

# *Social Mobility and Hereditary Titles in France, 1814-1830: The Majorats-sur-demande*

by David HIGGS\*

Honorific titles granted by the governments of nineteenth-century France interest both political historians of the Right and students of the national élite. Even before 1789 the nobility was assumed to have an inherent affinity for conservative politics, and for their part analysts of the élite emphasized its recruitment from the most favoured elements in society. In the past the grant of a title, even more than inherited nobility, was a sign of having arrived. However, the lachrymose accounts of the nobility given in many novels and histories set in post-revolutionary France chronicled their decline. Patricians were thought to have lost wealth and prestige in the battle with scheming middle-class characters like those who people the works of Balzac or Sandeau. As much remains to be clarified about the nobility's true standing among the rulers of nineteenth-century France as does its image in the art and literature of the times, but one thing is clear. Obviously individuals who went to pains to obtain a new hereditary title in a land where all were henceforth equal before the law were underlining their desire not to be taken for mere *grands notables*. Was this a psychological compulsion, the desire of individuals to satisfy *vanitas*, itself by no means a simple historical concept? Are we dealing with a continuing impetus towards the legal registration of titles to ensure they would receive recognition by the state like that found among the eighteenth-century Breton nobility?<sup>1</sup> One historian of the period 1814-30 has noted that many Old Regime nobles were indeed preoccupied with having a documentary basis for their claim to titles now that nobility as a quality no longer had a juridical basis.<sup>2</sup> Or, as I believe is shown by evidence here presented, was a title the sign of membership in the wealthiest large social category in France?

If we are to understand the post-revolutionary "Guermantès" theme in French élitism — and surely it deserves the same attention as that given to commerce, industry and politics proper — we can profitably ask what

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<sup>1</sup> Jean MEYER, *La noblesse bretonne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Paris: SEVPEN, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> G. BERTIER DE SAUVIGNY, *La Restauration*, nouv. éd. (Paris: Flammarion, 1963), p. 248.

kind of people took titles under the restored Bourbons and what were their social characteristics. This article proposes to look at 289 individuals who established an hereditary title by setting up a *majorat* (entailed property) as was required in law for a grant of letters patent which permitted the eldest surviving son to accede in perpetuity to a title upon the death of his father. By looking at a sizeable group I hope to navigate between the Scylla of individual anecdote and the Charybdis of premature generalization about the development of the entire nobility.<sup>3</sup> Were these two *ducs* (0.6 percent), fifty-one *comtes* (17.6 percent), thirty-six *vicomtes* (12.5 percent), one hundred and seventy four *barons* (60.1 percent) and twenty-six *marquis* (9.0 percent) representative of the nobility as a whole?

As in all earlier periods, there was no accurate census of the nobility in the nineteenth century. The number of those who claimed a title in 1814 was unlikely to exceed 200,000 individuals or some fifty thousand families, although perhaps rather more slipped particles into their family names. Even in the exceptional conditions of the fall of the Empire, however, it would have been difficult to "usurp" titles on a massive scale over the numbers of the 1789 Second Estate. Each individual stands at least figuratively as a head of family by founding a hereditary title and tells us a good deal about richer recruits to the nobility. On the other hand, just over half (52.5 percent) of them had received titles from prior regimes.

*Majorat* is a French legal term meaning property held in entail to provide hereditary revenue for the support of a noble title, and the designated land, or real estate, or *rentes* (or combinations of these), could not be sold legally by the holder but had to be passed intact to his successor if the title was to be recognized in law.<sup>4</sup> Unlike primogeniture which governs the unequal proportion of an inheritance which passes to the eldest son, the *majorat* was a fixed entailment of specified property. Before the Revolution a similar arrangement had existed for the Third Estate and was called *substitution* in which individuals could be named to inherit a donation after the immediate legatee. The August 1747 Ordinance of Daguesseau forbade *substitutions* beyond the second degree exclusive of the legator. This did not affect provinces where *substitutions* were forbidden (Bourbonnais, Marche, Montargis, Auvergne, Nivernais, Bretagne, Normandie,

<sup>3</sup> Some of the most informative work on the characteristics of the French élite in the first half of the nineteenth century is to be found in G. CHAUSSINAND-NOGARET, L. BERGERON, R. FORSTER, "Les notables du Grand Empire en 1810", *Annales. É. S. C.*, 25<sup>e</sup> année, 5 (septembre-octobre 1971): 1052-75; Jean TULARD, "Problèmes sociaux de la France napoléonienne", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XVII (juillet-septembre 1970): 639-63, and "Les composants d'une fortune: le cas de la noblesse d'Empire", *Revue historique*, 513 (janvier-mars 1975): 119-38; M<sup>me</sup> SOUTADÉ-ROUGER, "Les notables en France sous la Restauration 1815-1830", *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, XXXVIII (1960): 98-110; G. K. ANDERSON, "The French Chamber of Peers under the Restoration" (Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 1974), not consulted; André-Jean TODESQ, *Les grands notables en France (1840-1849)*..., 2 vols (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964).

<sup>4</sup> "Le mot même de majorat vient de ce que cette propriété doit être possédée par l'aîné (*natu major*).", P. LAROUSSE, *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Vol. X.

Hainaut) although an exception was made for duchies of the peerage. Nor did the restriction apply to provinces where true *majorats* (accorded only to nobles) existed. These were areas where the Spanish precedent (*mayorazgo*) had entered the customary law: Franche-Comté, Roussillon, Artois and Flanders. Primogeniture, *substitutions* and *majorats* were abolished by the Law of 14 November 1792. The Revolution swept away such gross inequities in inheritance law as well as limitations on the free enjoyment of property by its owners.

