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Houses divided?

Noble familial and class connections during the Age of Revolution and Napoleon

As Napoleon prepared to leave for Elba in 1814, his young *aide-de-camp*, Anatole de Montesquiou-Fezensac, begged to join in his emperor's exile. For the young officer, serving the imperial monarch equated to performing his duty for his country, and without his sovereign to serve, his country had no meaning. 'Sire,' he said, 'I do not know France without you.' Napoleon refused his request. Montesquiou had his whole life ahead of him, and he had a young family. The deposed emperor could not let him throw away his future with exile. Yet, in his willingness to share his liege's fate, Montesquiou illustrated, as he had done on the battlefield, his devotion to Napoleon.[1]

Only a month earlier, Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld, another young Frenchman, publicly displayed his own sentiments toward his chosen sovereign. An active campaigner for the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France, he sought some way to demonstrate, dramatically and very publicly, his loyalty to the Bourbons and his hatred for the previous regime. On 31 March 1814, he found his opportunity. Sosthènes incited a Parisian mob to welcome the returning Louis XVIII by pulling down the statue of Napoleon from atop the Colonne Vendôme. 'Prove that you no longer want to be governed by the man who has made so much blood spill, and who has made a pedestal with the cadavers of your children! To the Place Vendôme!,' he harangued his listeners. The crowd responded in kind and marched toward the Paris landmark. Climbing

1 A. de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution, l'empire, la restauration et le règne de Louis-Philippe,* ed. R. Burnand (Paris, 1961) 335-336.

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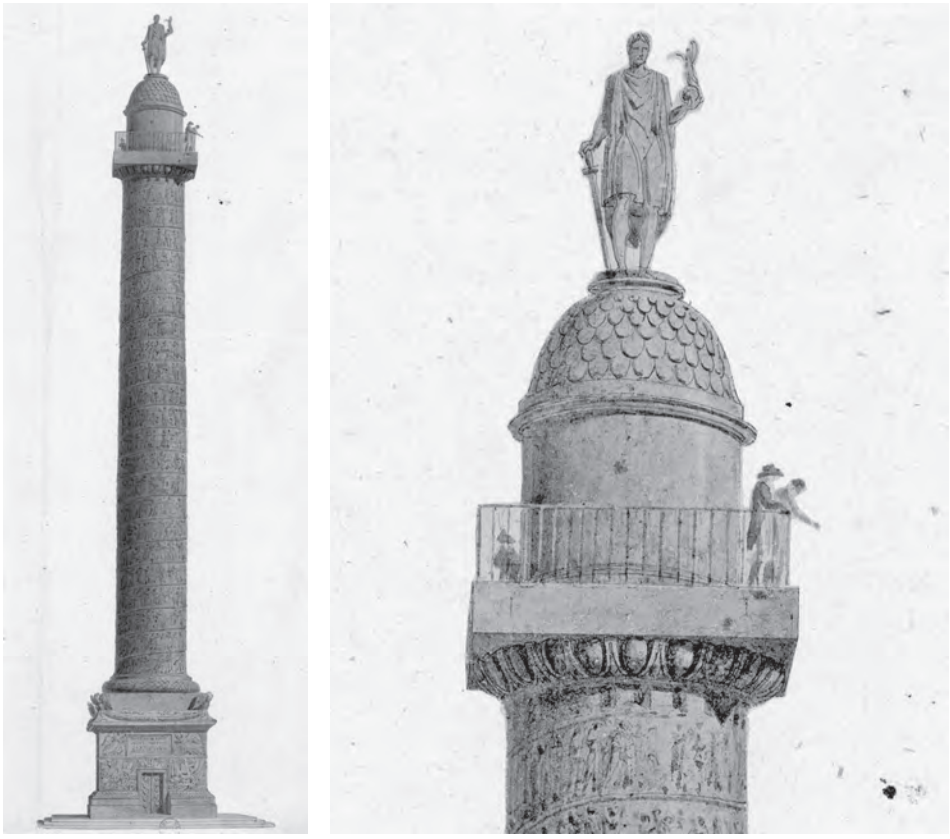

The Colonne Vendôme with Napoleon's statue (see detail) before the attempted iconoclasm of 1814 *(pen and ink drawing, Jean-François-Joseph Lecointe, 1810-1814; collection Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-VE-53 (H))*

to the top of the stairs inside the column, some of the people tied ropes around the statue and threw the ends down to the mob below. Pulling on the rope, the crowd attempted to extricate the statue in a symbolic toppling of the Napoleonic regime. The enterprise met with no success, and the crowd eventually dispersed when the occupying Russian garrison appeared on the scene. By encouraging this riot, the young La Rochefoucauld hoped to participate in the replacement of the imperial regime with what he viewed as the legitimate monarch, even if only by a symbolic dislodgement.[2]

2 L.F.S. de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires de M. de La Rochefoucauld, duc de Doudeauville* (15 vols.; Paris, 1861), V, 465-467; J. Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain sous l'Empire et la Restauration* (Paris, 1949) 104.

