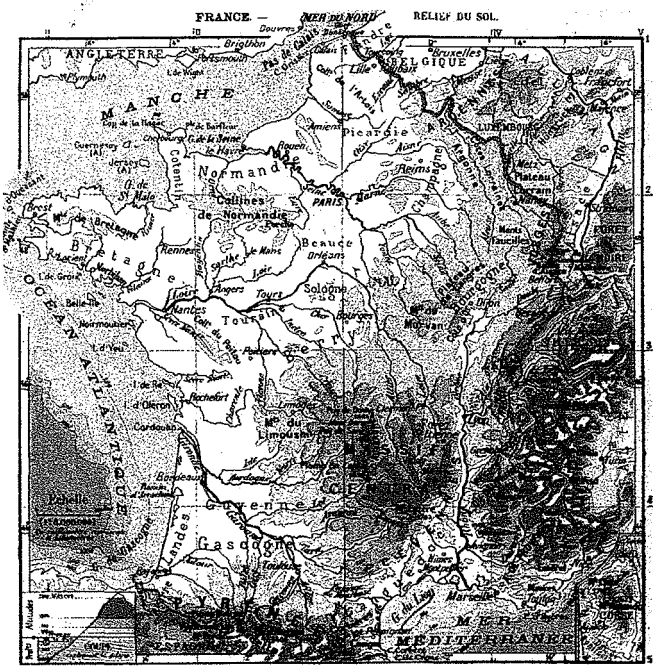
# PATRONAGE AND THE PRODUCTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE IN FRANCE

## The Testimony of the First Hundred Regional Monographs, 1905-1966




Hugh Clout

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## The Testimony of the First Hundred Regional Monographs, 1905-1966

By Hugh Clout

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**About the Author**

Hugh Clout is Emeritus Professor of Geography at University College London where he has spent his whole career. He graduated in Geography (with History) in 1965, proceeded to research and was appointed to the teaching staff in January 1967. His research focus is on the contemporary and historical geography of France, with particular emphasis on rural environments, settlement reconstruction after both world wars, and the production of geographical knowledge, especially among the disciples of Vidal de la Blache and subsequent generations of French geographers. His teaching commitments extended more widely into social and rural geography, the European Union, the historical geography of London, and ideas in geography. He reached professorial rank in 1987 and served as Dean of the new Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences between 1995 and 2004. He holds D de l'Univ (Paris I), PhD (London) and DLit (London) degrees, has an honorary doctorate from the Sorbonne-Paris IV, and was elected a Fellow of the British Academy (1997) and a Fellow of UCL (2008). *Themes in the Historical Geography of France* (edited, 1977), *Agriculture in France on the Eve of the Railway Age* (1980), *The Land of France, 1815-1914* (1983), *After the Ruins: Rebuilding the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (1996), *Histoire de Londres* (1999), *The Times History of London* (edited, 5th edition 2007) and *Contemporary Rural Geography: Land, Property and Resources in Britain* (edited, 2007) are among his twenty-one book titles.

# 1.

# Introduction

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the politicians of the Third French Republic sought to promote national unity in the wake of the disastrous defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 (Lehning 2001). Superior knowledge of location and terrain, as a result of the efficient teaching of modern geography in the Prussian military academy, was widely believed to be one of the reasons for that success (Claval 1998).[1] In turn, the French recognised that geography could have military and ideological significance as well as being just another school subject (Berdoulay 1981; Rhein 1982; Lefort 1992). Pioneering geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918) was entrusted with the mission to renovate the teaching and practice of geography in French schools and in the university (Sanguin 1993). He sought to give his 'new geography' an identity that was distinctive from that of history, with which geography was traditionally associated, and from the fledgling field of sociology.[2] Vidal proclaimed geography to be the study of the interaction of physical and human processes, best appreciated at specific locations on the face of the Earth and giving rise to particular ways of life, landscapes and spatial configurations, commonly recognised as 'regions'. He insisted that this 'new geography' was not a matter for armchair scholars (*géographes du cabinet*), as geography had frequently been in the past, but was rather a science that demanded personal experience of, and investigation in, the field (*le terrain*).

To promote these ideas Vidal wrote textbooks and articles for schoolteachers, often working with former students who had passed the fiercely competitive national examination (the *agrégation*) qualifying them to teach in state high schools (*lycées*) or in the national university. This aspect of Vidal's life was most apparent between 1877 and 1898 when he taught at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in the rue d'Ulm in central Paris where future members of

the nation's intellectual elite were prepared for careers in education.[3] Many were, in fact, of quite humble social origin having left their families in the provinces for training in the metropolis that could lead to upward social mobility, and especially so if an appropriate marriage could be made.[4] In addition, Vidal launched the *Annales de Géographie* and in later years he would draw up an agenda for a multi-volume *Géographie Universelle* (Clout 2003a). After leaving the ENS in 1898 for a Chair at the Sorbonne (the state-run University of Paris), he encouraged his brightest students to undertake doctoral research and thereby promote the academic standing of the 'new geography'. In accord with his holistic view of the discipline, he advised these scholars to focus on particular stretches of territory and to make those 'regions' their own. This second aspect of Vidal's mission lies at the origin of the hundred regional monographs that will be discussed in the present essay.

These remarkable volumes were appreciated by many geographers, historians and members of other disciplines, and represented a level of scholarship which some aspired to attain, but they are now virtually unknown to younger generations of scholars both in France and beyond. Four decades ago, Robert Dickinson enumerated the contents of some volumes and Anne Buttimer provided a valuable critique of a selection of monographs but, with the exception of the posthumous collection of methodological essays in historical geography by H.C. Darby, discussion in subsequent English-language publications has been minimal (Dickinson 1969; Buttimer 1971; Darby 2002).[5] Recent geographical compendia ignore them, either largely or completely, and whilst accounts of the history of French geography deal with individual authors and their works they do not examine the monographs as a distinctive genre.[6] They fare no better in collections such as the multi-volume *Lieux de Mémoire* enterprise, edited by Pierre Nora, or in works dedicated to 'regionalist' themes by historians or political scientists (for example, Gras and Livet 1977; Revel 1989). Only a couple of monographs are mentioned in a recent book entitled *The Discovery of France* (Robb 2007). However, Eugen Weber did cite evidence from a considerable number of monographs in his

*Peasants into Frenchmen*, as did Xavier de Planhol in his *Géographie historique de la France* (Weber 1977; De Planhol 1988, 1994). In his final work, *L'identité de la France*, historian Fernand Braudel also drew material from some of these volumes despite his fundamental conception of the discipline of geography being structured by components of the physical environment (Braudel 1986).

It is therefore important at the very outset to be absolutely clear about what these volumes were — and also about what they were not. They were substantial theses, averaging about 550 printed pages, which were normally researched on a part-time basis in order to obtain the *doctorat d'état* (state doctorate) that was a prerequisite for candidates seeking to occupy a professorial chair in a state university in France. Each doctoral candidate defended not only a major monograph but also a minor thesis in a public examination, before a jury of professors composed of members of other disciplines as well as one's own.[7] All theses had to be published and this would be at the candidate's own expense if a grant could not be secured or an appropriate bargain be struck with a publishing house.[8] In short, the regional monographs were the outcome of periods of protracted personal research undertaken with rigorously academic objectives and career enhancement, especially acquisition of a chair in a state university, in mind.

These volumes were not written to a standard design or formula. Even in the very early days before World War I, they varied enormously in length, structure, content and composition. Some were holistic discussions of the author's chosen region, whilst others explored selected themes within a jealously guarded spatial framework.[9] Some monographs were illustrated with numerous maps and photographs, whereas others comprised unadorned pages of text. These doctoral theses were not exploratory investigations for defining functional regions that might provide a more effective structure for efficient administration of a nation whose age-old rural life was being transformed by the rapid growth of towns and cities and the opening of factories and workshops at the end of the nineteenth century. Certainly, Vidal

was very interested in projects that were mobilised by a wide range of political opinion, from the far right to the far left, to steer a measure of administrative power away from Paris and to recognize dynamic regions that corresponded with hinterlands around cities with powerful chambers of commerce. He published an innovative article on this theme in 1910, however the doctoral candidates to whom he afforded patronage were not conducting research with such 'regionalist' objectives in mind (Vidal de la Blache 1910; Charles-Brun 2004) (Figure 1).[10] Nor were they seeking to define the 'legitimate' borders of the *patrie*, as Vidal would do in his final book, *La France de l'Est*, which argued that German-occupied Alsace-Lorraine was rightly part of France (Vidal de la Blache 1917; Wrigley 1965 10).[11] Later monographs were not written to support a distinctly French version of spatial planning to be known as *l'aménagement du territoire*. Some of those completed after 1950, however, employed methods, evaluated evidence and presented information

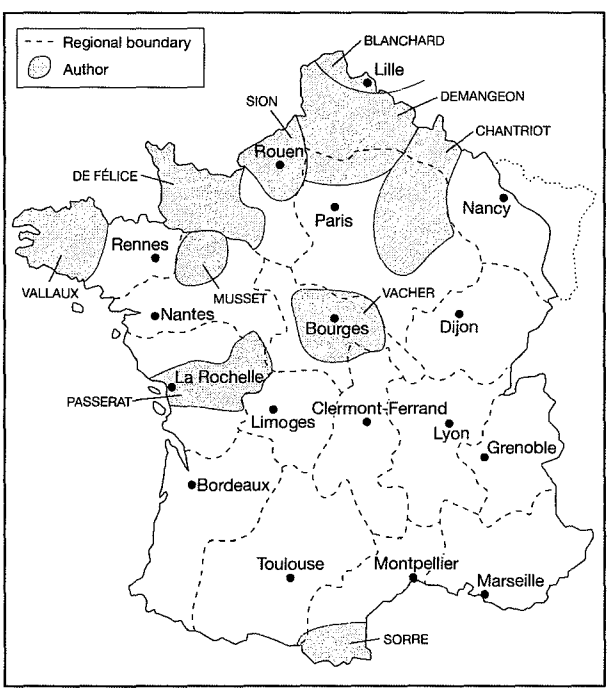



**Figure 1:** The urban-centred regions proposed by Vidal de la Blache in 1910 compared with the regions examined in the first cohort of geographical monographs.

that planning practitioners might appropriate. Nonetheless, these volumes were not written as explicit exercises in spatial planning. Like all doctorates, the regional monographs were prepared to make original contributions to knowledge in order to advance the academic careers of their authors, to enlarge the corpus of geographical information about France, and thereby to enhance the standing of the discipline.

The basic structure of a selection of monographs will be provided to convey a flavour of what they were about but it is not my intention to summarize one hundred volumes in order to show how the practice of academic geography changed between 1905 and 1966. Instead, attention will be drawn to personal interactions among scholars by demonstrating how a handful of senior French geographers assembled younger researchers around them and afforded patronage to those chosen students as they researched their doctorates. The notion of 'patronage' rather than 'supervision' is preferred as this was the word commonly in use at the time. In addition, some patrons offered their support with such a light touch that it could hardly be described as supervision.[12] Patrons used the pages of learned journals in their control to present the doctoral monographs of their favoured students to a wider academic audience. A positive published report by one's patron was, of course, a strong recommendation of a candidate's suitability for a university chair. By interrogating the printed monographs to discover the social context in which they were produced, the following discussion will exemplify the differential exercise of academic power, will trace patron-client relationships, and will demonstrate the creation and operation of networks of reciprocity in which a handful of leading professors occupied nodal positions for the formation of geographical knowledge and the development of careers.[13]

With established and newly-arrived members being 'actors', and monographs and scholarly careers being thought of as 'actants', it is possible to examine how social and material processes were enmeshed within complex arrays of circumstances to fashion the discipline of geography in France. Bruno

Latour's 'actor-network theory', that at times he denied as being an expression of theory but rather one of practice, offers a potential route map to navigate one's way through an intricate mass of published evidence and a bewildering crowd of personalities (Murdoch 1998; Selman 2000). However, the scientific laboratory in California, whose workings were famously analysed by Latour, differed substantially from the university departments – or institutes – of geography in French universities during the first half of the twentieth century (Latour & Woolgar 1986). It is true that some professors adopted the term *'laboratoire'* to describe their collections of maps, books, atlases, rock samples and teaching rooms in order to demonstrate that the 'new geography' that Vidal had bequeathed was, in fact, a 'science' and thus different from the widely-embracing parent discipline of history. With the exception of Paris (the Sorbonne) and Grenoble, these early geographical laboratories were modest affairs, nonetheless they were the sites where the discipline was formalized and, to echo David Livingstone, put in its place (Baudelle, Ozouf-Marignier and Robic 2001; Livingstone 2003). In practice, it was a handful of powerful men who managed, energized and controlled the 'networks', 'clusters' or even 'tribes' – another suggestion from Latour – that structured French academic geography prior to 1968 (Latour & Woolgar 1986 17). As well as advising younger geographers who investigated parts of France, these power brokers also afforded patronage to scholars who undertook research on other parts of the world. The existence of the monographs they produced on overseas regions must not be dismissed, but for purely practical reasons, including employment in school teaching and an almost complete absence of research funding, most candidates analysed regions (or specific aspects of regions) of France in which they worked or had family connections. The present discussion will focus on the first hundred monographs, comprising some 56,000 pages, which were submitted between 1905 and 1966 and presented specific regions of France. As will be shown later, French geographers continued to assemble state doctorates for examination until well into the 1990s, despite important reforms having been

introduced in 1984, but these recent monographs lie beyond the scope of the present study.

**Patrons, disciples and regional monographs**

André Meynier, a distinguished historian of French geography, claimed that writing regional monographs was the most "successful and significant" contribution by France to academic geography during the twentieth century (Meynier 1969 97). Certainly, it formed an essential element in the renovation of the discipline by Vidal de la Blache after his period of teaching at the ÉNS, the "great lay seminary" that trained the intellectual elite of the nation's future schoolmasters. Under contractual agreement, these *élèves* (pupils) received financial support for three years of study and then served the state for at least ten years (Bourdieu 1988 xix; Clark 1973 9).[14] In 1898 Vidal left the ENS and moved to a professorial chair at the Sorbonne that he occupied until he retired in 1909. This position not only brought him into contact with undergraduates but also afforded him access to aspiring doctoral candidates (Rhein 1982; Berdoulay 1981; Sanguin 1993; Claval 1998)(Plate 1). Degree-awarding powers in France, from first degrees to doctorates, were jealously guarded by the state university, and still are. Like other professors at the Sorbonne, Vidal served as patron to a 'cluster' of advanced students. Using his professional expertise, he monitored the progress of their research, negotiated with appropriate academics to act as examiners for their doctoral degrees, and encouraged them to publish in the *Annales de Géographie*. He also used his contacts with publishing houses, especially Armand Colin, to assist the appearance of the best monographs in print.

Patrons frequently published extensive, and often uncritical, reports that presented the work of their protégés to the international community of geographers and thereby facilitated the entry of the new *docteurs* into that community. The idea of writing an unbiased, disinterested 'book review' seems not to have been current among French geographers in the early years of the twentieth century nor, indeed, during subsequent decades. Hence the

**Plate 1:** Paul Vidal de la Blache, 1845-1918.

terms 'presentation' or 'report' will be employed as well as 'review'. Because published reports were often promotion exercises, in both senses of the word, it is difficult to gauge how many of the monographs were received by their readers. Friends, colleagues and patrons tended to accentuate the positive and to eliminate (or at least downplay) the negative. With the exception of works by Vidal himself, few geographical writings in France have been subjected to the kind of critical re-assessment that has been directed recently toward certain pieces of American geographical scholarship (Lacoste 1979; Robic 2000; Keighren 2005, 2006).[15] Of course, some negative reviews were

published and these could block an unfortunate scholar's career. As will become clear, some of these critical reports seem to have been triggered as much by long-standing differences between patrons as by the perceived deficiencies of the particular monographs in question.

Members of the academic cluster surrounding a patron were expected to demonstrate allegiance and loyalty, not only as they dedicated their monographs but also in the conduct of their subsequent professional lives. They were, in short, the clients of their master and committed themselves to his network.[16] In turn, existing members accepted new entrants and in this way academic alliances were consolidated. As Terry Clark explained, in the social science context: "The cluster was an association of ... persons who shared a minimal core of beliefs about their work and who were prepared to collaborate to advance research and instruction in a given area. They also generally hoped thereby to advance their careers" (Clark 1973 67). In this way, a "circuit of continuous exchanges", or a network of academic and personal reciprocity, was established around Vidal that would serve to propagate his "new geography" to *lycées* and faculties throughout the land (Bourdieu 1988 97). Clark's vocabulary was different from that of Latour's but many aspects of actor-network practice were being evoked for non-laboratory environments.

The state doctorate, completed with the patronage of a university professor – effectively the 'doctor-father' of German scholarship – was not only the pinnacle of academic research but was also the necessary, though not sufficient, qualification for obtaining a university chair in France (Claval and Sanguin 1996 8). At the end of the nineteenth century, "candidates [for chairs] had to be at least 30 years of age, have passed their doctorate, have [at least] two years of teaching experience in an officially recognized institution [usually a *lycée*], and normally be of French citizenship" (Clark 1973 27). Once a chair had been obtained, tenure lasted until the occupant reached 70 years of age. Most university professors of geography operated alone, covering the

whole of the syllabus at all levels, however the number of students in their charge was very small. Given the very few university posts in geography throughout the first half of the twentieth century, young scholars could be denied the chance of teaching in higher education. Under such circumstances, the opportunity of significant innovation in teaching and research was slight (Chevalier 1996 18). Well-qualified candidates had, literally, to wait for dead men's chairs. For example, on the eve of World War I only about twenty university chairs throughout France were associated with the teaching of geography but scholars who were historians by training and preference occupied many of these (Joerg 1922; De Martonne 1924) (Figure 2). Until after the educational reforms of 1941-42, the fiercely competitive examination that had to be passed in order to teach at the highest level in a *lycée* or in a state university was a combined qualification in the two subjects, the *agrégation d'histoire et géographie*, with geography being very much the minor element (Cholley 1957 24; Robic 2006 26; Chevalier 2007).

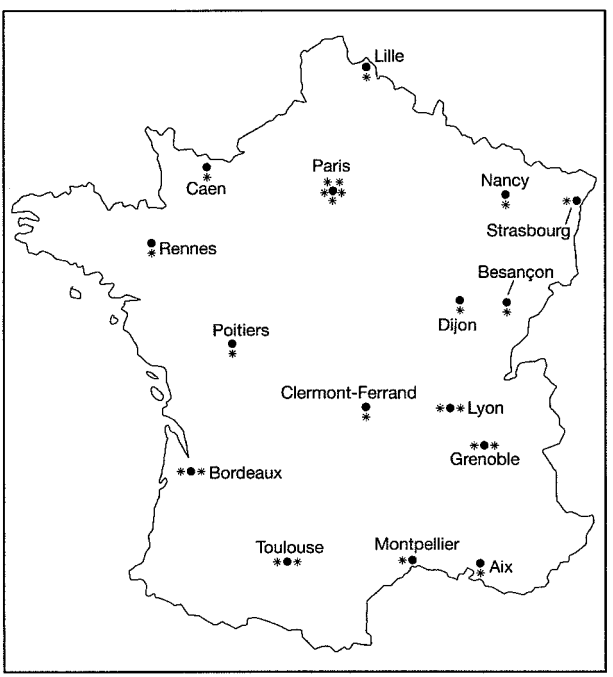



**Figure 2:** Distribution of university teachers of geography, 1920.

The acquisition of state doctorates by a select group of Vidal's pupils was of great symbolic as well as practical significance since it provided a vital mechanism to demonstrate the scientific identity of geography as a subject in its own right rather than being a mere auxiliary to history (Capel 1981 38). The disciplinary store of capital was enhanced in this way; however the doctorates in geography acquired by the Vidalians were not the first. During the final quarter of the nineteenth century, a small number of state doctorates had been awarded at the Sorbonne to candidates working under the patronage of Vidal's predecessor, the historian/ historical geographer Louis-Auguste Himly, who held the title of professor of geography (Berdoulay 1977). In 1892, colonial geographer Marcel Dubois also acquired professorial status at the Sorbonne but his right-wing politics and his conception of geography were seriously at odds with the Republican politics and innovative views of the discipline held by Vidal (Pinchemel 1975; Berdoulay 1981; Soubeyran 1997). In addition to a major thesis written and published in French, each doctoral candidate had to submit and publish a minor thesis in Latin on a different topic (Noiriel 1991). This system applied to all disciplines and Vidal had passed through it in 1872 when he defended his main thesis on the life of Herodus Atticus (and a smaller thesis on Greek funerary epitaphs in Asia Minor) before an academic jury and a public audience (Ozouf-Marignier 1992). This language requirement survived until 1903 but thereafter both major and secondary theses were submitted and published in French (Clark 1973 24). Doctoral success was an essential component in Vidal's strategy to propagate his 'new geography' (Vidal de la Blache 1899). This integrative, explanatory conception of geography was very different from earlier obsessions with the oceans and the heavens, with the history of exploration and discovery, and with lists of terrain features, capital cities and commercial products. As a sympathetic outsider to the state university, Émile Levasseur greeted Vidal's *Tableau de la Géographie de la France* (1903) and his 'new geography' in glowing terms, declaring "Geography has the right to be called a philosophic science; it does not restrict itself to description, it

scrutinizes the links between cause and effect, it shows the relationship between phenomena, and it makes one think" (Levasseur 1903 617).[17]

In association with his *Tableau* that presented the nation's land and regions as an introduction to Ernest Lavisse's great series on the *Histoire de France*, Vidal encouraged his chosen few to use their varied skills to prepare doctoral monographs that deepened geographical knowledge of particular territories, usually within France. These works differed from previous studies of what may be thought of as the 'history of geography' since they focused clearly upon regions, explored the mystical relationship between people and the land, and discussed the present as well as the past (Friedman 1996 69). There had, in fact, been a precedent for this kind of regional work in the form of a now largely forgotten study by Léon Gobin. Vidal's earliest and arguably most influential pupils certainly prepared doctoral monographs but these examined regions and topics beyond France and do not qualify for inclusion in the present discussion. In brief, Jean Brunhes submitted a thematic study that compared the impact of irrigation in Spain, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, and Emmanuel de Martonne presented a synthesis of the physical and human geography of Wallachia, a region of Romania (Brunhes 1902; De Martonne 1902; Vidal de la Blache 1902; Gallois 1902; Allix 1956a; Baudelle, Ozouf-Marignier & Robic 2001). Vidal's disciple and trusted colleague, Lucien Gallois, wrote his *Régions naturelles et noms de pays* in the early years of the twentieth century, revealing the complex origins of the names of small areas (*pays*) deriving from physical geography, history or urban hinterlands.[18] However, this volume was not a doctoral study and will not be discussed further, nor was the regional study of Lorraine by Bertrand Auerbach or Vidal's own book on *La France de l'Est* (Gallois 1908, 2008; Blanchard 1941; Clout 2005; Auerbach 1893; Vidal de la Blache 1917). The study entitled *Le Morvan* (1908) by Jacques Levainville was indeed a regional monograph but was submitted for a lesser doctorate rather than for a *doctorat d'état* and for that reason is not considered here.[19]

## Antecedents to the first cohort of regional monographs

Despite widespread opinion to the contrary, the regional monograph was not entirely the invention of Vidal's and his pupils. As early as 1891 Pierre Camena d'Almeida defended a 328-page thesis on geographical knowledge about the Pyrenees, however this work belonged to the group of doctorates on the history of geography written under the patronage of Himly (Laplace 1995 87). More emphatically 'regional' was the *Essai sur la géographie de l'Auvergne* defended at the Sorbonne in 1896 by Léon Gobin, teacher of history and geography at the *lycée* in Clermont-Ferrand, who acknowledged "encouragement and advice" from Marcel Dubois (Gobin 1896 vii; Andrews 1984). Extending to 414 pages and containing fifteen detailed maps and forty sketches and diagrams, this was no trivial work. In 1889, its little-known author had successfully passed the very demanding *agrégation* examination in history and geography and spent the next seven years reading published works, interviewing notable personalities, and travelling in the Auvergne region of the Massif Central. Nine of his twenty chapters examined systematic aspects of physical geography including a review of component districts (*pays*), and the remaining eleven explored themes in human geography. Gobin reported the findings of nineteenth-century geologists at length and discussed territorial divisions both before and after 1789. He analysed the importance of outward migration but did not produce a map of population densities that would have summarized the relationship between people and their land. His fundamental argument was that "all existence ... is intimately linked to the distinctive characteristics of each type of soil and each *pays*" (*Ibid.* 388). Whilst claiming with undue modesty not "to know the region, even less its inhabitants" (*Ibid.* vii), despite having amassed documentation and having travelled widely, his objective was to show "how the inhabitants ... have adapted themselves to the land they occupied [and] how the same inhabitants have exploited the natural resources of their *pays*" (*Ibid.* 388). This, he insisted in what may be considered a very Vidalian phrase, related to "the reciprocal influences that operate between mankind and the land" (*Ibid.* 389).

