

Time and the French Revolution,
1789 – Year XIV

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Submitted for the degree of D.Phil.
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January 2000

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the origin and consequences of the French Republican calendar in relation to eighteenth-century temporality. It assesses the extent of the calendar's use, examines the cultural and political meanings that it assumed, and argues that the temporal order of society can be equally as important as its spatial organisation. It suggests that calendars are not purely neutral measures of time, but are cultural, social and political texts that can express the central beliefs of a society. As the history of the Republican calendar shows, such beliefs could be highly contestable. Unsurprisingly, the demands of a ten-day week, new nomenclature, and the calendar's association with the Terror did not lend the new style of time reckoning much popularity, except amongst confirmed Jacobins. Yet, successive regimes, in particular the post-Fructidor Directory, did attempt to ensure conformity to the new calendar. In many parts of France the calendar became a site of cultural, political and, indeed, physical conflict as local communities and officials fought over observance of the new Republican day of rest, the *décadi*. The speed of political events and the dramatic changes in French society, coupled with intellectual trends from before the Revolution also led to new questions about the nature of time and history defined more broadly. Although the timing of society was becoming more controlled and more precise during this period, older and often more flexible time practices still remained. Opposition to the calendar and the new temporalities was not just a consequence of political or religious sentiment, but represented communal and individual attachment to older habits. Finally, it is argued that the Revolution, the calendar, and pre-existing cultural changes helped to create a modern understanding of time, and had important consequences for the imagining of the nation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been completed with the aid of a postgraduate scholarship from the Arts and Humanities Research Board of the British Academy. I would like to thank the staff of the postgraduate office for their professionalism and courtesy. I am grateful for the financial assistance provided by the Thomas Glover Memorial Foundation, Somerton and the Department of History of the University of York. The Department has also provided a stimulating place to learn, teach and write history.

While I have been concentrating on one calendar, the consequences of another have not gone unnoticed, and the new millennium appears to have been marked by restoration and rebuilding around the world. The staff of the Museum of the Risorgimento, Milan, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of The New York Public Library, the Bibliothèque nationale and the British Library were all helpful to me at a time when they are also dealing with these changes. The pleasures of working in French archives have been in no small way due to the interest and professionalism of their staff. The employees of the Archives nationales also deserve special thanks, especially those who sweated through the summer of 1997. I am grateful to the staff of the essential and long-suffering Inter-Library Loan service of the J.B.M. Library, York.

Fay Bound, Laurence Brown, Liz Cafferty, Martin Knudsen, John Langdon, and Jill Maciak have provided pertinent criticisms, generous help with proof-reading, and consistent friendship. I have been fortunate indeed to have Alan Forrest as a supervisor. I would like to express my thanks for his patience, kindness, and subtle good sense. Geoff Cubitt and Chris Clark provided pertinent comments and encouragement as members of my panel. Finally, I owe a deep debt to my family, who have all made me see how valuable time can be. And, of course, to Liz, who, with patience and love, has persistently shown how to make the best use of it.

CHAPTER 1

DOING TIME: AN INTRODUCTION

(MATTHEW SHAW)

Revolutionary France placed few limits on its desire to reform the nation and its constituents. Like the complex muddle of Ancien Regime weights and measures, the Gregorian calendar was not excepted from rational scorn, but became subject to a Revolutionary committee. The result was the introduction of the Republican calendar in October 1793. This thesis examines the creation and the consequences of this new measurement of time. It argues that the calendar was an important and durable element of Republican culture that was enforced, with more or less official enthusiasm, for over twelve years and, indeed, outlasted the First Republic. Its introduction demonstrated the Revolutionaries' real commitment to the forging of the new world and encapsulated many of the regime's ideals by promising both the application of reason to everyday life and the diffusion of Republican virtue and education. As in the creation of metric weights and measures, reason and rationality found expression in the decimal aspects of the calendar, while Republican virtues and useful agricultural knowledge replaced the Gregorian calendar's roster of saints. Whether by fortune or design, the year began on the date of the autumnal equinox, thereby further linking the calendar and the Republic with the perceived natural and scientific order. The political legitimacy of the new regime was paraded by the new system, since the basis for the dating of the year was removed from religion and was instead grounded on the inauguration of the Republic.

Such bold claims helped fulfil the Republic's need for self-legitimation and sacralisation. As James Leith notes, 'Politically as well as socially, a revised symbolic system was needed'. Such symbolism found fantastic,

unrealised expression in the outpouring of plans for civic building schemes.¹ Similarly, the calendar, like the metric system, symbolically and practically represented both the new Republic and the commencement of a new age. By (retrospectively) substituting the Year I for 1792, the Revolutionaries placed more importance on politics than religion as the basis for measuring time and, by implication, as a means of understanding and valuing the world. The foundation of the Republic and the creation of the nation, the decree of October 1793 suggested, were the most important events in the history of France and thus marked a new beginning, distanced from the past. The calendar combined utilitarian reform with a range of symbolism.

Such symbolism was not always welcome, especially when it had practical consequences for important events such as local markets and Sunday mass. Although the proponents of the Republican calendar claimed that it represented a clean break with the past, traditional temporal practises did not vanish in the same manner as the Revolutionaries also wished that feudal dues or the theory of absolute monarchy would. Like many other aspects of the regime, and indeed the very regime itself, the new institution was highly contentious and met with opposition, which was sometimes violent and often profoundly revealing of the conflicts unleashed by the Revolution. A heady mix of religion, counter-revolution and politics was created by the competition between the new calendar and that of the church and tradition. These reactions provide much of the material for the thesis.

The consequences of the Republic's attempt to supplant the Gregorian calendar provide a rich source for the cultural and social history of the period. Its study can reveal the tensions, conflicts and otherwise silent enunciations of contemporary apprehensions of time, since its introduction

¹ James Leith, *Space and Revolution: Projects for Monuments, Squares, and Public Buildings in France 1789-1799* (Montreal & Kingston, 1991), pp. 34-5. See also p. 4 for a summary of the 'process of delegitimization or desacralization of the old order, followed by a relegitimization of the new one.'

gave rise to numerous incidents that are recorded in the archives. Official reports were keen to stress superstition and general backwardness as the main reasons for the lack of acceptance of the new institution, but such opposition, I suggest, also related to issues of local identity, established patterns of temporality, and dissatisfaction with the new regime. This site of contention cannot be adequately understood without an analysis of its temporal context. The new calendar and eighteenth-century temporalities are mutually illuminating; their intersection provides the basis for this study and a way forward from current understandings of the calendar.