That two, young men should seek to prove their devotion to their chosen sovereigns does not seem striking. Both bore names of illustrious noble French families who boasted centuries of service to the throne, whoever currently occupied it. Their youthful sense of valor and honor may also explain their extreme measures of loyalty: exile and iconoclasm. But, perhaps what is surprising is their relationship as first cousins, only three years apart in age. They had grown up together and at times lived in the same household. At some point in their youth, these two men, so similar in age and upbringing, diverged dramatically in their political allegiances. Did these political differences turn cousin against cousin?

Previous historical studies have delved into the responses of French nobles to cataclysmic political and social changes. Carolyn Chappell Lougee, for instance, described the reaction of a French Protestant noble family to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), which made them unwelcome in their homeland.[3] Raymond Mentzer also examined the lives of members of a Huguenot French family, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[4] Both argued that these families, like most nobles facing difficult circumstances at various times in history, developed strategies for preserving their ancestral wealth and status. Yet, similar analyses of individual families during the crises of the French Revolution and Napoleonic regimes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seems sparse.[5]

William Doyle addressed the fate of the nobility in France during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in France, but he concentrated on the relationship of the noble class as a whole to the government rather than looking at interactions within their own ranks.[6] Jean Tulard offered some examples of interpersonal relationships among the elite in his work on the nobility of the Napoleonic regime, but like Natalie Petiteau and Philip Mansel, he focused mainly on Napoleon's creation of a new elite and his efforts to integrate the old nobility with his new social order.[7] For the most part, little research has addressed how the French Revolution and First Empire affected pre-existing bonds of kinship among the nobility at the familial level. Yet, this could be the litmus test of the era's far-reaching attempts at social and political change. Could these watershed events rend long-standing connections between noble elites?

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3 C. Lougee, *Facing the Revocation: Huguenot families, faith, and the king's will* (Oxford, 2016).

4 R.A. Mentzer, *Blood and belief: family survival and confessional identity among the provincial Huguenot nobility* (West Lafayette, 1994).

5 For a comprehensive study of German, Russian, and British nobility during the nineteenth century, see D. Lieven, *The Aristocracy in Europe, 1815-1914* (New York, 1992).

6 W. Doyle, *Aristocracy and its enemies in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford, 2009).

7 J. Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse d'Empire* (Paris, 1986); P. Mansel, *The court of France: 1789-1830* (Cambridge, 1988); P. Mansel, *The eagle in splendour* (London, 2015); N. Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire and the elite groups of the nineteenth century: a successful fusion'; https://www.napoleon.org/en/history-of-the-two-empires/articles/the-nobility-of-the-empire-and-the-elite-groups-of-the-19th-century-a-successful-fusion/ (accessed 15 Nov. 2019).

Matthew Rendle's research on the Russian nobility after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 suggests that this was not the case. Tracing noble Russian families and their kinship connections from 1917 through the 1920s led him to conclude that times of stress created stronger bonds, regardless of political differences. He further demonstrated how nobles' relationships with one another helped them maintain their cultural identities and at times even saved their lives.[8] By observing the connection between two French noble families as they faced the events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the present article suggests that what Rendle discovered for Russian aristocrats in 1917 also held true for French nobles in similar circumstances. Despite their differences, Anatole, Sosthènes, and their families maintained a close bond throughout the Revolution (1789-1804), the reign of Napoleon (1804-1814/1815), and even the Restoration (1814-1830). The Montesquious and La Rochefoucaulds even used their positions of influence during the various regimes to benefit each other and their fellow nobles. An examination of the lives of these two men and their relatives reveals how noble familial connections and class allegiances could still eclipse any other competing identities.

The La Rochefoucaulds and the Montesquious during the French Revolution

Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld and Anatole de Montesquiou-Fezensac grew up together as the sons of prominent *ancien* régime noble families. Connected by blood through their mothers and socially by their fathers who hunted and attended *salons* together, the two cousins played together as children and grew up in similar households.[9] Both families benefited from their distinguished pedigrees and the political and social privileges that came with their names. As Sosthènes proudly described in his memoirs, the La Rochefoucaulds had a long history of service to France and its monarchs.[10] The Montesquious claimed that their lineage traced back to Clovis, a detail which Anatole's grandfather was fond of mentioning to his acquaintances.[11] The names of La Rochefoucauld and Montesquiou appeared on the lists of those allowed to be presented at court, and as members of the highest nobility both families owned extensive country estates as well as Parisian townhomes.[12] Members of both families also enjoyed the company

8 M. Rendle, 'Family, kinship and Revolution: the Russian nobility, 1917-23', *Family and Community History*, 8 (2005) 35-47.

