cans in their dilemmas. At the least, this work scotches forever the position trumpeted by General Douglas MacArthur, that he decided to spare the Emperor after Hirohito called on him on September 27, 1945, to take full responsibility for the war. MacArthur wrote that he was so impressed by His Majesty that he knew he was in the company of the First Gentleman of Japan and decided on the spot to spare him. This work shows that the matter was settled in American policy long before MacArthur entered Japan to begin the Occupation.

In light of all the years of planning and discussion, the Americans were surprisingly unprepared to carry out the tasks of the Occupation. Japanese sources are used together with English sources in volume 2, *Tokyo*, to show the objective situation of both the Japanese and the Americans. Again, the many discussions and conflicts among both the Japanese and the Americans, as well as between them, are discussed in exhaustive detail. The work ends with the presentation of the radical American constitutional draft to the Japanese and the complicated and devious process of translating drafts. It does not proceed through the discussion and adoption of the constitution by the Japanese Diet, during which Article 9, outlawing the maintenance and use of armed forces, was amended to permit interpretations that actually allow the existence of the Self Defense Forces. Appendices discuss all the constitutional drafts and the people who made them.

There are 2,312 footnotes to the text and more to the appendices. Here is a typical example (vol. 2, p. 768):

> 17 Nov. 1945, Tel. No. 2361, S/S to Harriman, in U.S. Department of State, *FRUS*: 1945, Vol. VI, 856-60; 20 Nov. 1945, n.a. to Marshall, Arnold, Handy re negotiations on FEC and AMC (NA, RG 165: OPD ABC 014 Japan (1 Sept. 1945) Sec. 1-A); 21 Nov. 1945, m/r A.P.G. [Pixton] (NA, RG 165: OPD ABC 334.8 FE (9 Nov 1944) Sec. 2-A).

That is a short one; many contain long anecdotes or explanations. Occasional comic relief is provided by the author's choice of words, some of which I had to look up: subreption, frangible, vergiberating.

It is a work that no one will ever attempt again, and so it will stand as definitive.

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Odile Join-Lambert — *Le receveur des Postes, entre l'État et l'usager, 1944–1973*, Paris, Belin, 2001, 317 p.

Focusing upon *receveurs* — the rough English translation would be postmasters — primarily from the period 1944 to 1973, this book represents a carefully researched study of a group of key players in the twentieth-century French postal system. The idea behind this work is to conduct a study of a particular category of public servants in an era when France was entering the service economy. The study argues in favour of the fundamental continuity of the *receveurs*, who, as a body, managed to

ensure their collective integrity, notwithstanding a context marked by technological, economic, and social change. The book is organized in three parts: part 1 summarizes the history of this occupational group from 1844 to 1944, and then from 1944 to 1960; part 2 focuses upon the period 1960–1968; part 3 rounds out the analysis by examining the years 1968 to 1973.

Odile Join-Lambert is well versed in her subject, and the narrative provides ample food for thought — nowhere more so than in chapter 1, which sketches a broad tableau of the situation of the *receveurs* during a century, from 1844 to 1944. The *receveur* is from the start and throughout recognized not as a local notable but as a character in the village setting. Unlike many of his peasant neighbours in the rural commune, the *receveur* could drive a car, although it was invariably not a Mercedes. The French state assigned certain functions to the postal system that had bearing on the workload of the *receveur.* He handled mail, delivered daily in rural communities beginning in 1832. He handled the telegraph for his community (1878) as well as tending to his neighbours' banking needs, via the Caisse d'épargne postale (1881). His place of work was close to the village centre of social action, either the *mairie* or the church. He operated the telephone service beginning in the 1880s (unfortunately the author does not provide this date). Later he served as an agent for the national lottery (1933), sold war bonds, and distributed estate forms for families of deceased persons. At once public scribe, accountant, and a vital link to the government, the *receveur* was someone whose services were appreciated by the local population, as testified by the old rural custom of offering him a slab of pork or beef once a year (p. 34).