The examiners that included Dubois, Gallois and Himly found Gobin's thesis worthy of a *doctorat d'état*, and an anonymous reviewer from Bordeaux found the monograph "conscientious, interesting and useful, sober and clear in style [and] worthy of study by students and faculty" (Andrews 1984, p. 322; Anon. 1897 175). However, that reviewer regretted that Gobin's definition of the Auvergne was confined to a footnote and that the author did not "bring together in a single chapter the principal characteristics of this area whose numerous details he examines with minute care" (*Ibid*). Unlike this balanced appraisal, Vidal's short review was damning: "People who hope to find an interpretation of the geography of the Auvergne reflecting progress in scientific knowledge, or even a description of the physiognomy of this distinctive country, will experience disappointment" (Vidal de la Blache 1897 59). He insisted: "The author does not have a feeling for what belongs to geography and what does not". Without raising further criticisms, Vidal concluded his eleven-line critique by condemning Gobin's bibliography which, "to judge by what he quotes and what he omits, is not inspired by a sufficiently critical sense". Despite proposing what may be seen as a Vidalian agenda of interaction between people and the land, and presenting a substantial and well-illustrated volume, Gobin's work was dismissed for its lack of understanding of the 'new geography'. Of course, its author had not had the privilege of attending the ENS in Paris and hence could hardly have been expected to be aware of the expectations articulated when Vidal taught there. Perhaps Gobin's real downfall was to have called upon Dubois to be his patron, at a time when personal and professional relations between Vidal and Dubois had deteriorated so irreconcilably that Dubois left the editorial board of the *Annales de Géographie*, which the two men had founded (Broc 1978; Soubeyran 1997). Dubois would never publish in its pages again. The vacant place on the editorial board was filled by two of Vidal's allies, Lucien Gallois and the independent geologist Emmanuel de Margerie. As the ill-fated disciple of Dubois, Léon Gobin remained an obscure *lycée* teacher in Clermont-Ferrand. His doctorate had consumed his energies but did not enhance his career. By contrast with this scholar condemned to provincial

isolation, a group of Vidal's chosen men were preparing theses that would help to establish geography in a modern form. The Vidalian network of reciprocity and alliances that would mould academic geography in France during the first half of the twentieth century was in the process of being forged.

Drawing on evidence contained in the monographs, in the scholarly reports by their patrons and others, in published biographies and in letters received by Albert Demangeon (and now housed in the Bibliothèque Mazarine in Paris), the present essay traces patron-client relationships surrounding the production of the first hundred state doctorates between 1905 and 1966 that examined regions of France (Dickinson 1969 208-52; Deneux 2006).[20] This period begins with the monograph by Demangeon that was proclaimed to be the prototype for this genre of writing and concludes before the aftershock of student uprisings in 1968 brought profound changes to higher education in France (Bourgéat 2007 8). In the words of Paul Claval: "The hierarchy of positions which was central to the French University system, with its powerful professors, its *mandarins*, collapsed in a few weeks and never recovered" following 1968 (Claval 2000 171). As Figure 3 shows, the hundred monographs under consideration formed less than one-third of the 316 state

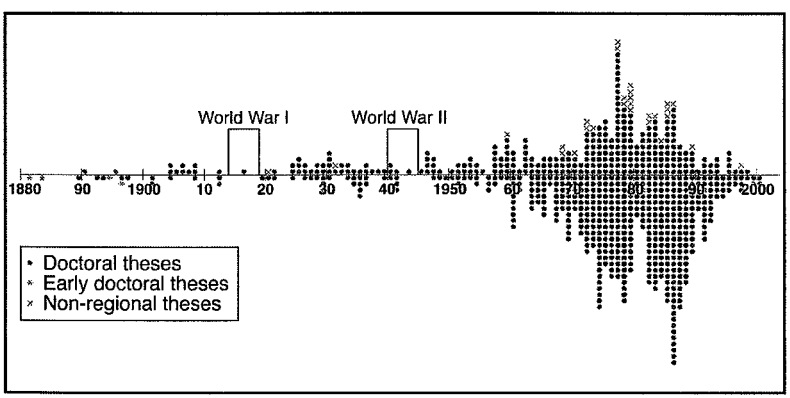



**Figure 3:** State doctorates in geography during the 20th century.

doctorates that were submitted during the twentieth century on aspects of the geography of France (Appendix I). Almost all focused on particular regions but a small proportion examined chosen themes on a nationwide basis. Over that hundred-year period, 495 other geographers successfully defended state doctorates in French universities that dealt with other parts of the world (Robic 2006). These theses are shown on the lower part of Figure 3.

# 2.

# The First Cohort of Regional Monographs, 1905-1917

## The men and their works

Between 1905 and Vidal's death in 1918, ten regional monographs on parts of France were successfully defended for the award of state doctorates. Five of the candidates had demonstrated their brilliance by gaining admission as *élèves* to the ENS and had been taught by Vidal, either at the École or subsequently at the Sorbonne prior to his retirement in 1909. Nine presented their work for examination at the Sorbonne and had Vidal as their patron (see Appendix I). The exception was Raoul Blanchard who had been a pupil of Vidal's at the ÉNS but subsequently taught in *lycées* at Douai and Lille in northern France and chose to work under the local patronage of Edouard Ardaillon, professor of geography at the University of Lille (Blanchard 1963a; Carré 1991). Nonethless, it was to Vidal and Gallois, "my masters at the ENS", that Blanchard chose to dedicate his thesis (Blanchard 1906 I). With the exception of Émile Chantriot, who was aged 40, and Camille Vallaux, who was 37, the men in this first cohort completed their theses when they were in their late twenties or early thirties. Their mean age was 33 when they defended their work (Table 1). After having passed the *agrégation d'histoire et de géographie*, all had experience of teaching in *lycées* or other educational establishments, such as the École Navale in Brest (Camille Vallaux) or the

**Table 1: Characteristics of the first hundred regional monographs**

| Cohort | Number of theses | Mean age of author (years) | Mean length of thesis (pages) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1905-17 | 10 | 33 | 460 |
| 1918-45 | 34 | 42 | 595 |
| 1946-66 | 56 | 39 | 555 |
| 1905-66 | 100 | 39 | 560 |

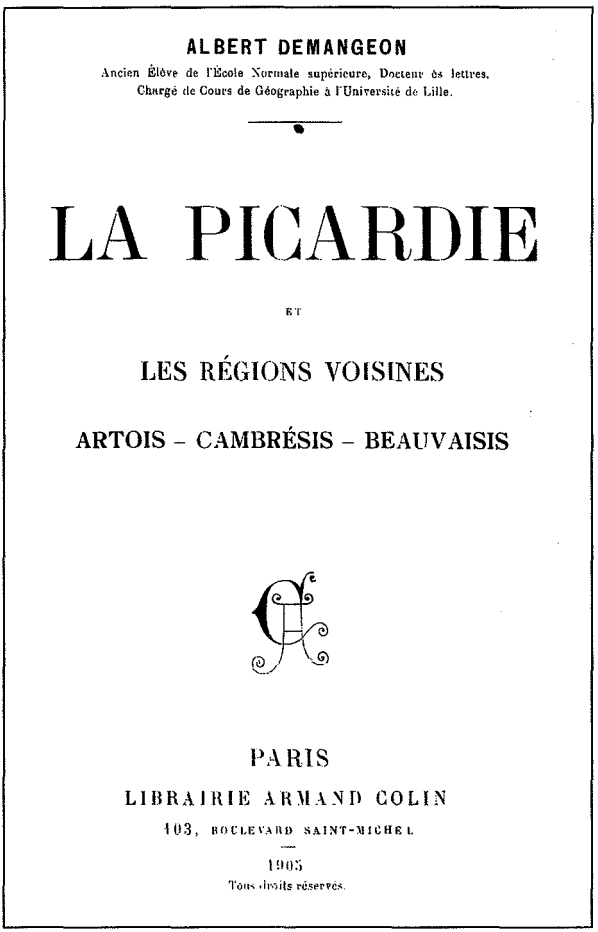
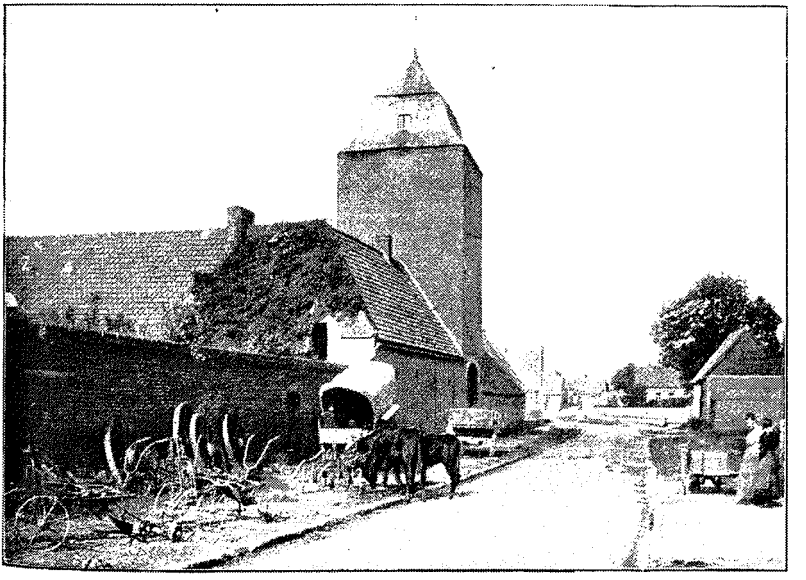



**Plate 2:** Frontispiece of *La Picardie.*

Prytanée Militaire de La Flèche (René Musset). In the preface to their work, two candidates expressed gratitude to other experts in addition to Vidal. Chantriot thanked Marcel Dubois (at the Sorbonne) and Bertrand Auerbach (professor of geography at the University of Nancy), and Maxmilien Sorre noted his debt to Charles Flahault (professor of botany at Montpellier) (Robic 1999). The length of the ten printed theses ranged from 240 pages (Charles Passerat) to 598 pages (Raoul De Félice), around a mean of 460 pages (Table 1). As is true to this day, greater length was not necessarily an indicator of higher quality.

**Table 2:** **Chapter structure of *La Picardie*, Albert Demangeon (1905, 496pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Limits of a geographical region: excursion around the margins of the chalk region |
| 2 | Geology |
| 3 | The chalk |
| 4 | Clay with flints, the Tertiaries, superficial deposits |
| 5 | Climate |
| 6 | Hydrography and natural conditions |
| 7 | Hydrography and the human environment |
| 8 | The coast, lowlands and estuaries |
| 9 | Agricultural geography: cultivation |
| 10 | Agricultural geography: livestock, fruit trees |
| 11 | Urban industries |
| 12 | Industries in the countryside |
| 13 | Economic relations and trade routes |
| 14 | Human settlement: fields |
| 15 | Human settlement: houses, villages, towns |
| 16 | Population |
| 17 | Territorial divisions within Picardy |



UNE GRANDE FERME A DURY (ARRONDISSEMENT D'ARRAS)
Porte sous le pigeonnier.

**Plate 3:** Photograph from *La Picardie.*

The monograph on *La plaine picarde* (marketed at the insistence of the publisher as *La Picardie*) that was completed by Albert Demangeon in 1905 covered both physical and human geography. Its author began by defining the limits of Picardy and evoking the characteristics of surrounding *pays* (Plate 2). In the five following chapters he discussed aspects of physical geography before turning to human occupation and economic activities (Table 2). The chapter devoted to 'Hydrography and the human environment' formed the interface between these two sections. Historical evidence was presented to complement physical factors in explaining agricultural activities, urban and rural industries, settlement types and population patterns ca. 1900. Demangeon concluded his monograph by discussing territorial divisions within Picardy. As well as travelling widely in his study region (on foot, by bicycle and by train), Demangeon incorporated evidence from personal enquiries and observations in the field, as well as from 592 listed publications. He circulated questionnaires to village schoolteachers (*instituteurs*) to obtain more local detail (Demangeon 1905 458). In addition to using field notebooks, he took photographs to record his impressions and used some of these to illustrate his work (Wolff 2005) (Plate 3). Copious use was made of published work in all cognate disciplines and of archival material held in the *archives départementales de la Somme* (Amiens), the École des Ponts et Chaussées (Paris) and the *archives nationales* in the capital. Indeed, Demangeon wrote his minor thesis about source materials for geographical work held in the national archives (Demangeon, 1905a). In true Vidalian style, natural and historical evidence was invoked to explain the landscapes of the province and the activities of its people.

With its balance between physical and human themes, its clarity of written style, its professionally drawn maps and pertinent photographs from Demangeon's own camera, *La Picardie* was praised in a six-page review in the *Annales de Géographie* by Vidal himself (Plate 4). He stressed that the author, who had taught in *lycées* at Saint-Quentin, Reims and Amiens, had "travelled throughout the countryside [so that] personal observations convey an

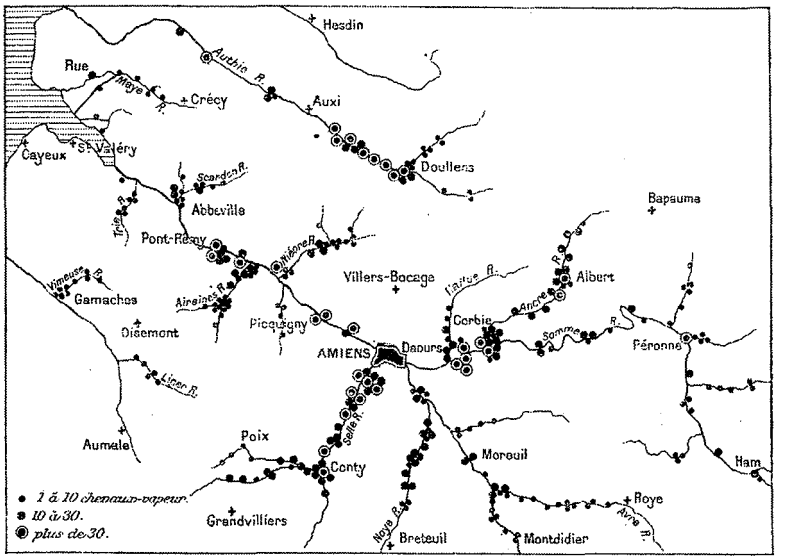



Fig. 14. — *Répartition des forces hydrauliques sur les rivières de la Somme.* Les points noirs représentent l'emplacement des usines ou des moulins.

**Plate 4:** Map from *La Picardie.*

impression of reality that marks almost every page" (Vidal de la Blache 1905 265). Certainly, he knew his *terrain* and his method was "sure and precise [with] attention drawn from nature to people, and *vice versa,* and to repeated aspects of the problem" of regional study (*Ibid.* 265). Vidal hoped "that works of this kind will be undertaken in other parts of France and will be inspired by the method adopted by Demangeon" (*Ibid.* 270). Reviewer Paul Risson set the book in its context, declaring: "At a time when geographical studies are being renewed, this fine book is really timely. It provides a model of reasoned description being both scientific and full of life ... It leaves a lasting impression" on the reader (Risson 1905 190, 191). The young historian Lucien Febvre, a former pupil at the ENS, contemporary of the Vidalians, and close friend of Jules Sion, described *La Picardie* as truly "remarkable ... an accomplished model by virtue of its elegant and firm structure, [and] the probity and sincerity of its documentation" (Febvre 1907 92). In a letter sent in April 1905, Jean Brunhes thanked Demangeon for "your fine book on *La plaine*

*picarde*, which will remain one of my first and genuine books about geography and geographical method" (Brunhes 26/04/05). De Martonne praised the solidity, structure and construction of the monograph but added: "My poor friend, what archival work you have had to do! [By comparison] historians do nothing" (De Martonne 7/04/05). At the University of Lyon, Maurice Zimmermann, who had known the author since their *lycée* days at Evreux, was "enthusiastic" about Demangeon's book in a conversation with Edouard Herriot (another ENS friend, future mayor of Lyon and national politician) and argued that it should serve as "the prototype" for future monographs that would be written over the next half century (Letter from Demangeon to Herriot 29/06/05; Zimmermann 1906 4; 1940-41a).[21] *La Picardie* was undoubtedly feted as "the prototype" but Demangeon's comprehensive approach would not be followed by many of his successors. Indeed, several of his contemporaries chose to stress either human or physical themes, or to concentrate on contemporary matters reducing past conditions to a bare minimum.

In the year following Demangeon's triumph, Émile Chantriot defended his thesis at the Sorbonne. This was judged to be less of a success. Organized into three parts, his monograph defined the individuality of the Champagne region, described component *pays*, and presented systematic aspects of physical and human geography. Denied a review in the *Annales de Géographie*, it received only an 18-line entry in the annual geographical bibliography that was written, at the request of its editor Louis Raveneau, by none other than Demangeon (Demangeon 1906 98; Raveneau 6/05/07). The reviewer allowed himself to describe Chantriot's work as "conscientious" but proceeded to raise serious criticisms, including a paucity of historical evidence in the discussion of industry, crops and land ownership, an over-reliance on geological data to explain territorial divisions, and a bibliography that was presented in an unmethodical way. Chantriot certainly experienced the patronage of Vidal but he also acknowledged support from Dubois (Vidal's vanquished rival) and from Auerbach, who was not one of the most

prominent representatives of French geography (Robic 1999). Despite having his doctorate, Chantriot's career was not advanced and he remained, like Gobin before him, a provincial *lycée* teacher, this time in Nancy.

In 1906, Raoul Blanchard defended his research on Flanders before a jury at Lille composed of Demangeon (by then teaching at the city's state university), his former teacher Lucien Gallois from the Sorbonne, Ardaillon now rector at Besançon, a geologist and several historians (G. Lefevre, 8/04/06). Blanchard had already shown his self-confidence and intellectual brilliance as a repeated prizewinner at the ENS and by coming first in the *agrégation d'histoire et de géographie* national examination in 1900 (Blanchard 1961 236). Whilst teaching at Douai, he had turned to Ardaillon for advice on choosing a research topic. Blanchard rejected Ardaillon's initial suggestion of "the plain of northern France" as too imprecise, reformulating it into *La Flandre* and including parts of Belgium and the Netherlands as well as northern France (Blanchard 1963a 33). Indeed, he learned through subsequent discussions that Ardaillon had "a very poor knowledge of this plain of northern France" (Blanchard 1963a 64). In his monograph, he distinguished between 'maritime Flanders' and 'interior Flanders' leaving some examiners unsure whether he was discussing one region or two. Writing in retirement almost sixty years later, Blanchard recalled the public oral examination in bitter terms, judging Demangeon's questioning to have been combative, although Vidal praised it as being "serious and critical" [for after all] "the candidate had nothing to lose" (Blanchard 1963a 75; Vidal de la Blache 16/5/06). Blanchard condemned Ardaillon for apparently having failed to read the thesis for which he had acted as patron, and he noted, "from that day, everything was over between Ardaillon and myself" (Blanchard 1963a 76; Lentacker 1992). In a review, Lucien Febvre was again supportive of this geographical work, praising a "lively and alert study ... with many fine and expressive photographs" that illustrated physical and human features. He remarked that Blanchard's 'Flanders' was, in fact, a "two-fold region" (*pays double*) and, rather than criticising this duality, recommended the virtue of a comparative approach to

future authors of geographical monographs. A six-page review in the *Annales de Géographie* by examiner Gallois described in detail the content of "this intelligent study, patiently undertaken, and inspired by good geographical method" (Gallois 1906 388). With his thesis completed, Blanchard moved to the small University of Grenoble (with fewer than a thousand students) where he set up his own Institut de Géographie Alpine, soon comprising "one office and three rooms" in the former bishop's residence in the rue Très-Cloître abutting on the cathedral (Petit-Dutaillis 18/12/08; Derruau 1965). In due course, he would mobilize his personal energy and institutional resource to serve as patron to an important cluster of doctoral candidates, making Grenoble a rival centre to the Sorbonne for the production of geographical research. He would establish his own academic journal and use it to proclaim the achievements of his disciples thereby promoting their careers as well as reinforcing his own (Rougier 1996).[22] In this way, a second scholarly network was about to be established in French geography.

**Table 3: Chapter structure of *La Basse Bretagne*, Camille Vallaux (1907, 320pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Introduction: the physical environment |
| 1 | Legacy of the past: customs, belief, language |
| 2 | Moorland, marsh and forest |
| 3 | Landownership and farming regions |
| 4 | Commune, village, dwelling |
| 5 | Work and farm labourers |
| 6 | Market-gardening areas |
| 7 | Industrial groups in the interior |
| 8 | Fisheries and maritime industries |
| 9 | The maritime fringe |
| 10 | Overpopulation, nomadism, emigration |
| 11 | Towns, routes, trade |
| 12 | Present and future |

Two men of distinctly different calibre and experience defended regional theses at the Sorbonne in 1906-7. After having studied under Vidal at the ENS and teaching at the *lycée* in Brest and, from 1901, at the city's École Navale, Camille Vallaux approached the professor in Paris to seek approval for a

project on the human geography of *La Basse-Bretagne* (Table 3). Vallaux was not, of course, in Vidal's current circle of disciples and *le patron* would recognise the existence of that more distant relationship by not writing an appraisal of his resultant monograph for the *Annales de Géographie.* That responsibility was passed to De Martonne who had taught at Rennes (1899-1905) and was well qualified to review work on western Brittany. Vallaux's first sixty pages on the physical setting were deemed "not the best in the book", however the author's discussion of human activity was "succinct and lively; on every page one senses a personal knowledge of places and people, a lively feeling for the reality of things" (De Martonne 1907 361). Vallaux knew his ground. However, De Martonne regretted that few archival resources had been used and that "earlier publications and documents accessible in great libraries", by which he meant Paris, had not been consulted (*Ibid.* 364). He argued that Vallaux's focus on contemporary human themes "perhaps harms the recognition of geographical contrasts and regions [but] has the advantage of examining questions clearly" (*Ibid.* 362). Whilst praising a map on migration, "whose sources I would like to know" – implying that they were not explained – De Martonne lamented the absence of a map of population densities (*Ibid.* 363). He also felt that "the geographical causes of facts are perhaps not sufficiently clarified, and ... changes through time, necessary to understand economic conditions, could have been studied more closely" (*Ibid.* 363). He expressed the wish that Vallaux would take these criticisms to heart and write a second monograph on 'Haute-Bretagne' but this was never undertaken. Unlike the professional artwork that graced the favoured monographs published by Armand Colin, *La Basse-Bretagne* contained only a few crudely drawn maps, lacked photographs and was the product of a small publisher (Appendix I) (Plate 5). In a five-page review, Lucien Febvre made similar points to those raised by De Martonne, praising Vallaux's "patient and fruitful enquiries among the people" but criticising his handling of physical themes and of some aspects of human geography (Febvre 1908a 46). He lamented the lack of archival research, the absence of photographs, and the variable quality of the maps, some of which were "not successful or of little

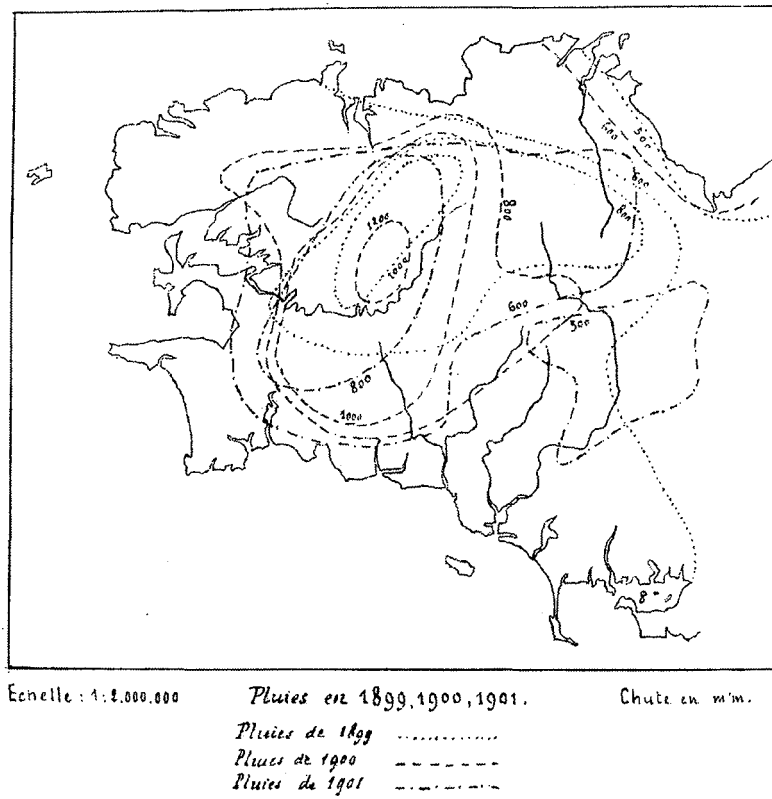



**Plate 5:** Map from *La Basse-Bretagne.*

utility" (*Ibid.* 49). Febvre insisted: "The book is not without faults, even grave faults. [It] does not leave us with an overall view of the country studied, or a clear impression. The chapters are a little too scattered" (*Ibid.* 49). After what amounted to a snub by Vidal and very mixed appraisals by a geographer and by an historian, Vallaux's very productive but rather unorthodox career developed in *lycées* and at the prestigious École des Hautes Études Commérciales in Paris rather than in a state university. This denied him the chance of mentoring doctoral students of his own (Carré 1978 125; Nicolas 1984 131).