9 For the mothers' history, see J. de Lavernette, *Dans la tourmente une femme forte: Augustine de La Rochefoucauld, duchesse de Doudeauville, 1764-1849* (Paris, 2010); *Life of Madame de La Rochefoucauld, Duchesse of Doudeauville, foundress of the Society of Nazareth,* trans. F.C. Hoey (London, 1878); De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution,* 341-383; De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, I, 87-88, 90; V, 502.

10 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires,* V, 351-392.

11 A. de Tilly, *Mémoires du comte Alexandre de Tilly pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs de la fin du XVIII^e siècle* (2 vols.; Paris, 1929), II, 282.

12 P. Goubert, *The Ancien Régime: French society 1600-1750,* trans. S. Cox (New York, 1969) 161. For infor-

of the highest Parisian society. Anatole's father had a position at the Versailles court as first equerry to the comte de Provence (the future Louis XVIII).[13] Evidence of the Montesquious' relationship with the royal family can be found in one of Anatole's earliest childhood memories. He recalled that one day he was walking with his maid through the Tuileries garden when Queen Marie-Antoinette walked up and embraced him saying, 'Anatole, you are quite handsome, you tell that to your mother on my behalf'.[14]

The French Revolution brought catastrophic changes, and even as young children Sosthènes and Anatole encountered the violence of the era. Both witnessed violent riots in the streets and watched family members go to prison or even the guillotine.[15] The Revolution also represented the first major split in the political views of the two families. The La Rochefoucauld parents stalwartly refused to countenance the revolutionary regime. Sosthènes' father, the duc de Doudeauville, initially critical of nobles who straightaway fled France, eventually decided to leave as well and join the army of *émigrés* organized by the prince de Condé on France's eastern border.[16] Sosthènes and his mother remained behind in Paris. As the Revolution moved into the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), the duchesse de Doudeauville entrusted her son to tutors thinking that he would be safer with them than with his noble relatives. Her feelings seemed justified as shortly after Sosthènes' departure, the female members of the La Rochefoucaulds were put under house arrest.[17]

On the other side of the political divide, Anatole's grandfather, Anne-Pierre de Montesquiou-Fezensac, enlisted in the revolutionary army and assumed command of the French *Armée du Midi* which invaded Savoy in 1792. Anatole's father, Elizabeth-Pierre de Montesquiou-Fezensac, a more cautious supporter of the new constitutional monarchy, received the appointment of ambassador to the court of the elector of Saxony in April of 1791.[18] After living in Dresden for a little over a year, the Montesquious returned to France during the Terror, but they insisted that they did not belong on the list of é*migrés.* When accused of being such by a local government official, Elizabeth-Pierre vigorously protested to the contrary, and eventually the family received certificates verifying their status as *non-émigrés*.[19] In spite of this, Anatole's

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mation on presentation at court and the lists of those who could receive this honor, see: F. Bluche, *Les Honneurs de la cour* (Paris, 1958; republished 2000).

13 A. de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou Fezensac depuis la fin de l'ancien régime* (Paris, 1962) 31.

14 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 1; J.F. Solnon, *La Cour de France* (Paris, 1987) 436; D. Roche, *The culture of clothing: dress and fashion in the Ancien Regime*, trans. J. Birrell, (Cambridge, 1996) 191.

15 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution,* 2, 22-31; De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 489-498.

16 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 7; V, 405. The first two volumes of Sosthènes' memoirs are his father's memoirs which the elder La Rochefoucauld dictated to his son.

17 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 489-492.

18 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 60; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution* 6, 9.

19 Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, Dammarie-lès-Lys [ADSEM], no. 969 F 4, Certificat ordon-

parents still spent several months in a provincial prison.[20] While the La Rochefoucaulds chose complete resistance to the revolutionary government, the Montesquious seemed to find some merit in it and willingly served in it until the Reign of Terror.

Once the Terror ended, the Montesquious, like many remaining nobles, tried to live in obscurity on one of their remaining estates. Eventually, they moved back to a large house in Paris during the Directory (1795-1799), but they continued to stay out of politics.[21] The La Rochefoucaulds also seemed to travel unencumbered between their country estate and a house in Paris. During this time, Anatole's mother sent him to live with her sister so that he and Sosthènes could be educated together by an Abbé Duval.[22] Anatole described his tutor as 'very active in the legitimist [pro-Bourbon restoration] party', yet despite these overt political leanings, Anatole reminisced fondly about the abbé.[23] The differences in attitudes toward the Revolution did not seem to prejudice either family against the other. The La Rochefoucaulds did not seem to hesitate in welcoming the grandson of a revolutionary general into their home. Likewise, the Montesquious must have felt secure in their social and legal position to the extent that they did not fear fraternizing with the household of a known *émigré* nor worry about their son being educated by an outspoken royalist. Their relationship to each other and their desire to provide their sons with the best education seemed to surpass any misgivings regarding their political views.