This thesis, therefore, is not just confined to a history of the Republican calendar, but is also a history of time during the Revolution. As historians have found memory, the emotions, the body, and space to be valid subjects for historical inquiry so, increasingly, they have turned to time. Different understandings of temporality have been found according to gender, race, age, culture and era.² Its role in society and its relationship to culture and politics demand attention. The responses to the calendar will therefore be placed within the context of eighteenth-century temporality. In short, I argue for an increased importance for the calendar as a Republican institution, suggest that the responses to it relate to a variety of social and

² The literature on time is vast, but the following provide good examples of the history and study of temporality: Barbara Adam, *Timewatch: The Social Analysis of Time* (Cambridge, 1995); John Bender and David E. Wellberg, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time* (Stanford, 1991); Norbert Elias, trans. in part, Edmund Jephcott, *Time: an Essay* (Oxford, 1992); Richard Glasser, trans. C.G. Pearson, *Time in French Life and Thought* (Manchester, 1972); Diane Owen Hughes and Thomas R. Trautmann, eds., *Time: Histories and Ethnologies* (Ann Arbor, 1995); Nancy D. Munn, 'The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21 (1992), pp. 93-123; Ákos Östör, *Vessels of Time: An Essay on Temporal Change and Social Transformation* (Delhi, 1993); Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill & London, 1997).

political factors and stress the role that time played in the imagining and understanding of the Revolution.

This introductory chapter outlines the evidence available for a study of the calendar and what is meant by a history of temporality. It holds that the calendar cannot be fully understood without a complementary comprehension of contemporary apprehensions of time. It has also tended to be the case that time has been examined in detail, that is disparate histories of clocks, calendars, or work-discipline, and a more 'holistic' approach has yet to be taken. This thesis views the experience of time more broadly. As such it highlights the massive increase in state involvement during the Revolution which heralded consequences for eighteenth-century temporalities. The rule of the clock was already increasing before 1789, but the impact of the army, more efficient regularisation and the demand for military and other hardware can plausibly be seen to have increased 'work-discipline' and further regularised time. Nonetheless, the older temporalities remained. The calendar and the Revolution made claims on all these personal and local temporal identities.

The Impact of the Calendar

While the Revolution clearly heralded great social changes, historians have been unwilling to place much importance on the Republican calendar. James Friguglietti has detailed the creation and implementation of the calendar and has stressed its close relationship with the changes of political currents, but emphasises the limitations of its social impact. Pressure to adopt the new measure of time was not continual, but resulted from occasional periods of increased enforcement, which were then allowed to lapse. He concludes that 'in the eyes of most Frenchmen, the new calendar

represented an inconvenience, an absurdity that served no practical purpose.’³

Such an interpretation underestimates the use of the Republican calendar. In a recent and detailed quantitative study of Marseilles and its environs, Michael Meinzer has suggested that it could indeed have a real impact on an area and, furthermore, that the lack of observance can itself reveal the dynamics of local politics. In the urban centre of Marseilles, if not the surrounding villages, the calendar had important administrative and social consequences.⁴ He is also not alone in suggesting that its effects have been underestimated. Jack Thomas’ study of the markets in the Haute-Garonne suggests that the new calendar did effect a certain amount of change and that the structure of the week was altered.⁵ Serge Bianchi has noted the efficiency with which the calendar was implemented and suggests that historians, such as Michel Vovelle and Mona Ozouf, have underestimated the impact of the new calendar.⁶

Bianchi highlights the lack of detailed understanding of the calendar’s chronological and geographical differences. His article is an explicit call for a more detailed understanding of the calendar, taking into account both differences of local conditions and the changes during its life span of 1793-1806. It calls for more local studies of the calendar. He provides a list of

³ James Friguglietti, ‘The Social and Religious Consequences of the French Revolutionary Calendar’ (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1966), p. 158.

⁴ Meinzer, *Der Französische Revolutionskalender*.

⁵ Jack Thomas, *Les Temps des foires: Foires et marchés dans le Midi toulousain de la fin de l’Ancien Régime à 1914* (Toulouse, 1993); Thomas, ‘Le temps du marché, le temps de dieu: le calendrier républicain en Haute-Garonne, de l’an VI à l’an XI’, *Annales du Midi*, 109 (1997), pp. 93-103.

⁶ Michel Vovelle, *La mentalité révolutionnaire: sociétés et mentalités sous la Révolution française* (Paris, 1985), pp. 199-200; Mona Ozouf, ‘Revolutionary Calendar’ in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds. (Yale, 1992), pp. 538-539.

suggested sources for such studies, including the largely neglected, but rewarding, records of the *Justice de paix*. Bianchi not only outlines a programme of research, but also gives us the results of his own findings from the Essonne and Val-de-Marne. Such suggestions and complaints are legitimate and useful, and the demand for more local studies a pertinent one. A detailed understanding of the operation of the calendar ‘on the ground’, especially a nuanced understanding, is lacking. Current studies still leave room for more research. Friguglietti attempts a representative sample of departments, but he does not have space to develop a systematic analysis of local responses, preferring instead to relate the calendar to more general trends of the Revolution, such as dechristianisation and the Thermidorian Reaction. Françoise Fortunet’s study on the department of the Côte-d’Or is limited to one small region and examines the response of the administration rather than the population.⁷ The demands of Meinzer’s quantitative methodology have limited his work to just Marseilles and the port’s hinterland: this choice of a predominantly Jacobin town helps explain his conclusion that the Republican calendar had more influence than has previously been suspected.

The scope of the questions being asked about the Revolution has also been broadened. Meinzer’s and this thesis’ evidence also point to a complex and subtle picture of the calendar’s consequences. Its introduction also heralded more general changes in France’s temporality. As Meinzer suggests

il est frappant de voir avec quelle continuité – malgré une atmosphère parfois hostile ou indifférente au calendrier – les administrations publiques ont respecté le rythme décadaire. Le nouveau calendrier fait ainsi partie – en relation avec la bureaucratie croissante – d’un changement séculaire de modernisation et de rationalisation des structures temporelles.

⁷ Françoise Fortunet, ‘Le temps à l’épreuve de la Révolution: Les avatars du décadi’, in *Mouvements populaires et conscience sociale*. Colloque de l’Université Paris VII – CNRS, Paris, 24-26 May 1984 (Paris, 1985), pp. 678-86.

[it is striking to see with what continuity – despite an atmosphere at times hostile or indifferent to the calendar – public administration respected the ten-day rhythm. The new calendar played its part – together with the expansion of bureaucracy – in a secular modernisation and rationalisation of temporal structures.]⁸

The relationship between the calendar and the state, as well as the possible connections between modernity and the reform are valid subjects for investigation. Might it be that the beginnings of modern, timetabled life lie in the eighteenth-century? The answer is complicated, not just by the diversity of the period and the Revolution, but by the difficulty with searching for origins. Nonetheless, some pattern, or interpretation, can be cautiously advanced. The reforms did not just affect the everyday use of calendars, but affected other areas, ranging from political discourse to work practices. Local circumstances also greatly influenced this general picture and a simple outline of the calendar's chronology does not always concur with geographical, social and political variations in its use and popularity. The history of the calendar is therefore not just a history of administration, or of measurement, but also of the ways in which time and timing helped to provide the structures for community.