Rien ne contraste davantage avec les principes de la Liberté et de l'Égalité, rien ne blesse plus ouvertement les principes républicains, que la faculté de prolonger ses volontés au delà de la vie, au delà des siècles.<sup>5</sup>

Almost fifteen years later Napoleon wished to consolidate and glamourize the hierarchic structure of the great Imperial dignitaries by ensuring they possess income sufficiently imposing to command respect. By Decrees of 30 March, 5 June 1806 a *majorat* had to be set up for the *grands dignitaires* of the Empire ("lesquels portent le titre de Prince et d'Altesse Sérénissime"), which meant modifying article 896 of the Civil Code, ostensibly to permit the transfer to France of entails first granted on confiscated property located in the German and Italian conquests. The eldest sons of the *grands dignitaires* were permitted to use the title of *duc de l'Empire* once a *majorat* worth two hundred thousand francs in revenue was established. These changes permitted *majorats* to be established on property within France, so that in fact there was now legal provision for immobilizing a portion of a family inheritance in favour of the eldest male, in violation of the principle of testamentary equality for younger children. This applied only to a small group close to power. In the high noon of Napoleonic glory no voice was raised in audible indignation against the infringement upon egalitarianism, and when the system had become buttressed by the property interests of a small but very powerful group of individuals it was unquestioned at law either by the *Conseil d'État* or the lower courts.<sup>6</sup>

After the return of the Bourbons to the French throne in 1814-15 it might have appeared that property arrangements established by the Napoleonic Empire in support of imperial titles would be altered, but, as is well known, the new nobility's rights were guaranteed by the Charter. Under benign Bourbon rule journalists and politicians found courage to express views which had passed unspoken under Napoleon; now the existence of both the old and new nobility, and the *majorats*, were attacked as vehicles of aristocratic pretension. This campaign against nobility reached its paroxysm in the Spring of 1826 in debates at the Chambers of Peers and Deputies over the *projet de loi* to abrogate article 896 of the Civil Code and to permit the re-establishment of primogeniture. The debates were

<sup>5</sup> Report to the Convention of 18 October 1792, in *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, 20 October 1792.

<sup>6</sup> *Traité des majorats. Parallèle des majorats français et espagnols* (Paris, 1808), pp. 11-17; J. SARRAZIN, *Les Majorats dans la législation française* (Paris: V. Giard et E. Brière, 1906), pp. 32-41; Jean TULARD, *Napoléon et la noblesse d'Empire suivi de la liste complète des membres de la noblesse impériale* (Paris: Tallandier, 1979).

grave and intense discussions of the principles of 1789 and social equality, reflecting more lively and sometimes scurrilous views to be found in newspapers like *Le Constitutionnel* and *La Minerve*, pamphlets and caricatures, and echoed in many provincial cafés and *cabinets de lecture*. Despite this rising tide of criticism *majorats* continued to be set up. In the aftermath of the 1830 Revolution the social tensions of the preceding decade persuaded the Deputies to abrogate article 259 of the *Code Pénal* (punishing illegal use of titles), as well as to legislate against the establishment of new *majorats* in 1835. Those already in existence were not abolished. In the aftermath of 1848 a Law of 7 May 1849 repealed that of 17 May 1826 which had permitted “repairs” to family succession lines when there was not an eligible son to inherit by allowing nephews, sons-in-law and adopted children to succeed to titles. The end of the enforcement of *majorat* legislation led, through wills and sales, to the dispersal of properties under the Second Empire. Despite the web of increasingly hostile legislative restrictions, *majorats* nevertheless persisted in vestigial form well into the Third Republic, mainly as *rentes*. This evolution in law from the Old Regime to the present century has excited the interest of various students of jurisprudence, the first notable treatment being that of a barrister, Narcisse Parant, in the early July Monarchy.<sup>7</sup>

*Majorats* could be either of *propre mouvement*, that is to say bestowed by the Crown, or *sur demande*, permitted in response to a request.<sup>8</sup> In both cases, particularly the latter, information was required about family situation and wealth. Procedures followed in the actual granting of *majorats* have elsewhere been described in detail.<sup>9</sup> They never changed much from the forms established by Napoleon. The Bourbons required that all peers establish *majorats* by the Ordinance of 25 August 1817. During the Restoration the titles of *marquis* and *vicomte* returned to currency. Candidates who successfully passed the scrutiny of the Chancellery officials were granted letters patent which declared their titles hereditary. In August 1822 there was a call for increased precision and care in collecting the complete documentation required. All the information amassed was summarized in register entries of roughly standard form which are *majorats-sur-demande*; indeed after 1818 only Richelieu (Law of 2 February 1819) and Pélessier (Law of 18 March 1857) were rewarded by the Crown with a title established on property paid for from the public purse. The registers contain details not included in the announcements of the property basis of new *majorats* which appear in the *Bulletin des Lois*. Excluding fourteen double or triple entries (resulting from modifications to the original title concession), we are left with a file of information about 289 individuals

<sup>7</sup> Narcisse PARANT, *Commentaire de la loi du 12 mai 1835 sur les majorats* (Paris, 1835); Henry BOISSARD, *Des substitutions et des majorats* (Paris, 1858); Étienne Martin SAINT-LÉON, *Des substitutions fidéicommissaires* (Paris, 1886); P. FRAIN DE LA GAULAYRIE, *Les majorats depuis le premier empire jusqu'à nos jours* (Rennes: Impr. de E. Prost, 1909).

<sup>8</sup> The establishment of *majorats* was governed by article 5 of the *sénatus-consulte* of 14 August 1806 and article 7 of the Imperial Decree of 1 March 1808.

<sup>9</sup> FRAIN DE LA GAULAYRIE, *Majorats*, pp. 33-47.

who set up *majorats* to ensure hereditary titles, although death (one) and other developments (fifteen) explain why some did not actually receive sealed letters patent.<sup>10</sup> We are able to examine comparable characteristics of a sizeable group during the Restoration intent on a legal claim to a hereditary title. Here is the register entry for one of the richest individuals:

Requête présentée par M. de Méry pour M. Pierre-Arnaud Comte de la Briffe, Colonel des Dragons de la Manche, Membre de la Chambre des Députés des Départements, Chevalier de St. Louis, né à Paris le 6 Mai 1772; Tendant à s'être autorisé à fonder un majorat qui serait affecté à son Titre de Comte. Ordonnance d'Autorisation du 18 décembre 1817. Pièces produites: L'Acte de naissance de M. le Comte de la Briffe, requérant, constatant qu'il est fils de M. Arnaud Barthélemy Marquis de la Briffe, et de Delle de Laverdy, son épouse; Deux déclarations sous signature privée faites par M. le Comte de la Briffe un même jour 14 avril 1818 portant: la première que les Biens dont se compose sa fortune mobilière [*sic*] sont: un château, avec jardins, parc, moulins, terres, prés et bois, situés à Arcis sur Aube et dans plusieurs communes environnantes; produisant 40 000 F; plus les domaines et autres lieux, sis dans les Départements de la Marne, de l'Aisne, de Seine et Marne, Seine et Oise, Eure et Loir, produisant 132 100 F et une maison à Paris produisant 22 000 F, Total en revenus, (non compris 10 000 F produit de rentes sur le Grand Livre et de créances particulières), 194 100 F.<sup>11</sup>

