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Gavin Daly, *Inside Napoleonic France: State and Society in Rouen, 1800-1815*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. xii + 290 pp. Maps, tables, figures, bibliography, and index. \$79.95 US (cl). ISBN 0-7546-0357-4.

Review by Michael Broers, King's College, University of Aberdeen.

It is high time someone wrote a book like this. Gavin Daly's title is apt, and the ground he has chosen to cover is essential territory to those who wish to grasp the essence of the Napoleonic regime. Historians--this reviewer included--have usually gravitated to "where the action is" in Napoleonic studies, and that action is found most easily in the outer empire and those parts of the hexagon where the battles of the Revolution remained to be won. Studies of conscription tend to focus on regions where the battle to enforce it effectively was hard fought and prolonged; the impact of the blockade is best known where smuggling was rife; the workings of the Concordat and the Code attract attention more readily where they met opposition. The cumulative effect of this is to make the interior of the Napoleonic empire something of a "heart of darkness" in terms of local studies. This is certainly an irrational lacuna in the historiography of the period, for the inner empire--centred in the first instance on the departments of northeastern France--was the major reservoir of human and material sources for the regime; it formed its heartland and embraced those regions where human and physical geography most often coalesced to make Napoleonic rule both relatively natural to its *administrés* and relatively easy to apply by its *fonctionnaires*. This neglect is all the more lamentable because the archival sources for the Napoleonic period in the provinces are excellent, and their richest elements tend to be centralised in the *Archives Nationales de Paris*, a truth well borne out by this study. Daly's book marks a welcome step into this neglected zone. Indeed, the closest recent work of similar stamp, and with which Daly's must stand comparison, are the recent studies of the Rhenish departments by Michael Rowe. His choice of subject is to be applauded.

Inside Napoleonic France is divided into ten chapters, an Introduction and a Conclusion. It is, in the best sense of the term, an old-fashioned regional study in terms of its organisation, beginning with solid chapters on Rouen's economic and social background and on the administrative structures of the Napoleonic regime. Each of the following chapters explores the major issues of the period in their local context, with chapters on law and order, the Concordat, the notables, the major sectors of the local economy during the Napoleonic wars, and conscription. Imaginatively, Daly chooses to make public opinion his penultimate chapter, a tactic that throws into sharp relief the extent to which the regime did and did not win over its *administrés* in an area that, in practical, functional, and material terms, served it well. Above all, by ending his study with an examination of *l'esprit public*, Daly makes it clear that the history of the Napoleonic regime was itself complex and ever-evolving; that it changed in the face of fluctuating--often volatile--circumstances and was capable of internal mutations. The result is often a mine of useful information and insight into an aspect of the period badly in need of such solid, direct research.

Nevertheless, *Inside Napoleonic France* begins by wanting to ride too many hobbyhorses, tilt at too many windmills, and strike out in too many directions to be accepted without some criticism. This book is looking for a needless fight in its attacks on other scholars who all too readily accept the crucial differences in Napoleonic rule between areas Daly describes as "more troublesome French and foreign

departments" (p. 224) and regions such as his own. Indeed, the differences Daly ably points out, particularly in the workings of the prefectorial administration, are fundamental to the concept of an "inner" and an "outer" empire. To assert that the prefectorial administration was central to the period while claiming that the prefects were not "emperors in their departments" (p. 266) is not impossible, but Daly finds the possible contradictions hard to avoid. Closer to home, in the most literal, concrete sense, Daly has not decided on which ground he is fighting. *Inside Napoleonic France* can never make up its mind whether it is about the city of Rouen ("as advertised") or about the department of the Seine-Maritime. That Daly must stray so often beyond the confines of Rouen to fulfill his aims probably vindicates the latter, rather than the former, as the best unit of assessment in Napoleonic studies, at least within the inner empire.

If Daly's true vocation were solely Rouen, the absence of any examination of the municipal archives would be a serious flaw in his research. But as it stands, its absence is nothing of the kind. Indeed, Daly can be at his most original and effective as a researcher when he builds the links between town and hinterland, as in his penetrating analysis of conscription fraud. This is a well-documented aspect of conscription, but also one relatively neglected by those preoccupied with its enforcement and its impact on the workings of institutions. Daly skillfully explores how this all-pervasive institution influenced not only the structures of village politics but also the relationships among, and infighting between, the urban elites. His work here is almost a model of how to develop this rich vein of material.