Since Lynn Hunt's *Politics, Culture, Class and the French Revolution* in particular, historians of the Revolution have begun to look afresh at the vast cultural production of the period.⁹ Politics and culture, Hunt suggests, were

⁸ Michael Meinzer, 'Le calendrier révolutionnaire: son application et ses effets sociaux a Marseille et dans trois villages provençaux', in *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: la Révolution Française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures? Actes du colloque organisé à Marseille par la Commission Scientifique régionale pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution Française et le Centre Méridional d'Histoire social des mentalités et des cultures (Université de Provence), les 22,23,24 février 1989* (Aix-en-Provence, 1990), pp. 181-196. The quotation is from p. 191.

⁹ Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1984).

bound together like the continuous face of a Möbius strip.¹⁰ Historians have become attuned to the possible political and social meanings of a whole range of cultural output, from theatre to song. The visual and material culture of the Revolutionary period has since drawn a great deal of attention from historians, who have also extended this notion of culture beyond Hunt's focus on Jacobin identity and have demonstrated the contradictions and complexities of Revolutionary culture. Despite the explosion of the political press, the dramatic creation of a network of Jacobin clubs, the militarisation of society, and Republican social policy, politics still meant something different in the salons and clubs to its meaning in the countryside. The Republican calendar, in theory, applied to all of France, but geography and political differences meant that the reality was more complicated.¹¹ Nonetheless, as a result of its strong associations with the aims of the radical Revolution, the calendar was suffused with politics. The cultural implications of the calendar, such as its visual representations and use in plays and tableaux need to be examined. Similarly, the 'linguistic turn' in the humanities has focused attention on the nuances of language and the importance of rhetorical structure in the representation, or creation, of reality.

This thesis both relies on new evidence and takes a broader and more 'cultural' approach than previous studies. Primary research in the Côte-d'Or, the Doubs, the Loire-Inférieure and the Vaucluse provides the main evidential base. Other evidence of departmental reaction has been found in the reports on *esprit public* held by the Archives nationales (series F¹cIII). I have found the records of the *Justice de paix* to be the most useful for

¹⁰ The discovery of the German mathematician, August F. Möbius, the strip consists of a 'surface with one continuous side formed by joining the ends of a rectangle after twisting one end through 180°', *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Oxford, 1999).

¹¹ Emmet Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (New Haven & London, 1989).

revealing actual practice, allowing a comparison of a variety of communes, districts and department to be made. Much of value is also contained in other series, such as police records and *comptes décadaires*. Where possible, I have examined a series of records of the *Justice de paix*, recording the times of the citation or the meeting for an urban section or rural district. As a judicial institution, the *Justice de paix* provides important evidence for meeting times and local views on offences such as working on the *décadi*. Officials operated with some independence from central authority and therefore reflect local opinion.¹² It took a brave *juge*, as Colin Lucas has remarked, to work counter to local feeling.¹³ Complete runs of meetings are, however, rare, particularly for the whole period 1793 to the Year VIII and after. Boundaries changed, as did administration and jurisdiction of the law. Local record-keeping also varied enormously and clerks sometimes seemed confused about dates (this itself is telling about familiarity with the new system). Furthermore, it seems likely that the sources used under-report the number of meetings of the *Justice de paix*. Nonetheless, the inherent limitations of this source and the small size of the sample do not preclude useful conclusions being drawn from these meetings. The size of the sample is perhaps one of the main problems (others being the comparability of the sittings, and the questions of citations and sittings), but, on the other hand, it is to some extent a random sampling.

All four geographic areas show the impact of the calendar and reflect the fact that the Republican calendar had a particular chronology of

¹² The meeting of the *tribunal criminel* could, at least in Besançon, depend on the personal wishes and needs of its members: 'je pars pour la campagne: mes affaires domestiques et ma santé m'y appellent. J'aurais l'honneur de vous faire part de mon retour que je ne peux fixer à ce moment,' A.D. Doubs L 2624, Letter, Charles, member of the *tribunal criminel* to Vejeux, President of the *tribunal criminel*, Besançon, 3 jour complémentaire V (19 September 1795).

¹³ Colin Lucas, 'The Rules of the Game in Local-Politics under the Directory', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989), p. 358.

introduction. All four departmental towns (Avignon, Besançon, Dijon and Nantes) began to use the new calendar at different times after it was introduced in Paris. The distribution of the Revolution relied on the speed of the postal system.¹⁴ None, however, were particularly tardy in their implementation of the new calendar. Various municipal and departmental committees recorded its arrival. Some gave enthusiastic welcomes, such as an oration at Besançon, at the time a mainly Jacobin town, in language reminiscent of reports of the Committee of Public Instruction. Soon all government correspondence complied with the new calendar.¹⁵ They also highlight the importance of local variation in reactions to the Republic's initiatives. Other evidence found in departmental, municipal and communal archives has been filtered through officials and government representatives. Behaviour tends to be recorded only when deviant and attracting official attention and this needs to be considered. The history of the calendar is in part a history of administrative practice and the official construction and recording of (usually peasant) deviancy.

The local records in these areas demonstrate that the calendar had an impact that continued well beyond the events of the 9 thermidor. Central records held by the *Archives nationales*, ranging from police reports to those of the Ministry of the Interior and the Committee of Public Instruction, have also proved to be particularly revealing. These findings are combined with evidence from newspapers and political pamphlets. The legitimate, if contested, involvement of the state in all aspects of life, including the use of time, is well reflected in this mass of paper.

¹⁴ Guy Arbellot, Bernard Lepetit, and Jacques Bertrand, eds., *Routes et Communications, Atlas de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1987), vol. 1.

¹⁵ Serge Bianchi, 'La «Bataille du Calendrier» ou le Décadi contre le Dimanche. Nouvelles approches pour la réception du calendrier républicain en milieu rural', *A.H.R.F.*, 312 (1998), pp. 245-64, esp. p. 247.

Reform of any customary measurement could appear provocative. Witold Kura suggests:

Measure is intimately connected with man and the things he values above all others; land, food and drink[...] it is never neutral: it is good or bad, or rather there are countless bad measures, and only one, the one 'of old,' that is just, and 'true,' and 'good.'¹⁶

Few things could be more valuable than time, or seem as established as the setting of the sun and the names of the months. The Republican calendar, as contemporaries frequently lamented, was not easily forced upon a populace often in the thrall of superstition and habit: a common complaint of officials and administrators. This *commissaire* in the Loire-Inférieure in the Year VI, who blamed the lack of observance of the *décadi* on the continued custom of observing Sundays, is typical:

L'habitude était une seconde nature chez les habitants des campagnes plus particulièrement que parmi ceux des villes, et les préjugés ne pouvaient y être détruits qu'avec la plus grande difficulté.

[Tradition is second nature for the inhabitants of the countryside more so than for those of the towns and these prejudices can only be destroyed with the greatest difficulty.]¹⁷

The meanings of persistent calendar customs and opposition to the new reforms could vary. The local responses to the Republican calendar, typically recorded by officials as problematic, could mean more than an instinctive kick of habit and might involve local loyalties and a form of popular politics. The calendar, like many of the Republic's reforms met with a range of opposition. Difficulties were caused by ignorance of the new method of dating and officials recorded a variety of problems resulting from the observance of this Republican institution. Habit, tradition, and a

¹⁶ Witold Kura, trans. R. Szyreter, *Measures and Men* (Princeton, 1986), p. 17.