More than half the *majorats-sur-demande* were set up during the last five years of the Restoration. This reflected the impact of the Ordinance of 10 February 1824 which stated that, if at the death of the founder of a *majorat*, the entailment of the property required had not been completed the hereditary transmission would be cancelled. By contrast, looking at the distribution of plain titles over the whole Restoration more than sixty percent were granted from 1814 to 1820; many of these were without *majorats* or the recipient never in fact established one as required. There was thus an increase in the rate of those who set up hereditary titles. The government was apparently still unsatisfied, and an Ordinance of 15 October 1828 reminded the eligible that failure to complete the formalities of entailment within six months of the title grant, rather than by the time of death, would risk its loss. These figures seem to suggest a greater desire to establish a hereditary title towards the end of the Restoration and a

<sup>10</sup> These registers are found in the Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), BB<sup>29</sup> 783-84. I have used all those entries concerning letters patent initiated under the Bourbons. These registers do not include those whose *first* title *sur majorat* was *pair*, but they established the *majorat* on personal property among twelve who sat in the Chamber of Peers during the Restoration: Boissel de Monville, A. M. Clermont-Tonnerre, Fabre de l'Aude, A. B. P. Froissard, G. F. P. Glandèves, H. H. L. Greffulhe, A. F. J. Haubersart, F. C. Houdetot, R. M. M. A. Montalembert, A. J. M. Seguier, J. J. Simeon, C. L. Chastellux, A. F. X. S. Barthélémy, C. F. G. Chanaleilles, A. J. Feutrier, C. F. Reinhard, L. J. Thénard, all of whom established Restoration *majorats*, entered the peerage after 1830. Double entries in the registers for Blanc d'Hauterive, Boissel de Monville, Boutaud, Casin d'Honincthun, Charpentier, Falatieu, Goyon, Hocquart, Jaubert, Julliac, Lejeas, Simeon, Tessier, Tramecourt. F. PONTEIL gives the same figures advanced by the Duc de Bassano in 1834 before the Chamber of Peers and states that 228 *majorats* "hors de la pairie" were created under the Restoration and 78 for peers. Discrepancies from the totals I have encountered may result from my inclusion of individuals who submitted the requisite information and were entered on the registers but whose letters patent were not issued. See F. PONTEIL, *Les institutions de la France de 1814 à 1870* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), p. 98.

<sup>11</sup> AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783, No. 86.

lesser emphasis on personal titles. The legislation moreover showed the government's hope to encourage the setting up of hereditary titles.

Table 1. — COMPARISON OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *MAJORATS* WITH THE GRANT OF TITLES BY THE BOURBONS, 1814-1830.

Years	Restoration Titles (254)			
	Prior Titles		Commoners	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1814-20	36	24.6	28	23.5
1821-24	27	18.5	22	18.5
1825-30	83	56.9	69	58.0
Totals	145	100.0	109	100.0

  

Years	Restoration Titles (1,264)			
	Prior Titles		Commoners	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
1814-20	316	60.3	498	67.3
1821-24	68	13.0	88	11.9
1825-30	140	26.7	154	20.8
Totals	524	100.0	740	100.0

Sources: AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783-84; random sample of 1,264 cases from V<sup>te</sup> A. RÉVÉREND, *Les familles titrées et anoblies au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : titres, anoblissements et pairies de la Restauration 1814-1830, nouvelle édition précédée d'un avant-propos et d'un complément bibliographique par Jean Tulard* (Paris: Champion, 1974).

Since the purpose of the *majorat* was to ensure the hereditary use of a title the family situation of the founders is germane; not surprisingly most of them (85.6 percent) were or had been married. Sixteen prior titles and seven commoners had second wives; four nobles had married a widow and one commoner had done so. The contrast between the size of bourgeois and aristocratic families in the Old Regime<sup>12</sup> still existed during the Restoration, although the *majorat* registers record only children alive at the time of registration and there is no note of children born subsequently. An extreme case is that of Liborel who declared that of his seventeen children only two boys and four girls remained, and he noted a grandson as "representing" a dead mother. Despite these flaws the number of children recorded is a rough guide to differences (Table 2).

<sup>12</sup> Claude LEVY and Louis HENRY, "Ducs et pairs sous l'Ancien Régime; caractéristiques démographiques d'une caste", *Population*, 15<sup>e</sup> année (octobre-décembre 1960): 807-30.

Table 2. — NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF *MAJORAT* FOUNDERS, 1814-1830.

<i>Majorat Founders</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Nobles	33	30	28	13	5	6	3	1	—	—	—
Commoners	21	19	15	5	3	5	1	—	—	—	1

The nobles had more children than commoners: those with prior titles comprise 51.5 percent of the total of founders, but had 63 percent of the total number of children (319 noble; 187 common). Average family size was small (2.6 children with more girls than boys, and lower than the average legitimate family (3.9) in 1827. Such statistics give only a bare outline of the linkages of family size and the search for a hereditary title. The twenty-six year old eldest son of the Director of the Royal Mint, Lespine, had one daughter in 1823 when he set up his *majorat* after his father's death. No more children appeared in his family. In 1825 his younger brother also established a *majorat*: in 1827 his only son was born. The Lespines had strong court connections and doubtless wished to gratify Charles X in setting up a hereditary title with a son to carry it.

More curious is the large group of bachelors (forty-two or almost fifteen percent of the total), who went to the trouble of setting up *majorats*. In some cases these were very young men: one widow completed the formalities for her minor son. The desire for hereditary titles on the part of those who had no progeny, at least officially, seems bizarre as in the case of Delangle who became a *marquis*. Mayor of Coyère in the Ille-et-Vilaine, he was not an official guardian of any children. He was wealthier than average with the château of Plessi and its environs which he had inherited from a bachelor uncle, former *président à mortier* at the Parlement of Brittany who died in February 1815. The intention of such individuals may have been to settle the title later upon a relative, or they may have felt there was particular prestige in possessing a *majorat*.

