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*La Banque de France et ses deux cents actionnaires sous le
Second Empire, by Alain Plessis*

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and military organization, Sullivan sometimes has difficulty showing how Bugeaud's views and policies interacted. A more chronological division of material might have permitted a better understanding, for example, of the interplay between Bugeaud's agrarian paternalism and colonial militarism. These criticisms notwithstanding, Sullivan has gone well beyond the requirements of a biographical monograph by demonstrating the complex nature of the French political and provincial as well as military and colonial life in which Bugeaud participated during the first half of the nineteenth century.

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JEAN-PIERRE CHALINE. *Les bourgeois de Rouen: Une élite urbaine au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. 1982. Pp. 509. 250 fr.

Twenty years ago Adeline Daumard's pioneering thesis *La bourgeoisie parisienne de 1815 à 1848* (1963) placed a new subject on the agenda of French social history. In the subsequent generation a number of scholars have responded to her call for the construction of a *codification socio-professionnelle* for nineteenth-century France. In the process they have refined her methodology, extended the range of her sources, and moved from the capital into the provinces. No one has succeeded at this more completely, I believe, than Jean-Pierre Chaline in *Les bourgeois de Rouen: Une élite urbaine au XIX^e siècle*.

Chaline's book, an abridged version of a thesis written under the direction of Louis Girard and submitted at the University of Paris IV in 1979, is clearly organized, gracefully written, and contains sufficient endnotes, tables, graphs, and maps to retain its scholarly foundations and at the same time be understood by the general reader. The author is a professor of modern history at the University of Rouen, and he takes obvious delight in the particularities and peculiarities of the city while never losing sight of how his work fits into the larger project—a historical description and redefinition of the French bourgeoisie. I recommend it to American graduate students poised at the start of their own dissertations. Others may appreciate what Chaline tells us directly and indirectly about the milieu of the best-known son of Rouen's bourgeoisie, Gustave Flaubert.

The book is divided into three major sections. Part I, "Les bourgeois dans leur ville: Approche d'un groupe social," focuses on social structure. Chaline employs Daumard's techniques to establish the fiscal boundaries of the four groups (*bourgeois de*

la rente, bourgeois de négoce, professions "libérales," and fonctionnaires) that comprised the bourgeoisie of Rouen and that he estimates to have been 11 percent of the total population. The city's economic development, particularly its cotton industry, is also traced throughout the nineteenth century. The approach here has become standard in French scholarship in the field.

Chaline breaks fresh ground in part 2, "Une fortune un mode de vie," where he examines different types of bourgeois households (buildings, budgets, furnishings, servants), patterns of private and public sociability in daily life, and the institutional structures of education and elite culture. Social organization is the general subject of this section. In part 3, "Une mentalité, un comportement," he discusses the collective consciousness of the Rouennaise as members of a local elite as well as a social class. Among the ways he gets at this elusive and difficult subject are through the ceremonies surrounding marriage and burial, voluntary efforts to moralize and improve the poor, and participation in electoral politics. In spite of all the things that divided them individually and as families, the members of the bourgeoisie of Rouen held pride, fear, and conservatism in personal behavior in common. That, of course, is where the acid for Flaubert's pen came from.

Chaline is not prepared to be as harsh. His final chapter, "Ni Marx ni Flaubert: Les bourgeois de Rouen," reviews many of the contradictions in the lives of the Rouennaise, the sort that Marx saw as manifestations of class hypocrisy and Flaubert ascribed to provincial stupidity, and concludes that we should not judge them. He quotes Chateaubriand in support: "Qui sait si la société de ce moment, qui nous semble supérieure (et qui l'est en effet sur beaucoup de points) à l'ancienne . . . ne paraîtra pas . . . dans deux ou trois siècles ce que nous paraît la société avant nous?" (p. 381). The words are wise ones, but it may take another twenty years of scholarship like Chaline's to convince me completely that they apply in this case.

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ALAIN PLESSIS. *La Banque de France et ses deux cents actionnaires sous le Second Empire*. (Travaux d'Histoire Éthico-Politique, number 40.) Geneva: Librairie Droz. 1982. Pp. x, 294.