The long, 598-page, monograph on *La Basse-Normandie* that was defended by Raoul De Félice in 1907 also received harsh reactions. It read like a catalogue or encyclopaedia with no fewer than 25 thematic chapters covering physical and human topics. The appearance of the monograph was not greeted by a review in the pages of the *Annales de Géographie,* but its existence was signalled in a 22-line bibliographic entry. This was written by René Musset who was firmly inside the Vidalian cluster but was very much still a junior member and was far from completing his own doctorate. In his words, De Félice's "useful monograph" served as a "precious guide that gives a strong impression of truth but one will recognize ... a superabundance of detail. One searches for the guiding thread across chapters distributed in a rather confused way" (Musset 1908 97). The author "follows information from geologists in a docile fashion ... [and is] very psychological, finding the explanation for economic facts in 'the Norman character'". His bibliography was judged to be "incomplete and rather confused". Lucien Febvre also criticised De Félice's attempt "to 'say everything' and to 'be complete' [through an] impartial and facile abundance" of information (Febvre 1908b 359). Such an approach might suit the preparation of a dictionary but "does not make a real scientific contribution to a science that is undergoing formation and growth ... It would be damaging, in our opinion, if such a conception of geographical work were to spread" (*Ibid.* 360). Febvre wisely insisted that geographers should not "reduce themselves to being hard-working compilers" (*Ibid.* 360). The doctorate did not advance the career of De Félice who remained a *lycée* teacher in Chartres until his premature death in 1912 at the age of 33.

The next two Vidalian monographs, by Antoine Vacher on *Le Berry* and by Charles Passerat on *Les plaines du Poitou,* most certainly did not follow Demangeon's 'prototype' or attempt to be holistic regional studies. In fact, they were emphatically, although not exclusively, physical in character. In correspondence with his friend Demangeon, Vacher remarked that he would have preferred to restrict his research to hydrology and geomorphology but

**Table 4: Chapter structure of *Le Berry*, Antoine Vacher (1908, 550pp)**

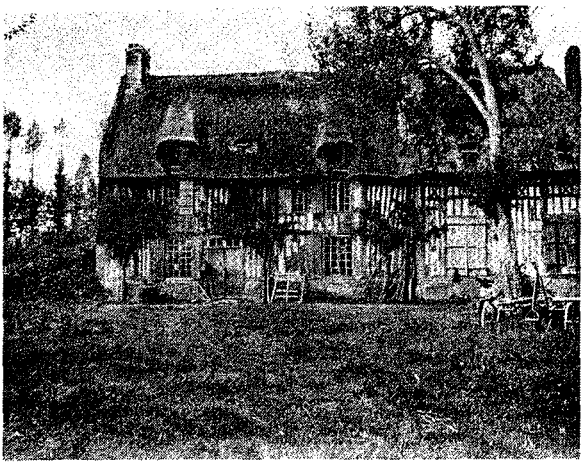
| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The ancient fringes of Berry: wood, heath and marsh |
| 2 | Political geography of Berry: changing limits |
| 3 | Maps depicting Berry |
| 4 | Morphological conditions |
| 5 | Attempts at explanation |
| 6 | Hydrography |
| 7 | Toward an explanation of ancient valleys |
| 8 | Climate |
| 9 | Water regime: springs and wells |
| 10 | Water regime: the rivers |
| | Conclusion: physical structure and *pays* names |

Vidal had insisted that he should include reference to human geography by using historical maps to review the changing spatial expression of Berry as a political unit (Table 4) (Vacher 9/01/09; Friedman 1996 66). Vacher's personal relations with his patron were not always cordial and he feared the worst when Vidal delayed returning his finished manuscript. Nonetheless, his oral examination went well and his fears proved to be unfounded. Independent geologist Emmanuel de Margerie, co-editor of the *Annales de Géographie*, devoted no fewer than seventeen pages to a presentation of *Le Berry*. His review was more of a summary than a critique but he included the general regret that "theses in France have tended to become much too voluminous and demand work that is too prolonged" (De Margerie 1909 391). After noting that "Vacher deliberately renounced giving his book the character of a [balanced] regional monograph [but rather offered] 'a contribution to the geographical study of a French region'", Febvre asked whether it would have been preferable to write "an excellent, precise, complete monograph of a group of interesting rivers" and avoid any pretence at studying a region (*Ibid*). Despite this pertinent criticism and Vacher's deviation from the Vidalian ideal expressed in the work of Demangeon, the thesis was published by Armand Colin and appeared with elegant maps and photographs. Its author was appointed successor to Demangeon at the University of Lille but Vacher died

in 1919 aged 46 before his full potential as a physical geographer could be realized (Demangeon 1921 70; Clout forthcoming).

The same fate befell Passerat who died in 1911 at the age of 34, less than two years after defending his brief monograph on *Les plaines du Poitou* (239 pages) and after a short time lecturing at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. In his 3-page presentation in the *Annales de Géographie*, Vidal insisted that Passerat's "minute and penetrating method" for analysing aspects of physical geography contributed "the great merit of the book" (Vidal de la Blache 1910a 367; 1911a). In his report, the reviewer chose "not to focus on the last two chapters" dealing with rural life which, "although containing useful observation, appear too incomplete" (*Ibid.* 368). Not surprisingly, Armand Colin did not publish this now forgotten monograph.

By contrast, that distinguished publishing house accepted *Les paysans de la Normandie orientale* by Jules Sion. Exceeding 540 printed pages, this thesis first examined physical conditions and then analysed archival evidence to present detailed accounts of rural life. The discussion of eighteenth-century landholding and the author's general concern for the impact of social differences on economic development was exceptionally noteworthy. Published under its full title, rather than as *Le paysan normand* as Max Leclerc (managing editor of Armand Colin) proposed, it contained professionally drawn maps and an array of photographs, of which some came from Demangeon's own camera (Sion 21/10/08; 8/03/08) (Plate 6). In a four-page report for the *Annales de Géographie*, Vidal expressed great approval of this intricate work (Plate 7). Commenting on the varied approaches of his doctoral candidates that worried some reviewers in neighbouring disciplines, Vidal insisted, perhaps surprisingly, "There is everything to gain from these studies not being cast in the same mould. It would be wrong to regret the differences in viewpoint that distinguish them, since they all, in various ways, are applications of the geographic method" whose "essential characteristic ... consists in rigorous concern to locate the facts being studied. That is its *raison*



VIEILLE FERME CAUCHOISE (Normanville, 1766).
L'ancienne maison d'habitation, aujourd'hui convertie en remise, est construite en colombage et couverte en chaume.

**Plate 6:** Photograph from *Les paysans de la Normandie orientale.*

*d'être*" (Vidal de la Blache 1909 177, 178). Not surprisingly, Sion's friend Lucien Febvre was very enthusiastic about this "excellently informed, marvellously ingenious painstaking guide" that was a fine "example of an 'intelligent' book" (Febvre 1909a 47, 51). In responding to Sion's "explanatory excursions into history", he was especially impressed by the "methodical prudence [and] extreme care taken by the author who never exceeds the factual evidence in his conclusions" (*Ibid.* 47, 48). By contrast, De Martonne described the monograph as "an excellent historical study done by a geographer", continuing to inform Sion "now that you have paid your debt to history and to sociology, we hope that you will devote all your energy to geography" (Letter from Sion quoting De Martonne 8/02/09). Bruised by this harsh comment, Sion confided to his close friend Demangeon: "I believe that it is geography to study ... people and their natural environment, whether that be in the past or in the present" (*Ibid*). Nonetheless, with praise from both Vidal and Febvre, Sion soon escaped the frustration of *lycée* teaching at Laval and Angoulême and lecturing at Clermont-Ferrand by moving to the chair of

LES PAYSANS

DE LA

# NORMANDIE ORIENTALE

## CHAPITRE I

### LA NORMANDIE ORIENTALE

Le littoral de la Manche, les cours de la Bresle, de l'Epte et de la Seine circonscrivent un plateau dont l'altitude est rarement inférieure à 100 et supérieure à 200 mètres. La craie, qui en forme les assises peu ondulées, supporte une épaisse couche de limons où prospéra longtemps la culture des céréales et des plantes industrielles, tandis qu'aujourd'hui l'humidité du climat, la présence fréquente de l'argile dans le sous-sol favorisent le développement de l'élevage. Dans ce plateau s'entaillent des vallées profondes dont l'une, celle de la Seine, étend sur 5 à 15 kilomètres de largeur ses sablières, ses bois et ses prairies marécageuses. Au Nord-Est, des abords de Neufchâtel à ceux de Beauvais, s'ouvre une dépression, le Bray, dont les terres lourdes et compactes seront bientôt tout entières couvertes d'herbages. C'est cette contrée que nous appellerons la Normandie Orientale. Elle ne présente point cette homogénéité des « régions naturelles » où l'activité humaine s'adapte par des procédés identiques à un milieu physique identique ; elle constitue plutôt un ensemble organique de régions naturelles. Quelques-unes manifestent même une originalité si évidente qu'elle s'est imposée à l'attention populaire et qu'un nom a été créé pour les désigner : elles figurent à juste titre parmi les « pays », parmi ces divisions que l'usage vulgaire a maintenues, au milieu du chaos des circonscriptions administratives, parce qu'elles correspondent à certains aspects de la nature, à certains modes de vie. En les

J. Sion. 1

**Plate 7:** First page of text from *Les paysans de la Normandie orientale.*

geography at Montpellier, where he remained for the rest of his life (Gibert 1940-41; van Spengen 1998; Saussol 1990 283).

After this phase of remarkable productivity, four years passed before the next regional monograph was examined in 1913. This was written by Maximilien (Max) Sorre who began as a pupil-teacher in his home town of Rennes and later encountered Vidal's teaching when he studied at the less prestigious École Normale de Saint-Cloud, which must not be confused with the elite ENS in the rue d'Ulm (Beaujeu-Garnier 1963). Sorre's teaching career took him to training colleges in western and southern France, including Montpellier where he met Charles Flahault, professor of botany at the local university (Gaussen 1935). This scientist's influence, together with that of Vidal and De Martonne, helped to mould the progress of Sorre's ecological monograph on the eastern (or Mediterranean) Pyrenees in which biogeography figured alongside Vidal's beloved concern for ways of life. Sorre insisted that the relationship of these *genres de vie* to the natural environment was not constant but changed substantially through time. Published by Armand Colin and containing elegant maps and field sketches drawn by its author, *Les Pyrénées méditerranéennes* received a 5-page review in the *Annales de Géographie* from De Martonne who had contributed some of the photographs it contained and had known its author since their time in Rennes. Whilst acknowledging that by adopting an ecological viewpoint "the author has not wished to produce a complete monograph", De Martonne echoed Sorre's arguments about the inadequacy of environmental determinism as a constant mechanism to explain human activity (De Martonne 1914-15 164). He insisted: "Determinism of economic facts is often more apparent than real: adaptations to the environment have changed across the ages and may even change again" in the future (*Ibid.* 165). Despite Sorre's inclusion of certain abstract concepts, De Martonne judged the thesis to be "happily corrected by using lively descriptions and frequent appeal to personal impressions" (*Ibid.* 168). He had passed the fieldwork test. Writing from Grenoble, Blanchard's pupil Philippe Arbos criticized Sorre's limited analysis of past vegetation cover and the "lack of balance" in his discussion of *genres de vie* but praised his attempt to compare changes in different sub-areas. These passages contributed a "solid, lively and picturesque" study that

was a "fertile contribution to the science of human geography" (Arbos 1914 278). Within a few months of defending his work, Sorre was mobilized in August 1914. During the autumn of 1915, he was gravely wounded and received the *croix de guerre* and the *légion d'honneur* on his hospital bed since his survival was in doubt (George 1962 449). After the war, he embarked on a career in which university teaching, initially at Lille, alternated with educational administration at a high level (Clout 2008). This fragmented pattern would prevent him from establishing a cluster of disciples.

The final thesis to be completed before the death of Vidal was by René Musset who had studied at the ENS and then taught at the Prytanée Militaire de La Flèche in western France (Journaux 1977 6). His initial idea had been to examine both the Perche and the Bas-Maine areas but he confined his doctoral monograph to the latter (Musset 17/05/06). Unlike the physical orientation of some early theses, Musset explored both physical and human conditions and devoted considerable attention to historical changes. In this way, his work echoed the formulation that had been employed so successfully by Demangeon and had received such praise. Musset's monograph was published by Armand Colin and received a 5-page review in the *Annales de Géographie* by Gallois. After rejoicing that the "collection of regional studies on France is being enriched by a new volume", the reviewer summarized its content and praised the quality of its illustrations (Gallois 1918 135). After the war, Musset's career as a university professor was assured, beginning at Rennes in 1919 and then moving to Caen in 1933 where he remained until retirement (Journaux 1977; Clout forthcoming).

Two other French geographers who would eventually write monographs were directly influenced by Vidal, however their research developed slowly. The first was Henri Baulig whom Vidal had advised in October 1904 to go to Harvard in order to study under W.M. Davis (Juillard 1975 120). As a result, Baulig's research was slow to develop and his thesis was delayed by teaching in Paris (1911-12) and Rennes (1913), by military service during the First

World War, and by his acquisition of a teaching post at the University in Strasbourg in 1919 where he taught geography single-handed for many years. The second scholar was Philippe Arbos who had studied at the ENS but chose to present his thesis at Grenoble where he taught at the local *lycée* and also delivered lectures at the Institut de Géographie Alpine when Blanchard visited the USA in 1917 (Arbos 15/02/17). This was the start of a succession of visiting professorships that Blanchard would hold in Canada and the USA over the next 35 years that enhanced his international visibility (Berthoin 1966 11).

## Approaches and appraisals

Despite their authors having Vidal as their patron, the regional monographs that were examined between 1905 and 1917 were surprisingly varied in approach, length and quality. Despite Demangeon's work having been acclaimed as "the prototype", several distinctive approaches were in evidence rather than repeated examples of a single acceptable model. Most authors researched regions in which they were employed as teachers or with which they had family connections. Their choice of study area had been conditioned, at least in part, by practical matters of accessibility. The precise nature of Vidal's patronage and the regularity with which he gave advice to his pupils remains unclear. Letters to Demangeon from Sion and Gallois reveal that during 1905 and 1906 Vidal (who had just turned 60 years of age) was overwhelmed with reading routine work related to school textbooks as well as final thesis drafts (Sion 22/11/05; Gallois 2/5/06). In November 1907, Vacher noted that his final draft was "awaiting the goodwill of Vidal" and reported that Gallois had agreed to read it if Vidal found that he was too busy (Vacher 1/11/07). In fact, Vidal did read the draft but took a considerable time. In the following February, Vacher complained that he had to "wait three months to have it back in my own hands" (Vacher 5/02/08). Vidal had told his disciple: "Do not rush me. I like to enter into the thoughts of those whose work I read" (*Ibid*). In frustration, Vacher exclaimed: "Heavens above! I wish

he would just return my draft as soon as possible ... I will not protest any more: I must await my fate" (*Ibid*). In fact, Vidal was content with what he read and Vacher recalled how "his satisfaction has calmed me" (Vacher 16/02/08). At this critical moment in his career, Sion's experience with his patron was similar. In March 1908 he informed Demangeon: "I am still not absolutely sure that Vidal will read [the draft since he is] tired of reading theses [but if necessary] Gallois will move into the hot seat" (Sion 26/03/08). This uncertainty again proved unfounded and Sion could report: "Vidal has produced a *tour de force*. He has read my thesis in a month ... The only reproach was its length and the abundance of footnotes, [but these are] inevitable in the semi-historical chapters ... He found it to his liking" (Sion 7/08/08).

It has been assumed by some commentators that Vidal steered his pupils toward preparing regional monographs in order to provide him with a substantial array of geographical information on France from which he would formulate general explanatory hypotheses for human geography that would be deployed in some future treatise (Dickinson 1969 214). Thus, Anne Buttimer stressed, "when France's mosaic of natural *pays* had been exhaustively studied, Vidal hoped to draft a systematic human geography of the country" (Buttimer 1971 76).[23] However, the relationship between this supposed 'grand design' and the pragmatic desire of his protégés to complete their theses and advance their careers remains unclear. Buttimer asked: "Could it have been that Vidal ... assigned regional studies to his disciples before communicating to them the general plan within which these individual monographs would eventually fit?" (*Ibid.* 58). There may have been some truth in this suggestion but the practical, personal circumstances of the authors certainly played some part in their choice of study area across what was, in effect, a geographical *terra incognita*. In addition, Vidal was content to accept very different approaches to regional study, exemplified by Demangeon, Vallaux and Vacher, and in so doing was guaranteeing that he would not be provided with a consistent array of regional information for

writing a single treatise or defining functional regions. One thing, however, is clear. The regional monographs by the first generation of Vidalians were written for academic purposes, granting their authors the status of *docteur d'état*. They were most certainly not prepared as components in Vidal's quite separate project to define an array of city-based regional units for the administration and management of France in the early twentieth century (Vidal 1910; Sanguin 1993) (Figure 1).

Members of the editorial board of the *Annales de Géographie*, who were past teachers of the authors, reported successful monographs at length, but less satisfactory works were allocated only brief bibliographical entries. In addition, Lucien Febvre discussed the most impressive examples in his contributions to the *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, at the request of its editor Henri Berr. His contributions were generally constructive and supported the 'new geography'. Most of the authors were his acquaintances and a few were close friends. However, none of the authors of these very early regional monographs, as members of a "discipline with great ambitions", could escape criticism from the fledgling discipline of sociology (Simiand 1906-09 723). In a densely written review of nine pages in the *Année Sociologique* (1906-09), François Simiand concentrated his attack on the works of Demangeon, Blanchard, Vallaux, Vacher and Sion (Andrews 1984; Friedman 1996 70). With remarkable pertinence, he identified three major deficiencies: the ill-defined and inconsistent scope of geography as demonstrated by the variable content of the monographs; an apparent poverty of explanatory logic in the "new geography"; and the scientific limitation of concentrating on individual regions. He was amazed that "among geographers of a single school, the notion of what is a geographical fact, of what is and should be the object of geographical study, appears very diverse — or very indeterminate" (Simiand 1906-09 725). Reading the monographs convinced him that "selection of the spatial location of facts ... is arbitrary and capricious, [and] follows a tradition that is poorly thought out, yet these studies claim to contribute to a renovation of geography" (*Ibid.* 726). To insist on location as the defining

characteristic of geography struck him as downright banal. In his view, the geographical theses were not only bewilderingly diverse in structure and content but failed to include important social themes such as religion, marriage and criminality. He emphasized: "If geography wishes to be other than an empirical repertoire of very varied facts only characterized by having their location noted ... if it wishes to be a science, that is knowledge having a specific array of phenomena and explanatory relations ... it will have to possess its own domain of study" (*Ibid.* 727). To reinforce his point, Simiand developed the central point made by De Margerie and praised Vacher's attention to hydrology that appeared well focused and had its own explanatory logic in physical science.

Simiand's next criticism was directed at the ambiguity of man/land relations, with components of the physical world influencing human activities but changes in technology and human organization then modifying how that alleged 'influence' operated. He believed that "to recognize this circle of alternating cause and effect is a defeat for geography as a distinctive explanatory science", asserting that genuine explanations were only to be found in the realm of the human mind, in psychology (*Ibid.* 728). Finally, Simiand found the study of single, discrete regions to be worthless, for such an approach "is to condemn [the project] in advance, to prove nothing" (*Ibid.* 731). He believed that it would be far more fruitful to adopt a comparative approach whereby selected human phenomena could be considered in several regions, throughout France or across Europe, so that scientific generalizations, and perhaps even explanations, might be recognized. In this respect, his view echoed those expressed by Ritter and Ratzel who had sought "to move out of regional description to more rigorous scientific generalizations" (Buttimer 1971 75).

Despite these fundamental criticisms, the regional monograph – in either 'complete' or thematic format – had become established as the accepted work for a state doctorate in geography well before the death of Vidal in 1918.

Interestingly none of these theses examined the kind of functional region articulated around major cities that he had proposed as early as 1910 (Vidal de la Blache 1910b; Ozouf-Marignier 2000 175). The explanation for their rural emphasis lies at the heart of the Vidalian conception of academic geography. As Étienne Juillard would explain much later, this bias "should not be surprising, since no other milieu allows one to study so well the interaction of physical and human factors whose internal logic geographers try to explain" (Juillard 1964 46; Clout 1977). Soils, climate, elevation and exposure each had a logical contributory role to play in explaining crop production, and hence ways of life, agricultural settlements and the rural world. The same kind of correlation could not be made with urban settlements or modern manufacturing. To the first generation of Vidalians writing their monographs, cities were complex unfathomable entities whose logic lay with society rather than at the interface between nature and mankind. As Anne Buttimer remarked: "Cities were somehow anathema, unwelcome intrusions in the neatly ordered agricultural landscape" (Buttimer 1971 118). In more mundane terms, France was still a predominantly rural nation; not until 1931 would half of the French population be recorded as resident in towns or cities.

Within twelve months of the Armistice, some of Vidal's pupils had benefited from their enhanced academic capital and already held positions of considerable power as university professors and patrons of future scholars. They formed the nodes of two rival academic networks at the Institut de Géographie of the Sorbonne (De Martonne, Demangeon) and the Institut de Géographie Alpine in Grenoble (Blanchard), two sites where French geographical research was forged and approved (Marres 1940; Livingstone 2003). Other favoured disciples of Vidal occupied positions in provincial universities in Lille (Vacher, then Sorre), Montpellier (Sion) and Rennes (Musset) but doctoral candidates were rare indeed in these institutions and the chance of influencing research was slight. Those *docteurs* whose work was not held in high esteem were not admitted into the elite of university professors and remained as schoolteachers. Despite their diversity of

approach, content and – frankly – quality, the fame of the regional monographs spread far and wide. Outside France, "the international renown of early twentieth-century [French] geographers rested largely on their famous regional monographs" (Buttimer 1971 74).

# 3.

# The Second Cohort of Regional Monographs, 1918-1945

## The disruptive influences of war

The oldest of Vidal's doctoral successes had turned forty years of age when war had been declared in 1914. For its duration, De Martonne and Demangeon (together with Gallois) combined their teaching at the Sorbonne with the preparation of intelligence reports on various parts of Europe for the Service Géographique de l'Armée (Heffernan 2001; Boulanger 2002; Clout 2003b). Vacher and Sion also contributed to this rather basic intelligence work. After the Armistice, De Martonne played a not insignificant role in assembling cartographic evidence and devising geographical arguments for shaping the states of the 'new Europe' that would be delineated during the peace conferences (Bariéty 1997; Boulineau 2001, 2008; Palsky 2002). A parallel with the activities of American geographer, Isaiah Bowman, and perhaps of American and British geographers during and after World War II may be drawn at this point (Smith 2003; Barnes 2005, 2006; Clout and Gosme 2003).

By contrast, younger French geographers experienced a more savage war that disrupted their teaching careers, delayed their doctoral research and seared their lives (Clout 2003b 346-7). For example, René Clozier had already been conscripted for two years when war broke out and spent its duration in the army, suffering serious effects of gas attacks at Verdun (Broc 1993 234). André Cholley and André Gibert served in the army from August 1914 to March 1919, as did Paul Marres who spent the whole war in a regiment of colonial infantry where he rose to the rank of lieutenant (Galtier 1953 3).[24] Despite recurrent ill-health, Jules Blache joined up as a volunteer in a cavalry regiment, serving later as an artilleryman and military cyclist until he was wounded at Verdun in 1916 and subsequently transferred into aviation (Nicod 1977). Amidst these challenging circumstances he found time to draft several articles on the morphology of glaciated areas in the Alps (Blanchard

1963b 9). Wartime issues of the *Recueil des Travaux de l'Institut de Géographie Alpine* contained regular reports by Raoul Blanchard on the experiences of his young men at war as well as expressions of condolence to the families of those who had been killed.