A majority of those setting up these titles had reached political consciousness in the Old Regime. This might explain why more than half of those who established *majorats* already held titles. More than half of the entire group was born between 1756 and 1780, and a further forty-two (16.3 percent) before 1755. Even more than age it was family tradition which seemed to motivate them, especially the legalism of the robe nobility encapsulating their advantages in documentary form. Of the individuals in the registers 37.7 percent were of Old Regime *noblesse*, 11.4 percent Old Regime and Imperial titles, 3.1 percent Imperial titles, 0.3 percent foreign title while 44.3 percent were commoners. (Three percent were of unknown antecedents.) In due course some recipients of *majorat-sur-demande* titles, or their descendants, would seek titles from the July Monarchy and the Second Empire. Duchesne, son of a former *conseiller* to the Paris Parlement, had become Baron de Gillesvoisin under the Empire. He added his father-in-law's name Conégliano to his own in 1824 and was designated in 1825 to inherit the rank, title and dignity of the Duc de Conégliano,

dispositions which were confirmed by letters patent of Louis-Philippe in 1842. Among the *majorats* a good example of family solicitation of titles is provided by the Villiers du Terrage family: they included in the Old Regime a *gentilhomme* of the Duc d'Artois, a *chevalier* and then *vicomte* of the Empire who set up a *majorat-sur-demande* under the Restoration with *rentes sur l'État*, and became a Peer of France in 1837. His son, a magistrate, known in society as *Vicomte*, was confirmed as a hereditary *baron* in 1864. These men followed a *cursus honorum* indifferent to politics or, more precisely, seeking recognition from any regime which recognized their merits.

During the fifteen years of the Restoration the character of those seeking titles changed. The proportion of those without an earlier title crept up slowly, while the percentage of prior titles moved down slightly, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. — DISTRIBUTION OF *MAJORATS-SUR-DEMANDE*  
(265 LETTERS PATENT SEALED).

Years	Number of Cases	Prior Titles (%)	Commoners (%)
1814-1821	64	56.3	43.8
1821-1824	49	55.1	44.9
1825-1830	152	54.6	45.4

On the other hand, the younger the individual setting up a *majorat* the more likely he was to have a prior title, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. — DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTHDATES FOR 268 *MAJORAT* FOUNDERS.

Years	Number of Cases	Prior Titles (%)	Commoners (%)
1724-1755	47	53.2	46.8
1756-1780	147	53.7	45.0
1781-1799	65	53.8	46.1
1800-1817	9	55.0	44.0

As an example of a commoner let us cite Pierre-Alfred Carrier, born at Paris in 1801 who was authorized by the *tribunal de première instance* of the Seine in 1820 to substitute his father-in-law's name for his own. In 1824, now M. Tamisier, he bought château and lands in the Orne for 600,000 F from Baron Cromot du Bourg, *maréchal de camp*. In 1828 he became a *baron*.

Not all those who wished a hereditary title in France were French by birth: Reinhard was born in Wurtemberg, Daw in England and Stacpoole in Ireland. Foreign wives were to be found, as in the case of Maillé Latour Landry who displayed a decided *anglomanie* in marrying two British wives in succession, the first in 1780 and the second in 1804. A



remarkable variant of nationality and titles is that of Cuchet, born in Geneva, who married Lady Fleming. She made him her legatee on condition that he took "le nom et les armes de Fleming, noble et ancienne maison", which was confirmed by the King of England in 1806: "En conséquence S. M<sup>te</sup> Britannique a donné au requérant par ce diplôme [20 February 1806] la qualification d'écuyer."<sup>13</sup> In 1814 Fleming came to live in France and, a widower, he married in 1820 the sister of Houdetot, a peer. The diversity of the sixteen individuals born outside France (6.6 percent of 242 known birthplaces) illustrates that the French élite was open to foreign recruits. However, it is no surprise that the vast majority of candidates were French by birth, marriage and family. If we established a "typical" composite portrait of the man who set up a *majorat* he was in his fifties, married, with two or three children, and as likely as not had a title either from the Old Regime or the Empire or sometimes both.

Wealth and the way it is distributed is an obvious indicator of social position, but it is often difficult for the historian to provide more than a rough estimate for the individual, let alone a large group. This simply reflects the fact that many individuals have only a hazy value of their net worth at any moment. That might well be true of the Restoration nobility which now rather underlined the elegance of parsimony instead of the flamboyance of Old Regime court nobles or the lavish spending of parvenus. That makes the contrast of income by those who already had a title before the Restoration and those commoners now for the first time laying claim to one informative. By way of assessing the sums involved we can ask what was the minimum revenue required to figure in the national élite in the large sense of the top five percent of the population, a group in which for example the First Empire *notables* certainly fitted. We can take the figure of 5,000 F representing a total fortune of at least 100,000 (calculated by a factor of times twenty, the *denier vingt*, as in the nineteenth century). Obviously the effective value of such amounts vary in relation to setting: 100,000 F would be imposing indeed in a provincial location like Auch or Vannes but threadbare in Paris. Yet we can take an annual revenue of 5,000 F as a "vital minimum" for noble pretensions. In the short term aristocratic antecedents or personal loyalties might permit a noble in reduced circumstances to "tenir son rang" but it remained true that status not fertilized by cash was a perishable flower. This 5,000 F figure, it may be noted, was less than the annual revenue required in a *majorat* for the establishment of all hereditary titles, with the exception of that of *chevalier*, which was widespread during the Old Regime, but never gained real currency during the nineteenth century. The title was bestowed by both Napoleon and the Bourbons, the latter mainly giving it to businessmen.<sup>14</sup> This, as well as its relative cheapness, ensured its relative disrepute.

<sup>13</sup> AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783, No. 80.

<sup>14</sup> P. DURYE, "Les chevaliers dans la noblesse impériale", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XVII (juillet-septembre 1970): 671-79.

In this connection and before looking at the wealth of those who set up *majorats* it is helpful to recall briefly the pricing of nineteenth-century titles, shown in the following table:

Table 5. — REVENUES IN FRANCS REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH *MAJORATS* BY TITLES.

Title	1808	1817	1829
<i>Duc</i>	200,000	30,000	—
<i>Marquis</i>	—	20,000	15,000
<i>Comte</i>	30,000	20,000	—
<i>Vicomte</i>	—	10,000	8,000
<i>Baron</i>	15,000	10,000	—
<i>Chevalier</i>	3,000	—	—

Sources: *Édit impérial*, 1 March 1808; *Ordonnance royale*, 25 August 1817, 21 June 1829.