¹⁷ A.N. F¹⁷1454, Letter, *Commissaire Central*, Loire-Inférieure to the Minister of the Interior, 21 messidor VI (9 July 1798).

lack of knowledge of the changes also played their part, as in the commune of Pleumartin in the Vienne, where couples still wished to wed on the traditional day of *mercredi* rather than on the new Republican day of *quintidi*. Some citizens feared for their wages in the light of the new ten-day week; others expressed a belief that such reforms went against religious teaching.

Such problems may have not initially arisen from political motives, but became so in the drafting of official reports. While local reactions sometimes resulted from political motivations, they represent the responses of people whose complex local temporalities were confronted by an administration that could be equally dogmatic and, sometimes, unpleasantly authoritarian. The ‘chouans’, for instance, who attempted to disrupt the new arrangement of markets in the Loire-Inférieure were cited by a local official as indicating the continuing presence of counter-revolutionary feeling, but they may equally have been locals upset by the confusion caused to their system of provision and sale.¹⁸ During the Revolutionary period many forms of local activity could become politicised and such action needs to be contextualised. Eighteenth-century temporalities could be complex, and need to be delineated if the calendar’s impact is to be properly assessed.

Time and the Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century, one critic has suggested, is noted for ‘its unprecedented passion for chronometric exactitude, in its timepieces and in its prose’. Yet time for the average Parisian has also been described as ‘extensible, élastique, fluide comme la lumière, allongé ou réduit suivant les

¹⁸ Henri Carré, ‘Le calendrier républicain et les épisodes de l’an VI et de l’an VII’, *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de l’Ouest*, series 3, 40 (1937), p. 341; A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 335, letter from Municipality of Savenay to the Department of the Loire-Inférieure 27 pluviôse VIII (16 February 1800).

saisons, ce temps du soleil, nonchalant et rêveur.’¹⁹ These contradictions suggest that France was undergoing a process of change in its relationship with time. As society changed, so did the importance and nature of its timing. Any consideration of the role of time is bound to conclude that the evidence is contradictory and that the picture of time-use in the eighteenth century which emerges is one of considerable complexity.

A number of broad points about eighteenth century temporality can be made. Firstly, time, and timing, were at once both complex and rather banal and commonplace. St Augustine’s dictum on the awareness of time is apposite: ‘I know what time is, but if someone asks me, then I cannot tell him’.²⁰ Time was accepted, understood and not discussed and forms a key, but unspoken component of culture and life itself. Yet despite the commonsensical nature of time keeping, the people of France had dealt with temporal and calendar reform without much trouble, as did other countries during their adoption of the Gregorian calendar.²¹ Relationships towards time also differed according to class (wealth and working-practice), gender and geography. The structures of these relationships were also undergoing change. Aristocratic style, and the king’s strict and ordered daily routine of rising, walks, working, hunting and eating, demonstrated a control of time, rather than a suggestion that one was in thrall to time. Affectations of laziness similarly showed disdain for the rule of the clock. Yet it is also possible to discern a growing strand of thought, most clearly

¹⁹ Stuart Jay Sherman, ‘Telling Time: Clocks and Calendars, Secrecy and Self-Recording in English Diurnal Form, 1660-1795’ (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1990), p. 9. Michèle Perrot, *Les ouvriers en grève* (Paris, 1974), p. 271.

²⁰ Quoted in David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 1.

²¹ Francesco H. Maiello, ‘Il tempo dei calendari in Francia (1484-1805)’, *Studi Storici*, 31, no. 2 (1990), pp. 413-36; Maiello, *Storia del calendario: La misurazione del tempo, 1450-1800* (Turin, 1994); Robert Poole, *Time's alteration: calendar reform in early modern England* (London, 1998).

expressed by the new discipline of economics.²² Work practices were changing. At all levels of society, appropriate use of time became an issue.

In his discussion of the life and times Jacques-Louis Ménétra, Daniel Roche presents a picture of eighteenth-century temporality that can be described as traditional and pre-modern. Time and the necessity for precise timing were not of great importance to everyday life. He notes that Ménétra's diary mentions the time of the day just thirty-five times in over three hundred pages. On the occasions that the time is recorded, Ménétra recalls the time as 5 and 6 o'clock, 8 o'clock, and 10 and 11 in the evening. Roche comments that this method is simply the diarist's shorthand for morning, evening, dawn and dusk.²³ Ménétra's diary, and a number of secondary sources, are used to conclude that for Paris' popular classes time had little meaning. Although without other references, this no doubt also draws upon Roche's substantial primary research into the material world of the everyday. In the eighteenth-century workplace, time was flexible and regular hours were less important than the needs of the current job, the fatigues of the body or, when on the road, the distractions of 'une belle fille'.²⁴

Compared to the industrial, modern age, people were less aware of the time of day. Such a view is most eloquently expressed in E.P. Thompson's highly influential and frequently cited 'Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism'. The lack of an internal clocking of time is contrasted with the

²² Richard Glasser, trans. C.G. Pearson, *Time in French Life and thought* (Manchester, 1972); Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 129-76.

²³ Jacques-Louis Ménétra, *Journal*, p. 367.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 364; David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and community in Paris, 1740-1790* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 170; Michael Sonenscher, 'Work and Wages in Paris in the eighteenth century', in *Manufacture in town and country before the factory*, Maxime Berg, Pat Hudson, and Michael Sonenscher, eds. (Cambridge, 1983), p. 166.

automaton created by industrialised, modern (if not modernised) society and the rule of clock and factory.²⁵ The pre-industrial world is one without need for sophisticated or, indeed, commonplace time use and reckoning. In this analysis, time as it is understood today in everyday life is a modern phenomenon, as much a result of the industrial revolution as urban life. Industrialisation, urbanisation, nation-building and globalisation (as the International Date Line testifies) have placed us in a world controlled by the relentless, regular, ticking of the clock (or the electronic pulse of a quartz crystal), rather than biology or personal needs.

Such a view not only exaggerates the rigidity and dominance of industrial work practices, but also underestimates the role of time keeping in pre-industrial society. This has been the argument of a number of scholars, most notably the historical geographers Nigel Thrift and Paul Glennie. They take issue with Thompson's assertion of a 'pre-modern time consciousness' that was traditional, limited and linked to the natural rhythms of life, rather than a mechanistic recourse to a clock-based means of measuring time. In the preface to *Customs in Common*, Thompson stood by his view and 'saw no reason' to alter his interpretation.²⁶ Glennie and Thrift do not come to grips with the issue of industrialisation and their implications may only be valid for Northern Europe. Nonetheless, their approach has demonstrated the limitations of describing time-consciousness (or use) as 'pre-modern' or industrial. Indeed, as Dohrn-van Rossum has shown, our usual descriptions of time-use before the industrial revolution are based on limited research.²⁷ The importance of time-measurement to

²⁵ E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present* (1967), pp. 56-97; Landes, *Revolution in Time*. For an example of Thompson's continuing influence see Smith, *Mastered by the Clock*.