Letters received by Demangeon during the war exemplify the respect in which young geographers held their patron at the Sorbonne and reflect his concern for their well-being and that of their families. They make poignant reading. For example, Henri Baulig, who spent the whole war in the army, wrote to Demangeon in January 1915: "I have been at the front for a month. I have done two weeks in the trenches, and now I am the colonel's secretary" (Baulig 13/1/15). Georges Chabot expressed his gratitude for Demangeon's concern, being "very touched that you have not forgotten your servicemen (*poilus*)" (Chabot 12/5/15). Chabot's subsequent letters conveyed the personal horrors of war. In May 1916 he reported having "passed rather a quiet winter in a calm sector of the Aisne that is well organized, with even the trenches being quite comfortable; then we moved to a terrible place near Navarin" at Sommepy-Tahure in the Marne *département* (Chabot 6/5/16). Suffering from wounds and gas, he was moved to Lyon at the end of the year and "entered hospital today for another operation" (Chabot 20/12/16). His wartime achievements were recognized by entry to membership of the *légion d'honneur* and the award of the *croix de guerre* (Perpillou 1976 3).

Having served on the Argonne front and being wounded seriously, Théodore Lefebvre wrote to Demangeon in April 1915 from a military hospital in Vichy (Lefebvre 3/04/15). Suffering further injury, he reported two years later: "the wounds on my right buttock and back are healing slowly. They continue to suppurate. Regarding my elbow, I have no more to say" (Lefebvre 19/1/17). By May 1917, he was receiving physiotherapy in a military hospital in Bordeaux and spending his afternoons exercising his "brainbox" by reading in the university library and exploring the idea of writing a regional monograph about the western Pyrenees that he would complete sixteen years

later (Clout, 2003b 346). So severe were Robert Capot-Rey's wounds received on the Champagne front during April 1917 that a leg had to be amputated (Broc 1993 235).[25] Serving as an artillery officer near Salonica, Daniel Faucher contracted malaria and would experience attacks throughout his life (*Ibid*). By contrast, Roger Dion emerged from the war relatively unharmed, having been called up in 1916 and serving as an artilleryman for the next two years (Broc 1998 47).

## Restoring the flow of monographs

With the exception of Arbos, who defended his thesis at Grenoble in 1922, the flow of regional monographs was interrupted between 1917 and 1925 as the experiences of wartime service delayed completion. Thereafter it continued unbroken until 1942 by which time a further 34 volumes had been published and examined (Appendix I). Two-thirds were submitted under the patronage of either Emmanuel De Martonne, who succeeded Vidal in the established chair at the Sorbonne, or of Albert Demangeon, who acquired a chair of human geography also at the Sorbonne. Prior to his retirement in 1927, Lucien Gallois acted as patron for only Thérèse Sclafert; however, André Gibert, Henri Cavaillès and Robert Capot-Rey later acknowledged his advice in their doctoral monographs, and it is likely that Raymond Quenedey received the assistance of Gallois (Zimmermann 1940-41b; Fijalkow & Lévy 2008 27). The major change in the national pattern of patronage occurred when Blanchard used his remarkable energy and drive to support a cluster of candidates who successfully defended their monographs at the Institut de Géographie Alpine. In so doing, he made Grenoble a place of authority for the fashioning of doctoral research.[26] Following the precedent of Vidal, all three leaders in the discipline in the inter-war years allowed considerable latitude in the work undertaken by their students but Blanchard tended to emphasise the importance of present features and dynamic processes, whereas De Martonne and Demangeon expected more attention to be paid to the past and its legacy for the geography of the present. In addition to the three leaders, Philippe

Arbos and Daniel Faucher, who belonged to Blanchard's network, started to serve as patrons to a handful of younger scholars in the provinces.

Partly as a result of war service but also because most candidates researched on a part-time basis whilst teaching in *lycées*, the mean age at completion for scholars in the second cohort rose by nine years to 42 (Table 1). At the upper end of the age range, Henri Cavaillès was 61 when he submitted in 1931 and six other geographers had turned fifty when they completed. For example, Raymond Quenedey was 58 when he finished his monograph on traditional housing in Rouen, and Lucien Goron had taught for several decades at the teacher training college in Foix in the Pyrenees before submitting at the age of 55 in 1941. René Clozier was 52 when he completed in 1940, having taught for several decades in various teacher-training institutions around Paris. Henri Baulig was 51 when he submitted his thesis in 1928 having started almost a quarter century earlier (Chabot 1963). His time with W.M. Davis in the USA, his war service and his post-war teaching post at the University of Strasbourg, where he initiated the teaching of geography *à la française* after half a century of German occupation, all contributed to the delay (Juillard 1962 561). Among his close colleagues at Strasbourg were two rising stars of French history, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, who in 1929 founded the revolutionary *Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* that sought to break with the hegemony of Parisian historical scholarship by embracing ideas from members of other disciplines such as anthropology, economics and geography (Friedman 1996; Burguière 2006).[27]

Given the male environment of Vidal's academic elite at the ENS, it is not surprising that only one woman gained a state doctorate in geography between the wars. This was Thérèse Sclafert who was 50 years of age when she completed in 1926. Her entire career was spent teaching in schools and teacher training colleges, being moulded by the various career moves of her close friend and companion Anne-Marie Grauvogel who headed training colleges successively in Bordeaux, Grenoble and Paris (Fontenay-aux-

Roses)(Davis 1992 124). Although teaching grammar and the classics rather than geography, Mlle. Sclafert had followed courses delivered by Blanchard at the Institut de Géographie Alpine in Grenoble. Her major thesis made use of documents written in Latin and was submitted to the Sorbonne following her employment at the École Normale at Fontenay-aux-Roses where Mlle. Grauvogel was *directrice*. Gallois described the monograph as "belonging to geography as much as to history, [presenting] an interesting and lively picture of the population of the mountains of Dauphiné from the eleventh to the sixteenth century" (Gallois 1926 537). In a characteristically proprietorial review, Blanchard acknowledged the success of "one of my earliest students", whose "taste for geography I had the pleasure to inspire" (Blanchard 1926a 665). He noted how Mlle. Sclafert had "run to the archives to spend an hour, or even half an hour" free from teaching and rejoiced that "a modest schoolteacher has risen to the rank shared with our best *savants*" (*Ibid.* 666, 665). Her monograph deserved to be "one of the most precious volumes in the library of every Alpine geographer" but despite this praise its completion did not provide its author with an entry into academic geography (*Ibid.* 665). Similarly, Antoine Albitreccia had also reached 50 years of age when his Sorbonne doctorate on Corsica was examined in 1942 after a long career as a teacher and inspector of schools.

The mean length of monograph completed between 1922 and 1945 increased to 595 pages, with those by Maurice Pardé (1,330 pages), Jules Blache (992 pages), André Allix (915 pages) and Lucien Goron (888 pages) at the upper end of the range (Table 1). The maturity of many candidates undoubtedly contributed to the greater length of what in some instances had become their life's work, however there was no consistent correlation between age and number of pages. For example, at 52 years of age, René Clozier submitted a "vigorous" human geography thesis, "full of ideas" that ran to only 296 pages, whilst Maurice Pardé was only 32 when he completed his massive two-volume hydrological work (Cholley 1943 222). Running to 690 pages, the holistic monograph by the "young and enthusiastic" Pierre George, aged 27,

was well above average length but was felt to lack a certain sophistication in written style, punctuation and illustration (Cholley 1937 620; Blache 1937 529). By contrast, Pierre Birot's youthful geomorphological thesis, defended at the age of 28, was a concise monograph of only 318 pages (Dufaure 1984 1153).

## Patrons at the Sorbonne: Albert Demangeon

Following the retirement of Vidal and his death in 1918 and the retirement of Gallois in 1927, Albert Demangeon and Emmanuel De Martonne consolidated the associations and alliances enmeshed in the Paris network. As faithful Vidalians, both men had research experience right across the field of geography but De Martonne tended to focus his patronage on candidates working in physical geography whilst Demangeon mentored those researching economic or political geography. As lecturer at the Sorbonne from 1911, and professor of human geography after 1925, Demangeon became patron for almost a dozen regional monographs that were examined during the 1930s and immediately following his death in 1940 (Clout 2003c; Wolff 2005)(Plate 8). In addition, others were listed in the *Annales de l'Université de Paris* as being in preparation but for various reasons were never completed (De Martonne 1929 65).[28] Some, such as Henri Cavaillès's thesis on *Les Pyrénées des Gaves de l'Adour* and Théodore Lefevbre's study of *Les Pyrénées atlantiques*, were 'complete' regional monographs in the style of Demangeon with detailed expositions on physical geography being included as part of the author's explanatory logic of the human scene. By contrast, others were emphatically thematic exercises in human geography, focusing on urban, rural or industrial phenomena within the confines of a specific region. In addition to acknowledging the patronage of Demangeon, several candidates (André Gibert, Henri Cavaillès, Robert Capot-Rey) expressed their gratitude to Gallois for help prior to his retirement and to De Martonne for advice on physical aspects of their work (André Meynier, Théodore Lefebvre) (Papy 1951; Le Lannou 1986). Submitting his monograph on the Atlantic coast after Demangeon's death, Louis Papy recorded his intellectual debt to his late

**Plate 8:** Albert Demangeon, 1872-1940.

master who had kept a watching eye on his research when the young man taught at *lycées* in La Rochelle and latterly Bordeaux (Papy 1941 1; Barrère 1990 409; Guillemain 1990). By contrast, neither René Clozier nor Antoine Albitreccia included a dedication but their research, on railways and suburbanization around Paris, and on the human geography of Corsica respectively, fell within Demangeon's expertise and had received his support. So did Dion's holistic study of *Le Val de Loire* that equally lacked a dedication, and Gaston Rambert's work on the urban geography of Marseille that had received early advice from Paul Masson, professor of history and economic geography at Aix-en-Provence (Broc 1993 228-9). On the other hand, Maxime

Perrin's monograph on the "hive" of industrial activity in and around Saint-Étienne specifically acknowledged Demangeon's patronage and was duly recognised by him as an "excellent and substantial study" (Gibert 1944 214; Demangeon 1938 70). Far more complicated was the relationship between the geographers of the Sorbonne and Pierre Deffontaines, protégé of Jean Brunhes, professor of human geography at the Collège de France who died in 1930. Since the Collège de France did not award degrees, Deffontaines required the patronage of a professor in the state university for his thesis, with Demangeon being the obvious choice. Profoundly religious Deffontaines chose to dedicate his work to Saint-Francis of Assisi and did not mention Demangeon until page 421, the very same page on which he recorded his "attachment, almost like that of a son" to Brunhes. Given the Republican values of the Sorbonne geographers and the formal exclusion of matters of religion from the state university system, this was not a wise move.

Following the pre-war precedent, doctoral patrons continued to present work by scholars whom they had supported in the *Annales de Géographie*, the *Revue de Géographie Alpine* and other journals. These 'reviews', which were certainly not detached, were usually positive but not always so. Thus, Demangeon praised the monograph by André Meynier on three adjacent parts of the Massif Central as "a very good book studying a small region [in which] he covers all phenomena of physical geography and all phenomena of human geography, since there is a necessary link between these two groups" (Demangeon 1931 661). Here is the faithful Vidalian writing. However, Demangeon acknowledged the methodological and practical difficulties of conducting "research in two very different fields whose methods, as well as substance, do not resemble each other" (*Ibid*). His main criticism was that Meynier's maps were "sometimes crudely executed" and he regretted that the author had not discovered sufficient documentation to describe the human geography of the region prior to the eighteenth century in any detail (*Ibid.* 661) (Plate 9).[29] The overall evaluation was very positive nonetheless. Since university posts were scarce in the extreme between the wars, Meynier

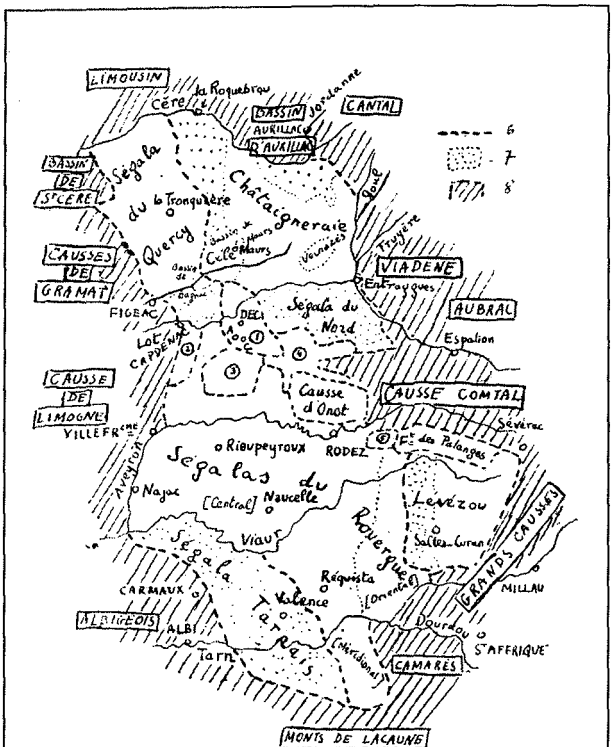



Figure 1. — Régions étudiées dans l'ouvrage.

1 Bassin houiller. — 2. Bassin d'Asprières-Naussac. — 3. Causse de Montbazens-Rignac. — 4. Vallon ou Rougier. — 5. Causse de Sainte-Radegonde. — Limites des régions. — 7. Région sans dénomination. — 8. Région non étudiée dans l'ouvrage.

DEC. : Decazeville ; A. : Aubin ; C. : Cransac.

Echelle : 1 : 1.000.000.

**Plate 9:** Map from *Ségalas, Levézou, Châtaigneraie.*

continued to teach at the prestigious Lycée Henri IV in central Paris and at the École Normale at Fontenay-aux-Roses before moving in 1938 to the chair of geography at the University of Rennes, where he remained until retirement (Guilcher 1983 174; Flatrès 1996).

Prepared after a traumatic war and during a remarkably fragmented teaching career that embraced *lycées* in Pau, Bordeaux, Constantinople, Amiens and

Paris (Lycée Charlemagne), Théodore Lefebvre completed a study of the western Pyrenees that was considered by Demangeon to be "one of the best among the geographical monographs", earning praise for the author's archival studies and his "personal observations from numerous journeys that have put [him] in direct contact with nature and people" (Demangeon 1934a 193, 194; Perrier 1947 309). Nonetheless, the reviewer felt that Lefevbre's discussion of cultivation separately from pastoral life was "artificial and theoretical ... since they are closely associated in the rural economy" (Demangeon 1934a 194). He praised Lefebvre's "talent and intelligence" in drawing thirty detailed maps but "the abundance of the cartography sometimes leaves the impression of a plethora" (*Ibid*). Likewise, "there is sometimes an excess of detail and a plethora of [territorial] subdivisions", nonetheless one must "praise the hard work and personal spirit that ... animates the book" (*Ibid.* 196). With his doctorate finished, Lefebvre occupied a chair at the University in Poitiers until his savage death at the hands of the Germans in 1943 (Perrier 1947 309).

By contrast, Dion's monograph on *Le Val de Loire* was greeted with unqualified approval from Demangeon, being "one of the best and most fertile that the younger generation of French geographers has given us" (Demangeon 1934b 319). Its structure was ingenious, for whilst some theses

**Table 5: Chapter structure of *Le Val de Loire*, Roger Dion (1934, 752pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Book I** | **Natural Features** |
| Part 1 | Definition and limits of the Val de Loire (3 chapters) |
| Part 2 | Climate (3 chapters) |
| Part 3 | Land and relief of surrounding areas (3 chapters) |
| Part 4 | Physical constitution of the Val de Loire |
| **Book II** | **Population and the constitution of defences on the floodplain** |
| Part 1 | Occupation of the Val under threat of floods (3 chapters) |
| Part 2 | The levees of the Loire (6 chapters) |
| **Book III** | **The rural economy of the Val de Loire** |
| Part 1 | Links with the agricultural world of adjacent plateaux (3 chapters) |
| Part 2 | Development of distinctive agriculture (4 chapters) |
| Part 3 | Social and agricultural change on small farms since the middle of the 19th century (4 chapters) |

separated physical geography from human geography, rather like "a building containing two rooms, separated by a thick wall that do not communicate with each other [and] only having in common the same roof and the same architect", Dion had produced a monograph in which "everything communicates with everything else" (*Ibid.* 315) (Table 5). Demangeon greatly appreciated how the "physical study leads directly by all sorts of paths to the human study" especially with respect to the climate and topography of the Val and to the floods of the Loire (*Ibid.* 316). Dion's "constant concern [was] to link local and regional research to greater facts, of a general order, which illuminate it" (*Ibid.* 316). The central part of the monograph was "perhaps the best and most personal [affording] the first genuinely explanatory history of the levées of the Loire" (*Ibid.* 317). The author's maps and photographs were "abundant and original, well coordinated and strictly organized to demonstrate [arguments], all closely integrated with the text" (*Ibid.* 319). His writing style was "sober, illuminating, very evocative and full of colour, which demonstrates a talent for writing that has become rather rare in our geographical theses" (*Ibid.*). With such a superlative recommendation, and having already taught at the ENS and having served as an auxiliary lecturer at the Sorbonne (1927-32), Dion moved to Chairs at Lille, the Sorbonne and finally the Collège de France in 1948 (Broc 1998). The latter institution does not award degrees and hence Dion had no doctoral students. His later writings on viticulture and on the history of discovery among the Greeks and Romans influenced historical geographers and ancient historians on both sides of the Channel but arguably had no wider impact on academic geography (Gulley 1961).

The monograph entitled *Les hommes et leurs travaux en moyenne Garonne* by Pierre Deffontaines was distinctive on several counts. It began with an album of 63 photographs from the author's camera plus an explanatory text. The author had clearly travelled widely across his chosen terrain and satisfied the fieldwork text. Surprisingly, he admitted that his study area was not a well-defined region, but rather was "a *pays* without individuality [since] few things

are unique to the middle Garonne" being shared to varying degrees with surrounding areas (Deffontaines 1932 417). He insisted: "the geographer [should] start from the present in order to approach history" and began his thematic discussions of population, agriculture, industry and trade by considering nineteenth-century conditions before working back to medieval times (*Ibid.* 29). He did not examine physical geography in its own right at all but incorporated elements into chapters on agriculture (in the case of soils and climate) and valleys and trade (with regard to hydrology and floods) (Table 6).

**Table 6: Chapter structure of *Les Hommes et leurs travaux dans les pays de la Moyenne Garonne*, Pierre Deffontaines (1932, 462pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Introduction: a name – the Middle Garonne, limits |
| **Book I** | **Human presence** |
| Part 1 | Types of dwelling and types of settlement |
| 1 | Types of dwelling |
| 2 | Types of settlement |
| Part 2 | Phases of settlement |
| 1 | Depopulation in the 19th century |
| 2 | Overpopulation in the 18th century |
| 3 | Repopulation in the 15th century |
| 4 | *Bastides* and recolonisation in the 13th and 14th centuries |
| 5 | The role of abbeys in the 11th and 12th centuries |
| **Book II** | **The Horizons of work** |
| Part 1 | Agriculture and its horizons of work |
| 1 | Conditions of agricultural life: soil and climate |
| 2 | Agricultural life at present |
| 3 | The wheat-maize cycle in the 17th and 18th centuries |
| 4 | Medieval farming systems |
| Part 2 | Industrial and commercial horizons of work |
| 1 | Industry and trade at present |
| 2 | Industry and overseas trade in the 18th century |
| Part 3 | The great valleys |
| 1 | The physical aspect of the great valleys |
| 2 | Human transformation of the great valleys |
| 3 | Use of the great valleys |
| 4 | Routeways |
| 5 | Activities along the routeways |
| | Conclusion: a *pays* lacking individuality |

Demangeon analysed this work in a surprisingly critical review in the *Annales de Géographie*. He maintained that Deffontaines contributed nothing original in terms of physical geography and that his retrospective approach gave rise to "the inconvenience, very apparent throughout the book, of supposing that previous trends were already known when studying the past, which is truly paradoxical" (Demangeon 1934 641). He felt that the final section was least satisfactory of all since "too much attention was devoted to small details, small industries and small crafts" (*Ibid.* 642). Whilst he felt the description of rural houses was excellent, Demangeon then itemised "certain gaps and faults" in the monograph, especially the absence of systematic discussion of rural property and forms of tenure. Coverage of physical geography included "too many improprieties and inexactitudes" so that, "to some extent throughout, the reader hits up against forms of words whose underlying thought is not sufficiently firm" (*Ibid.* 643). After such damning comments, Demangeon's final sentence was downright paradoxical since he welcomed "the appearance of a well worked study, well documented, full of personal ideas ... that will occupy an honourable place in the lineage of regional monographs" (*Ibid*). De Martonne also characterized the thesis as "an ingenious and lively study" and Jean Sermet, writing from Toulouse, stressed how the influence of Jean Brunhes could be detected in the copious use of photographs and the demonstration that "observation is the first phase of geographical work" (De Martonne 1935 240; Sermet 1932 829). Thanks to Demangeon's critique, however, the damage was done.

Pierre Deffontaines was situated – perhaps situated himself – on the extreme margin of the 'Sorbonne network' and his career would develop in the Catholic University in Lille, the French Institute in Barcelona and at Laval University in Quebec rather than in a state university in France. Nonetheless, he forged an important array of 'external' associations and alliances. His numerous books and the 'Géographie humaine' series that he edited for the Gaillimard publishing house reached a very wide audience, with some volumes being translated into other languages (Pinchemel 1984 262; Clout

2003d). With the wisdom of hindsight, it was almost as if Demangeon had been reviewing a work by Brunhes whose own doctorate on irrigation in four countries had preceded, and deviated from, Vidal's 'regional' model for state doctorates. In addition, Brunhes's textbook on human geography usurped a subject that Vidal, and indeed Demangeon, believed to be their own. Both men conceived *la géographie humaine* in different ways to that practised by Brunhes (Clout 2003d). The experience of Deffontaines, perhaps rather like that of Vallaux a quarter of a century earlier, revealed how patrons could prevent accession to a chair in the state university despite a candidate having successfully completed a state doctorate.[30] These were examples where academic power brokers held the door shut rather than graciously allowing it to open.

### Patrons at the Sorbonne: Emmanuel De Martonne

As successor to and son-in-law of Vidal, holder of the established chair of geography and long-serving director of the Institut de Géographie at the Sorbonne (both from 1909 to 1944), De Martonne headed what was recognised as the 'Paris school' (or 'network') of geography in contrast with Blanchard's 'Grenoble school' (Allix 1956a 77). Drawing on a long career that was reinforced by his marriage alliance, he exercised remarkable influence within French academic geography and in the wider context of the International Geographical Union (Chabot 1955). De Martonne acted as patron to the authors of eight regional monographs between 1925 and 1940, and to two others whose work was completed in the late 1940s (Plate 10). Five of the inter-war theses were emphatically works of physical geography that focused on the geomorphology of particular stretches of territory. The remaining three covered both physical and human themes. André Cholley and Aimé Perpillou (son-in-law of Demangeon, and another example of a marriage alliance) dedicated their theses to De Martonne alone. Henri Baulig acknowledged his initiation by Vidal and honoured his memory but particular thanks were conveyed to De Martonne "whose penetrating criticisms have led me ... to

express my argument more precisely and to remove obscurities" (Baulig 1928 1). Such flattery did him no harm. Whilst conveying heartfelt thanks to De Martonne, Georges Chabot, who taught at the *lycée* in Strasbourg from 1919 to 1925, also recognized help received from Baulig at the local university, as indeed would Robert Capot-Rey in his monograph on the Saar (Chabot 1927 7; Capot-Rey 1934 viii).

In his study of the geomorphology of the eastern Pyrenees, Pierre Birot acknowledged the patronage of De Martonne and also the support of André Cholley who had joined the lecturing staff of the Sorbonne in 1927 following the retirement of Gallois and the subsequent reconfiguration of the Paris network (Péchoux 1984). As an experienced physical scientist, Abel Briquet must have had De Martonne as his patron for the monograph on the coastal morphology of northern France, although no dedication was included. Pierre George added the name of Demangeon to those of De Martonne and Cholley in the preface to his comprehensive study of the Bas-Rhône region that was organized almost equally around physical and human topics. Only its concluding pages, which explored the impact of capitalism in the countryside, provided a hint of how George's commitment to social and economic geography and to the communist party might develop (George 1935 651-58). The matter of patronage for Paul Marres, who taught at the University of Montpellier, was even more complex. His main thesis on the human geography of *Les Grands Causses* was dedicated to Jules Sion, his professorial colleague, and his substantial secondary thesis on the region's physical geography evoked the memory of Charles Flahault (1852-1935) with whom he had undertaken extensive work in the field, but he tactfully added the name of De Martonne to the overall acknowledgement since his work was examined at the Sorbonne (George and Hugues 1939 350; Saussol 1990 285). However, Demangeon wrote the review for the *Annales de Géographie* in which he praised Marres's "direct contact with the area [allowing him] to write with originality" and to offer "personal explanations", but criticised a perceived overabundance of detail (Demangeon 1937 186).

