a rural France given over to anarchy, was led on the famous night of August 4 to vote for the abolition of the remnants of feudalism in the nation.

Clay Ramsay perceives himself as being within the tradition of Marxist historiography in France running from Mathiez through Lefebvre and Soboul — something which very few Anglo-Saxon historians of the French Revolution now care to do. Refusing to accept the widely-held view of the Marxist historiographical tradition in France as having become sclerotic, Ramsay writes of it that it “remains an unfinished work in progress” (xxvi). He represents himself as advancing the study of the Great Fear to the level of ideological analysis, beyond the level of economic and social analysis reached sixty years ago by Lefebvre in his *La grande peur de 1789*. He looks at just one of the regions which Lefebvre had established as having