²⁶ E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), p. vii.

²⁷ Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago & London, 1996), pp. 217-89. On this issue see also, Hans-Joachim Voth, 'Time

society before the industrial revolution has been documented by a number of scholars. Stuart Sherman draws attention to ‘important seventeenth-century changes in outward notation’ of time, while Alfred Crosby has stressed the advances made up to and during the Renaissance.²⁸ In contrast, Robert Poole suggests that the calendar was more important than the clock in England. Yet he also points out that time ‘in the form of clocks and pocket-watches, [was] ever more widely owned.’²⁹ Because Roche’s account stresses the importance of personal timepieces, he misses other key indicators of how Ménétra and his contemporaries may have apprehended time. Time could be told in a number of ways, such as by bells or sundials, or discerned from the sound of traffic or the height of the sun. Furthermore, evidence for the a more widespread use of watches and clocks can be found elsewhere.

The importance of timekeeping is difficult to measure with any certainty, although material culture and textual references can provide some important indication. The prevalence of timepieces might be one clue, but is difficult to detect the level of their distribution. By around 1700 watches begin to appear in Paris inventories. It seems certain that they spread rapidly during the century, especially in urban households and were soon to be an expected item.³⁰ Watches were mentioned in nearly all the Parisian clerical inventories examined by Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, while decorative clocks figured

and Work in Eighteenth-Century London’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 58 (1998), pp. 29-58.

²⁸ Alfred W. Crosby, *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600* (Cambridge, 1997); Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and the English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 1-9. The quotation is taken from p. 1.

²⁹ Robert Poole, “‘Give Us Our Eleven Days!’: Calendar Reform in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Past and Present*, 159 (1995), pp. 95-139. The quotation is from p. 95.

³⁰ Jan de Vries, ‘Peasant Demand Patterns and Economic Development: Friesland 1550-1750’, in *European Peasants and their Markets: Essays in Agrarian Economic History*, William N. Parker and Eric L. Jones, eds. (Princeton, 1975), pp. 205-68, esp. p. 221-2.

strongly in merchants' from as early as the 1710s. For example, L. Gilles Curé, a *marchand limonadier*, possessed a clock with both second and hour hands, and an enamel dial. At the time of his death in 1751, the merchant also owned a more personal form of time in the form of a silver pocket watch. As a yardstick to their place in material culture, musical instruments were rare. Clocks, although more likely to be made of wood and with a leather dial, were also found in more modest households from the beginning of the century.³¹ Before the Revolution, 70% of servants, according to this index, possessed a watch. 32% of non-domestic employees owned one.³² Knowledge of time was accessible to most, if not all, and was, indeed, becoming a matter of great importance and necessity for many. Even cookery manuals, which at the start of the century did not provide suggested cooking times, did so by the start of the Revolution. Clocks were now to be found in kitchens.³³ As well as a febrile imagination, Ménétra, the diarist of *les petites gens*, possessed a pocket watch. Mercier, surveying the 'new Paris', saw watches everywhere:

Une montre est moins aujourd'hui un objet de parure qu'un régulateur de commerce. Pour un peuple d'argent, l'aiguille à secondes est le télégraphe de la Bourse. S'il y a la manie de la musique, la manie de la danse, il y a aussi la manie des montres.

[A watch is less today an object of fashion than a regulator of commerce.

For a people of money, the second hand is the telegraph of the Bourse. If

³¹ Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La naissance de l'intime*, pp. 144, 149, 154, 156.

³² Laurence Fontaine, trans. Vicki Whittiker, *History of Pedlars in Europe* (Oxford, 1996), p. 193.

³³ Jean-Louis Flandrin and Philip et Mary Hyman, eds., *Le cuisinier français* (Paris, 1983); Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La naissance de l'intime. 3000 foyers parisiens XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1988), p. 396.

there is a craze for music, a craze for dance, then there is also a craze for watches.]³⁴

Clocks and watches were reasonably common by the Revolution in the town. By the Year IV, the *Jury au nouveau système horaire* considered horology to be ‘un art également utile à la société & au commerce’ and public clocks to be ‘[les] machines les plus importantes à l’usage de tous les citoyens.’³⁵ In 1811 a keen clock-maker from Besançon proposed a design for public clocks which could be installed throughout all the villages of France. Although the clocks would show the time very roughly, they would be cheap and of great general use.³⁶

The meaning of such timepieces needs to be delineated. Pardailhé-Galabrun stresses the importance of pride and status, which could be gained from the sporting of a watch fob in a world where ‘la notion de temps est encore assez approximative.’ As well as their relationship with fashion and display, their presence brought a more scientific, regulated, and precise awareness of time into the world of the everyday and on to the streets of Paris.³⁷ Such time awareness also hints at the importance of longer-term temporality as organised by calendars. Their large numbers and the impression Mercier gives, suggest that their function was not unimportant: timepieces combined display and utility. Since they also often attracted the attention of thieves it is possible to discover details of their use by using police archives as a source.³⁸ One such victim was a stonemason, Sylvain Jean Maux, who accused a coachman of stealing his pocket-watch. He had found the coach in square of the Croix Rouge, and remarked to the

³⁴ Louis Sébastien Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris* (Paris, 1994 edition), p. 1197.

³⁵ *Rapport sur les questions relatives au nouveau système horaire* (Paris, IV), pp. 4, 42.

³⁶ Antitide Besançon Janvier, *Essai sur les Horloges Publiques, pour les Communes de la Campagne* (Paris, 1811).

³⁷ Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La naissance de l'intime*, p. 161.

³⁸ Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, p. 69, n. 47.

driver that it was ‘huit heures du soir’ and that he needed a shot ‘d’eau de vie’. The coachman, the stonemason continued, went drinking with him, but then stole his watch at some point during the evening with the help of an accomplice. Although he did not know the name of the manufacturer, the watch had a silver case and was of modern type, complete with hour and minute hands and Arabic numerals. The theft was discovered when Maux later attempted to check the time at another bar in the Rue du Faubourg Honoré.³⁹

Despite its status as a police report, with all the possible mutations of fact such a record can give rise to, this document does reveal something of the everyday use of watches in Parisian society. True, the watch was a valuable artefact and its theft merited a police report, but it was also used at a number of points during an evening’s drinking. The watch may have been used for non-chronological purposes, perhaps as a nervous tick or a foolhardy display of wealth and status, but the time would have been noted as well. Consulting one’s watch was clearly not an unusual occurrence, although enough of a motion to recall doing so in front of the coachman. Necessary or not, time was common and understood.