As both young men entered society, they frequented the same events and houses. Anatole described spending his Sunday evenings at the various noble Parisian residences, including that of the La Rochefoucaulds. He also attended parties in the faubourg Saint-Germain, the hotbed for noble, royalist activism during the Directory and the reign of Napoleon. There, he and his cousin Sosthènes mingled with the remnant offspring of Versailles courtiers such as the Noailles and the Sullys.[24] The Montesquious also entertained noble royalists such as their cousin, Abbé François-Xavier-Marc-Antoine de Montesquiou, who would later serve in the restoration government of Louis XVIII.[25] However, no record appears to indicate that either the La Rochefoucaulds or the Montesquious associated with Jacobins, republicans – aside from Anatole's grandfather – or the rising military class during the Directory and the early Consulate (1799-1804). Rather, both families only socialized with those whom they perceived as members of their class. This seems to suggest that for old nobles, lineage still outweighed political orientation.

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né par l'article premier de la loi du 15 mars 1793, 12 Aug. 1793; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 11-16.

20 ADSEM, L 1556, Comité de surveillance La Ferté Gaucher An II; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 23-35.

21 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 38; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 82.

22 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 497; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 66.

23 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 68.

24 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, 65.

25 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, 70.

The nobility under the Napoleonic regime

The most serious test to the relationship between the La Rochefoucaulds and the Montesquious would come with the ascension of Napoleon to the imperial throne. The emperor desired to create a new nobility to add prestige and legitimacy to his court. This imperial elite class, though, would differ from the feudal nobility of the *ancien régime* in that it would be based on service to the empire alone, without the promise of land tenure. Thus, anyone of any social class could potentially receive an imperial title. At the same time, Napoleon stipulated that all new title holders had to possess an income of at least 3000 francs and had to continue in their service to the state.[26] Noble appointments were bestowed on single individuals; those hoping to bequeath their titles to their offspring had to meet additional requirements.[27] Napoleon's first nobles were princes of the empire, created in 1804, but he significantly expanded his elite class with a series of decrees in 1808 that established the titles of counts, barons, and chevaliers. In this way, Napoleon created a whole new elite class based on service and merit.[28]

The emperor wanted particularly to attract members of the old nobility to join the ranks of his imperial aristocracy. This courting of the old nobles represented, first of all, an attempt to dispel opposition and incorporate some of Napoleon's harshest critics into the new regime.[29] Furthermore, the creation of a new nobility that incorporated old and new elites would more truly represent the diversity of the French nation and once and for all break the power and prerogatives of the old nobility.[30] Most importantly though, adding the celebrated names of France's history to the contemporary court would lend glamour and prestige, perhaps enough to dispel perceptions that this court was one of upstarts and soldiers.[31]

As soon as Napoleon took the throne, some *ancien régime* nobles joined his court, but even more rallied to his reign with the expansion of titles in 1808 and the emperor's marriage to an Austrian archduchess, Marie-Louise, in 1810.[32] By 1814, about one fourth of the imperial titles were held by members of the old nobility.[33] Many incen-

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26 L. Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* trans. R.R. Palmer (Princeton, 1981) 65, 68; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'.

27 Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* 68-69; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'.

28 Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* 68; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'.

29 Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain,* 87; Bergeron, *France under Napoleon*, 67; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 84.

30 Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* 69.

31 H.M. Ghislain, *Souvenirs du comte de Merode-Westerloo* (2 vols.; Paris, 1864), I, 208-209; E.-D. de Pasquier, *Mémoires de Chancelier Pasquier, part 1, Révolution, Consulat, Empire, vol. 1, 1789-1810* (3rd ed.; Paris, 1893) 346; L. Madelin, *La Nation sous l'Empereur. Tome X: Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* (Paris, 1948) 29-30; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 91; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'. Petiteau claims that Napoleon initially opposed the inclusion of the *ancien régime* nobility with the imperial nobility.

32 J. Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse*, 99; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 82; C.-O. Zieseniss, *Napoléon et la cour impériale* (Paris, 1980) 93; Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain,* 87.