The hierarchy of value, especially the high valuation of a dukedom by the Empire, is obvious. The second evident feature is the fall in the tariff over time especially for *duc* and for two titles brought again into use by the Restoration, *marquis* and *vicomte*. The apparent reason for the reductions was an effort to make it easier — cheaper — for candidates to establish hereditary titles at a time of mild inflation.

The average annual revenue of the Restoration *majorat-sur-demande* was 37,453 F (median: 28,618 F). Administrative instruction to officers of the *Sceaux* dated 20 August 1822 pointed out that the calculation of wealth should not include salaries (*traitements*), pensions or *rentes viagères*. The declarations are thus if anything understatements of real income which, calculated by the contemporary factor of the *denier vingt*, represented total fortunes in excess of 500,000 F on average. The founder of a *majorat* was not merely in the wealthiest five percent of the French population but in the top one percent. In 1820 only one percent of Parisian fortunes reached that level or above, while in some provincial centres like Lille (1821) or Toulouse (1826) no fortunes declared at the *enregistrement* reached such heights.<sup>15</sup> The two wealthiest individuals for whom letters patent were sealed were of *noblesse*: Riquet de Caraman (219,807 F) and Briffe (204,100 F).<sup>16</sup>

Annual average revenue was calculated for the whole Restoration, but it would be interesting to know if there was a rise over time, as indi-

<sup>15</sup> Adeline DAUMARD, éd., *Les fortunes françaises au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Mouton, 1973), p. 130.

<sup>16</sup> This omits the wealthiest individual in the registers, Pierre-François-Jacques-Fidèle Jaubert de Passa of the Monesti château in the Pyrénées-Orientales, for whom letters patent were not sealed. At the time of writing I have not been able to verify from independent sources his income. He does not figure in other dictionaries of the nineteenth-century titled. From the modest revenues which were actually to be entailed for his title of *baron* (3,800 F from his château and 1,397 F from a farm belonging to his wife) it seems likely that the total value of his property was erroneously entered as revenue, and when this was discovered the registration was cancelled.

cated in a 1909 study by Frain de la Gaulayrie. If we take the amounts of the total of annual revenue and divide by the number of *majorats*, both as given by the author, we find a steady increase, from 8,891 F at the start of the century to 18,272 under the July Monarchy.<sup>17</sup> However, the BB<sup>29</sup> registers of *majorats-sur-demande* reveal a steady increase in the under 25,000 F category during the Restoration and a corresponding fall in the higher levels. Prior titles remained consistently wealthier overall.

Table 6. — ANNUAL REVENUE OF 240 MAJORATS FOUNDERS, 1814-1830.

Thousands of Francs	1814-1820		1821-1824		1825-1830	
	Prior Titles	Commoners	Prior Titles	Commoners	Prior Titles	Commoners
13.5 to 25	10	9	7	10	30	36
25.1 to 50	14	10	9	9	37	18
50.1 to 75	6	3	1	2	10	2
75.1 to 100	1	1	3	0	3	1
100.1 to 200	1	1	1	0	1	2
200.1 to 300	1	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	33	24	22	21	81	59

Political upheavals had partially reversed the traditional accumulation of wealth into the hands of the longest established couples in the élite since marriages contracted during the Empire were richer on average. The part played in this accumulation by women and their dowries is not clear although in a few cases among *majorats* we find men whose wives held legal rights over amounts of property larger than theirs, as in the case of Jankovitz de Jeszenieze. His property produced 5,850 F revenue from farm, woods and ponds while his wife's income from land, woods and *rentes* produced 16,150 F. More usually there is no mention of what property was dotal in origin. More than half of the marriage contracts known were *communautés de biens*, twenty-one were *séparations de biens* (where the husband did not administer his wife's property) and only fifteen *régimes dotaux* where the dowry remained the inalienable property of the wife although administered by the husband. This contrasts with Chaline's findings in Normandy where the influence of the pre-revolutionary customary law made itself felt in a preference for protection of the woman's dowry. "Dot de la femme ne peut périr", as the old legal tag had it. This preference for the *régime dotal* was marked throughout the nineteenth century, particularly by the upper classes, and Chaline

<sup>17</sup> FRAIN DE LA GAULAYRIE, *Majorats*, p. 77. From the figures he gives we can extrapolate the following averages:

Empire	8,891 F
Restoration Peers	8,434 F
Restoration Non Peers	11,884 F
Restoration Overall	9,315 F
July Monarchy	18,272 F

observes of Rouen that “tous les nobles locaux qu’on a pu relever le choisissent, laissant la communauté d’acquêts aux épiciers ou aux hor-sains”.<sup>18</sup>

The long-term consequences of dotal transfers of wealth to the economic status of the upper classes in early nineteenth-century France is obscure but the actual forms of that family wealth are more easily scrutinized. Land remained the most important element in the fortunes of the wealthiest nobles just as it did among their *notable* emulators. The greatest landlords were predominantly old robe and sword nobles in the view of one historian.<sup>19</sup> In the case of the *majorats* this emphasis on landed property was naturally accentuated since the whole purpose was to institutionalize an hereditary, titled, landed élite. It is the extent to which *majorats* were not based on land that is revealing. Before moving to that point one might note the importance of the estate symbolism, with its obligatory signs of seigneurial dominion: château, parklands, the *allée* leading to the *grande cour*, all structures in stone sufficiently weathered to suggest ancestral possession and dignity. Then as now there was a brisk demand in France for property carrying a ready-made aroma of *bon ton*. We can divine something of the mechanics of this from the registers of the *majorats*, as in the case of Boutaud. Born a commoner he became a Restoration *vicomte* with a *majorat* of 10,000 *F rentes* which he subsequently changed to entailment of an estate bought during the Napoleonic period. This estate had the following recent history.