Time was not understood in the same manner everywhere and featured in social and geographical divisions. In contrast to the high level of watch ownership and hence time awareness in Paris, ownership outside of the city and other urban centres was limited to the elite.⁴⁰ Yet even here portable sundials were commonplace. Lack of a watch did not necessarily mean lack of access to time, since public clocks, bells and other time signals were often available, although the manner in which time was understood differed from the town. Seconds and minutes held little relevance to the majority. Time

³⁹ A.P.P., AA 236, Minutes of the *commissaires de Police*, Roule, Paris, 22 fructidor, XI (9 September 1803).

⁴⁰ R. Lick, ‘Les intérieurs domestiques dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle, d’après les inventaires après décès de Coutances’, *Annales de Normandie*, 4 (1970), p. 308.

was less of a personal possession, but public and held in common by the community.

The most significant division in time-consciousness no doubt lay between town and country. Mechanical clocks were an uncommon feature of rural life when compared to urban environments. Aural time was also concentrated in towns. Sparsely populated areas of the countryside may well have been beyond the reach of peals, although Corbin has demonstrated the widespread passion which the French held for their bells.⁴¹ Additionally, Urban environments – and Paris in particular – possessed their own, man-made rhythms, such as traffic.⁴² The time of the day, Mercier relates, could also be signified by the congestion of the roads. On the other hand, the passing of the seasons could be of less importance in the towns, especially for those who could afford insulation from the vagaries of the weather, although most could not escape the summer stench and heat and winter cold. Towns also had their own seasons and migrations of population. For the rue St. Honoré, to take a rather disreputable example, winter was ‘la période la plus propice au jeu clandestin’ due to the large numbers of officers billeted in their winter quarters.⁴³ In contrast to the urban patterns of work and leisure, the rhythms of the rural year were central to peasants’ concerns. From this arose a vast amount of weather and season folklore concerning activities and signs for the times of the year.⁴⁴ Measuring the hours, in contrast, was less of an issue, although if necessary sundials and lunar dials could be employed. Janvier, a renowned clockmaker, thought that accuracy to the nearest five minutes was enough for rural dwellers, as his scheme to introduce clocks in rural communes reveals:

⁴¹ Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-century French Countryside* (London, 1999).

⁴² Thommy Carlstein, Don Parkes, and Nigel Thrift, eds., *Timing Space and Spacing Time* (London, 1978).

⁴³ Francis Freundlich, *Le monde de jeu à Paris (1715-1800)* (Paris, 1995), p. 78.

⁴⁴ Arnold Van Gennep, *Manuel de Folklore Français contemporain* (Paris, 1947), vol. 1.

L'Horloge publique ne doit avoir qu'une seule aiguille, qui fasse deux tours par jour; cette aiguille marquera les heures et les minutes de cinq en cinq minutes, ce qui est suffisant pour l'usage du public; par ce moyen on évitera la dépense et les frottemens qu'entraîne une aiguille de minutes. L'Horloge doit sonner l'heure seulement, tout autre subdivision est inutile pour la destination de cette machine.

[The public clock only needs a single hand, which makes two rotations each day; this hand marks the hours and every five minutes, which is sufficient for use by the public; by these means, one avoids the expense and difficulties that a minute hand brings with it. The clock will have to sound the hour only, all other subdivision is of no use for this device's purpose.]⁴⁵

Henri Lefebvre suggests a distinction between a rural 'cyclical' time metaphor for the seasonal rhythms of agriculture, and a 'linear' time in urban and industrialised environments.⁴⁶ Such a view is perhaps overly simple. The importance of the calendar within the rural world cannot be dismissed. *Compagnons*, tradition and the church ensured that seasonal festivities marked the passage of the year in both the towns and the country. Both communities, as well as the large numbers of itinerant traders and peddlers, met in the market place: these had to be advertised and regulated.⁴⁷ Fishermen and those using inland tides, for example, had need to be temporally aware, as did those making calculations about the setting of the moon when hunting. Each village had its own sundial, and clocks were not unheard of.⁴⁸ Distinctions between urban and rural environments,

⁴⁵ Janvier, *Essai*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne* (Paris, 1958), pp. 52-6.

⁴⁷ Fontaine, *Pedlars*; A.N. F¹²1273 Foires et marchés Year VII-1820.

⁴⁸ Hélène Monod-Casidy, 'Un astronome-philosophe, Jérôme de Lalande', in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, Theodore Besterman, ed. (Geneva, 1967), vol. 56, Transaction of the Second International Congress on the Enlightenment II, pp. 914-915;

especially when markets are involved, can only be made with caution. Class and occupation made for another distinction, perhaps clearer than the rural/urban divide. The division of the day split the wealthy from the poor as much as did dress and demeanour. While the rich returned from socialising, gaming, drinking or dancing, the poor, summoned by market bells, moved into the city bringing the vast amounts of produce and supplies necessary for the functioning of urban society.⁴⁹

Time keeping was not just entrusted to the hands and dials of pocket watches, recently developed carriage clocks and more imposing *horloges* and *pendules*, but was more traditionally displayed by sundials, which were found on many public buildings, churches, and numerous portable gnomons. Perhaps most of all, though, time was kept by the sounding of bells. Tocsins, chimes, carillons and peals of a wide variety suffused France with ‘aural time’, so much so that, in many cases, some of the only surviving records of pre-Revolutionary parishes dealt with the care of bells.⁵⁰ The upkeep of these bells was also an economic activity in its own right. In Besançon, the city authority was responsible for the upkeep of church bells, rather than the Church, which claimed that the upkeep and winding of the clockwork was too expensive.⁵¹ The city authorities recognised the need for a means of telling common time as the peal of many of these bells was a form of clock, albeit one without hands and dials.⁵²

The sound of bells ringing could signify many things to the informed listener. Different bells, such as the deep toll of the tocsin or the carillon’s melody, had different meanings, in these examples probably a summons or

Suzanne Tardieu, ‘La Vie domestique dans le Mâconnais rural préindustriel’ (Doctorat d’Université, Université de Paris, 1964), p. 609.

⁴⁹ Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, pp. 151-2.

⁵⁰ Corbin, *Village Bells*.

⁵¹ A.M. Besançon, DD 176, Horloge Publique, 1682-1784.

⁵² Indeed, the English word clock is derived from *cloche*.

the time of day respectively. Bells tolled the hour, announced services and their endings (and the end of dominical restrictions), and warned of calamities. As Enlightened observers never ceased to comment, rural parishes continued to insist on ringing their bells, at personal danger to the campanologist, at the sound of thunder to warn the storm away. But bells were not limited to churches: they also had civic functions. Markets, such as the Paris pork market, were ordered to install a bell to announce the hours of trade.⁵³ Finally, bells brought news of death. In a number of regions the form of the peal told the age and sex of the deceased. In Bully, in the pays de Bray, for example, thirteen tolls signified a man's death, eleven a woman's, and seven a child's. In Croisy-sur-Andelle in the Seine-Maritime, bereavement was signified by two strikes on the bell with a mallet and followed by a final ring. In contrast to the time of the pocket watch, 'aural time' was truly common time.⁵⁴ The passing of the hours must have been a mental marker in most people's lives, underlined by the regular sounding of bells.⁵⁵

For those involved in business, time played an important role: an accurate and common system of time keeping was necessary. It is during this period that the agenda and date book came into common use. Financial

⁵³ A.N. Y 9498, Ordonnance de police, 22 November 1727.