33 Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 91.

tives encouraged the old to embrace the new. For these former members of the Second Estate who had witnessed the deprivation of their status during the Revolution, the imperial titles afforded them the opportunity to once again assume a position of prominence at court and in society. These nobles could perform again what they had been raised to do: serve the state and act as leaders of the social order.[34]

This may have been what motivated the Montesquious to align with Napoleon despite the opposition of most of their relatives. Their support began with Anatole's father assuming positions in local politics, like it did for others of their class. It grew gradually when Anatole and his older brother received officer commissions in the French army.[35] In 1805, Elizabeth-Pierre became a deputy to the *Corps legislative* and was elected its president in 1810. His distinguished pedigree and his reputation for honesty and competence attracted the attention of the emperor who appointed him to the position of grand chamberlain of the palace in 1809. This position came with the titular promotion to *comte* of the empire. Anatole's mother became the governess of Napoleon's son, the king of Rome, while Anatole himself enjoyed an esteemed military career, became a chamberlain of the emperor, and received the title of baron of the empire.[36]

As members of the new elite, the Montesquious became regular fixtures at the Tuileries as they once had been at Versailles. They also solidified their relationship to the new regime through intermarriage with the imperial family. Anatole's cousin, Anne Rose Zoé de Montesquiou-Fezensac married Arrighi de Casanova, duke of Padua and Napoleon's second cousin, in 1812.[37] But, the Montesquious did not just enjoy the perks of the court at its height and then abandon their imperial posts in 1814, like most of their fellow courtiers. Rather, this noble family remained committed to the emperor even in the final days of his reign. Anatole's protestations of devotion mirrored his parents' commitments to their duties and their loyalty to their sovereign. Madame de Montesquiou accompanied Napoleon's four-year-old son to Austria in 1814 while Elizabeth-Pierre took charge of the National Guard in 1815 and resumed his post as grand chamberlain during the Hundred Days.[38] The fidelity of the Montesquious surpassed most others who had received imperial ennoblement.[39]

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34 C.É.J. Gravier de Vergennes, comtesse de Rémusat, *Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat, 1802-1808* (3 vols.; London, 1880), II, 86, 301; Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain,* 89; Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse*, 99; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 82; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'.

35 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 31, 39, 49; Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* 67, 133.

36 Archives nationales de France, Paris [ANF], no. 349 AP 10, Service du Grand Chambellan; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 153, 199; de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 60; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 31; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 48, 193; Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse*, 195, 262.

37 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 34; Bergeron, *France under Napoleon*, 120.

38 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 32.

39 Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 95, 114.

Ambroise Anatole Augustin de Montesquiou-Fézensac (1788-1878), baron, later comte de l'Empire *(bust, collection Château de Courtanvaux, Bessé-sur-Braye, Loire region, France; photo by Gérard Grand)*

The La Rochefoucaulds, on the other hand, wanted as little to do with the Napoleonic regime as possible, according to Sosthènes' memoirs. Although the emperor dangled titles, financial gains, and positions of influence before the old nobility, most, like Sosthènes' family, refused his advances. Whether out of attachment to the Bourbon dynasty, revulsion at the atrocities of war, or personal dislike for the new ruler, many former nobles stayed away from the new court. They preferred the company of like-minded opponents of the empire who gathered in the salons of Saint-Germain.[40]

Napoleon proffered positions to Sosthènes' family, but, unlike their Montesquiou relatives, the La Rochefoucaulds turned him down nearly every time. The duc de Doud-

40 Bergeron, *France under Napoleon,* 132; Bertaut, *La Faubourg Saint-Germain*, 90-91, 94; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 81, 161.

Napoleon presenting the King of Rome to the dignitaries of the Empire. Governess Louise de Montesquiou, Anatole's mother, is probably represented among the women at the left *(oil on canvas, Georges Rouget; collection Château de Versailles, Wikimedia commons)*

eauville, Sosthènes' father, refused the position of senator, instead only accepting a position in local government.[41] Likewise, his mother refused to become a lady-in-waiting to Josephine.[42] In his memoirs, Sosthènes claimed that he was the subject of several arrest warrants because of his refusal to accept a court position.[43] For him, nobility was a matter of birth that carried with it an obligation of service to a legitimate ruler. It required an ancient lineage, wealth, and social position, qualities acquired over time, not dispensed by the monarch *du jour.*[44] The only La Rochefoucauld who accepted a position at the imperial court or government was the wife of Sosthènes' cousin, Alexandre de La Rochefoucauld, who became the head of Empress Josephine's household. Her acceptance though did not indicate enthusiastic support. She executed only the bare minimum of her duties, often drawing the ire of the emperor for her lack of decorum and her refusal to live in the palace with her mistress.[45] Clearly, the La Rochefou-

41 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 10-11; V, 442.
42 Madelin, *La Nation sous l'Empereur*, 30.
43 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 443-444.
44 De La Rochefoucauld, V, 415, 419.
45 De La Rochefoucauld, II, 73; de Rémusat, *Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat*, II, 133-134; Bertaut, *La Faubourg Saint-Germain*, 87; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 56, 112; Zieseniss, *Napoléon et la cour,* 204-205.

caulds and the Montesquious diverged in their stances regarding the imperial regime.