**Plate 10:** Emmanuel de Martonne, 1873-1955.

Like Demangeon, De Martonne presented the monographs of his disciples at length in the pages of the *Annales de Géographie*. André Cholley's holistic study of *Les Préalpes de Savoie* received lavish but not unqualified praise in a 4-page report. Its enthusiastic tone undoubtedly contributed to his appointment to teach at the Sorbonne in 1927, with a personal chair coming in the following year. Numa Broc identified him as De Martonne's "favourite disciple" (Broc 2001 98). In the words of his patron: "Cholley has added a considerable work to the series of regional monographs that have made the

reputation of the French school of geography inspired by Vidal de la Blache ... No aspect of physical, economic or even political geography of the Préalpes de Savoie has been neglected; each has been discussed in a personal way; [and] new interpretations have often been advanced" (De Martonne 1926 363). As well as praising Cholley's detailed knowledge in the field, De Martonne extolled his archival work and argued, that "historians would benefit from reading the 150 pages that give a clear and lively account of eighteenth-century economic life, using enquiries made for the princes of Savoy" (*Ibid.* 365). Whilst recognizing the overall quality of the monograph, De Martonne added: "A geographer might regret seeing so much space being devoted to past facts, some of which have left no trace, although others continue through directly to the present", adding spitefully that "the same inconvenient feature" had been found in "the admirable study of the farmers of Normandy by J. Sion" (*Ibid*). Despite some qualifications, De Martonne wished that "this first great monograph of an Alpine region [by Cholley] should be followed by other equally comprehensive and solidly-backed [studies] but a little lighter in structure" (*Ibid.* 367). This point was qualified in a barbed footnote that he aimed at the Institut de Géographie Alpine whose members had "published a number of estimable regional studies, but much more modest in extent", as articles in its geographical journal (*Ibid.* 367). In fact, this comment was inaccurate when it was made in 1926 and soon would be discredited as a cluster of scholars completed their monographs under Blanchard's patronage. Perhaps by way of retaliation against De Martonne, Blanchard used a 6-page review to criticise Cholley's monograph for excessive length, lack of comparison with conditions in other parts of the Alps, and especially for the author's application of the cyclical ideas of W.M. Davis and, unsurprisingly, of De Martonne regarding landscape formation to Alpine territory (Blanchard 1926b 676). He argued that more attention should have been paid to geological structure and recent processes, concluding that the monograph was "a work of youth that echoes theories from the school room. When he becomes a teacher himself, and learns from constant contact with reality to be less rigid, I am sure that Monsieur Cholley will deliver

shorter, denser and more useful books" (*Ibid.* 677). Blanchard was a man of spirit whose sharp comments were never forgiven or forgotten among physical geographers at the Sorbonne.

Georges Chabot's study of the evolution of karst landforms on the Jura plateaux was praised by De Martonne for its author's field observations and scientific reasoning, being commended "to all studying not only the Jura but limestone areas in general" (De Martonne 1928 176). Nonetheless, the reviewer wished that Chabot's "essential ideas" had been "less veiled" and had been highlighted in his conclusion, a point that he would repeat when reviewing other physical geography monographs (*Ibid*). Briquet's study also received this admonition, although De Martonne was impressed by the author's integration of field evidence with information from "historic texts, old maps ... detailed charts, and reports by hydrographic engineers" in his examination of the changing coastline of northern France (De Martonne 1931 176). De Martonne's praise reached unparalleled heights in a review of no fewer than 20 pages devoted to Baulig's long-awaited thesis on the geomorphology of *Le Plateau Central* published in 1928. This was truly "a masterly study [expressed] through breadth of topic, variety of analytical processes, rigorous argument, richness of ideas and new information" (De Martonne 1929 113). An extensive bibliography and numerous maps, diagrams and photographs contributed to its excellence and ensured that it "surpassed the best ... morphological studies born from progress in topography and geology over the past half century" (*Ibid*). De Martonne had no hesitation in recommending it as a model "to all who contemplate making a serious morphological study of any kind of region" (*Ibid*).

For contributing a short but "very dense study" on the eastern Pyrenees during the following decade, Birot was applauded by De Martonne for "employing modern technical resources" to analyse topographic and geological evidence as well as having spent "long months on foot in difficult terrain" in the mountains (De Martonne 1937 617). Each problem was

"discussed with rigour and concision requiring a real effort that was often compensated in the clarity of conclusion" (*Ibid*). Precise and firm analyses, and solidly established results were "always inspired by sincerity and a love of truth that cannot fail to impress ... [indeed] nothing comparable has been produced before on the morphology of the Pyrenees" (*Ibid.* 619). Praise continued to flow from De Martonne for Aimé Perpillou's "excellent, new physical study of a region of the Massif Central whose overview by H. Baulig might have discouraged researchers" (De Martonne 1941 294). Focusing on the Limousin, whose geomorphology had been prospected by his father-in-law (Demangeon) a generation previously, Perpillou displayed "vigorous effort that succeeded in assembling a really new and solidly-established collection of facts and conclusions" (*Ibid.*; Demangeon 1910). Writing in the *Revue de Géographie Alpine*, Max Derruau concluded that this monograph was "a brilliant study in physical geography" (Derruau 1943 434). Such praise doubtless assisted Perpillou's advancement to professorial chairs, first at Lille and later at the Sorbonne where he occupied the post that had been held by Demangeon, as well as his office in the Institut de Géographie that he kept as a shrine to the memory of his father-in-law.[31]

## Patrons in the provinces: Raoul Blanchard and his disciples

Operating beyond the Sorbonne 'network', the third great inter-war patron was Raoul Blanchard who enrolled his cluster of followers into his network that was almost like a family, and in turn "was adored" by them (Broc 2001 95; Guichonnet & Masseport 1975) (Plate 11). For example, knowing that Blanchard adored acknowledgement, Daniel Faucher would describe him not only as his "master" but also "a friend, a very dear and very fraternal friend" (Faucher 1965). Blanchard's approach toward his disciples stemmed from his proprietorial personality and own experience of solitary doctoral research in Flanders that he described as "a purgatory" (Blanchard 1963a 39). He felt betrayed by Ardaillon, his chosen patron, and when he sought advice was dismissed politely by his "former masters at Paris, where Vidal de la Blache

remained sibylline and Gallois, with customary modesty, claimed to know nothing about the topic. I had to gird my loins and march alone into the night" of doctoral research (*Ibid.* 35). During the 1920s and 1930s, Blanchard's disciples in the Grenoble network held critical teaching posts in *lycées* throughout southeastern France thereby consolidating the hold of the Institut de Géographie Alpine on the diffusion of geographical knowledge and on the recruitment of students in that part of the country. Nine candidates would defend regional monographs in Grenoble before the end of World War II.

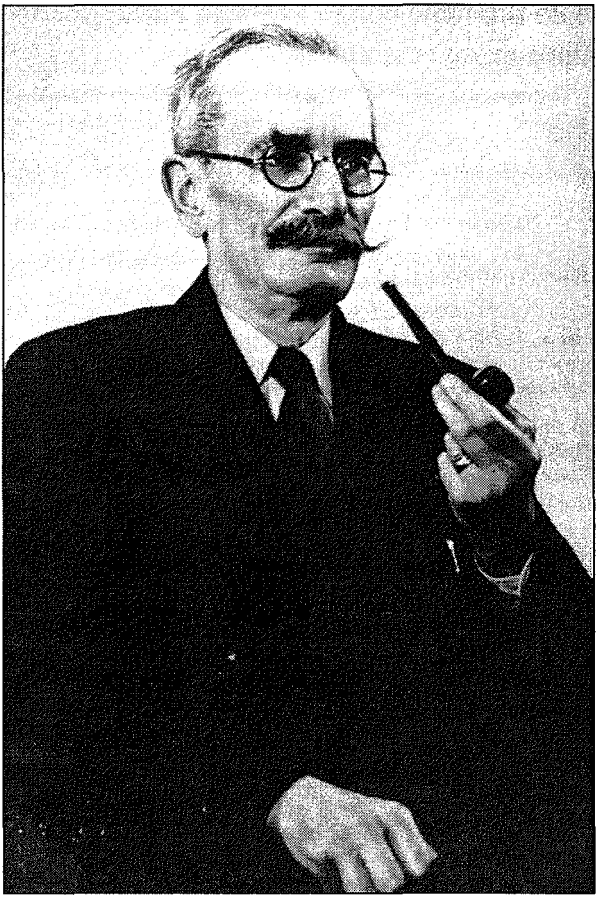


**Plate 11:** Raoul Blanchard, 1877-1965.

This sequence of doctoral awards began, perhaps uncharacteristically, with Philippe Arbos who originated in the Roussillon, studied at the ENS in the rue d'Ulm in Paris, and taught at *lycées* in Toulon and Grenoble, thereby becoming a protégé of Blanchard's (Derruau 1979; Sorre 1957a 182). He acknowledged early training by Gallois but, of course, dedicated his monograph on physical and human aspects of pastoral life in the Alps to Blanchard. He also expressed thanks to various "faithful correspondents" in Blanchard's network for their support, including Ernest Bénévent in Nice and Daniel Faucher in Valence (Arbos 1922 4). Here we find an interesting demonstration of mutual interaction among doctoral scholars rather than between individuals and the patron. In a glowing presentation of the work of his pupil, Blanchard argued, "it will be impossible to study any problem relating to the Alps or any other mountain chain without first referring to Arbos and his work" (Blanchard 1922 471). Gallois praised the quality of Arbos's fieldwork undertaken "from valley to valley" and his exploration of manuscript sources to elucidate "the past extending back far beyond oral tradition" (Gallois 1923 60). His monograph was recommended not only to geographers but also to "foresters, agronomists and economists interested in this most beautiful but least fertile region of France" (*Ibid*). With his doctorate completed, Arbos moved to the chair at Clermont-Ferrand and began to serve as patron to his own disciples (Faucher 1956; Gachon 1957). Invitations to consider moving to the Sorbonne upon the retirement of Gallois were declined politely (Blanchard 1957 58)

In 1925, it was the turn of Maurice Pardé who had taught in *lycées* at Le Puy, Grenoble, Saint-Rambert (Lyon), Belfort and Bourg-en-Bresse (Loup 1974 133). His massive study of the hydrology of the Rhône was, in fact, published by the Institut d'Études Rhodaniennes, newly founded by André Cholley at the University of Lyon. It contained thanks to a variety of scholars, including Arbos, Musset and De Martonne, but it comes as no surprise to see that it was Blanchard who received extensive gratitude (Pardé 1925a xiii-xiv). As a dutiful patron, he had accepted Pardé's early papers for publication in the

journal of the Institut de Géographie Alpine and also assisted his successful application for a two-year research grant. He had allocated travel funds and offered unfailing advice with "heartfelt simplicity" that made Blanchard "a friend as much as a master, deserving of our gratitude" (*Ibid.* xiv). However, Blanchard felt free to criticize errors of detail, typography, illustration and bibliography, and also the length of the 1,330-page monograph whilst, at the same time, acknowledging its genuinely original contribution to physical geography (cited in Allix 1925 426). Perhaps by way of recompense, he allowed Pardé to publish a 90-page summary of his findings in the Grenoble journal (Pardé 1925b). In a very detailed review, written when he was still at Lyon, Cholley could "not overemphasize the interest" of Pardé's work that would be "particularly appreciated by geographers [seeking to] be informed on hydrological methods" (Cholley 1925 454). Indeed, a number of Pardé's subsequent papers were published in the pages of the Lyon-based *Études Rhodaniennes* (Pardé 1927, 1928, 1930a). In 1932, Maurice joined the staff of the Institut de Géographie Alpine, rising to professorial rank in 1935, and remained at Grenoble for the rest of his career (Pardé 1968; Loup 1974 133; Taillefer 1974).

After teaching in Nice and then lecturing at the University of Aix-en-Provence, Ernest Bénévent defended his monograph on the climate of the Alps in 1926, with thanks being expressed to De Martonne, to fellow members of the Grenoble network (Pardé, Jean Robert, Blache, Allix, Faucher) for supplying local information on winds and rainfall but, above all, to Blanchard. Bénévent recalled many shared expeditions in the mountains with his "master" whom he had come to know as a "friend and sure guide" and to whom he dedicated his thesis with "affectionate gratitude" (Bénévent 1926 4). Blanchard's reaction was one of mutual admiration. His praise was unqualified: Bénévent's monograph "placed him in the highest rank of French geographers ... making him our best climatologist to date" with "no other region of France having been the object of such a remarkable study"

(Blanchard 1927a 159). Four years after his doctorate he acquired a personal chair at Aix and remained there until retirement in 1953 (Pierrein 1968).

In 1927, Daniel Faucher used comparable phraseology to that employed by Bénévent in the introduction to his holistic study of the plains and basins of the middle Rhône, undertaken while he taught at the *lycée* in Valence. He invoked Blanchard's unfailing support as "master and friend" whose "warm encouragement" convinced him "that the disruption brought to my studies by the war was not fatal. My work owes him more than he thinks and I feel that [sentiment] more than I know how to say" (Faucher 1927 xi). Blanchard considered that his disciple had "produced a work of the first order that brings honour to the French school of regional geography" (Blanchard 1927b 471). In the eyes of his friend André Allix, Faucher had demonstrated genuine "regional cohesion in the midst of so many diverse influences" in the middle Rhône (Allix 1929 206). However, all was not well; Blanchard declared: "The illustration of the volume is mediocre, the maps and diagrams are poorly reproduced and scarcely legible ... But the main reproach is ... that the book should be shorter" (Blanchard 1927b 471). Despite these criticisms, Faucher was rewarded with the chair of geography at the University of Toulouse where he supervised disciples in a network of his own until retirement in 1952 (Taillefer 1975 173; Gay 1982).

In 1929, André Allix, by then lecturing at Lyon, dedicated his own holistic thesis on the Alpine massif of the Oisans to the memory of his father and to that of a friend, Jean Breton. In this respect, he deviated from the Grenoble custom, but it was "my master Raoul Blanchard" to whom he owed his "vocation [as a geographer] and all the teaching, examples and encouragements of all kinds that enabled that vocation to be realized" (Allix 1929 v). Blanchard, assisted by Blache, reacted in kind finding this "monumental book [to be] of the highest order, compelling, full of talent and ingenuity, that instructs and makes one think" (Blache and Blanchard 1929 781). Writing after this Grenoblois review had appeared, Demangeon praised

the "abundance of personal observations [and] mass of documents assembled" by Allix and stressed how his "analyses [are] full of ingenuity and talent" (Demangeon 1930 91, 93). However, he was concerned that the author had devoted eight years to studying a "miniscule area", producing "one page per km$^2$, and one page for every twelve inhabitants" (*Ibid.* 91, 93; Gibert 1966; Lebeau 1988).

Two years later, Jules Blache, who had taught at the *lycée* in Grenoble for nine years, presented his monograph on the Grande-Chartreuse and Vercors massifs in 1931. Despite Blanchard's well-known appreciation of personal praise expressed in print by members of the Grenoble network, Blache felt able to break with tradition and omitted a declaration of thanks. This courageous move apparently did him no harm since Blanchard described the monograph as "a kind of masterpiece ... produced in the Grenoble school" [of geography] demonstrating the author's originality and how "Blache sees everything with a fresh eye" (Blanchard 1931 899, 904). Writing from Paris, Demangeon and Gignoux praised his "conscientious, detailed descriptions, finesse and critical spirit of analysis" (Demangeon & Gignoux 1932 204). They particularly appreciated his ingenious internal comparison between the two massifs and his ability to draw general points from his regional discussion. They recommended his monograph "to all young researchers [who] will see a model of observation and conscientious analysis" that they would do well to emulate (*Ibid*). Blache was appointed to lecture at the Institut de Géographie Alpine and moved to a chair at the University of Nancy in 1935 (Nicod 1977).

In 1938, Henri Onde returned to the customary dedication to Blanchard in his study of the physical geography of the Maurienne and Tarentaise valleys. After thanking Arbos (his former professor at Clermont-Ferrand) and Blache and Pardé for local advice, Onde expressed his gratitude to Blanchard for his "extraordinary skill in stimulating so many geographical vocations" and for his constant encouragement (Onde 1938 3). Blanchard praised the monograph for "its constant concern to make comparisons with other regions, which is

not the least of the qualities whereby one recognizes a true geographer", however he felt the book to be "perhaps a little too filled with facts" (Blanchard 1939 231). In a 4-page critique, De Martonne avoided superlatives as he acknowledged that this was "a good regional study" whose author focused on "many interesting details" but he regretted that Onde concentrated on recent processes and paid little attention to the relationship of geological structure to "fundamental problems of the relief of the high Alps" (De Martonne 1939 339, 341, 339). In tone and substance, this comment exemplified the long-standing personal quarrel between De Martonne and Blanchard, as much as the academic conflict between the styles of regional geography of the Sorbonne and that of Grenoble. Onde was simply caught in the crossfire (Broc 2001 100). After lecturing at Grenoble, he moved to the chair of physical geography at Lausanne in Switzerland.

Focusing on rural housing in the northern Alps for his doctorate, Jean Robert examined a topic that was of great interest to human geographers at the Sorbonne and that they considered to be their own particular reserve. However, given the location of his study area it made sense to work with Blanchard. In a 4-page review – published posthumously – Demangeon praised the quality and detail of Robert's observation of houses located in distant valleys and isolated hamlets that he had "visited almost as a guest of the family", travelling sometimes by car but just as often on foot (Demangeon 1941 10). Indeed, the reviewer wished that "such a conscientious study could be undertaken in other regions" (*Ibid*). Robert's text was accompanied by a separate album of sketches, plans, maps, and over a hundred photographs (of which a few were from Blanchard's camera) that prevented the reader becoming lost as he enjoyed "picturesque descriptions, full of charm and truth" (*Ibid*). Nonetheless, the author's modification of Demangeon's own classification of rural housing was criticised for being inflexible and lacking sufficient transitional types. Demangeon wished that Robert had used historical documents to trace how Alpine housing had changed through time but, of course, Blanchard tended to advise members of his cluster to examine

the present rather than the past. The final footnote in the monograph suggests that Blanchard may have recognised the importance of the past in explaining the present, at least in this case (Robert 1939 494). Certainly Blanchard, *le patron*, ensured that he had the last word. Demangeon concluded his review on a positive note, praising Robert's thesis as "full and rich" and affording "a rare and original source of documentation on rural settlement in the Alps" (Demangeon 1941 13). Despite his success, a university position was not available immediately. Robert would not leave the teaching post at the *lycée* in Tours that he had occupied since 1923 until the execution of Théodore Lefebvre by the Germans created a vacancy at the University of Poitiers in 1943 (Pitié 1978 314; Perrier 1947 309; Moisy 1969 11).

Undertaking his work on the physical environment and human occupation of the middle Durance valley during the war, whilst teaching at the *lycée* in Gap, Paul Veyret dedicated his thesis to his wife, Germaine, and of course to Blanchard. In a very flattering introduction, he stressed that his master's geographical "ardour remains eternally youthful", despite the fact he had passed 60 years of age (Veyret 1945 ii). Blanchard had suggested the thesis topic to Veyret in 1938 and then read "chapters one by one", offering "pertinent advice" and becoming "a friend as well as a master ... to whom we shall always be indebted" (*Ibid.* iii). Here we have more evidence of Blanchard's attentive style of supervision that was not shared by all patrons. Veyret's success was accompanied by a lectureship at the Institut de Géographie Alpine and eventually he would succeed Blanchard as holder of the established chair at Grenoble (Loup 1988 101). In due course, he would become a patron of younger scholars and a prolific reviewer of regional monographs. By the end of World War II, Blanchard's role as patron was not yet over since a handful of monographs were still to be completed. By virtue of doctoral successes, members of the Grenoblois network now populated university posts in Clermont-Ferrand, Toulouse, Nancy, Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, Poitiers and Lausanne, as well as in Grenoble itself (Berthoin 1966). As the internationally acknowledged leader of French academic geography, De

Martonne did not block these appointments despite having serious personal and scientific differences with Blanchard (Allix 1956a 78). Thus, by 1939, one-third of French universities had been "colonised" by Blanchard's "marshals" who "maintained excellent relations with their patron" as consolidation of the academic cluster required from its members (Broc 2001 104).

In these provincial universities the 'Grenoblois' began to act as patrons albeit to a small number of candidates (Clark 1971 34). Thus as early as 1929, Jean Fischer completed a monograph on the hydrology of the Adour basin with Arbos as his patron at Clermont-Ferrand. He dedicated his work to "my dear masters", Arbos and Faucher, "with the expression of my profound and respectful attachment" and to "my colleague and friend" Maurice Pardé "as evidence of my affectionate recognition" (Fischer 1929 3). In the *Annales de Géographie*, Pardé acknowledged Fischer's "evident understanding of the complex problems of the hydro-meteorology of the Pyrenees" but regretted "a little heaviness of style", a structure that tended "to float with respect to detail, and a failure to highlight essential ideas" (Pardé 1930 641, 640). In another review of this work, Pardé intimated that Fischer proposed to extend his research to the hydrology of the Garonne basin, but that never materialised (Pardé 1929 306). Perhaps surprisingly, the *Revue de Géographie Alpine* did not carry a critique of Fischer's thesis but Blanchard allocated him space to present a substantial summary in the form of a 50-page article (Fischer 1930). Ten years later, Lucien Gachon defended the second monograph for which Arbos was patron, comprising a study of both the physical and human geography of the southern Limagnes. Arbos emphasized his pupil's "lively sense of reality, his empathy with the subject, namely the land of the Auvergne and its rural dwellers among which he counts himself" (Arbos 1941 529). Gachon's experience as a village teacher and as a novelist were employed to good advantage in his thesis, with Baulig (who had been evacuated along with his university from German-occupied Strasbourg to Clermont-Ferrand for the duration of the war) praising the author's description of the landscapes of the Limagnes and his ability to interpret

ordinary life in an appealing fashion (Baulig 1940 217; Cornu 2003). Despite some concern that Gachon handled certain topics in a fragmented way, Baulig concluded that this monograph was "not the 'masterwork' of an apprentice aspiring to be a master" of his trade but was, in fact, "a work full of maturity, strong, moving and profoundly human" (Baulig 1940 221). After training teachers in the Auvergne and lecturing at Besançon, Gachon returned to a chair at the University of Clermont-Ferrand for the latter years of his career (Fel 1984 1).

At Toulouse, Daniel Faucher served as patron to Lucien Goron who in 1941 submitted a meticulous monograph, inspired by the work of W.M. Davis, on the physiography of the pre-Pyrenees, following several decades spent training student teachers in the small town of Foix (Cholley 1954 236; Veyret 1954). As well as thanking Faucher, both as friend and master, Goron generously expressed gratitude to generations of former pupils who had accompanied him on countless excursions in his research area (Goron 1941 xviii). By the early years of World War II, the number of regional monographs had grown from ten to forty-four but patronage remained the overwhelming privilege of just a handful of elderly men at the core of their academic networks (Table 1). As such, the patron-client system that had functioned in the interwar years was both fragile and unsustainable at the core. In some instances successors were waiting in the wings but this was not always the case.

# 4.

# The Third Cohort of Regional Monographs, 1946-1966

## Influences of war on scholarly production

The experiences of some young geographers during the first half of the 1940s interrupted their research and delayed completion of their theses; however others simply kept their heads down and ploughed on with their teaching and research.[32] Doctoral candidates and younger academics, such as Pierre Birot and André Cholley at the Sorbonne, had been called up for military service in 1939 and hence scheduled doctoral examinations had to be postponed (De Martonne 1940 131-33). Indeed, only half a dozen regional monographs were examined between 1940 and 1945 (Chevalier 2007).[33] Disruptions associated with war and enemy occupation removed pressure on the patronage system for a while but only so long as some candidates were kept away from their research.

Among young geographers taken in captivity, Gaston Galtier was a prisoner-of-war in Alsace from June 1940 to October 1941 when he was repatriated because of poor health (Marres 1968 5). By contrast, other young scholars spent the duration of the war in camps. For example, René Lebeau had begun his military service in 1937, was mobilized in 1939, captured by the Germans, and then held in East Prussia until 1944 (Houssel 1999a 195).[34] Upon his return to France, he began his research by travelling around the southern Jura on a bicycle since neither vehicles nor petrol were available (Houssel 1999b 8). Similarly, Marcel Gautier spent five years in captivity where he helped to coach trainee teachers for the examinations they would face when they returned to civilian life (Meynier 1981 254). Henri Enjalbert used his captivity in Pomerania "to read almost all the German literature relating to physical geography prior to [W.M.] Davis", making himself "one of the rare geographers of his generation" to be so well informed (Péchoux 1983 460).