⁵⁴ Dieudonné Dergny, *Les Cloches du pays de Bray, avec leurs dates, leurs noms, leurs inscriptions, leurs amoiries, le nom de leur fondeurs, etc.; le tout classé topographiquement et chronologiquement* (Paris & Rouen, 1865).; Stuart Jay Sherman, 'Telling Time: Clocks and Calendars, Secrecy and Self-Recording in English Diurnal Form, 1660-1795' (D.Phil. Thesis, Columbia University, 1990).

⁵⁵ A 'new and not uninteresting Scene in the Great Drama of Life' from the next century suggests that this reminder may have on occasion been a cacophonous and unregulated one: 'On the third morning after their arrival, just as all the clocks in the city were striking nine individually, and somewhere about nine hundred and ninety-nine collectively, Sam was taking the air in George Yard', Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (London, 1972)., p. 649.

operations, in particular credit agreements, were based upon calculations of time: interest accrued by the day. Almanacs, which were produced for all sections of society from farmers to the army, and clerics to courtiers, contained a wealth of information. The timetables within them reveal a surprising degree of chronological accuracy. Coach, canal and river travel times suggested that the vehicles left at the time indicated 'on-the-dot'. Mail times were particularly punctilious. Even officials of the Ancien Regime had to keep office hours, such as Monsieur de Barentin, the Lord Chancellor, who held court Sundays from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. at Versailles according to the *Almanach Nécessaire*. More usual *jours des audiences* were arranged for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. most days of the week.⁵⁶ Regular meal times were kept by many, as Arthur Young reveals in during a complaint about the fondness of the French for midday dinning:

This single circumstance, if adhered to, would be sufficient to destroy any pursuits, except the most frivolous. Dividing the day exactly in halves destroys it for any expedition, inquiry, business that demands seven or eight hours' attention, uninterrupted by any calls to the table or the toilette[...] I am obliged to make this observation, because the noon dinners are customary all over France, except by persons of considerable fashion in Paris.⁵⁷

Society and commerce were timetabled. Amongst other social occasions, the *Almanach Nécessaire* for 1789 gave listing for *bals de l'Opéra* on Sunday nights, costing 6 *livres* and beginning at midnight.⁵⁸ The *Ordonnances et Sentences de Police du Châtelet de Paris* regularly detail the hours of trade at

⁵⁶ *Almanach Nécessaire, ou Porte-Feuille de tous les jours, utile a toutes personnes* (Paris, 1789).

⁵⁷ Arthur Young, *Travels in France during the years 1787, 1788, 1789* (Cambridge, 1950 edition), Constantia Macur. ed., p. 33. On French mealtimes, see also Corbin, *Le temps, le désir et l'horreur. Essais sur le dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris, 1990), p. 9.

⁵⁸ *Almanach Nécessaire*,

markets, revealing very early starting times.⁵⁹ The authorities frequently attempted to control opening times for markets, which, judging by the ordinances, the traders often flouted by opening earlier than was allowed by the rules.⁶⁰ Perhaps as a result, the authorities made the markets to some extent self-regulating; in this way it became everyone's financial interest to control the opening of markets. Ignoring the market bell became an affront to the trading community.⁶¹

Time and its ordering clearly had social and cultural importance. Timepieces – watches, clocks and sundials manufactured in a great range of styles and levels of complexity – fulfilled a practical function, but their cultural importance, or symbolism, may be seen on another, more metaphorical level. The measurement of time was not ideologically neutral but could make a number of symbolic connections. Primarily, it is a metaphysical enterprise designed to co-ordinate 'the earthly organisation of man's life with the temporal order of the universe.'⁶² Since the medieval period, and indeed before, the clock has been a symbolic instrument and illustrated the regularity, order, and harmony of the world. The Enlightened mind seized on the physical and mechanical attributes of clockwork and its representation of order and rationality.⁶³ The calendar represented a

⁵⁹ A.N., Y 9498-9499.

⁶⁰ Henri Hauser, *Travailleurs et Marchands dans l'Ancienne France* (Paris, 1929).

⁶¹ Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago & London, 1996); Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill & London, 1997); Douglas Freake, 'The Semiotics of Wristwatches,' *Time & Society*, 4 (1995), pp. 67-90.

⁶² J. T. Fraser, *Time as Conflict: A Scientific and Humanistic Study* (Basel & Stuttgart, 1978), p. 131.

⁶³ Josef W. Konvitz, *The Urban Millennium: The City-Building Process from the Early Middle Ages to the Present* (Carbondale & Edwardsville, 1985), pp. 18-19; Clara Menéres, 'L'espace du temps: l'horloge', *Temps Libre*, 2 (1981), pp. 9-17; Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty & Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 77, 119.

continuum of these temporal metaphorical possibilities. Although the clock and the calendar measured time on different scales, they were closely linked in the eighteenth-century mind, and would be in the Revolutionary calendar reforms. Other aspects of time could be a cultural resource. Personal ‘memory maps’, for example, link the events of individuals’ lives with historical occasions or memorable days in the calendar. Indeed, as Tim Ingold argues, the very landscape and its cultural associations, are suffused with temporality. The seasons and agriculture are constant reminders of the importance and rhythms of time, while memorials, graves and dates placed on buildings and statues present other stories about time.⁶⁴ The time of the self, of the community, and the nation all have separate tempos and importance, but also relate to one another. The introduction of the Republican calendar affected all these levels of identity. A contemporary noted: ‘Vous connaissez CITOYENS, toute l'importance d'une bonne division du tems[...] elle intéresse, même dans ce qui se fait aujourd'hui, les générations à venir & jusque aux peuples étrangers.’⁶⁵ Changing the calendar was a matter of great significance.

An Outline of the Thesis

These general questions regarding the history of time are approached via a history of the Republican calendar. Its creation, implementation and abolition help to provide the structure for the thesis and to reveal the cultural and political implications of time. The first three chapters examine the origins and implementation of the calendar and assess its cultural antecedents, political context, and success. I argue that during the eighteenth century, scepticism about the existing order of things included a

⁶⁴ Tim Ingold, ‘The Temporality of the Landscape,’ *World Archaeology*, 25 (1993), pp. 152-72 argues that time and the temporality of the landscape provides a point of contact between archaeology and anthropology and views time on a variety of levels.