Louis Bergeron, in his history of Napoleonic society, argued that the imperial regime created a rift among the *ancien régime* nobility. Those, like the La Rochefoucaulds, who rejected the emperor's court regarded with disdain and contempt the members of their class who accepted court positions from Napoleon, as the Montesquious did.[46] It certainly does seem plausible that those who continued to keep their vigil for the Bourbons would shun nobles like the Montesquious for selling out their loyalty for the advantages that imperial court appointments promised. This tension no doubt caused some familial discord at times. Sosthènes' father noted in his memoirs that his refusal of a place at the court caused him some difficulty since his in-laws, the Montesquious, figured so prominently there.[47]

Yet, this split in the nobility does not seem to have been as polarized or as segregated as Bergeron asserted. Rather, as Rendle discovered in the case of the Russian nobles in 1917, Anatole and Sosthènes' families continued to fraternize with one another despite their political differences. Their bonds of affinity manifested in a number of ways. For instance, Sosthènes served as a witness at Anatole's wedding on the Montesquious' country estate in 1809.[48] Anatole and his wife had a son a year later, whom they named Napoleon after the baby's distinguished godfather, but this rabid devotion to the emperor did not prevent the Montesquious from continuing to visit their royalist friends. Similarly, none of their royalist acquaintances seemed to shun the Montesquious.[49] In 1813, a report to the prefect of the *département de la Marne* noted that Mathieu de Montmorency, a well-known Bourbonist whom Napoleon had banished to live outside of Paris, went to reside with the La Rochefoucaulds at their estate at Montmirail. The report then described a gathering at the estate of various individuals, including Anatole and his wife. Evidently, the blight of exile did not prevent the Montesquious from visiting their friends and relatives. The report did not indicate what kind of reception the Montesquious received, but the document did mention that Anatole's wife stayed at Montmirail longer than her husband.[50] In contrast to Bergeron's assessment, the royalist faction of the La Rochefoucaulds and the Montmorencys did not appear to view the Bonapartist Montesquious as unworthy of their company. Furthermore, the Montesquious seemed to fear no repercussions from their continued mingling with known exiles. Class connections and kinship ties continued to bind these families and noble associates.

Not only did the Montesquious continue to socialize with their fellow nobles and relatives regardless of political leanings, they even used their positions of influence with the emperor to mollify his attitudes toward their noncompliant acquaintances.

46 Bergeron, *France under Napoleon*, 132.
47 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 11.
48 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 149.
49 Mansel, *The court of France*, 81; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 51.
50 ANF, F^{7} 6569, dossier 2668, 12: Montmorency (Mathieu), exilé.

Perhaps, by securing pardons, pensions, and commutations of sentences, the Montesquious hoped to bridge the divide between the old nobility and the new regime.[51] Two events in particular highlight the intercessory role that the Montesquious played for the La Rochefoucaulds and other members of the old nobility. The first of these came in the winter of 1811. Despite his vociferous protestations and his adamant refusal to involve himself in the imperial regime, Sosthènes, his wife, and his father were formally presented at the imperial court on 24 February 1811. Following the protocol from the *ancien régime*, men could present themselves at court while a woman needed a female sponsor, an older, respectable matron who had already been presented. Anatole's mother, the comtesse de Montesquiou, fulfilled this role for her nephew's wife, as she did for several other, unrelated women of the old nobility. In his official record of the recent *presentés*, Elizabeth-Pierre de Montesquiou, who then held the post of grand chamberlain, did not record the La Rochefoucaulds' opposition to the emperor. Rather, he listed some perfunctory comments about their appearance and their financial situations.[52] Thus, by Anatole's mother serving as a sponsor and his father recording his fellow nobles' positive qualities instead of their royalist sympathies, the Montesquious sought to reconcile their kin with the new empire.

The second event illustrates further that the Montesquious' efforts extended beyond their immediate family to members of their class. On 4 February 1807, Sosthènes married the daughter of Mathieu de Montmorency. While the Montesquious had no blood relationship with the Montmorencys, they nevertheless advocated for them when they ran afoul of the emperor. Napoleon discovered incriminating correspondence between Mathieu de Montmorency and the already banished imperial critic Madame de Staël. As punishment, the emperor ordered Sosthènes' father-in-law to leave the French capital. The Montesquious intervened and secured Napoleon's permission to let Mathieu de Montmorency reside with Sosthènes' parents at Montmirail, as long as Montmorency did not consort with enemies of the empire.[53] In this way, the Montesquious advocated for their fellow nobles, associated with their previous acquaintances – including partisans of the royalist faction – and still enjoyed the confidence of the emperor.

