

rely upon forced labour even in a *laissez-faire* economy. In the end, if the sugar economy of Réunion continued to function under the Second Empire, it was largely due to increased Asian immigration rather than freed black workers.

One of the virtues of this book by a Réunion native is the thorough use it makes of the colony's departmental archives. Fuma exploited an impressive array of family papers and local journals in sounding the colonial mentality prevalent in nineteenth-century Réunion. He also employed extensively the departmental archives' copies of administrative dispatches, government correspondence, and official reports from the French colonial archives now located in Aix-en-Provence. Unfortunately, though, the author appears to have limited his research almost exclusively to original sources available in Réunion. He makes no reference to the numerous documents of the *Généralités* series, not reproduced for the Réunion archives, but available in the original at Aix, which could have considerably expanded his sources and enriched his point of view. Moreover, this work, which grew out of a doctoral thesis, makes slight use of any secondary material on topics other than Réunion slavery itself. For example, it repeats the entirely dated estimation of losses of 30 per cent in the slave trade, a figure shown to be exaggerated by the massive – but here uncited – historical literature of the last 20 years. Consequently, the author often envisages the Réunion scene in isolation, not contrasting or comparing it to the French West Indian experience or even to that of the neighbouring British holding of Mauritius. Perhaps it is this limited approach that also leads the author to accept unquestioningly the sincerity of the French metropolitan government's efforts to undermine slavery in Réunion, while over-stressing the role of the local planters in preserving the status quo. The result is an interesting book, even a valuable one in its portrayal of slave culture in Réunion, but one which could have been improved by more extensive research and a wider perspective.

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Jacques Dupâquier et Denis Kessler, éd. – *La société française au XIX^e siècle : tradition, transition, transformations*, Paris, Arthème Fayard, 1992, 529 p.

La société française au XIX^e siècle is an ambitious attempt to produce a “new social history” of France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (pp. 9–10, 509, 518). The claim to be a “new social history” may be pretentious, but the anthology does represent a significant expansion of our horizons and employs an innovative methodology. Rather than basing the study on structural analysis, which the editors criticize, or on a snapshot view of a particular group or area at one time, the contributors examine the occupational dynamics of 3,000 families over six generations and through 45,000 marriage acts during the nineteenth century. This “genealogical” approach reveals a dynamism in French society that certainly has been suggested in a number of studies but not demonstrated with the thoroughness of this work or over so long a period of time.

The book includes 13 separate contributions by members of the team engaged in

this mammoth project. They cover sources, changes in marriage patterns, occupational and geographical mobility, the fate of unmarried mothers and their children, reproduction patterns, and the persistence of patronyms. Landowners and workers seldom intermarried in the French countryside; this pattern, the authors conclude, was the basis for the great division between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in the city. Despite individual migration and mobility, then, certain social levels were maintained. Upward mobility occurred mainly as a result of new positions created in urban centres rather than as a result of replacement elites. Age differentials between men and women widened during the nineteenth century, the days and seasons of marriage changed, and gradually rural France adapted to the model of urban France. Thus, even rural villages with stable populations were affected by the dynamism in society as a whole. No short review can do justice to the wealth of particular findings. Let me instead emphasize the sources, methodology, major directions, and limitations of the project.

Two vast projects of historical demography apparently were undertaken simultaneously. The first – a general historical demography – came to fruition in Jacques Dupâquier, ed., *Histoire de la population française* (4 vols., Paris, PUF, 1988–89). The second is introduced in this volume. It builds from the particular to the global and from the qualitative to the quantitative to define individuals in their place in society and in relation to others – notably marriage partners, parents, and descendants. Acts of marriage in departmental archives reveal date and place of birth, age, occupation, and literacy (the last not used in this volume) of each spouse. The tracing of descendants is an arduous task that could be accomplished only with the financing and co-operative effort that may be unique in France today.

As the authors point out, demographic change in France over a century was substantial – an increase of 11 million people (37%) with almost all of that new population located in urban areas. This growth has been denigrated in historical studies only because of the much greater increase (130%) elsewhere in Europe. Moreover, new occupations opened, notably in industry and in the civil service. This should have alerted historians and social scientists to recognize that, even if there was structural continuity in French society, there had to be considerable individual mobility. The dynamism within the country as a whole is starkly revealed in this study, whose “essential conclusion is that French society of the nineteenth century appears very much more mobile than has been generally imagined” (p. 12). Rural emigration meant not just leaving a locale but of necessity entering a new occupation. For the period from 1872 to 1901, births exceeded deaths in urban areas by only 285,000, yet urban population increased by 4,722,000 (p. 55). Thus 94 per cent of population growth in urban centres was the result of migration. Such demographic upheaval combined with increased agricultural production meant that not only were new occupations opening, but older ones in the countryside (e.g., bakers) were unable to preserve inheritance patterns (p. 516). Moreover, elites did not reproduce themselves sufficiently to fill available places in an expanding population. Thus, the authors conclude that *autorecrutement* (the inheritance model of mobility) across generations and through marriage has been grossly exaggerated.

The authors blame a long Marxist tradition in France, in which social history was

an appendage to economic history, for a misdirection of French social history and its emphasis on structural stability or even stagnation. There were other influences as well: Pierre Bourdieu's and Jean-Claude Passeron's *La reproduction : éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (Paris, 1970); Stanley Hoffman's notion of a "stalemate society" expressed in *In Search of France* (Harvard University Press, 1963); and the *Annales* school's tendency to emphasize continuity in the *ancien régime*, extrapolated by others to the nineteenth century. France also seemed socially static and economically backward in comparison to the English model of industrialization. Many community and occupational studies concentrated on those who remained within them rather than those who departed. The authors are certainly correct to criticize what is probably still the prevailing notion of a static French society, but they shout a bit too loudly. The inheritance model of both geographical and social mobility has come under fire from several North American historians, especially with regard to schooling (C. R. Day, *Education for the Industrial World*, MIT Press, 1987) and migration (Leslie Page Moch, *Paths to the City: Regional Migration in Nineteenth-Century France*, Books on Demand, 1983). The neglect of this historiography creates two problems: the authors present their findings in a vacuum without indicating where they depart from, and where they verify, previous historical explanations; and they claim revolutionary methodology while they really extend life-cycle studies based in one area or group to the nation as a whole.

The authors stress that theirs is a scientific approach to history. I would describe the approach as empirical. They build from particular families to global assessments, use sophisticated statistical tools, and verify their sample against national population figures; however, occupation reveals only so much about a person and status changes over time. Moreover, while the sample is representative of the French population as a whole, as one moves to sub-categories of particular occupations the numbers necessarily become smaller and statistically less significant. To their credit, the authors are well aware of the problems of using occupational classifications alone and promise to introduce additional material in later publications. No historical evidence is perfect and the authors are judicious in their findings, but the data place limits on the "scientific" nature of the project. It would be useful to have more explanation, even in an appendix, of the statistical procedures used and the significance of findings. Log-linear models offer yet-to-be-exploited possibilities for multivariate analysis of the marriage data.

La société française au XIX^e siècle is an important book, introducing a major project with a fresh methodology. The individual essays offer useful insights and information on a host of topics. Future publications promise enhanced understanding of the nuances, relationships, and fluctuations within French society. They may even result in a "rewriting" of the social history of France.

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