André Journaux reported that his doctorate had developed from an "idea suggested by Pierre Birot during long conversations that the 'long holidays' (*grandes vacances*) in East Prussia facilitated in 1942" (Journaux 1956 7). Madame Birot reported that her husband and other teachers had set up a kind of "little university" in the prisoner of war camp, adding that "his captivity will seem less prolonged if he succeeds in developing a love of geomorphology among some of them" [students and young teachers] (Daveau 2007 12, citing a letter from Mme Birot dated 25/07/1940). Journaux returned to France three years later but would not complete his doctorate until 1954 (Bastié 2006 94).

By contrast, André Guilcher, Jean Masseport and Paul Veyret had been mobilised in 1939-40 but soon returned to civilian life, but not without injury in Guilcher's case (Carré 1995 10). Others, including Yves Bravard, Pierre Estienne, René Haby and Jean Masseport, were involved in the Resistance and participated in the struggle for liberation. For example, Bravard refused to be enlisted in the *Service de Travail Obligatoire* and fled to the mountains of the Haute Tarentaise where he worked as a miner excavating tunnels for plant that would generate hydroelectricity.[35] He used the detailed geographical knowledge he gained of the area to assist the safe delivery by parachute of arms for the Maquis. Through the Resistance, he met his future wife who belonged to a different group at Chambéry; the couple were married on the very day that France was liberated. For Bravard, this was indeed "a determining episode in his life, as he was pleased to recall" (Chardon 2002 85). Estienne's long involvement with the union for university teachers grew out of his experience of the Maquis but he confided that the period 1943-45, that was devoted to the Resistance, a youth labour camp (*chantier de la jeunesse*) and conscription, represented "two wasted years" for the furtherance of his academic career (Bressolette 1987 7).

Those who managed to continue research whilst teaching during the war were confronted by many difficulties. Writing at the end of 1944, Paul Veyret

noted that his enquiries in Upper Provence could not be started "until August 1940. Since then, the fieldwork has hit against difficulties of finding lodging and food in an area filled with hungry people [who have fled] from the coast ... Nevertheless, we have travelled around our study area as much as possible" to observe landscape features and discuss conditions with mayors, village teachers and farmers (Veyret 1945 i). He continued: "During the bitter years, from which we have scarcely escaped, [the thesis] has been our refuge, our act of faith in a better future ... it has never been a burden, but rather a support" (*Ibid.* iii). In 1948, André Guilcher noted with regret that after two years of research, his thesis on the coastal morphology of southern Brittany was "hindered after 1938 by international difficulties, then by serving under the flag, then by the war and the occupation. Restrictions on transport and the impossibility of gaining access to the coast [designated a forbidden zone by the Germans] ... greatly retarded our work that, under other circumstances, would have been completed by about 1943" (Guilcher 1948 i). Geographers undertaking wartime fieldwork in southern France, away from coasts and avoiding strategic locations experienced fewer impediments (Chevalier 2007).[36]

Without doubt, wartime events retarded the doctoral research of many geographers in the third cohort, such as Gaston Galtier and Henri Enjalbert, both of whom were aged 50 when they submitted. Georges Viers, Mireille Ters, Roger Livet and Jean Hermitte had each passed 50 when they completed their theses, although they submitted in the 1960s long after the war had ended. By contrast, Jean Tricart (aged 28), Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier, Max Derruau and Philippe Pinchemel (each aged 29), and Charles-Pierre Péguy (aged 32) proved to be fast workers. In 1950, Madame Beaujeu-Garnier confessed: "This short thesis [of 288 pages, completed in 1947 but whose publication was delayed by paper shortages] is a product of youth. Its brevity will perhaps be surprising. It does not claim to be a definitive work, but rather expresses the current state of my conclusions or hypotheses that five years of research on the Morvan region and its surroundings have allowed

me to elaborate" (Beaujeu-Garnier 1950 vii; 1983 142). The thesis by Péguy on the Upper Durance (315 pages) was not much longer than that of Beaujeu-Garnier but the monographs by Derruau on *La Grande Limagne* and by Pinchemel on *Les plaines de craie* exceeded 500 pages apiece. For the 56 doctoral monographs completed between 1946 and 1966, the mean age of submission was 39 years, three years below that for interwar completions (Table 1). The average doctorate in the third cohort was 555 pages in length, just a little shorter than the average interwar thesis but almost 100 pages longer than the mean of those completed before 1918. Between 1946 and 1966, academic geography in France remained a 'masculine' discipline with only seven of the 56 state doctorates in the third cohort being written by women (Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier, Germaine Veyret-Vernier, Suzanne Daveau, Raymonde Caralp-Landon, Mireille Ters, Anne-Marie Faidutti-Rudolph, Jacqueline Bonnamour)(Bonnamour 1995). With Thérèse Sclafert as the sole female recipient prior to 1945, women accounted for only 8 per cent of state doctorates in geography across the six decades from 1905 to 1966. The geographical professoriat remained a man's world until well after 1968.

## Complexity of life chances

The career circumstances of individual geographers in the third cohort varied greatly but almost all undertook their research part-time whilst earning their living as schoolteachers. Usually this was at secondary level and took place in a single *lycée* or at several in succession. As Terry Clark remarked: "The importance of the *lycée* as a career base" for aspiring doctoral candidates could not be overestimated (Clark 1973 12). Thus, Yves Babonaux was well established at Orléans as were Pierre Estienne at Grenoble, Alfred Durand at Aurillac and Serge Lerat at Bordeaux. For various reasons, other geographers moved between *lycées* to occupy posts in schools that had better reputations, or were closer to their study areas or the nexus of academic power and library resources in Paris. For example, Jean-Paul Moreau left Nancy in favour of Dijon (that was nearer to his research area in Burgundy) and Germaine

Veyret-Verner taught at Valence, Gap and then Chambéry, changing her employment in order to be with (or at least working close to) her husband, Paul (Désiré 2000 9; Veyret 1974 7). After five years at the *lycée* in Brest and subsequent military service, André Guilcher spent the final half of his eleven-year stint as a schoolteacher at the *lycée* in Nantes (Chapel, Rémy and Le Coeur 1994 9). Other geographers were even more mobile, with Gaston Galtier teaching at *lycées* in Rodez, Béziers and Montpellier and then at the Lycée Claude-Bernard in the fashionable Parisian suburb of Neuilly before completing his Sorbonne thesis (Marres 1968a, 5, 1968b 735). Similarly, Paul Fénelon moved from Agen to Bordeaux, Talence and then to the prestigious Lycée Louis-le-Grand in central Paris prior to submitting his work to the Sorbonne (Bouhier & Soumagne 1994 201). Following a rather different route, other geographers taught in teacher training colleges, including André Vigarié at Rouen, Henri Enjalbert at Angoulême, and Marcel Gautier at La Roche-sur-Yon and then Saint-Lô. Even with his doctorate completed, Gautier served as a schools inspector before moving to a university chair in Rennes (Meynier 1981 253). Savoyard Pierre Bozon taught for over a decade at the teacher training college in the small town of Privas, which, although at the centre of his study area in the Ardèche, was "not very favourable for intellectual work, since one is singularly deprived of [geographical] documentation and exchange of ideas" (Blanchard 1962 185). Eventually he would be appointed to a chair at the new university of Saint-Étienne.[37]

An even more demanding route was pursued by those who taught as *instituteurs* in junior schools and had first to obtain their degrees part-time before progressing to doctoral research and university posts. Thus, Henri Elhaï, René Haby and Jean Masseport, as well as Paul Fénelon and André Vigarié, started their careers as *instituteurs* in villages or small towns (Saunier-Séïté 2003 9; Marcadon 2007 99). François Taillefer recalled how Jean Bastié began as a village schoolmaster in the Pyrenees, obtaining his first degree as a part-time student. Each Thursday Bastié cycled for 15km to the nearest railway station and then travelled for an hour and a half by train to reach

Toulouse where he attended Daniel Faucher's lecture course (Taillefer 1966a 330). However, Bastié managed to escape from his remote village and obtained a teaching post in the *lycée* in Toulouse before moving to Paris and doctoral research. By contrast, Pierre Pédelaborde was employed as an *instituteur* between the ages of 19 and 40, before he received a five-year research award that enabled him to complete his doctorate on the climate of the Paris basin at the age of 46 (Anon. 1964 64). His monograph was praised for not relying on arid statistics but also incorporating the results of personal enquiries and field observations made during numerous camping trips throughout the region (Blanchet 1961 378). Pédelaborde subsequently became a university teacher, being eventually appointed a professor at the Sorbonne at the age of 52.

In striking contrast, a few geographers spent only a year or two after passing their *agrégation* as teachers in secondary education before moving to one of the rare posts as assistant to a university professor that allowed them time for research.[38] Thus, Philippe Pinchemel taught for only one year at the Prytanée Militaire de La Flèche before moving to an assistantship at Lille in 1946 and at Paris two years later (Anon. 1967 613). Similarly, Michel Rochefort taught for just a year at the *lycée* in Strasbourg before becoming an assistant at the local university in 1952 (Anon. 1966 359). Others whose research careers were supported by assistantships included Jean Bastié (Paris), Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier (Paris), Pierre Brunet (Lille), Suzanne Daveau (Besançon), Raymond Dugrand (Montpellier), Henri Elhaï (Paris, then Caen), André Fel (Clermont-Ferrand), Gaston Galtier (Montpellier), Jacques Gras (Rennes), Michel Laferrère (Lyon), Jean Masseport (Grenoble) and Claude Prêcheur (Nancy).

A second form of support was available to a fortunate few in the third cohort in the form of financial awards from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)(an institution set up in 1939) that enabled promising scholars to devote themselves full-time to research or writing up, or assisted with costs of travels or map production. After two decades as an *instituteur*,

Pédelaborde was rewarded with a five-year research grant, and awards of varying duration were allocated to Daveau (4 years), Bernard Kayser (3 years), Estienne and Michel Laferrère (2 years), and Beaujeu-Garnier, Pinchemel and Rochefort (1 year). Maurice Wolkowitsch was profoundly grateful to the CNRS for funding an unspecified period of full-time research "after four years when this work was combined with the task of being a schoolmaster" (Wolkowitsch 1960 6). André Journaux acknowledged CNRS grants that enabled him to travel 15,000km in the Saône valley, and Maurice Dubois, Anne-Marie Faidutti-Rudolph and André Rondeau noted their gratitude for CNRS funds to make repeated research trips to the Jura, south-east France and Corsica respectively. The CNRS funded some of Michel Rochefort's cartography costs and René Haby coupled his gratitude to the CNRS with thanks to the Houillères de Lorraine that gave financial support for his investigation of the coal industry (Haby 1965 16). Others who benefited from CNRS funds included Yves Babonaux, Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier and Germaine Veyret-Verner.

## Patrons at and beyond the Sorbonne

The structure of patronage that had functioned between the wars came to an end with the death of Demangeon in 1940 and the retirement of De Martonne in 1944 and of Blanchard in 1948. New patrons had to move into place or to be found from beyond the institution. Networks of reciprocity had to be renegotiated, put in place and then consolidated. Having held a personal chair at the Sorbonne since 1928, André Cholley subsequently occupied many of the positions relinquished by De Martonne, including tenure of the established chair in Paris from 1944 to 1956 (Birot 1969) (Plate 12). By contrast, effective successors to Demangeon in Paris and to Blanchard in Grenoble proved more complicated. André Guilcher, who started his research in 1938 and completed ten years later, was the last scholar to acknowledge De Martonne in pride of place (Carré 1995 10). When Paul Fénelon submitted in 1949, Cholley's name was placed alongside that of De Martonne.

**Plate 12:** André Cholley, 1886-1968.

Remembered more as a teacher and administrator than as a researcher, Cholley headed the Institut de Géographie from 1944 to 1956 and was dean of the Faculté des Lettres between 1945 and 1953, shouldering what was considered to be "a crushing and inhuman burden" (Anon. 1969 7; Gras 1975). As his own doctorate had attested, his range of expertise was wide and he acted as patron not only for eight physical monographs (including those of Jean Tricart, Philippe Pinchemel and André Journaux) but also for three theses that were primarily works of human geography (Michel Phlipponeau, Jean-Paul Moreau and Pierre Brunet). During the 1960s, Pierre Birot emerged as a patron of doctoral work in physical geography at the Sorbonne, beginning with the monographs by Henri Elhaï on Normandy and by André Rondeau on Corsica.

Whilst De Martonne had an in-house successor in the person of Cholley, the question of effective leadership in the field of human geography at the Sorbonne proved elusive for a number of years. Max Sorre taught at the Institut de Géographie for only four years (1941-45) and Roger Dion remained for just three (1945-48), one of which was spent in Brazil (George 1962, 1975; Broc 1998). The disruption of wartime and immediate post-war conditions prevented both men from attracting a cluster of disciples.[39] This was not the case for Georges Chabot who, despite having written his monograph on karst geomorphology, had also researched and published on urban geography. After seventeen years as professor in Dijon, his appointment to the chair of regional geography at the Sorbonne in 1945 brought a new patron for some human geographers in the capital (S. Daveau, A-M. Faidutti-Rudolph, J. Bonnamour) (Perpillou 1976 3; Cabouret 1996; Bonnamour 2000). However, not until Pierre George was appointed in 1949 did students in the capital find a professor who was genuinely willing to discuss socially relevant topics, colouring his interpretation with more than a touch of the ideology underlying his membership of the communist party. To some extent this was surprising since he had written a very traditional holistic thesis on the Bas-Rhône region that covered both physical and human themes, however the final pages of that monograph revealed his concerns for the implications of capitalism (George 1935 651-58). George's teaching in Paris during the 1950s inspired a cohort of students to look to him as their patron for doctoral work. In the words of one of them, Michel Rochefort: "All his students know that, in spite of heavy responsibilities, one never knocks on his door in vain, and that he is always ready ... to respond to every request for information or clarification" (Rochefort 1960 9).[40] George's commitment to communism would end in 1956, as would that of some of his protégés, however a shared ideology certainly provided a bond between him and members of his entourage in the early 1950s.

Beyond the Sorbonne, Blanchard's reign at the Institut de Géographie Alpine drew to an end in 1948 but he served as patron for two monographs, by

Charles-Pierre Péguy and Germaine Veyret-Verner, which were completed just after World War II. Later still, Jean Miège recalled Blanchard's earlier formative influence (although he completed at Lyon), as did Pierre Estienne and Pierre Bozon who submitted their theses at Clermont-Ferrand (Dauphiné 2002 82). Only two further monographs, both in physical geography, by Jean Masseport and Yves Bravard, would be completed at Grenoble up to 1966. Despite retirement approaching, Blanchard continued to defend what he perceived as his own territory, delivering a blistering attack on Jean Chardonnet's Sorbonne thesis on the geomorphology of the southern Alps. He criticised the author's scientific methods and vented his anger on this Parisian student of De Martonne's who had not only dared to trespass on the research terrain of Veyret and Péguy but had done so without consulting himself (Blanchard 1950; Broc 2001 102).[41]

To some extent, the mantle of Blanchard had been assumed by three of his early students who had become professors in provincial universities and the spatial configuration of patronage shifted as a result. Thus, Philippe Arbos was patron to Alfred Durand (who died a months after successfully defending his thesis), Max Derruau and Pierre Bozon at Clermont-Ferrand, and certainly influenced André Fel (whose patron was Derruau) (Arbos 1947; Bordessoule 2007; Fel 1962 13). Daniel Faucher guided François Taillefer, Jean Coppolani and Michel Chevalier at Toulouse, whilst André Allix (collaborating with André Gibert) was patron to Jean Labasse, René Lebeau and Michel Laferrère at Lyon (Gibert 1966; Lebeau 1967). The fact that a number of researchers working in the provinces preferred to be examined at the Sorbonne, even if they had not been undergraduates in Paris, meant that other provincial professors, such as Henri Baulig at Strasbourg, Louis Papy at Bordeaux, Paul Marres at Montpellier, and André Meynier and Francis Ruellan both at Rennes, were responsible for only one or two doctoral completions apiece between 1946 and 1966. The preference for a Sorbonne degree also helped to contribute to the absence of doctoral awards at Aix-en-Provence, Caen, Lille and Poitiers over this period (Figure 4). As historian

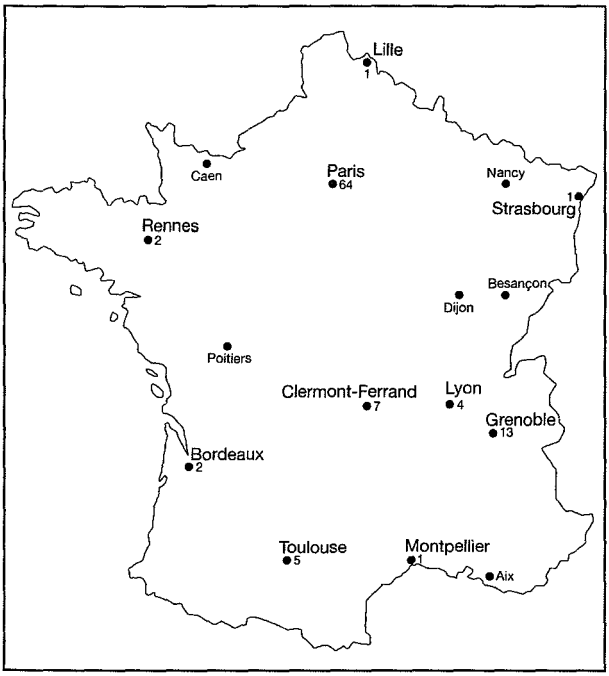



**Figure 4:** Regional monographs 1905-1966, by examining university.

Georges Duby remarked, looking back to the 1940s: "In those days, a thesis carried no weight unless it was defended before the Sorbonne. A 'made in Paris' label was essential" for rapid professorial progress (Duby 1994 7). In the case of geography, a 'made in Grenoble' tag also carried considerable importance for a post in southern France.

## Innovative approaches in regional monographs

Unlike their predecessors, few authors of doctoral theses submitted between 1946 and 1966 sought to integrate physical and human themes in order to produce holistic regional studies but some certainly continued to do so, writing respectable if not really innovative monographs. As we have seen, there was no single regional model that was adopted across the discipline. The separation was most pronounced in 'physical' monographs that largely excluded any mention of human conditions. Such authors, however,

preferred to use their minor theses to demonstrate a competence in human geography. However, many 'human' monographs, especially those relating to predominantly rural territory, included discussion of the physical resource base as an explanatory introduction to farming activities and rural landscapes. Increasingly, doctoral candidates used their chosen 'regions' as appropriate spatial containers within which to explore specific problems rather than to attempt to be comprehensive or to capture the "personality of their study area" (Musset 1957 188). The tradition of each monograph being presented at length in the *Annales de Géographie* declined as the quantity of monographs produced each year became greater. Many post-war theses examined at the Sorbonne received only brief mention in that journal (Bourgéat 2007 105). By contrast, the *Revue de Géographie Alpine* continued to publish substantial reviews of monographs relating to mountain areas and to south-eastern France. Blanchard's successors, Paul Veyret and his wife Germaine Veyret-Verner usually wrote these. In addition, the number of companies located in provincial cities that were willing to publish state doctorates and as a result the earlier grasp of Parisian publishing houses relaxed (see Appendix I).

Adopting a wide gaze at mid-century, Roger Dion detected what he delicately described as "a certain poverty of imagination" among some recent geographers who were faced by "the harsh and numerous demands of [writing] a regional monograph, forty years and more after the models given by Blanchard, Demangeon and Sion [that] are hard to equal" (Dion 1951 25).[42] For example, François Taillefer noted tactfully that that Michel Chevalier's 1,062-page study of *Les Pyrénées ariègeoises* was "exhaustive" and "based on long periods of archival research and personal enquiries of extreme precision", but for Max Sorre it was "a thick book [that] is too thick ...Too big through an excess of scruples [and a] concern to convey proofs through infinite detail at microscopic scale ... leading to an accumulation of tiny facts ... The author has emptied his card index" (Taillefer 1958 273; Sorre 1957b 258). The issue of length was of less concern to Paul Veyret who worried that

three-quarters of Chevalier's monograph was devoted to the past, there was insufficient analysis of depopulation, and "major points are rather drowned in a mass of detail" (Veyret 1956 776). By contrast, other scholars managed to explore new themes and to question accepted wisdom. Derruau's monograph on *La Grande Limagne* was judged particularly successful, not least because the author "widened his gaze and, in a systematic fashion, raised the question of external influences" on all the topics he investigated (Arbos 1950 569)(Table 7). Inspired by reading Derruau's work, Roger Dion concluded: "The conception of regional study fashioned by the masters at the beginning of the century was valid then and, in principle remains so, provided innovation and intellectual criticism are employed" in new monographs (Dion 1951 29). Sadly, this was not always the case.

**Table 7: Chapter structure of *La Grande Limagne*, Max Derruau (1949, 544pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Part I** | **The Land** |
| 1 | Land and activity in the Pays des Buttes |
| 2 | Land and activity in the Plaines marneuses |
| 3 | Land and activity in the Varennes |
| **Part II** | **Social and economic changes in natural regions** |
| 1 | The Pays des Buttes |
| 2 | The Plaines marneuses |
| 3 | The Varennes |
| **Part III** | **Trade and urban life** |
| 1 | Major flows of trade |
| 2 | Routeways and towns |
| 3 | The fortune of towns |
| **Part IV** | **North-South contrasts** |
| 1 | Contrasts in settlement types |
| 2 | Contrasts in field structures |
| 3 | Social contrasts |
| 4 | Linguistic contrasts |

Some geographers of the third cohort declared boldly that they were not attempting to write conventional regional monographs. Étienne Juillard insisted that his study of the plain of Lower Alsace focused on "general problems relating to rural societies" set within a determined region (Juillard 1953 7). He also defined his thesis as "a study of 'social geography' [or], more

modestly, the contribution of a geographer to certain social problems, without excessive preoccupation for the limits of geography ... I recognise, without any feeling of having 'betrayed' geography, that many pages ... could have been written by an historian, or by an economist, or even by a sociologist" (*Ibid*). Juillard acknowledged that he had not analysed physical conditions or events in the distant past in great depth, and even dared to suggest how certain rural problems might be managed in the future (*Ibid.* 8) (Table 8). Despite such a display of modesty on the part of Juillard, Lucien Gachon "sought pardon from the great masters of human geography, but we feel that none of them enquired so wide or so deep, or brought so much to a thesis as Étienne Juillard" has done (Gachon 1954 393). In similar vein, veteran geographer René Musset found "Juillard's book, together with that by Derruau on the Limagne, [to be] the best contributions to the rural geography of France published in many a long year" (Musset 1955 124). Gachon praised Juillard's treatment of empirical material, although Roger Brunet insisted that his analysis of local social relations was deficient (Gachon 1954; Brunet 1955). The new approach to regional study exemplified by Juillard was certainly far removed from Demangeon's prototype, and his interests in applied geography, regional planning and the recognition of functional regions grew

**Table 8: Chapter structure of *La vie rurale en Basse-Alsace*, Étienne Juillard (1953, 582pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Introduction: the problems and their location |
| **Part I** | **The traditional structure** |
| 1 | Agrarian civilisation (population, rural community) |
| 2 | Formation of the rural landscape (land, villages, origins) |
| 3 | The traditional system at its peak, 1750-1850 (demographic growth, agricultural revolution, division of commonland, farming villages, mixed farming) |
| **Part II** | **Crisis of the countryside** |
| 1 | Industrialisation (rural industry, industrial concentration) |
| 2 | Demography (natural increase, migration, ageing) |
| 3 | Mixed farming or specialisation? (adaptation, insufficient productivity) |
| 4 | Changes in rural society (mixed ways of life, end of the farming hierarchy, toward the urbanisation of the countryside) |
| | Conclusion: toward a rural policy (safeguarding agriculture, spatial planning) |

substantially during his long occupation of the chair of geography at the University of Strasbourg (Juillard 1962; Nonn 2007).

In 1962, André Fel stated in the introduction of his monograph on agricultural life in the Massif Central: "The study that we present in this book does not belong to the 'regional geography' category ... The object of this study is a precise problem: to describe, classify and explain the ways of agricultural life and the farming economy in a poor environment" (Fel 1962 11). By analysing conditions found above 500m in a score of *départements* and by classifying farms according to their future viability, Fel advocated planning intervention to support holdings that had a chance of survival. To Max Derruau, this thesis was a fine example "of geography in the fullest sense of the word [that is] indispensable for active planning" (Derruau 1964 585). In similar vein, at the end of his intricate study of how farming around Paris had become increasingly enmeshed with suburban sprawl, Michel Phlipponneau made a powerful plea for geographers to become involved in planning activities and to indulge in what he called *la géographie appliquée* (Phlipponneau 1955 553). His appointment at the University of Rennes provided an ideal base not only to study the regional problems of Brittany but also to become involved in regional and urban politics (Veyret 1957 790; Pitte 2008).