The abdication of Napoleon in 1814 brought yet another challenge to the political structure of France in general and the relationship between the La Rochefoucaulds and the Montesquious in particular. Like many of the faubourg Saint-Germain coterie, Sosthènes actively roused public opinion in favor of the restoration of the Bour-

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51 S. Cohendet, madame la générale Durand, *Mémoires sur Napoléon et Marie-Louise* (Paris, 1886) 72-73.

52 ANF, no. 349 AP 13, Liste des personnes presentée à S. M. l'empereur et roi depuis le 12 febrier 1809 jusqu'au [blank], 68-69.

53 ANF, Carton F^7 6569, no. 2668, 12: Montmorency (Mathieu), exilé; Souspréfet Carré to Baron de Jessain, préfet de la Marne, 22 May 1813; de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 218; P. Gautier, *Mathieu de Montmorency et Madame de Staël d'après les lettres inédites de M. de Montmorency à Mme Necker de Saussure* (Paris, 1908) 253, 273; Mansel, *The court of France*, 82; Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse,* 101.

bon monarchy. He even formed a deputation of other young nobles to petition Tsar Alexander I for the formal reinstatement of the comte de Provence as the new ruler of France.[54] His efforts culminated in his popular demonstration at the Colonne Vendôme.[55] Anatole, for his part, proved willing to follow his emperor and idol to Elba. His mother went into self-imposed exile, by accompanying the young king of Rome to Vienna and remaining with him for nearly a year. Shortly before Napoleon's escape from Elba, Anatole appeared in the Austrian capital to visit his mother. At the beginning of March 1815, rumors swirled at the Congress of Vienna that Anatole had arrived to carry out a plot to abduct Napoleon's son and take him to his father. The emperor of Austria dismissed Madame de Montesquiou but also ordered his police to detain her and her son in Vienna.[56] Both were finally released to return to France after the battle of Waterloo. Anatole and his family retreated to their country estate like exiles in the nation they had once served.[57]

The Bourbon Restoration

Under the Restoration it was the turn of the La Rochefoucaulds to intervene on behalf of their politically dissident relatives. Many of the Napoleonic nobility became incorporated into the new Bourbon court, and the Montesquious might have done the same had it not been for the loyalty they had shown for the deposed emperor. Anatole's father might have hoped for a court or government position from Louis XVIII whom he had served as equerry during the *ancien* régime, but his command of the National Guard of Paris during the Hundred Days ensured that he would receive only a chilly reception from his former lord.[58] Sosthènes' father cryptically mentioned, 'He [Elizabeth-Pierre de Montesquiou] rendered us all the services which he could under the Empire, and I was as useful to him as I could be under the Restoration.'[59] The elder duc de Doudeauville did not elaborate on what services he did for his brother-in-law, but the fact that none of the Montesquious, especially the direhard Bonapartist Anatole, faced more serious reprisals from the Bourbons or their partisans perhaps hints at the La Rochefoucaulds' efforts to protect their relatives. Philip Mansel, in his study of French society after the fall of Napoleon, noted that in this era of re-

54 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, V, 469-471.

55 De La Rochefoucauld, V, 465-468; J.-P. Clément, *Charles X: Le dernier Bourbon* (Paris, 2015) 162; Bertaut, *La Faubourg Saint-Germain*, 102; G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon restoration,* trans. L.M. Case (Philadelphia, 1966) 33; Mansel, *The court of France*, 98-99; Mansel, *The eagle in splendour*, 188.

56 For the entirety of this story, see: De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 356-402; De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires,* II, 62.

57 De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 341.

58 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 61; Mansel, *The court of France,* 134; Petiteau, 'The nobility of the Empire'.

59 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 59.

gime change political identities became as significant as social connections.[60] However, for the Montesquious and the La Rochefoucaulds at least, the bond of kinship still proved stronger than any other affiliation.

Sosthènes provided more specific evidence of his work to reconcile his uncle and cousins to the Bourbons. In a letter to Madame de Cayla, Louis XVIII's favorite companion, Sosthènes asked her to intercede with the king and name the youngest Montesquiou son, Alfred, a *gentilhomme honoraire*. 'It is time,' he said. If the king would grant this concession, 'He [Montesquiou's father] will ask for an audience [from the king] to express his thanks, the king will speak with him, and afterward he will be all his.'[61] Louis XVIII must have harbored more of a grudge though, since Alfred did not receive his title until the reign of Charles X in 1825. The most that Louis appeared willing to concede to the Montesquious was restoring Elizabeth-Pierre to the peerage and allowing Anatole to become an aide-de-camp to the duc d'Orléans. Unlike Napo-

leon who attempted to woo the recalcitrant nobility into his court, the king refused to have these perceived traitors in his own household.[62] This did not deter Sosthènes and his father from trying to rehabilitate their relatives in the eyes of the monarchy. Just as the Montesquious had served as intercessors while not compromising their own positions at the imperial court, so Sosthènes and his father did not seem to suffer from their association with the Montesquious. Rather, both held prominent government positions until 1830.[63]