This volume, drawn from the first three chapters of Alain Plessis's 1980 Sorbonne *thèse*, represents a new departure in the historiography of French banking. Whereas Bertrand Gille and Jean Bouvier wrote institutional history, even political history, in their earlier masterworks on the *maison* Rothschild and

the Crédit Lyonnais, Plessis is writing social history in the style of Adeline Daumard, relying on the kind of documentation pioneered by Daumard and her *équipe*, notably marriage contracts, estate transfers, and other notarial records. Thus, after sketching the structure and operations of the Banque de France in the 1850s and 1860s and comparing it to its English counterpart, Plessis turns to an extended statistical analysis of two of the three main classes of high bank officers: the *conseillers d'escompte*, who ruled daily on the acceptability of commercial paper for discount, and the 200 largest shareholders, who met each January in the bank's general assembly to hear management's annual report and to elect the regents. Since real power in the bank rested with the regents, censors, and governors who constituted the general council (to be treated in a subsequent volume), this prosopographical study of shareholders and councillors does not reveal much about the inner workings of France's central bank. It does, however, reveal a great deal about the structure and personnel of France's "aristocracy of wealth" in the mid-nineteenth century.

Perhaps Plessis's principal achievement in this work is to demonstrate the pluralistic nature of the French capitalist elite by showing that each of the three main classes of bank officers was drawn from a different and distinct segment of Parisian upper-class society. The regents came mainly from the great families of *la haute banque*, such as the Mallets, Hottinguers, Davilliers, Periers, Schneiders, and Rothschilds, who were also prominent in the corporate world of railroads, steamship companies, and heavy industry. By contrast, the *conseillers d'escompte* were from Paris merchant families who, although quite wealthy, avoided *grandes affaires* and joint-stock enterprises and concentrated on running family firms specializing in domestic or international trade in one product (textiles, wine, lumber, porcelain, jewelry, leather goods). Few of these merchants ever ascended to the regency of the Bank of France, nor did they have much to do professionally or socially with those who did. They also remained apart from the other governing elite of the bank, the *rentiers* and "inactive" capitalists who sat in the general assembly. These latter represented (relatively) old money and old families. They differed from the regents and *conseillers d'escompte* not so much in the level of their wealth as in their way of life, which centered on the pursuit of leisure and "cultivation," not on "enterprise." Security was their chief investment goal, so they typically put a large portion of their liquid assets in the virtually risk-free shares of the Bank of France, whereas the portfolios of regents and *conseillers d'escompte* included surprisingly few of these shares.

We must await Plessis's next volumes to see how the admixture of these three quite distinct capitalist

elites and capitalist mentalities within the Bank of France affected its policies and operation. For now, Plessis has given us a wealth of information on some 500 important, but heretofore little-known, French capitalists. And he has led us away from Beau de Lomenie's vague conception of unspecified but all-powerful "bourgeois dynasties" toward a more precise and nuanced picture of the multilayered world of French capitalism in the nineteenth century.

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GREGOR DALLAS. *The Imperfect Peasant Economy: The Loire Country, 1800–1914*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1982. Pp. xiv, 352. \$34.50.

Regional studies are especially valuable in illustrating the geographical diversity of French rural society, and interest in the peasantry seems to grow as the subject itself disappears. Even two regions as close together as the Nantais and the Orleanais, chosen by Gregor Dallas for this study, show marked differences, which he sets out to explain. The former had as its center the seaport of Nantes, making it more outward-looking in its economy, while Orleans was more exclusively dependent on its hinterland. In the Nantais the church held a strong position and the curé was a man of authority. The people of the Orleanais were lukewarm Catholics, but the instituteur, though a man of importance, never commanded the same respect; they were, Dallas suggests, more pagan than enlightened. In time of crisis popular discontent was more widespread in the Nantais, a hotbed of Chouannerie that saw its last outbreak of legitimist protest in 1835.

Although devoting some space to such aspects, Dallas is mainly concerned with rural society, taking as his framework the theory of peasant economy developed by the Russian Narodnik (populist) agronomist and economist, Alexander Chayanov, whose work was rediscovered and translated into English in the 1960s. Although some students of the peasantry, like Dallas, have found Chayanov's theory a useful guide, others have vehemently rejected it. His model was clearly the Russian peasant economy of the precollectivization era, the distinctive features of which he saw in its dependence on family labor aimed at satisfying household needs and its resistance to market forces. Chayanov fervently upheld the claimed virtues of the family holding against the large agricultural estate or the capitalist farm. How much relevance this theory has to nineteenth-century France is a matter for discussion. Dallas uses it in a modified form, since actual peasant conditions did not entirely fulfill Chayanov's canon. Certainly, by choice or by necessity, the French peasant holding had to strike a balance