Join-Lambert has some hair-raising things to say about the situation of women who held this post or their assistants. She stresses the vulnerability of the *receveuse*, who was at all times under the scrutiny of the entire village and could be a casualty of political in-fighting (pp. 26–27). She was relatively isolated; there was little time for socializing, and the day's work was long and hard (p. 28). The state was suspicious of women in this position intending to marry; at the turn of the century the future husband of a *receveuse* was required to provide a *certificat de bonnes moeurs*. Beginning in the 1920s *receveuses* were supposed to relinquish their position upon marrying a "foreigner" (p. 26).

In chapters 2 and 3, the author focuses on the *receveur* from 1944 to 1960. Housing conditions were at times appalling (p. 48). Living a private home life was next to impossible: the public could overhear family conversations in the *receveur*'s adjacent quarters, and similarly the *receveur*'s family could listen to all exchanges at the postal wicket (p. 52). The public, employees, and the *receveurs* and their families shared the news — as well as the w/c out in the back. Politically *receveurs* came under the authority of the local prefect, while professionally the *inspecteur des postes* oversaw their work. *Receveurs* thus had to accommodate two different sets of concerns that were at times conflicting. It was difficult as well for him to perform his accounting duties and manage the post office at the same time. Being a *receveur* meant having to complete reams of paperwork both for the PTT (the French postal authority) and for the public. The queues in front of the wicket during the 1950s were at times interminable (p. 107).

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the 1960s. The reader is introduced to the author's two main source materials: personnel files and a series of oral history interviews of

retired *receveurs*. The approach is convincing, inasmuch as considerable care is taken to distinguish between those *receveurs* recruited between 1919 and 1938 and the second cohort hired between 1939 and 1959. It is as if one is opening a new book, such is the richness of the detail vis-à-vis the professional antecedents, family and matrimonial links, and education of this group, whose experience was distinct from middle management elsewhere in the French civil service. The discussion of the professional itineraries of the *receveurs* is carried first by charts and figures (pp. 152, 155) that are striking for their incomprehensibility. The maps tracing their itinerary in space (pp. 158–159), on the other hand, eloquently show that some *receveurs* wandered throughout their career, while others stayed close to the home or *pays*.

The final section of the book (chapters 6 and 7) discusses elements of change and continuity during a brief five-year period (1968–1973) marked by the implementation of a new commercial policy. The public is no longer "the public" but the customer, preferably a paying one (p. 184). The inception of the policy of closing down rural post offices dates from this era, as does the practice of offering large customers a discount on postage (p. 188). *Receveurs* in big-city post offices became office managers, with a larger staff performing an increasingly complex array of tasks.

Yet elements of a more traditional work culture prevailed as well. The public expected a certain level of service from the *receveur*, technical modernization and *virage commercial* to the contrary (p. 206). Pensioners showed up for their cheques on appointed days of the month (p. 224). *Receveurs* were still very much involved in their local society. They organized or attended football matches and games of pétanque (p. 227). They enjoyed face-to-face conversation with patrons: "J'ai horreur d'écrire," states one; "j'aimais accrocher le client, rester derrière le guichet, discuter avec lui..." (p. 197).

The remarkable characteristic of the French *receveurs* was their ability to survive as a distinct occupational group. The key factor of their persistence lies in the system of seniority promotion that ensured both the continued integrity of the group and advancement in terms of individual career opportunities. The *receveurs* filled a void of expertise within the PTT that could not be filled by any other group until the outside invasion by the cohorts of baby-boomers during the 1970s. They represent the agency of an occupational interstice in the making of the *société de services* in contemporary France. Without saying so explicitly, the author seems to attribute significant importance to this phenomenon of persistence, to the rural tradition within the corporate culture of one of France's most important public institutions; perhaps this is intended as emblematic of overall trends in that country.