The two families continued their connections with one another throughout the Restoration and even after the July Revolution of 1830 brought Louis-Philippe d'Orléans to the throne of France. Anatole rallied to the new monarchy and tried to convince his cousin that Louis-Philippe was better suited to govern France, but Sostènes would not abandon his Bourbonist devotion.[64] In fact, his stubborn fidelity landed him in prison during the reign of Louis-Philippe, and once again, the Montesquious advocated on his behalf. Madame de Montesquiou wrote letters to local government officials trying to obtain her nephew's release, or at the very least, his transfer to a hospital. Anatole wrote to his incarcerated cousin, urging him to make

60 P. Mansel, *Paris between empires: monarchy and revolution 1814-1852* (London, 2003) 207.

61 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, VIII, 229: L.F.S. de La Rochefoucauld to Madame de Cayla, undated.

62 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 61; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac,* 32, 49, 69.

63 Despite his iconoclastic demonstration in 1814, Sosthènes became the director of the Bureau des Beaux-Arts, and his father became the minister of the royal household and later *directeur-général de poste* during the Restoration. De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, II, 11; Berthier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon restoration*, 367; I. Backouche, *La Monarchie parlementaire 1815-1848 de Louis XVIII à Louis-Philippe* (Paris, 2000) 105; Clément, *Charles X*, 275; F. Démier, *La France de la Restauration (1814-1830): L'impossible retour du passé* ([Paris], 2012) 576; Bertaut, *Le Faubourg Saint-Germain*, 155; P. Mansel, *Louis XVIII* (London, 1981) 386.

64 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, XIV, 142-145; De Montesquiou-Fezensac, *La Maison de Montesquiou-Fezensac*, 49. For Anatole's career during the July Monarchy, see: de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Souvenirs sur la révolution*, 486-511.

Louis François Sosthènes vicomte de La Rochefoucauld (1785-1864) (*print, nineteenth century; collection Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY*)

his own request for a change of location before his health deteriorated from the poor prison conditions.[65] If the politics of the previous decades had not succeeded in tearing the bond between the La Rochefoucaulds and the Montesquious, the new upheavals would not either. The families continued to socialize with each other, and Sosthènes' father mourned the passing of the comte de Montesquiou, testifying: 'the most tender friendship united us for more than fifty years, and in spite of a very different path in politics and very opposite opinions, we have never had the least quarrel between us'.[66]

65 De La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires,* XII, 281-283.
66 De La Rochefoucauld, II, 58.

Conclusion

It would be comfortable to view the French nobility during the Empire and the Restoration as part of mutually exclusive political factions – the royalists/legitimists versus the Bonapartists – who deliberately kept themselves isolated from one another due to their divergent political views. However, the Montesquious and the La Rochefoucaulds illustrate that this perspective discounts the strength of pre-existing connections and familial relationships of this social class. The Montesquious rallied to Napoleon but continued to fraternize with their former noble acquaintances and relations. In fact, they actively worked to facilitate integration of the old nobility into the new regime. With the Bourbon Restoration, the La Rochefoucaulds also sought to do the same for their Bonaparte-sympathizing in-laws. More case studies of noble families during this time period will indicate if the relationship of the Montesquious and the La Rochefoucaulds was exceptional or typical. It does seem unlikely though that these two families alone would have put politics aside in the name of familial harmony. The extended kinship and class connections exemplified by the Montesquious' advocacy on behalf of the Montmorencys, who were only related by marriage, seem to suggest that this pattern of class over politics was not isolated to just two families. After all, bonds of blood and class, formed in the waning years of the *ancien régime* and forged in the fires of the Revolution, could hardly rend easily, no matter how strong the attraction of opposing political lieges.

Mary K. Robinson

Houses divided?

Noble familial and class connections during the Age of Revolution and Napoleon

As Napoleon prepared for his journey to the island of Elba in the spring of 1814, his young aide-de-camp, Anatole de Montesquiou-Fezensac, begged to share in his idol's exile. Just a week or so prior, Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld gathered a mob to topple the statue of Napoleon from atop the Colonne Vendôme. Yet, Sosthènes and Anatole, first cousins and three years apart in age, did not let their partisan political identities break their family bond. This paper will use the example of these two men and their relatives to explore the familial and class connections that continued to bind members of the old French nobility. For the Montesquious and La Rochefoucaulds the cataclysmic social and political changes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did not sever the pre-existing bonds of blood and class.

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