On 30 April 1785 A. and J. de Valbonne Lusaye, brothers, had sold for 257,000 *livres* the “terre et seigneurie de Chateaudouble (Drôme)” to L. G. de Jansac who, on 17 Brumaire XIII, sold the property for 226,000 *F* and the furniture for 40,000 *F* to V. H. Boutaud. Boutaud was thus able to grace his *majorat* with furniture sufficiently worn to imply long residence in “le chateau dit Chateaudouble, avec ses écuries, remise, jardins, vergers, bois d’agrément; les réserves évaluées 2 000 *F*; la ferme de St. Apollinaire et ses dépendances, louée 9 000 *F* le tout formant un seul tenant, et produisant net 10 350 *F*”.<sup>20</sup>

A more direct origin of property is illustrated by the Marquis de Dubosc de Radepont, son of a “Haut et Puissant Seigneur”, who married a Clermont Tonnerre in Thermidor X, with a *communauté* marriage contract. The *majorat* was established on the property of Radepont, near Andelys with a château and park of 867 *hectares* of woodland, 42 *ares* of meadow and 38 *hectares* of arable producing a revenue of 60,500 *F*. Additional property was listed: a *créance* of 9,000 *F* capital and further farms and lands near Caen and Pontaudemer, together with a five percent *rente*

<sup>18</sup> J. P. CHALINE, “Les contrats de mariage à Rouen au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: étude d’après l’enregistrement des actes civils publics”, *Revue d’histoire économique et sociale*, XLVIII (1970), p. 254.

<sup>19</sup> Louis BERGERON, *L’Épisode napoléonien. Aspects intérieurs 1799-1815* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 137-46.

<sup>20</sup> AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783, No. 126.

worth 6,540 F annually.<sup>21</sup> The mother of Marc de Saint-Pierre, a gentleman of the *Chambre du Roi* who was both a mayor and a *conseiller général* in the Calvados, had assembled (*constitué*) the lands in Aunay and Vire cantons on which the *majorat* of *vicomte* (1826) was established. The estate of Tourteau de Septeuil was a bequest from his father, First Valet of the *Chambre du Roi*.

The location of estates, whether recently acquired or not, constitutes the honorific geography of France. A study of a small group in a country as large as France makes most sense if it is discussed according to major natural regions and the Paris area. Historians manipulate the concept of region according to a variety of criteria, sometimes linguistic, territorial, institutional or political in the light of the problem addressed and the available documentation. Certainly the boundaries of natural regions are difficult to set, particularly when superimposed on departments which are themselves often divided by major geographical contrasts like the Hautes-Pyrénées or the Ain, both split into areas of mountains and plain. One geographer counted no fewer than 425 "small regions".<sup>22</sup> Yet between the local historian and his "goût de l'infiniment petit" and a desire to make larger generalizations we may divide France into eight major natural regions and one vital political subregion: that of the capital.<sup>23</sup> A comparison with the percentage of the French population living in 1827 in the same regions shows the ratios (Table 7).

Table 7.— LOCATION OF LAND PROPERTIES ENTAILED FOR RESTORATION MAJORATS.

Region	% of French Population in 1827	% of 97 Commoners	% of 121 Prior Titles
Paris	5.6	15.5	10.7
Northern Lowlands	29.2	39.2	43.8
Vosges-Meuse	7.7	2.1	0.8
Armorica	12.0	3.1	8.3
Rhône-Saône	7.7	8.2	12.4
Alpine	4.5	2.1	1.6
Massif Central	13.4	7.2	7.4
South-West	13.2	6.2	6.6
Mediterranean	6.8	10.3	6.6

Sources: Population percentages calculated from those given in the Ordinance of 15 March 1827 and reprinted in FRANCE. BUREAU DES LONGITUDES, *Annuaire pour l'an 1830* (1829). Entailments from AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783-84.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 139.

<sup>22</sup> Denis BERGMANN, "L'état présent de l'agriculture française", *Annales de géographie*, 63 (1954): 339-57.

<sup>23</sup> These "maxi-regions" are drawn from E. E. EVANS, *France: a geographical introduction* (London: Christophers, 1959), pp. 94ff.; E. D. LABORDE, *Western Europe* (London: University of London Press, 1955); F. J. MONKHOUSE, *Regional Geography of Western Europe* (London: Longmans, 1959). I am greatly indebted to Dr D. A. McQuillan for his valuable advice on drawing up these major natural divisions of France.

This shows the titled preference for “ancestral” estates in northern France, extending from the Channel to the eastern frontier. The three areas that had a proportion of entailments higher than their percentage share of the total population were the Paris region, the Northern Lowlands and Rhône-Saône. By contrast the number of *majorat* founders born in the regions was much closer to the national population distribution which simply emphasizes the desirability of property in north-central France.

If we now turn from land holdings, less than one in ten declared income from urban property, and in this regard those with previous titles were less wealthy than the commoners. The retired officer Dupré’s house in the Chaussée d’Antin had been bought from Comte de la Grance; that of Falatieu in the same district from the Marquis de Romance. The average annual revenue from such property was 37,119 F (median: 13,002 F) with seven individuals receiving over 30,000 F. (Châteaux and outbuildings on estates were calculated as part of the revenue from country properties.) The urban property suitable for use in a *majorat* declaration was mainly located in Paris, especially the Chaussée d’Antin; just over a third of all such property lay outside the region of the capital. These statistics suggest that real estate in provincial centres was less valuable a component of titled income than had perhaps been the case before the Revolution. Paradoxically for a group which preferred land as the favoured form of wealth, the summit of titled society was now found in Paris, with *hôtel particulier*, often a large country estate within a hundred kilometre radius of the capital, and we might add, especially to the north-west.

One in seven of those setting up *majorats* declared a revenue from stocks and bonds other than government *rentes*. More than half of them received under 20,000 F — the average was 37,119 F (median: 10,115 F) reflecting a few very high amounts. Of those — four out of ten — who possessed government *rentes* (a form of investment particularly favoured for the purpose of establishing a *majorat* since they were completely secure investments), the average was 11,575 F (median: 8,051 F) with eight lying between 35,000 F and 100,000 F. Bouexic de Guichen declared a revenue of 30,000 F from the indemnity to the *émigrés*. De Polier, a captain of the *État-major*, included in the *majorat* of his *comtal* title a certificate of the immobilization of 10,000 F on the *Grand Livre*. A commoner, J. Ribes, was noted as possessing 1,380,000 F in English Three PerCent Bonds — an annual revenue of 41,000 F.

These examples show the general contours of the wealth declared in land, real estate and *rentes*, which is to say in the form of stable capital. A few entries in the register provide sparse details on a wider range of investments, although no mention was made of payment of the *patente*. Among those with prior titles T. G. C. Boissel de Monville, the political economist from a Norman family of robe nobility, owned the sheet manufacture of Elbeuf, and Riquet de Caraman had two soap factories in Marseilles. Cazin de Honinchun had a quarter share of the mines and glassworks of Hardinhem, and Posuel de Verneaux held forges at Varennes. Like Bellet de Saint Trivier he also had shares in the Givors Canal.