An important but previously overlooked aspect of regional dynamics was analysed by Jean Labasse (1955) whose work was under the patronage of Allix at Lyon (Houssel 2003 10). He drew on his dual career, as a banker with the Banque Neuflize, Schlumberger et Mallet and as a geographer, to trace how banks made capital available to manufacturing and service activities, and how such funds energised the economic systems of functional regions. Greater Lyon and the Crédit Lyonnais formed his case study of how invisible flows of finance helped to energize and shape the configuration of human regions. His very distinctive monograph was widely praised, although one reviewer questioned the consistency of the author's knowledge across a very large and dynamic region (Veyret-Verner 1955 854). By contrast, André Allix

was steadfast in his praise for the methodological inventiveness displayed by his protégé Jean Labasse (Allix 1956b 37). Finally, Claude Prêcheur's analysis of the Lorraine steel industry demonstrated the recent "progress accomplished in economic geography ... using statistics and detailed analytical methods, focusing on economic issues, and presenting results in new ways", thereby revealing work "very far removed from the classical theses in human geography" (Veyret-Verner 1960 367).

### Pierre George: patronage and entourage

Without doubt, the most innovative cluster of doctoral research undertaken in the third cohort involved students working with Pierre George on topics in the rapidly emerging field of urban geography and especially the relationship between town and country that formed "one of the most passionate and fertile subjects in social geography" (Kayser 1958 7; Buttimer 1968 94; Di Méo *et al.* 2008). However, this theme was not entirely new as Chabot had written about urban dynamics in the 1930s and later demonstrated that he was aware of pioneering work by German and Swedish geographers (Claval 1996 191). What was new was the frequent discussion among members of the cluster that incorporated other young geographers who shared George's political ideology, but did not work (or complete their theses) on France.[43] Whether this interaction was old-established patronage in a revived form, or an example of an entourage of comrades working around an inspiring professor to enhance their careers and reinforce the esteem of their patron, must remain open to debate (Bataillon 2006; Charbonneau 2006) (Plate 13).

Bernard Kayser's monograph on the consequences of urban development in the countryside of the Côte-d'Azur began the sequence of publication in 1958, owing much to George who had "steered, directed and corrected my work, having moulded my spirit as a geographer" (Kayser 1958 7). Kayser offered the thesis to his patron as "an expression of fidelity, respect and friendship" (*Ibid*). The tone here was different from the rather obsequious devotion that had been displayed by Blanchard's disciples between the wars. Kayser broke

**Plate 13:** Pierre George, 1909-2006.

with tradition in his thesis by making little mention of the natural environment or of historical antecedents, preferring instead to emphasise the recent dynamics of population growth, tourism and what he called the *déruralisation* of former agricultural areas in the face of urban growth (*Ibid.* 489) (Table 9). He demonstrated that, through sustained investment, the area had become "a colony for the international bourgeoisie, rather than a creation of the local bourgeoisie" (*Ibid.* 562). He insisted, perhaps rather conventionally: "Neither nature nor history exercised a precise deterministic influence on the countryside of the Côte-d'Azur" (*Ibid.* 561).

**Table 9: Chapter structure of *Campagnes et villes de la Côte d'Azur*, Bernard Kayser (1958, 593pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Part I** | **Traditional life in the countryside of the Côte d'Azur** |
| 1 | Population |
| 2 | People and land ownership |
| 3 | Town and country |
| 4 | Geographical distribution of wealth |
| **Part II** | **The Côte d'Azur today** |
| Book 1 | Population problems (5 chapters: demography, migration) |
| Book 2 | Land and agriculture (5 chapters: landownership, farms, production) |
| Book 3 | Non-agricultural activities (4 chapters: occupations, residential functions) |
| **Part III** | **The processes of change** |
| 1 | A century of change |
| 2 | Indications of urban change |
| 3 | Tourism |
| 4 | Residential functions |
| 5 | Population crisis: foreign immigration, departure of the young |

In a very different spatial setting, Michel Rochefort examined urban dynamics in Alsace, first tracing the current role of towns in stimulating agricultural, industrial and commercial activity, and then reviewing the development of urban activities from the eighteenth century to the present (Bourgéat 2007 273-79) (Table 10). His gratitude was expressed to Pierre George and to his fellow comrades who were "pursuing research on neighbouring topics and gave me the possibility of confronting my methods and conclusions with their own, and of profiting from their experience" (Rochefort 1960 10).[44] However, it was Jean Tricart, another communist lecturer at the Sorbonne, who had convinced the young Rochefort to become a geographer, through his "inspiring fieldtrips ... that put me in direct contact with human reality" (*Ibid.* 9). Rochefort, too, was fascinated by *le terrain*.

In 1962, Raymond Dugrand defended his long monograph on the urban network of Bas-Languedoc, a theme that Pierre George had suggested in 1951 (Dugrand 1963 v). It was researched during the decade when the author served as assistant to Paul Marres at the University of Montpellier and it was

**Table 10: Chapter structure of *L'organisation urbaine d'Alsace*, Michel Rochefort (1960, 384pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Part I** | **The present urban structure** |
| 1 | Towns and the organisation of agricultural production and trade |
| 2 | Towns and the organisation of industrial activity |
| 3 | Towns as foci of service provision |
| 4 | Present urban networks |
| **Part II** | **The development of urban networks** |
| 1 | Urban organisation in the middle of the 18th century |
| 2 | Influences of industrial development on urban organisation before the railway |
| 3 | Concentration of industry, commerce and finance in towns from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century |
| **Part III** | **Types of town** |
| 1 | Large towns: Strasbourg, Mulhouse |
| 2 | Medium-sized towns |
| 3 | Small towns |

there that his thesis was examined. The assistantship enabled Dugrand to undertake detailed local research into contemporary urban systems and to analyse historical evidence on the ownership of rural land by urban dwellers. After examining "the mechanisms of production", he sought "to explain through history the establishment of these structures and flows, finally tracing through the intermediary of demography the recent history of the countryside and towns" of the region (*Ibid.* xii) (Table 11). The language employed here was very different from that used in monographs early in the twentieth century but was comparable to that employed by George in the 1950s and 1960s. Dugrand was duly elevated to a chair at Montpellier and went on to play a very active role in local politics, especially with regard to the modernization of the city. In a long presentation of the studies on Alsace and Bas-Languedoc to which he had given patronage, George argued that Rochefort and Dugrand had demonstrated "a new conception of both regional geography and urban geography, and how society and the economy are being transformed" (George 1964 215). He maintained that a similarly innovative thesis should be written "for each region in France" (*Ibid.* 216).

The historical dimension was fully embraced in Jean Bastié's monograph on the growth of Parisian suburbia that was researched when the author was an assistant at the Institut de Géographie at the Sorbonne. George had suggested the topic to Bastié, recently arrived from Toulouse, and advised him to abandon the idea of tackling the whole of the city's suburban zone and rather to concentrate on a band of territory extending 25 km southward from Ivry.

**Table 11: Chapter structure of *Villes et campagnes en Bas-Languedoc*, Raymond Dugrand (1963, 638pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Book I** | **The role of towns in the organisation of industrial life** |
| 1 | The mediocrity of industrial life |
| 2 | Industrial capital |
| 3 | Types of industrial centre |
| **Book II** | **The role of towns in the organisation of agricultural production** |
| 1 | The importance of town dwellers owning rural property |
| 2 | Small and medium-sized rural properties owned by town dwellers |
| 3 | Large rural properties owned by town dwellers |
| 4 | Areas of land ownership by town dwellers |
| **Book III** | **Towns and the organisation of trade** |
| 1 | Towns and the dispatch of agricultural products |
| 2 | Distribution of products |
| 3 | Transit trade |
| 4 | Towns and the organisation of administrative, social and banking services |
| **Book IV** | **The urban network of the Bas-Languedoc** |
| **Book V** | **The establishment on economic structures of the urban network** |
| 1 | Evolution of land ownership among town dwellers |
| 2 | Evolution of industrial structures of urban origin |
| 3 | Establishment of banking and railway networks |
| **Book VI** | **Demographic problems: Part I Population change** |
| 1 | Demographic and urban growth in the 18th century |
| 2 | Harmonious economic development in the first half of the 19th century |
| 3 | Triumph of viticulture and the urban crisis, 1851-1901 |
| 4 | Demographic decline, 1901-1946 |
| **Book VII** | **Demographic problems: Part II The current demographic situation** |
| 1 | Urban population |
| 2 | Migration, 1946-54 |
| | Conclusion: toward an organised urban network |

Adopting a chronological structure, Bastié extended his discussion up to the post-war years and concluded with a plea for the introduction of regional planning to manage the legacy of the past and to shape future extensions to suburbia. A "single authority, democratically controlled", should be established and would need to confront the challenge of incorporating decisions by "various administrations and public services, local authorities and private interests" (Bastié 1964 552). Yves Babonaux, another but more remote member of George's entourage, also expressed a concern for regional management in his monograph on the towns and functional regions of the middle Loire valley. This was an area he had known for two decades, since he had investigated the urban functions of Tours back in 1946 and then taught at the *lycée* in Orléans for several years (Babonaux 1966 11; Couderc 2008). His thesis moved from an analysis of how the built environment had been fashioned in the past to a critical review of the challenges confronting the planning of an area that was increasingly coming under the dominance of Paris.

In a less direct way, Pierre George influenced two other monographs written by scholars who taught and researched far away from the capital. Long established as a *lycée* teacher in Bordeaux, and receiving advice from Louis Papy and Henri Enjalbert at the local university, Serge Lerat analysed social relations between landlords and tenants in the Adour basin order to introduce the "recent agricultural revolution", associated with fertilizers, tractors, electrification, irrigation and the adoption of hybrid maize (Di Méo and Pailhé 2005 135; Di Méo & Maillard 2006). Like members of George's inner entourage, he traced urban landownership in the countryside before highlighting what he characterized as "a new regional geography" that identified the challenge of planning different types of rural environment, ranging from backward districts to those that were modernising rapidly (Lerat 1963 447).

Drawing on his own experience of doctoral research in the Bas-Rhône during the 1930s, George also supported Roger Livet who had been attracted to seek a teaching post in the southern city of Aix-en-Provence where he benefited from the expertise of local geographers, Ernest Bénévent and Hildebert Isnard, in preparing his monograph on Basse-Provence (Livet 1962 7). Livet recalled how George "welcomed me as a 'freelance' researcher (*franc tireur*) ... with his habitual simplicity and cordiality. He constantly encouraged me ... [and] provoked discussion ... through the long and slow dialogue involved in preparing the thesis" (*Ibid.* 8). Beginning with the physical environment and the legacy of history, and then moving to rural settlement and agrarian structures, Livet's monograph proved to be very traditional in approach and conceptually different from the work by members of George's closer entourage. The fact that Livet had worked on his thesis for many years and had turned 50 when he completed must have held part of the explanation for this intricately argued but rather old-fashioned monograph. Apart from Bastié, who was 45 when he submitted, all of George's other close protégés were in their thirties when they defended their doctorates.

Although not having George as his patron, Roger Brunet also investigated the interaction between town and countryside, analysing the changing grasp of landowners resident in Toulouse on the surrounding farming region. François Taillefer had suggested the topic to him in 1954, placing rural class structure at the core of the work (Brunet 1965 7). The subject evolved over the subsequent ten years as Brunet worked as Taillefer's assistant at the University of Toulouse (Marconis 2006 16). His acknowledgement included George and Juillard for "their thinking [that] has constantly guided me" as well as "my masters at Toulouse" (*Ibid.* 8).[45] After contrasting the region's natural advantages with its recent economic backwardness, Brunet traced historic aspects of economic activity before analysing the modernization of agriculture during the 1950s (Table 12). In a similar way to that practised by students in George's immediate entourage, he made abundant use of land-ownership records.

He acknowledged that he had written "a [regional] monograph, if you will, but a monograph oriented" to particular problems (*Ibid*). Taillefer praised the innovative approach of his young assistant, and Veyret was impressed by the depth of social analysis in the thesis that made it "of exceptional interest" (Taillefer 1966b; Veyret 1967 227). Derruau's review was also couched in superlative terms as he argued how Brunet demonstrated "a subtle analysis that is expressed perfectly and penetrates to the heart of local diversity and social variation" (Derruau 1967 102). The overall synthesis was judged to be "perfection [and] entirely new" (*Ibid.* 98). In Derruau's opinion, Brunet had provided "*the* model to follow" for scholars undertaking doctoral work in the future (*Ibid*). Comparing Brunet's work with that of Demangeon or of Blanchard reveals just how far the science of geography and the art of writing a regional monograph had moved during the course of half a century.

**Table 12: Chapter structure of *Les campagnes toulousaines*, Roger Brunet (1965, 728pp)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Part I** | **A region favoured by nature** |
| 1 | Rich and varied land |
| 2 | A moderately capricious climate |
| 3 | Natural units |
| **Part II** | **Backward countryside** |
| 1 | Depopulation |
| 2 | Preponderance of family farms |
| 3 | Mediocre producers |
| 4 | Poorly educated farmers |
| **Part III** | **A weakness coming from far back in time** |
| 1 | Research of landed fortunes |
| 2 | The old agrarian system |
| 3 | Changes in the 19th century |
| 4 | Toward lethargy |
| **Part IV** | **Contemporary changes** |
| 1 | The tractor revolution |
| 2 | External influences |
| 3 | The new farmer |
| 4 | Improved structures |
| 5 | Less extensive farming |
| 6 | A disappointing result |
| | Conclusion: anxious countrysides |

# 5.

# Conclusion

By 1966 one hundred monographs on the regions of France had been completed which, according to Ronald Harrison-Church, were not only "central to the French outlook" in geography but also demonstrated the "fundamental originality of the French school of geography" (Harrison-Church 1957 76; Musset 1957 187). As has been shown, the system of patronage that had focused initially on Vidal in the early twentieth century and subsequently on three of his disciples (De Martonne, Demangeon, Blanchard) had become unsustainable by the 1940s. The networks of relationships, associations and alliances had to be re-created and consolidated, and not without difficulty in the case of human geographers at the Sorbonne. Thereafter, they were reconfigured around different personalities in Paris, in Grenoble and at a couple of other provincial universities. After mid-century, the size of the geographical community in France increased substantially with the number of professors and other university teachers of geography reaching seventy in 1955 and being set to expand rapidly in the 1960s and even more so after 1968 (Cholley 1957 24; Marconis 2000 144-70) (Figures 5 and 6). Despite these structural changes, the hegemonic grasp of the Sorbonne on the award of state doctorates still remained strong after the middle of the century but small clusters of candidates were beginning to emerge around professors in certain provincial universities. Academic circumstances had changed since the reign of Vidal but networks of reciprocity survived as the critical mechanisms for promoting doctoral research. These relationships were reformulated as elderly professors retired and new leaders emerged, with the whole system experiencing an abrupt shock following the events of May 1968. Thereafter, a larger number of patrons operated in French academic geography, but just a handful of these new *mandarins* controlled substantial shares of doctoral candidates (Knafou 1997; Claval 1998).

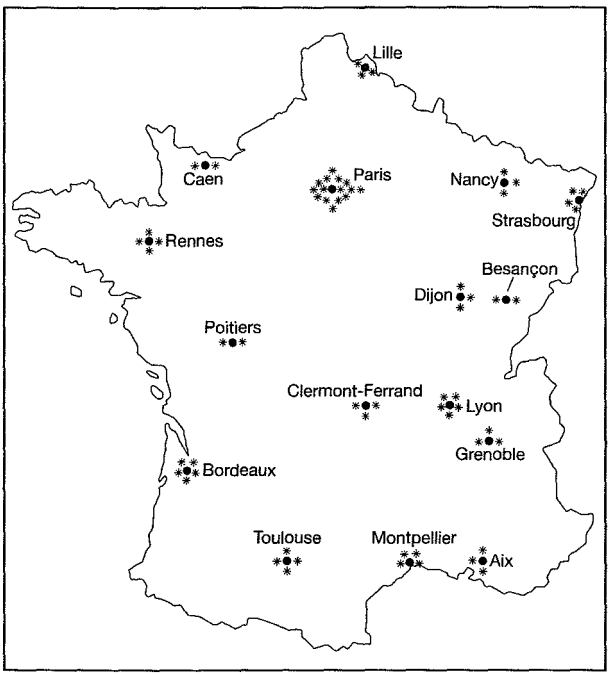



**Figure 5:** Distribution of university teachers of geography, 1955.

The first hundred monographs on French regions had generated an enormous volume of geographical information that Harrison-Church described as providing a "synthesis unsurpassed elsewhere [in the world] and for which they are justly renowned; ... scientific analysis sustains their descriptions, and their expository art has survived" (Harrison-Church 1957 75).[46] Without doubt, no comparable array of geographical writing existed in other countries, but the array of regional monographs was uneven in terms of quality and with regard to spatial coverage and thematic orientation.[47] Many authors had spent long periods as schoolteachers whose pedagogic activity was fashioned by national syllabuses and the content of approved textbooks. Working part-time, without regular contact with a patron, and often far away from a university library, tended to encourage solid scholarship rather than genuine innovation. Some parts of France had received much attention in the completed monographs but others were not discussed since work was

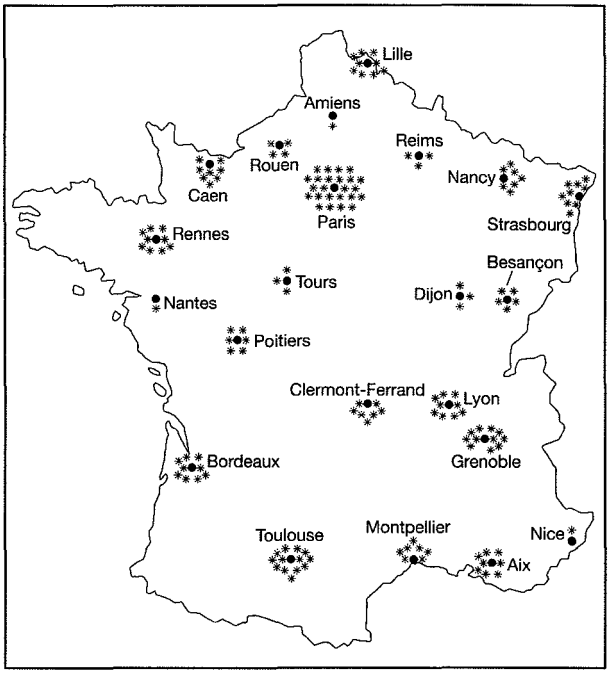



**Figure 6:** Distribution of university teachers of geography, 1965.

unfinished or projects had simply failed to materialize. For example, south-eastern France had received a great deal of attention thanks to the network of scholars working under the patronage of Blanchard at Grenoble, but parts of north-western France, the Vosges and southern sections of the Paris Basin had escaped attention at this time (Thibault 1972 140)(Figure 7). These shortcomings would be rectified in future years. In addition, the nature of the coverage varied greatly, with some theses being comprehensive attempts to write 'total geography' but the majority of recent monographs being examinations of particular themes cast in a regional setting. As was evident from the start, there was no standard model or formulaic approach for writing a regional monograph in French geography.

These hundred volumes do not belong to a single geographical 'jigsaw' into which a number of pieces still had to be inserted, but rather they should be

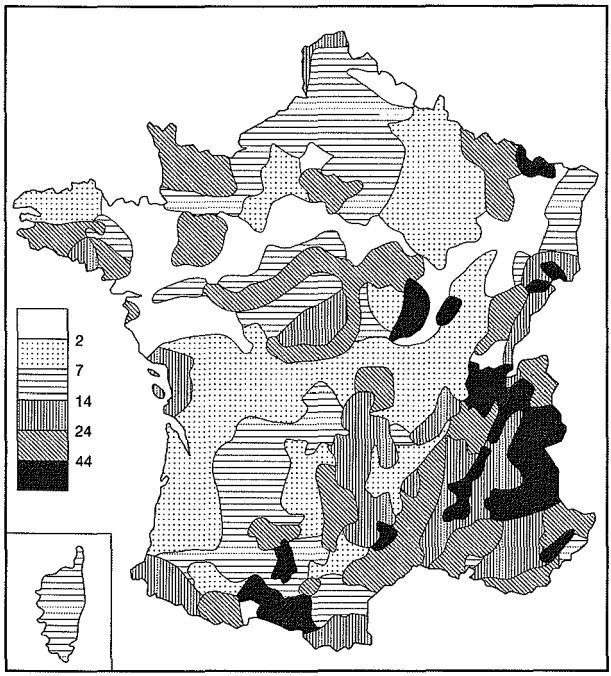



**Figure 7:** Intensity of coverage by regional monographs, 1900-1965 (pages per canton).

thought of as sections of several different and incomplete thematic puzzles. Such diversity reflected the varying initiative, interest and competence of individual authors as well as the degree of guidance offered by particular patrons. Nonetheless, when taken together, the monographs made important contributions to the systematic study of the geomorphology, rural geography and historical geography of France. Their substance and their scholarship were widely appreciated by academic geographers in the British Isles during the inter-war period and the third quarter of the twentieth century.[48] For example, the historical geographer H.C. Darby was greatly influenced both by the content of regional monographs and by the different approaches to writing historical geography adopted by their authors, especially Demangeon, Dion and Deffontaines (Darby 2002 91-128; Plet 2003; Berger, Gillette and Berger 2005; Clout 2007). The enduring rurality of France, the interpretative logic of combining physical and human factors at the heart of the Vidalian

discipline, and the placement of doctoral candidates in teaching posts in *lycées*, often in small towns, across the nation help to explain this particular orientation.

With very few exceptions, urban and industrial themes received little attention in geographical monographs that were completed before the 1960s (Juillard 1964 46; Buttimer 1971 118). Introducing his pioneering thesis on coal mining in Lorraine, René Haby remarked tartly: "One knows more about seasonal dwellings on the summer pastures of the Cantal than about dwellings of industrial workers, and more about diets of peasants in Tonkin than about family budgets of miners" (Haby 1963 13).[49] If the 'true France', extolled during World War II and by many politicians in subsequent decades, was to be found in the nation's farms, villages and market towns where traditions lived on and social changes were slow, then the corpus of regional monographs captured the spirit of France (Lebovics 1994). However, if that spirit could only be found in Paris and the nation's large cities, or among her miners, factory workers or immigrants then their cumulative message was seriously out of touch with the rapid transformation of French society after 1945.

After the 1950s, some regional monographs were invigorated as their authors injected concepts related to spatial dynamics and viewed their research not only as an academic exercise for building up cultural capital and enhancing career prospects but also as an activity that might help to inform spatial planning (Claval & Juillard 1967; Baker 2003 168). Despite these trends, it was an inescapable fact that preparing a state doctorate remained a slow and often isolated process that consumed a decade or more in the lives of candidates. Completing a doctoral monograph with the support of one's patron was seen as a critical point along the path toward acquiring a university chair, which would be the pinnacle of a scholarly career. It was not perceived as an early *rite de passage* that opened the way for decades of productive, and possibly innovative, research (Claval and Sanguin 1996 9; Claval 1998 327; Marconis

2000 36-39). This expenditure of so much effort on the preparation of state doctorates in the shape of regional monographs not only absorbed the intellectual energies of French geographers in the most productive periods of their lives but also channelled those energies into a mode of expression that was losing favour in academic geography in other parts of the world (Clout 2003e 264-68). The obsession with regional monographs of massive size, averaging 560 printed pages across the hundred titles, to enable an author to acquire a *doctorat d'état*, generated expensive volumes that were not widely read and had little or no influence beyond the narrow confines of academic geography. Equally seriously, the regional format of these hefty tomes arguably hampered the advance of systematic work. By virtue of this proprietorial concern for specific stretches of territory, their authors tended to remain isolated from developments in cognate disciplines (Bourgéat 2007). In the view of some critics, the lengthy monograph had simply become an "impasse" both for careers of individual scholars and for the development of geography in France as a whole (Brunet, Ferras and Théry 1992 307).

By the final quarter of the twentieth century, the French state doctorate was recognized as being seriously out of line with the relatively brief PhD required in the UK or the USA (Musselin 2008 106). In response to this incongruity, registration for life-consuming state doctorates was halted in 1984 and the qualification was replaced by short theses (*doctorats nouveau régime*) that were designed to be prepared within the equivalent of three or four years of full-time study (Douzant-Rosenfeld & Raison 1997; Claval 1998 327; Marconis 2000 38-39).[50] However, some candidates had only just registered the proposed topic of their state doctorate by the early 1980s, and hence the final cluster of long monographs was not completed until the 1990s (Figure 3). By that time the number of state doctorates on aspects of the geography of France had grown from 100 to 316. Most recent examples comprised thematic work that was set within a regional frame, but a minority examined selected topics across the whole of France. In addition, a further 495 state doctorates had been examined during the twentieth century that dealt

with other parts of the world. Whatever its academic merits may have been in the past, this gigantic, time-consuming form of scholarly production needed to be replaced if innovative modes of disciplinary expression were to be allowed to flourish in France.

