

aurait pu constater que seuls les Québécois (de la Haute et Basse-Ville) célébrèrent par des toasts l'avènement du nouveau régime constitutionnel tandis qu'à Montréal un contemporain pouvait déplorer l'absence de semblables réjouissances publiques.

En choisissant d'étudier *La France devant l'opinion canadienne*, Claude Galarneau prévoyait-il toutes les exigences d'un tel sujet ? Dans les deux chapitres qu'il consacre aux « relations et échanges » entre la France et le Canada et que nous considérons les meilleurs de son ouvrage, l'auteur a pu donner la mesure de ses capacités et de son savoir. Se serait-il limité à démontrer l'importance des « contacts personnels » et des « liens culturels » qui persistent entre Canadiens et Français, en dépit de la Conquête anglaise, qu'il aurait rendu un très grand service à la cause de l'histoire.

Pierre TOUSIGNANT,
Université de Montréal.

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THOMAS F. SHEPPARD. — *Lourmarin in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of a French Village*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press, 1971.

The local history of France, which was once practically the preserve of provincial antiquarians, is now rapidly acquiring major importance as a field of research. This is partly because several outstanding scholars have shown from the history of the capital that it is both possible and valuable to write history "from below", so that the anxieties and aspirations of ordinary people emerge as matters of significance in their own right. Before his death, Professor Cobban, too, made us increasingly aware that many — though not necessarily all — of the controversies about the causes and consequences of the French Revolution cannot be resolved until we know a great deal more about the real structure of society in eighteenth century France. If to all this there be added a growing realization of the wealth of material that is to be found in the local archives of France, it is scarcely surprising that local studies have become exciting to students of French history.

The appearance of a work as authoritative and attractive as Dr. Sheppard's study of Lourmarin, a village in Provence, is the more welcome on this account: for to write local history well is far more difficult than many suppose. As some published works already demonstrate, local sources are no less liable than others to be interpreted in the light of preconceived ideas; and while local studies can both illuminate and be illuminated by national developments, much of significance may be missed if the research is not closely correlated with wider scholarship. Art, moreover, is as necessary as knowledge if material that is miscellaneous in its nature is to be made coherent without simply being systematised as soulless statistics.

Happily, Dr. Sheppard avoids all these dangers with apparent ease. If he gives his readers tables and statistics in abundance, he also ensures by his text that their purpose and significance are clearly established; and

throughout the book it is evident that Dr. Sheppard's Lourmarin, like Laurence Wylie's Roussillon and Olwen Hufton's Bayeux, is a real place. Situated 30 miles north of Marseilles in the valley below the Luberon Mountain, Lourmarin today has less than half the population it had in the eighteenth century; yet it nonetheless remains for Dr. Sheppard's readers a village whose weather-beaten and red-roofed houses still withstand, amid vineyards and olive-groves, the Mediterranean sunshine and the icy blast of the *mistral*. Moreover, as the author's analysis of the past reveals the village's economic basis and population trends, its complex finances and its vigorous local government, so his narrative quietly introduces us to the men and women of the time. Thus when we learn that the median property evaluation in Lourmarin was 249 *livres* according to the 1770 *cadastre*, we also meet Barthélemy Reymond, the 67-year-old *travailleur* who had five daughters and one son as well as a house and lands — nine plots totalling 5 acres — of that valuation.

Dr. Sheppard has in fact achieved a fascinating as well as a most informative reconstruction of the life of Lourmarin throughout the eighteenth century. Here we may see in detail, but without any magnification of minutiae, how mixed farming was supplemented by domestic industry, how the land was held and distributed and how taxes and dues were raised and spent. Here, too, we may discover how a predominantly Protestant community absorbed the impact of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and how in 1720-'22, when the plague was rampant in Marseilles, the villagers isolated themselves from all comers and contributed their contingent of armed men to the patrols which watched the banks of the Durance River with orders to shoot to kill.

If, as he explains, Dr. Sheppard was fortunate in finding a wide range of sources, he has undoubtedly used them well, and it is good to see that his appreciation of them is constantly enhanced by his extensive knowledge of the work of both regional historians and specialists in the successive aspects of the period. Moreover, while he shows himself well aware of the impossibility of deriving general conclusions from one specific example, he has no hesitation in saying that several orthodox assertions about the France of the time are simply not true of Lourmarin. Well may the general historians crave for more books of this calibre !

Nor should Dr. Sheppard's dispassionate approach be left without commendation. Seeking simply to discover what may be learnt from the records of Lourmarin, he finds that while the village as a whole, and many of the individuals in it, usually lived precariously close to poverty, its people met their problems pragmatically, their most constant concern being for the welfare of their community. Fully documented, this finding leaves Lourmarin as remote from Marx as it was from the monarchy: but one may yet wonder whether the author's evident sympathy for his subject may not have led him to see life in Lourmarin as idyllic. Were these people all like the "quiet and kindly" *curé*, and had Lourmarin secured exemption from human failings and family feuds ?

Although Dr. Sheppard is not excessively concerned with the Revolution, that is inevitably the climax of his study, and his chapter on it shows very clearly how much is gained if the event is encountered as it occurred to men rich in knowledge of their own communal experience. Significantly, the Revolution came to, not from, Lourmarin; and while it had economic repercussions — the *seigneur*, long a respected absentee landlord, retained his lands but became the principal taxpayer — it would seem to have evoked a predominantly political response. Nor was this by any means immature: when the council of the village welcomed the decisions of August 1789, the so-called “abolition of feudalism”, it was not the end of noble privileges that they applauded most, but rather “the sacrifice that our deputies have made of the dangerous privilege which isolated this province from the rest of France. To be called a Frenchman is the first and most beneficial of all national rights . . .” Further, if later events (which are, unfortunately, examined only up to 1794) suggest that the men of Lourmarin lacked any “deep political or ideological commitments”, they certainly show that these same men were, as Dr. Sheppard also says, well experienced in the art of adapting their policies to meet new political realities.

Ultimately Dr. Sheppard leaves the eighteenth century with keen regret. Concluding that the effects of the Revolution in Lourmarin were “short-lived and superficial”, he rather inconsistently implies that by the turn of the century the communal life which he appreciates so well had already begun to deteriorate. Towards the end of his researches he is indeed sadly conscious that in Lourmarin a new type of individualism was bringing greater harshness towards the poor and the unfortunate, and that the persistent encroachment of administration by the state was reducing a flourishing local government to a mere piece of machinery. Such sombre thoughts, inseparable perhaps from village studies of this period, nevertheless ensure that Dr. Sheppard’s readable and scholarly work remains as stimulating at its end as it is from its beginning. The perpetual question of who exactly had the right to cut wood on the slopes of the Luberon Mountain necessarily remains a far cry from Rousseau and Robespierre: but *Lourmarin in the Eighteenth Century* is still a significant contribution to our understanding of both the Revolution and its background.

Michael John SYDENHAM,
Carleton University.

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GÉRARD BOUCHARD. — *Le village immobile : Sennely-en-Sologne au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1972, 386 pp. *Collection civilisations et mentalités* dirigée par P. ARIÈS et R. MANDROU.

La monographie régionale ou locale constitue dans le contexte actuel un des principaux moyens de faire progresser la recherche historique. En projetant de larges perspectives sur un terrain restreint mais bien choisi, l'historien peut pousser davantage l'analyse en profondeur, vérifier la validité de certains schémas généraux, les nuancer au besoin, et dégager des phéno-