Mme Camus de Martroy had an interest in the Littry coalmines near Caen, worth an average return of 15,000 F which was mentioned as a component of her husband's total declared revenue. De Puivert, Governor of the Vincennes Castle, included in his properties shares of three and five percent on the Banque de France, the Caisse d'Assurances Générales, the Société de Charenton et Billancourt, mines in Périgord, bonds on the Hôtel de Ville de Paris and investment in iron ships together with woodland and other property. These investments favoured extractive and commodity investments rather than those which were technologically innovative. Among commoners C. J. Certain owned one-third of the Poullaouen mines, near Carhaix in the Finistère. Joseph Falatieu, Deputy for the Vosges, mentioned his factory which produced bathtubs near Epinal (an annual revenue of 15,000 F) as the largest component of an income which included 10,000 F in five percent *rentes*, 5,400 F in Chaussée d'Antin real estate, and a further 4,000 F in woodland. The *receveur général des fermes*, Lesparde, born in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, was a landowner in the Seine-et-Marne and Seine-et-Oise with a fortune composed of various farms as well as a faience factory, but the revenue from the latter was under 1,000 F. As a final example one may cite Florentin Seillière, chairman of the Salines de l'Est who, as well as drawing 60,000 F revenue from land, owned a sheet factory established for more than thirty-five years and employing between a thousand and twelve hundred workers.

The registers thus give us a reasonably detailed breakdown of the "public" fortune of aspirants to hereditary titles, and the information in them may be more accurate than the *enregistrement* since there was no inbuilt desire to avoid taxation. On the contrary each individual wished to magnify the statement of wealth and property for the declaration of the *majorat*. On the other hand information about more volatile forms of wealth does not figure. The overall profile of the individual seeking a hereditary title under the Restoration was of a man of substantial landed property, frequently possessing further investment in *rentes*, but less commonly possessing "blue chips" stocks, bonds or industrial investments.

Do the professions of those who established *majorats* point to a special link between occupation and the desire for a title? In this small wealthy group more than a quarter listed no profession at all and in the Restoration this implied the status of *propriétaire*. If we add those who actually described themselves thus, then at least thirty percent of the total simply lived from estate revenues. Far more, however, gave a statement of their "other" profession, even though land was the major component of wealth. Of professions held before the Revolution almost one-third were in the judiciary (29.1 percent) and under a half were in the military (43.6 percent); during the Revolution more than half were military (57.7 percent) while the judiciary were only 4.4 percent. During the Empire the military remained in first place with exactly one-third of the totals, and local administration (19.4 percent) and central administration (10.8 percent) now outnumbered the judiciary (9.7 percent). Under the Restoration the military were, as always, the most numerous (29 percent) followed by local administrators (21.7 percent), central administrators (12.7 percent),

deputies (5 percent), other officials (4.5 percent) and courtiers (3.6 percent). State service remained the road to honour. The judiciary was now only 6.8 percent, while the total of the liberal professions, employers and agriculture made up 12 percent. This is rather schematic. Many considerations of career and influential contacts were invoked, as in the case of Jean Baptiste Jacques Rolland, born in 1744 at Carcassonne, a member of both the electoral college and the *conseil général* of the Aude:

Propriétaire dont le père a été anobli pour service à l'état, cousin de Mrs. Rolland de Chambludouin et Rolland de Villarceaux, préfets, et frère d'un président au tribunal civil de Carcassonne, père de quatre enfants dont trois garçons demande titre et fonder [*sic*] un majorat de Baron transmissible à son fils aîné.<sup>24</sup>

From these statistics we may perhaps deduce the obvious: those closest to the government were best able to satisfy a request for hereditary status. That the military of the Restoration should be avid for titles was natural to the hierarchic mind of the soldiery, as Alfred de Vigny exemplified in his *Servitude et grandeur militaires* (1835). Moreover the Bourbons were especially concerned to "royalize" the army after the Napoleonic interlude.

The judiciary also show the desire for duly registered titles on the part of the old robe nobility, individuals deeply concerned with the application of the jurisprudence of titles and privileges before 1789.

Le S. Caila, ancien premier avocat général en la cour des aides et finances de Guienne à Bordeaux, fonctions qu'il a exercées pendant 22 ans, désire être autorisé à établir un majorat de baron. Il est membre du conseil municipal de Bordeaux et du collège électoral du département, et de plusieurs sociétés savantes. Jean Caila, son aïeul, seigneur de Naillieux avoit obtenu des Armoiries en 1698; Christophe Caila son père aussi seigneur de Naillieux est mort secrétaire du Roi, Jurat et directeur de la chambre de commerce de Bordeaux. Il n'a point d'enfants.<sup>25</sup>

The title was set up and transferred to the husband of a niece. There were also those who had not been members of the *noblesse de robe* before the Revolution but who now found themselves able to emulate them, like Antoine Lemaire-Darion, a *chevalier de l'Empire*. He had been a member of the Oise electoral college and had been elected to the *Corps législatif*. A magistrate since 1784, he had presided the court of criminal justice until 1804.

The overview of the professions of those who took titles during the Restoration shows that the type of individual seeking an honorific position remained the same before and after the Revolution. The same thing was true of the nobility of the Empire. More important, however, is the least tangible aspect of the nineteenth-century nobility, its continuing prestige as an ideal in life. Even the many detractors of the prejudices, shibboleths and restrictions which the nobility reflected were fascinated in a way that ultimately became a power of suggestion to entrench many cha-

<sup>24</sup> AN, BB<sup>29</sup> 783, No. 16.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 56.



racteristics as cultural values in France. Social and economic historians have perhaps been too often hasty in drawing up single-dimensional views of power in assessing the position of the French nobility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover it appears that the nobility was much more adept in preserving the economic basis of power than is usually stated.

The fact that the nobility remained the wealthiest large French social category, per capita, during the first half of the nineteenth century has often been overlooked, but it may well be that the most rapid gains in wealth were being made by the commercial classes, as in England at the same period.<sup>26</sup> In one analysis of major corporate businessmen in France under the Second Empire, a group of 1,997 "executives", few aristocrats were to be found among the most important 164 although many were present in the total and still more among shareholders.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the real turning-point in the political and economic power of the French nobility lay in mid-century developments, especially following the agricultural crisis of the 1840s.