Despite their disappearance from the academic agenda and from the reading lists of undergraduates, the French regional monographs have acquired a new appeal among amateur historians and bibliophiles with original editions being in great demand. Some titles even generate sufficient interest for reprints to be made. Perhaps because of its exemplary structure and the fact that it covered part of the devastated war zone, Armand Colin reprinted Demangeon's *La Picardie*, both before and after World War I (Demangeon 1911, 1925). In 1973, a fourth edition appeared from another publisher, thanks to Aimé Perpillou, Demangeon's dutiful son-in-law, who provided a new introduction, a revised bibliography and additional maps (Demangeon 1973). Some reissued monographs have been reprinted and bound between hard covers to make attractive collector's items (for example, Blanchard 1970; Deffontaines 2000). Others have been enhanced by full-colour cartography (Durand 2006), or have been republished between simple paper covers (Sion 1981; De Félice 1984). Whatever their appearance, at least some of these remarkable monographs continue to attract interest at the start of the twenty-first century among sections of the book-buying public. They are purchased by city-dwellers who spend their weekends or vacations in the countryside, or have retired to the nation's villages and small towns. This market is not, of course, entirely a French one being shared by foreign residents in France. The explanation for the detail of France's much-loved rural landscapes, vernacular architecture, vineyards, chestnut groves, local cuisine, cheeses and other *produits du terroir* is to be found on the pages of these volumes. Despite being overtaken by other forms of academic endeavour and doctoral expression, there is no doubt that the corpus of regional monographs formed a major aspect in the production of geographical knowledge by French scholars during the twentieth century, and may very well have been the leading one.

By interrogating these monographs and their reception by members of the French geographical community, this essay has explored the social context in which this major corpus of knowledge was produced. Far from being a monolithic body of writing, the hundred volumes were remarkably diverse in structure, content and length. Their only common features were their attachment to specific parts of France and the fact that they were written to acquire a doctoral qualification, often with a university professorship in mind. Each candidate depended on patronage from an acknowledged master whose network, or cluster, was joined and to whom allegiance had to be demonstrated. Patrons, in turn, presented the work of their protégés to the discipline at large, only rarely expressing serious criticism and thereby blocking career enhancement. When established patrons retired or died, networks had to be renegotiated and allegiances re-established by their successors. In addition to demonstrating the skill and orientation of their authors, these volumes were fashioned by "styles of patronage, pedagogic traditions, and conduits of intellectual transmission" articulated through networks of communication and social organization (Livingstone 2003 88).[51] Without doubt, the production of geographical knowledge in the form of these regional monographs was not simply the outworking of a formulaic academic process but was, rather, a richly human affair in which diverse life chances had a major role to play.

## Appendix : Regional monographs on France

This inventory shows the date of publication of each monograph, the author, title, place of publication, publisher, number of pages, examining university, name of patron, and the dates of birth and death of the author. If a thesis was published in a different year from which it was examined, the year of examination is placed after the examining university within the bracket. To ensure comparability between the inventory and library catalogues, monographs are listed by date of publication rather than by year of thesis defence. Where the patron is not specified but a name is highly probable, then a single question mark is placed against that name. Only in a few cases has it proved impossible to identify the patron. A question mark indicates where vital dates are not known.

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**1896** Gobin, Léon, *Essai sur la géographie de l'Auvergne,* Paris, Hachette, 414p. (Paris : Dubois)[ ?- ?]

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**1905** Demangeon, Albert, *La plaine picarde : Picardie, Artois, Cambrésis, Beauvaisis. Étude de géographie sur les plaines de craie du Nord de la France,* Paris, Armand Colin, 496p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1872-1940]

**1906** Chantriot, Émile, *La Champagne. Étude de géographie régionale,* Paris and Nancy, Berger-Levrault, 316p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1865 - ?]

**1906** Blanchard, Raoul, *La Flandre, étude géographique de la plaine flamande en France, Belgique, Hollande,* Dunkirk, Société dunkerquoise pour l'avancement des lettres, des sciences et des arts, 530p. (Lille : Ardaillon)[1877-1965]

**1907** Vallaux, Camille, *La Basse-Bretagne : étude de géographie humaine,* Paris, Cornély, 320p. (Paris, 1906 : Vidal de la Blache)[1870-1945]

**1907** De Félice, Raoul, *La Basse-Normandie. Étude de géographie régionale,* Hachette, Paris, 598p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1879-1912]

**1908** Vacher, Antoine, *Le Berry. Contribution à l'étude géographique d'une région française,* Paris, Armand Colin, 548p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1873-1919]

**1909** Sion, Jules, *Les paysans de la Normandie orientale. Étude géographique sur les populations rurales du Caux et du Bray, du Vexin normand et de la vallée de la Seine,* Paris, Armand Colin, 544p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1879-1940]

**1909** Passerat, Charles, *Les plaines du Poitou,* Paris, Delagrave, 239p. (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1877-1911]

**1913** Sorre, Maximilien, *Les Pyrénées : étude de géographie biologique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 508p (Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1880-1962]

**1917** Musset, René, *Le Bas-Maine; étude géographique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 496p.(Paris : Vidal de la Blache)[1881-1977]

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**1922** Arbos, Philippe, *La vie pastorale dans les Alpes françaises. Étude de géographie humaine,* Grenoble, Allier, 716p. (Grenoble : Blanchard)[1882-1956]

**1925** Pardé, Maurice, *Le régime du Rhône. Étude hydrologique,* Lyon, Masson, 1,330p. (Grenoble : Blanchard)[1893-1973]

**1925** Cholley, André, *Les Préalpes de Savoie (Genevois, Bauges) et leur avant-pays : étude de géographie régionale,* Paris, Armand Colin, 756p. (Paris : De Martonne) [1886-1968]

**1926** Sclafert, Thérèse, *Le Haut Dauphiné au Moyen Âge,* Paris : Sirey, 766p. (Paris : Gallois)[1876-1958]

**1926** Quenedey, Raymond, *L'habitation rouennaise. Étude d'histoire, de géographie et d'archéologie urbaines,* Rouen, Lainé-Lestringant, 426p. (Paris : ?Gallois)[1868-1938]

**1926** Bénévent, Ernest, *Le climat des Alpes françaises,* Paris, Office National Météorologique, 446p. (Grenoble : Blanchard)[1883-1967]

**1927** Faucher, Daniel, *Plaines et bassins du Rhône moyen entre Bas-Dauphiné et Provence ; étude géographique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 670p. (Grenoble : Blanchard) [1882-1970]

**1927** Chabot, Georges, *Les plateaux du Jura central. Étude morphogénique,* Paris, Belles Lettres, 350p. (Paris : De Martonne)[1890-1975]

**1928** Baulig, Henri, *Le plateau central et sa bordure méditerranéenne : étude morphologique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 592p. (Paris : De Martonne)[1877-1962]

**1929** Fischer, Jean, *L'Adour et ses affluents. Régime et utilisation des eaux,* Bordeaux, Bière, 598p. (Clermont-Ferrand : Arbos)[ ?- ?]

**1929** Allix, André, *Un pays de haute montagne : L'Oisans. Étude géographique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 915p. (Grenoble : Blanchard)[1889-1966]

**1930** Gibert, André, *La Porte de Bourgogne et d'Alsace (Trouée de Belfort) Étude géographique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 638p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1893-1985]

**1930** Briquet, Abel, *Le littoral du Nord de la France et son évolution morphologique,* Paris, Armand Colin, 442p. (Paris, 1929 : ?De Martonne)[ ? -1952]

**1931** Meynier, André, *Ségalas, Levézou, Châtaigneraie. Étude géographique,* Aurillac, USHA, 490p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1901-1973]

**1931** Blache, Jules, *Les massifs de la Grande Chartreuse et du Vercors. Étude géographique,* Grenoble, Didier-Richard, 992p. (Grenoble : Blanchard)[1893-1970]

**1931** Cavaillès, Henri, *La vie pastorale et agricole dans les Pyrénées des Gaves de l'Adour et des Nestes : étude de géographie humaine,* Paris, Armand Colin, 416p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1870-1951]

**1932** Deffontaines, Pierre, *Les hommes et leurs travaux dans les pays de la moyenne Garonne (Agenais, Bas-Quercy),* Lille, SILIC, 462p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1894-1978]

**1933** Lefebvre Théodore, *Les modes de vie dans les Pyrénées atlantiques orientales,* Paris, Armand Colin, 778p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1889-1943]

**1934** Dion, Roger, *Le Val de Loire : étude de géographie régionale,* Tours, Arrault, 752p. (Paris, 1933 : Demangeon)[1896-1981]

**1934** Rambert, Gaston, *Marseille. La formation d'une grande cité moderne. Étude de géographie urbaine,* Marseille, Maupetit, 536p. (Paris : Demangeon)[1893- ?]

**1934** Capot-Rey, Robert, *La région industrielle sarroise. Territoire de la Sarre et bassin houiller de la Moselle. Étude géographique,* Paris & Nancy, Berger-Levrault, 640p. (Paris, 1933 : Demangeon)[1897-1977]

**1935** Marres, Paul, *Les Grands Causses : étude de géographie physique et humaine,* Tours, Arrault, 658p. (Paris : De Martonne)[1893-1974]

**1935** George, Pierre, *La région du Bas-Rhône : étude de géographie régionale,* Paris, Baillière, 692p. (Paris : Cholley)[1909-2006]

**1937** Perrin, Maxime, *Saint-Étienne et sa région économique. Un type de la vie industrielle en France,* Tours, Arrault, 402p. (Paris : Demangeon)[ ?- ?]

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## Notes

[1] Jules Simon, minister of public instruction, charged Auguste Himly, holder of the chair of geography at the Sorbonne, and Émile Levasseur, historian, statistician and demographer, to report on the situation. In 1871, their views were published in a 46-page joint report and Levasseur produced an expanded version (Levasseur & Himly 1871; Levasseur 1872).

[2] The earliest professors of geography in France, such as Himly, Dubois, Gallois and Vidal de la Blache, were historians by training. *Histoire-géo* remains a single subject in French schools to this very day and it has been estimated that four-fifths of staff teaching geography in secondary schools (*lycées* and *collèges*) are historians by training. However, first degrees in history in France still involve students taking some basic courses in geography, and some – but not all – programmes of study in geography involve a few courses in history. Many advanced *lycée* teachers who see themselves as 'geographers' have passed the *agrégation* examination in *histoire-géo* rather than in geography alone.

[3] The ENS was – and still is – the classic example of an "elite space" (Livingstone 2003 83).

[4] Among the earliest Vidalians, Albert Demangeon was the son of a gendarme and was brought up by his widowed mother in Normandy. The father of Maximilien Sorre was a railway worker living in Rennes, and Antoine Vacher was the son of a tailor from Montluçon. The father of Raoul Blanchard was a draughtsman in Orléans, and Camille Vallaux came from a rural family living near Tours. By contrast, the father of Jean Brunhes was a professor, and Emmanuel de Martonne was the son of an archivist. In terms of marriage, De Martonne married the daughter of Vidal, whilst Demangeon married the daughter of architect Paul Wallon and granddaughter of the historian, senator and former minister of public instruction, Henri Wallon.

[5] For example, Preston James and Geoffrey Martin noted the wide variety of topics studied in French regional monographs, and Alan Baker offered a brief assessment of their role in bridging the divide between geography and history (James & Martin 1972 196-97; Baker 2003 167-69).

[6] Notably, Bailly, Ferras and Pumain (1992), Brunet, Ferras and Théry (1992), Lévy and Lussault (2003), Benko and Strohmayer (2004), and Johnston, Gregory and Smith (1994). Vincent Berdoulay (1981) and Paul Claval (1998) deal with individual authors and works, and some monographs are appraised as part of the entries in successive volumes of *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* for individual authors.

[7] The requirement to write two theses in order to obtain a state doctorate survived throughout the period under consideration. To avoid confusion, the present essay will not examine *thèses complémentaires* that varied in length from the equivalent of substantial academic articles to small books exceeding a hundred printed pages.

[8] Originating in the nineteenth century, the obligation to publish doctoral theses operated right across the period under consideration with the exception of World War II when some theses were submitted in typescript only, with publication being hindered by paper shortages (see note 33). Worries about obtaining funds to enable printing to commence figured in correspondence among the early cluster of Vidalian researchers and remained a serious matter of concern for later candidates (Clout 2003b).

[9] The theme and region to be investigated had to be recorded officially and, in effect, became the academic 'property' of the candidate that should not be invaded by others. As will be seen below in the case of Raoul Blanchard and Jean Chardonnet, some patrons viewed wide sections of France as the academic domain within which sections could be allocated to their students alone.

[10] The 2004 reprint of Charles-Brun's book, first published in 1911, contains a useful digest of various projects to define administrative regions in order to break the centralized stranglehold of Paris. Supporting essays by Mireille Meyer and Julian Wright (pages 7-60) examine the varied career and political ideas of Charles-Brun. See also Wright, 2003.

[11] Raoul Blanchard was always keen to use geographical knowledge to promote the economic development of the French Alps, and in the 1950s and 1960s Michel Rochefort used information and techniques derived from his monograph to assist the regional planning of Alsace and the designation of *métropoles d'équilibre* (major provincial cities to counterbalance the economic weight of Paris) as part of the programme for *l'aménagement du territoire* (Veitl 1996, 2001; Anon. 2002).

[12] Vidal appears to have read only the final drafts of work by his disciples (Clout 2003b). Recently Michel Sivignon told me that his patron, Maurice Le Lannou, declared: "Do not come to see me each week to discuss your thesis. Bring it to me when you have finished". I am grateful to Marie-Claire Robic for a discussion about the notion of 'patronage' among the Vidalians.

[13] Interesting examples of networked knowledge in historical knowledge are found in the work of Jon Stobart on personal and commercial networks in the eighteenth century, of Mark Brayshay, Mark Cleary and John Selman with regard to the early twentieth-century corporate class, and of Heike Jöns on networks of academic travel, to mention but three examples (Stobart 2004; Brayshay, Cleary & Selman 2007; Jöns 2008).

[14] *Élève* remains the correct official title to this day. A recent visit to the ENS (Lettres et Sciences Humaines) in Lyon revealed that such contractual obligations remain in place. I will use the term 'pupil' only in relation to students passing through the ENS. The terms 'disciple', 'protégé' and 'student' will be used in other contexts.

[15] An interesting critical assessment of the reception of the work of Gallois is provided by Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier and Marie-Claire Robic in their preface to the 2008 reprint of *Régions naturelles et noms de pays* (pages vii-lvi).

[16] The valuable contributions written by cluster members to collections of school textbooks that bore their master's name exemplify the reciprocity embedded in this relationship (Lefort 1992 53). In a North American context, Geoffrey J. Martin comments on 'disciple groups' as follows: "Authority fundamentally resides with *le maître*. The disciples schooled in his or her beliefs, tutored in his or her tastes, and admitted to the profession, will jointly constitute a belief system that advances its cause and domain. Friendships, networks, gatekeepers, and other brokers of disciplinary currency carry forward the synergistic process in ways both subtle and direct. The process has changed in degree, but not kind, since the early years of [W.M.] Davis. The matter of disciplinary advance via disciple groups is worthy of further attention" (Martin 2003 47).

[17] More of an economic historian by training, Levasseur taught economic geography and related aspects of demography and statistical science at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers and the Collège de France. In addition to works of erudition, he published textbooks and atlases for schoolchildren (Vidal de la Blache 1911b).

[18] In this third category came a historical hint of Vidal's innovative scheme of urban-based regions (Vidal de la Blache 1910).

[19] This was a *doctorat de l'université* prepared under the patronage of Camena d'Almeida at the University of Bordeaux. Appearing as *Le Morvan; étude de géographie humaine* in 1908, it was published by Armand Colin, the favoured publishing house of the Vidalians (Clout & Gay 2004; Clout forthcoming).

[20] Given the period under consideration and the fact that very few remain alive (see Appendix I), I have not been able to interview the geographers who wrote the first hundred monographs (the memorable two-hour interview with Michel Laferrère and conversations with Jean Bastié, Pierre Brunet and André Fel being exceptions) but over the years I have benefited from chance discussions with many of their disciples. The biographical approach to elucidating more recent aspects of geographical endeavour has been employed effectively, for example, by Trevor Barnes (2001).

[21] Hereafter, letters received by Demangeon are indicated by author and by date of dispatch.

[22] Founded in 1913 as the *Recueil des Travaux de l'Institut de Géographie Alpine*, this journal assumed the title of *Revue de Géographie Alpine* in 1934. The Institut de Géographie Alpine was duly rehoused in the main university building on the Place de Verdun and a nearby thoroughfare bears the name of Raoul Blanchard.

[23] In similar vein, Christopher Board wrote of "the 'incomplete' series of regional monographs written under Vidal de la Blache" (Board 1968 35).

[24] Jacques Bethemont recalls that Gibert's religious beliefs, as a member of the Darbyste Protestant group, and his abstinence from alcohol, set him apart from most of his fellow soldiers.

[25] This disability influenced his choice of the Saar for his doctoral terrain but later in life he undertook demanding research – by camel – in North Africa.

[26] This point is discussed, albeit in a very different context, by Trevor Barnes in his analysis of the development of academic geography in Canada in the second half of the twentieth century (Barnes 2007).

[27] The title changed to *Annales d'histoire sociale* in 1939, to *Mélanges d'histoire sociale* during the war, and then to *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations* in 1946. Since 1994 the title has been *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales*. Whatever the title, this journal must not be confused with the *Annales de Géographie*.

[28] Among the regions to be studied in these monographs that failed to materialise were the Hainaut, the Alpes-Maritimes, the Jura, and vine cultivation in south-eastern France.

[29] Many years ago, Hugh Prince memorably described such illustrations as "the kinds of map engraved on dry toast".

[30] In other respects, the two men were fundamentally different, with the independence and freethinking of Vallaux contrasting with the Catholic piety of Deffontaines.

[31] Certainly I remember the walls of Perpillou's office in the mid 1960s being adorned with black-framed portrait photographs of his father-in-law.

[32] Ian Thompson reminds me that these contrasting wartime experiences had significant implications for thesis completion dates and gave rise to interpersonal difficulties after the war when candidates were competing for professorial posts.

[33] For the sake of completeness, mention must be made of a monograph entitled *De la Marne à la Saône* presented in 1944 by Fernand Mory to the University of Dijon for a state doctorate. This was under the patronage of Georges Chabot who reported Mory's work in the *Annales de Géographie* (Chabot 1946). Under wartime dispensation, the monograph was not printed and four typescript copies were submitted, of which one survives in the *archives départementales* of the Haute-Marne at Chaumont, Choignes. Mory was a teacher and schools inspector who collaborated with Chabot on several school textbooks. He published an article on rural settlement and the undated manuscript on the cutlery industry held at Bar-le-Duc may well have been his minor thesis (Mory 1939; undated). The doctorate does not seem to have changed Mory's career. His thesis is listed in Appendix I but is not included among the one hundred monographs under scrutiny since it has not been possible to read this typescript.

[34] Both Michel Laferrère and Jacques Bethemont recalled their former colleague by referring in first place to the years he spent as a prisoner of war. Soon after his return to France, Lebeau delivered a largely objective lecture about East Prussia, however he stressed that the presence of "Slavs (Poles, Russians) and Latins (French, Belgians, Italians), who were living side by side [as prisoners-of-war] with the Prussians", contributed to a "reinforcement of the old, profound racial hatred between Slavs and Germans" (Lebeau 1945 55). He argued that French prisoners-of-war brought a "civilising element" to the Prussian farm workers, "often introducing them to more modern cultivation techniques, teaching them how to use their machinery more effectively, and even revealing some rudiments of well being, notably through teaching them how to cook" (*Ibid*).

[35] The German occupiers introduced the *Service de Travail Obligatoire* to send young Frenchmen to work in factories and mines in Germany in order to support the war effort. A visit to the Musée de la Résistance in Grenoble brought home the importance of wartime Resistance activity among students, academics, factory workers, priests and others in the French Alps, and the significance of that engagement for post-war solidarity. I am grateful to François Gay for discussing the STO with me.

[36] Chevalier mentions wartime fieldwork undertaken by Jean Chardonnet in the southern Alps, Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier in the Morvan, Jean Tricart in eastern parts of the Paris Basin, and Max Derruau in the Limagne.

[37] Jacques Bethemont reports that Blanchard believed that Bozon was better suited to the teacher training college.

[38] The position of *assistant* was established in 1942 for young scholars, each working for and directly under the control of a professor. As well as helping with teaching, an *assistant* was expected to undertake research leading toward a doctoral thesis (Bourgéat 2007 61).

[39] In fact, Sorre had considerable influence on French geography and on the world scene through his writings and his membership of national and international committees (Clout 2008).

[40] This comment was not without irony since George was completely out of sympathy with his students and doctoral candidates during and after the events of May 1968. Nicole Mathieu relates how Pierre George's protégés (Michel Coquéry, Raymond Guglielmo, Yves Lacoste, Michel Rochefort) called at his suburban home to discuss the implications of the events for the Institut de Géographie and for the future of geography in France. The front door remained closed for a long time and only after prolonged ringing of the doorbell did their master receive them. He confessed that he did not understand the concerns of the students and was unconvinced by the 'revolutionary' arguments of his disciples (Mathieu and Cartier 2002).

[41] Blanchard finally moved from Grenoble to Paris in 1952, apparently having fallen out with his successors (and protégés), Paul and Germaine Veyret (Bourgéat 2007 236). His flow of book reviews was directed to the *Revue de Géographie de Lyon* rather than the *Revue de Géographie Alpine*.

[42] As one anonymous reviewer of the present text remarked: "Frankly, some of the regional monographs are now forgotten and unread because they deserve to be; they were utterly indigestible and reflected a general Gallic refusal to engage with the intellectual currents transforming the discipline of geography in the English-speaking world". To me, this comment is not entirely appropriate since it assumes competence in English and access to English-language periodicals. Neither of these prerequisites is widespread among French geographers to this very day. French colleagues frequently ask me how many anglo-saxon geographers are familiar with publications in French or in any language other than their own.

[43] Like some of his disciples, Pierre George left the communist party in 1956 following Russian repression of the Hungarian uprising.

[44] Hélène Lamicq offered an interesting qualification, stating that Rochefort "constructed his doctoral thesis with and against Pierre George, leaving each meeting in a fury ... 'With', because Pierre George was a good critic, without whom Michel Rochefort would not have written such a good thesis, [certainly] a regional one, but not entirely so. 'Against', because Michel Rochefort exerted his liberty

to use his own voice to write a thesis that was hardly orthodox, in relation to the Geography of the time or to Pierre George's thinking at the end of the 1950s" (Lamicq 2002).

[45] Brunet was referring to the article by Juillard (1962) that discussed dynamic, functional regions.

[46] Ronald Harrison-Church was a fluent French speaker who had studied at the Sorbonne in the late 1930s. Best known as an expert on tropical Africa, he also published and taught on France, where his frequent visits made him well known in university circles.

[47] A collection of regional essays on Great Britain was edited by A.G. Ogilvie to accompany the International Geographical Congress in Cambridge but these brief essays were in no way comparable to the French regional monographs (Ogilvie 1928). Hugh Prince reminds me that Carl Sauer wrote a regional monograph on the Ozark Highland of Missouri for his doctorate and that Vernor Finch discussed various early regional studies written in the USA (Sauer 1920; Finch 1939).

[48] It should be recalled that most academic geographers in British universities before 1950 were able to read French, and that only a minority had doctorates.

[49] Haby was referring to the monographs by Alfred Durand (1946) and by Pierre Gourou, *Les paysans du delta tonkinois* (1936).

[50] With the demise of the state doctorate, a new hurdle was devised for those aspiring to a university chair in France. This is the *habilitation à diriger les recherches* (HDR) that demands the submission of substantial dossiers of work, covering the full text of past publications, a lengthy statement of career development and experience with graduate students, and a very full presentation of research work in progress. Each candidate for the HDR is required to defend the case before a jury of professors at a public examination. The state doctorate has disappeared from French higher education but the HDR has certain similarities, the main exception being the requirement to submit a lengthy and fully complete thesis. See Fell 2007, 111-12.

[51] Later in this quotation, David Livingstone refers to "expressions of religious devotion". These issues not only influenced the writing and career of Pierre Deffontaines but also, in a negative sense, conditioned every monograph that was presented as a thesis for a state doctorate in the secular system of higher education in France.

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