In other respects, however, Daly's approach to conscription suffers because he is too intent on asserting, on the one hand, that the process of conscription could only work with the co-operation of the local elites, and on the other hand, that the prefectorial administration reigned supreme over the whole process. He does not confront the potential contradictions of his own assertions here, and this also manifests itself in other aspects of his study. Daly points to the fundamental role of the departmental bureaucracy in processing the paperwork of conscription, while also showing how effective fraud could be. The conscription process itself could not have worked without the gendarmerie across the countryside, or the tribunals, but when faced with this, Daly has a tendency to retreat behind the "walls" of his urban center. Daly knows paperwork is not the real point, but at times this escapes him. For example, when dealing with the subsistence crises, Daly notes, "Despite the shortcomings of the prefectural subsistence statistics they were ultimately the greatest achievement and innovatory measure of the prefectural administration in the field of subsistence" (p. 198). He speaks more truth than he knows: the more astute critics of the late, great Geoffrey Elton discerned his penchant for confusing bureaucratic energy with effectiveness. Daly falls into this trap, too, when he makes wider points, though his archival sensitivity does bring him back to earth when analysing the particular.

All too often in the course of reading *Inside Napoleonic France*, this reviewer was struck by how the particular threatened to contradict the general. Whenever the prefect of the Seine-Maritime was confronted by a real crisis or concerted opposition from another source of local authority, he came off the worse for it: the Bishop of Rouen, Cambacérès, effectively ran one able prefect, Beugnot, out of office, leading Daly to observe that "given Beugnot's fate it was sensible to go out of one's way to please Cambacérès" (p. 103). And this was exactly what his successors did. Daly is very anxious to establish the prefect as the driving force behind the maintenance of law and order in the department, but when faced with a genuinely serious crisis in 1811-1812, civil peace was saved only by the combined efforts of the Rouenais notables and the Imperial Guard. Despite Daly's denial of the relative importance of the role of the Military Districts in this sphere, the refusal of intervention from this quarter during the subsistence crisis of 1801-1802 exposed the weakness of the prefect and sent him running to Paris for equivalent levels of military support. None of this undermines Daly's assertion that, in normal conditions, local administration revolved around the prefect. This was, incontestably, the benchmark of when a given area was really part of the inner empire. Yet even here Daly describes the routine workings of conscription as "operating (as) a system that was both efficient and corrupt, the prefectural administration appeased the needs of both Paris and those of the local elite" (p. 222). Daly sees very well

the complexities of the prefects' position at the local level, but he still insists on a powerful role for them.

There is also a crucial lacuna in the research behind *Inside Napoleonic France* that, if addressed, would either consolidate or undermine Daly's belief that "the prefect was the epicenter and unifying force of local government," that it "remained unchallenged as the axis of local government" (p. 7). If Daly's description of Rouen as "the capital of Normandy" under the *ancien régime* is not to be rendered an anachronism, it is because of its *Parlement*, whose *palais*—now the *Cour d'Appel*—still dominates the center of the city, overshadowed only by the cathedral. Daly says nothing of its heritage in the Napoleonic period, and this reflects two vast gaps in his study, which could have been filled by exploiting series BB5 (Justice) and possibly BB8 in the *Archives Nationales*. As it stands, this very important, theoretically independent branch of local administration remains a "dog that did not bark" in Daly's work. The usefulness of these sources has been well illustrated by Michael Fitzsimmons for France as a whole and by Michael Rowe for the Rhenish departments, and Daly would have done well to examine the history of the local judiciary in *Inside Napoleonic France*, given the central importance of the judiciary in the life of Rouen. To what extent did this powerful section of the local elite retain its influence and power in the new judicial structures? To what extent did it co-operate with or challenge the prefects (or the procureurs, for that matter) who were always outsiders? At a more general level, Daly's treatment of the notables, heavily influenced by annaliste methods, might have been given a deeper, case-studied dimension by reference to these sources. The commercial classes are well covered by this approach, but not the magistracy. This is too important a gap to be left unremarked upon, especially in the light of Daly's wider claims for the omnipotence of the prefect in local government.

It is interesting that the conclusion of *Inside Napoleonic France* is rather more nuanced than its introduction. Gavin Daly has broken important new ground and given students of the Napoleonic period many important insights along the way. We need more such studies, although perhaps ones more considered in some of the parameters they work within and more rounded in their use of the very rich archival sources with which Napoleonic scholars are blessed.

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