The former certainties of historians who saw the victors of the Revolution as the bourgeoisie have in the last twenty years been shaken; more subtle analysis has made increasing use of the word *notable*, which was current between 1770 and 1870. Its very existence shows that all *notables* were not noble although it proved a convenient vehicle to chart the intermediate stages between the atrophied hierarchy of orders swept away in 1789 and the class society which predominated in France from the intensive urbanization of the population until the aftermath of World War II. No sooner had the merits of the term *notable* appeared in discussing politics and society from late absolutism to effective universal suffrage than the problem appeared of how to deal with the nobility. In local as well as in national history it appears necessary to distinguish nobles from *notables*.<sup>28</sup> A meticulous scholar like A.-J. Tudesq drew this vital distinction in his work on the *grands notables* of the 1840s, but some other writers simply duck the issue on the grounds that nobles and *notables* were now essentially the same thing. How, then, can we interpret a study of the *conseillers généraux* of the 1870s which showed nobles to be the wealthiest group among their colleagues, very obviously the *notables* of rural France?<sup>29</sup> The *majorats-sur-demande* of some fifty years earlier showed those

<sup>26</sup> W. D. RUBINSTEIN, "Wealth, élites and the class structure of modern Britain", *Past and Present*, 76 (August 1977): 99-126.

<sup>27</sup> Robert R. LOCKE, "A method for identifying French corporate businessmen (The Second Empire)", *French Historical Studies*, X, 2 (1977): 291.

<sup>28</sup> DAUMARD, *Les fortunes françaises*, p. 95: "En fait, il s'agit d'apprécier l'influence de la noblesse, le poids et la survivance du passé dans la société moderne, la contamination d'une psychologie fondée, en principe, sur la foi dans les vertus de l'hérédité, par la philosophie individualiste de la bourgeoisie. Ce qui complique le problème c'est qu'un certain nombre de nobles exerçaient une profession et que les autres étaient des « propriétaires », des rentiers que rien ne distinguait, en droit, des autres Français des mêmes catégories."

<sup>29</sup> L. GIRARD, A. PROST, R. GOSSEZ, *Les conseillers généraux en 1870* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), pp. 116-31.

with an earlier title to be wealthier than those without. Scattered evidence points in the same direction: that the nobility was the wealthiest sector of landed society at least until 1848 and perhaps long after.<sup>30</sup>

The mechanism by which the nobility increased in wealth at a faster rate than society at large from the late 1790s to the 1840s, while at the same time declining in absolute numbers, remains to be investigated in depth. However, in towns where *mutation par décès* studies of the nineteenth century have not systematically omitted to count noble titles separately they seem to remain the wealthiest large social category as in the case of Toulouse.<sup>31</sup> This growing wealth, of course, goes far to explain the continuing prestige of the nobility in Restoration France. It may also be linked to the extravagance of the "Guermantes" world of Proust — and it may be recalled that the "Guermantes" were modelled on a couple descended from a Franco-Belgian *majorat* of the Restoration, the comte de Greffulhe. He was a banker who bought great estates in the Seine-et-Marne, followed Louis XVIII to Ghent after the return of Napoleon to Paris in March 1815, and who was spectacularly charitable during the 1816 famine.<sup>32</sup> The commoner's desire for a *majorat* showed the wish to enter the richest large group in French society as a visible mark of success while the renewal of titles was a reaffirmation of hereditary place at the pinnacle of French society and wealth.

<sup>30</sup> Claude BRELOT, *La noblesse en Franche-Comté de 1789 à 1808* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972); Professor Thomas Beck of the University of North Carolina, has kindly told me of his recent research which is based on 25,554 entries from electoral lists of sixty-eight departments in the late 1830s, a sufficiently large and random sample to be representative of the entire electorate of the July Monarchy. He found among this group 385 titled electors who comprised the wealthiest per capita social category, paying over 2,000 F on average annual tax. His sample also noted voters whose names contained the particle. Many writers have pointed out the particle was not in itself a reliable guide to nobility although it is equally obvious that it was a component of aristocratic names and/or a sign of such pretension. Using the computer he found that individuals with the particle were not as wealthy as those with titles but were still wealthier than the national average of those without titles or particle. Further investigation may well strengthen this picture of a wealthy nineteenth-century nobility, at least during the half century following the 18th Brumaire. There may be many provincial centres like Rennes where the *procureur général* recognized in 1840 that the nobility possessed the "fortunes les plus considérables". Michel LAGRÉE, *Mentalités, religion et histoire en Haute-Bretagne au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: le diocèse de Rennes* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977), p. 330.

<sup>31</sup> During the period 1905-8 the average noble succession at Toulouse was 581,683 F; during the Revolution 239,222 F. Among the city's *grande bourgeoisie* of the early twentieth century only five bankers exceeded the noble average: the median of the *industriels* was 381,076 F. Jean SENTOU, "Les fortunes au décès à Toulouse au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Annales du Midi*, 88 (juillet-septembre 1976): 345-49.

<sup>32</sup> G. D. PAINTER, *Marcel Proust: a biography*, (London: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 133, 212, 247-48. Adeline Daumard observed that the Greffulhe's full integration into the nineteenth-century nobility obliged them to abandon "les occupations mercantiles qui avaient fait la fortune de la famille et vivre dans l'oisiveté ou exercer de hautes fonctions civiles ou militaires", in: F. BRAUDEL et al., *Histoire économique et sociale de la France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976), t. III, second volume, chap. 6: A. DAUMARD, "Diversité des milieux supérieurs et dirigeants", p. 933.

## RÉSUMÉ.

*L'auteur étudie le majorat-sur-demande dans la France de 1815 à 1830: il s'agit de l'octroi de titres héréditaires fondé sur la substitution de propriété. La moyenne du revenu annuel des 289 requérants considérés se situait à 37 453 F et la médiane à 28 618 F. Les détenteurs de titres antérieurs étaient en général plus fortunés que les roturiers. Leurs domaines étaient généralement situés dans un rayon d'une centaine de kilomètres autour de Paris; dans la constitution des fortunes les rentes étaient plus fréquentes que les actions, les obligations et les investissements industriels. Sur le plan professionnel, les agents de l'administration militaire, centrale et locale l'emportaient numériquement sur les employeurs et les représentants des professions libérales. L'analyse du majorat-sur-demande indique comment l'un des secteurs les plus riches de la société post-révolutionnaire, soit 0,1% de la population française, poursuivait un statut social élevé.*