One final critical remark: the overall apparatus of the PTT, not to mention that of the government bureaucracy itself, will remain something of a mystery to readers of this book. Perhaps the assumption of the author is that the reader is already knowledgeable on these matters in a general sense, but this assumption makes for arduous reading and understanding. A further effort to provide this background could perhaps be attempted in the future. This would make the French experience much more accessible to postal and social historians interested in a comparative perspective.

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Alexis Keller — *Le libéralisme sans la démocratie. La pensée républicaine d'Antoine-Elisée Cherbuliez (1797–1869)*, Lausanne, Payot, 2001, xxiii, 388 p.

Depuis la traduction, à la fin des années 1990, de quelques titres importants tirés de l'historiographie révisionniste anglo-américaine, plusieurs nouvelles études sont venues nuancer les certitudes jadis exprimées sur l'essor inéluctable, dans le monde francophone, d'un libéralisme appuyé sur de nouvelles conceptions de l'autonomie de l'individu, de la primauté des marchés et des limites de l'action gouvernementale. Tentant d'aller au-delà de la simple recherche des origines du libéralisme et inspirées d'une méthodologie « contextualiste », les récentes analyses historiennes du discours politique et des idéologies révèlent des philosophes et des politiques préoccupés, de la fin du XVIII^{e} jusqu'au milieu du XIX^{e} siècle, par le civisme, les moeurs politiques et l'intérêt général. Cherchant à conjuguer égalité sociale et liberté politique à une époque où se creusaient les écarts entre les classes sociales, ces libéraux hésitants faussent à l'image, que l'on leur avait depuis longtemps attribuée, de précurseurs des grandes traditions démocratiques occidentales. Cette hérésie révisionniste n'a pas tardé de susciter la critique des tenants d'une vision matérialiste de l'histoire, et elle s'est heurtée aux dogmes historiographiques et aux paradigmes discursifs voués à légitimer les fondements de la tradition « démocratique » occidentale. En revanche, les hésitations des premières générations « libérales », tant dans les contextes britannique, étasunien et canadien que français, suisse et québécois, ne sont pas sans intérêt à ceux qui de nos jours contestent l'hégémonie historiographique de la *métanarration* libérale.

Invoquée par Alexis Keller dès les premières pages de son *Libéralisme sans la démocratie*, cette perspective contestataire permet à la fois de situer la démarche de l'auteur et de mieux apprécier son analyse de la « pensée républicaine » d'Antoine-Elisée Cherbuliez, intellectuel engagé, juriste, et législateur suisse qui vécut de 1797 à 1869. Keller ne cache pas l'inspiration qu'il a puisée chez les auteurs anglophones, et il ne dissimule pas son intention de passer outre les définitions traditionnelles du libéralisme du début du XIX^{e} siècle par une application rigoureuse de l'approche contextualiste. S'ajoute à cette démarche une érudition dont témoignent les nombreux rapprochements que l'auteur fait entre l'oeuvre de Cherbuliez et celles d'une panoplie d'auteurs contemporains et ses multiples renvois aux principales sources de la pensée cherbulienne dans les textes de Rousseau, ceux de Bentham, et surtout ceux de Montesquieu.

Intellectuel et législateur, cherchant constamment à joindre le philosophique à l'utile, Cherbuliez représente un cas type du « libéral » européen confronté au paradoxe du mouvement vers une plus grande participation politique alors que s'ouvrait un gouffre entre riche et pauvre. Un peu comme son illustre contemporain Tocqueville — très présent dans cet ouvrage d'ailleurs — Cherbuliez fut dépassé par les mouvements politiques de son époque. Hésitant devant le spectre d'une démocratie « totale », il assista, impuissant, à l'abolition du cens électoral dans les cantons; puis, par la Révolution de 1841, sa patrie genevoise bascula, elle aussi, vers un régime démocratique. Participant à la constituante qui résulta de cet élan révolu-