⁶⁵ A.N. F¹⁷1355, Letter from Gugoulin, Apt, to the Committee of Public Instruction, 28 thermidor II (15 August 1794).

challenge to established temporality. Such attacks could be overt, as in a new civil year proposed by the writer Sylvain Maréchal, but were also implied in the intellectual attack on existing bases for authority and developed by new views of society and history.⁶⁶ The Revolution marked the dramatic apex of the reconsideration of society and thus the Republican calendar, created in the radical cultural and political environment of 1793, encapsulated the reforming verve and instinct towards rational reform. Initially, the enthusiasm and excesses of the Jacobin regime engendered keen observance in some quarters, as well as cultural ‘spin-offs’, such as the adoption of Republican months and days for children’s names.⁶⁷

Chapter 3 describes the initial consequences of the calendar. The cultural impact of the calendar during the Year II was limited but not inconsequential. Attempts were made to alter clocks and watches to the new time and the calendar provided material for propagandistic plays and ballets, but apart from government officials and perhaps the more insidious pressure of local surveillance committees, observance of the calendar was not generally compulsory and seems to have been ignored by many. A number of police reports during the Year II suggested that it was imposed in some areas, especially where religion was strongly equated with the counter-revolution. Its impact on the organisation of local administration and amongst Jacobins should also not be underestimated. Following 9 thermidor, the calendar seems to have fallen into widespread disuse, even amongst officials, but the relationship between the Revolution and time remained uncertain.⁶⁸ The calendar also took on a greater range of cultural

⁶⁶ Norman Hampson, *A Cultural History of the Enlightenment* (New York, 1968), p. 232.

⁶⁷ This practice had generally ceased by the end of 1795, Colin Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (London & New York, 1988), pp. 250-51; Jean Donat, ‘Une application du calendrier républicain aux inscriptions à l’état-civil’, *Mémoires de l’académie des sciences, inscriptions et belle-lettres de Toulouse*, 11, 2nd series (1933), pp. 83-107.

⁶⁸ Emmet Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (New Haven & London: Yale, 1989); R. Brouillard, ‘Un ballet original’, *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du Département*

meanings. For many, the calendar had been tarnished as an instrument of *terroristes*. It was allowed to fall into disuse, insofar as it was already employed. It is also interesting to note that it was not revoked; perhaps this is evidence of either its lack of importance, or its continued congruence with the ideals of the regime. By the Year VI the calendar had clear political associations that in part explain its attempted revivification by the Directory, which is described in chapter 4. The creation of Republican festivals, the attempts by the Directory to enforce the *décadi* as a day of rest, and the reorganisation of fairs and markets were three of the calendar's most important consequences and have consequently been examined more closely in three separate chapters.

To place the calendar and the issues it raised in some form of contemporary context, questions about the uses and ordering of time in late eighteenth-century society are considered throughout the text. One such question is that of the time of the workplace. Besançon was also the site of the *horlogerie nationale*, which was established in 1793, and the manufacture is an important source for understanding the impact of the new calendar on the clock and watch trade. The manufacture also provides an opportunity for a discussion of the impact of work discipline. The creation of stricter self-discipline, through the internalisation of time signals, undoubtedly took place during the Revolutionary period, especially as a result of the war's demand for goods and experience of the rigours of military life and routine.⁶⁹ Yet such a process of self-disciplining by no means dominated the experience of everyday life. As David Garrioch describes, despite a lack

de la Gironde, 5 (1912), pp. 277-78; A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 99. Bo, Représentant du Peuple, 'Le représentant du Peuple à Nantes, près de l'armée de l'ouest, & dans les Départements en dépendant, aux habitants des campagnes', 4 messidor, Year II (22 June 1794); Bianchi, 'La «Bataille du Calendrier»'; Meinzer, *Französische Revolutionskalender*.

⁶⁹ The following works place the control of the self in relation to the body Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 1977); William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

of leisure time, slack and busy periods, in the Paris trades at least, ‘allowed time for a drink and a chat either in the workshop or nearby.’⁷⁰ Furthermore, the chaos and disorder that was often such a feature of the Revolutionary period in many cases offered a loosening of the constraints of discipline and routine.

Public order and social harmony were, however, key elements of the ideal of the new Republic. Such concerns find a parallel in the work of historians such as Robert Muchembled.⁷¹ As such, the introduction of the *décadi* as a day of rest is compared to the place of Sunday in society. Indeed, the Republican authorities found themselves in a similar position to the religious police of the Ancien Regime in attempting to force compliance with public morality. Chapter 6 (‘Work time’) examines this continuity and stresses the importance of time for policing and the legislation of markets. Insights borrowed from cultural anthropology into the political and social meanings of local culture have also been vital, in particular for the politics involved in social events such as festivals and markets. Chapter 7 examines Napoleon’s relationship with the calendar and also draws attention to the political messages suggested by the use of time.

Following on from this discussion, the broader implications of the Revolutionary period are examined. The calendar’s significance for the creation of a sense of a nation are considered, together with the period’s connections with historical thought. The calendar has rightly been seized upon as an example of the possible excesses of the Revolution and political

⁷⁰ Garrioch, *Neighbourhood*, p. 170.

⁷¹ Robert Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne (XV^e-XVIII^e siècle)* (Paris, 1978), esp. pp. 62 & 390.

naivety, but close inspection also reveals the extent to which the Revolution engaged with all aspects of culture and society, not just in Paris, but throughout the new nation.

CHAPTER 2

GERMINAL: POLITICS AND THE CREATION OF THE REPUBLICAN CALENDAR

Appropriately enough, the history of the Republican calendar begins with a confusion about dates. After the abolition of the monarchy, the Convention declared on 22 September 1792 that henceforth all *actes publics* would be dated from ‘l’an I de la République’. As the coming New Year would increase the confusion, the Assembly issued a decree on the 20 December 1792 in the hope that an expedient and simple solution would be quickly found by the Committee of Public Instruction. It was to present a report on ‘les avantages que droit procurer à la France l’accord de son ère républicaine avec l’ère vulgaire’ as soon as was possible. Dissatisfaction with and rejection of the current calendar was a consequence of the culture of reform, regeneration, and the radicalism of the period. Within the context of an increasingly radicalised and reformed Republic, changing the calendar made ideological sense, especially as the old, Gregorian calendar was arguably compromised by its association with the Ancien Regime. The new calendar would, like the decimal system of weights and measures, be shorn of old irrationalities. The origins of the new calendar also lie in the decisions taken by its main progenitor, Charles Gilbert Romme. His ‘motivation complexe’ (to borrow Georges Lefebvre’s phrase), a mixture of personality, pedagogical concern, interest in Enlightenment thought, and an increasing Republican zeal helped to generate a thoroughly Republican and rational calendar.¹ The reform also

¹ Alessandro Galante Garrone, trans. Anne & Claude Manceron, *Gilbert Romme: Histoire d’un révolutionnaire (1750-1795)* (Paris, 1971), p. 8.

reveals the Revolutionaries' understanding of the political and the propaganda possibilities of a new calendar. Yet the roots of such change predate the Revolution. The calendar represented a continuation of Enlightenment interest in the scientific mapping and ordering of both society and the natural world. Precedents for reform also existed, in particular in a number of contemporary almanacs

Sylvain Maréchal and the Almanach des Honnêtes-gens: a calendar before its time?

The dangers of dabbling with the calendar had been demonstrated nearly six years earlier. On 9 January 1788, the writer and bookseller Sylvain Maréchal was sentenced and imprisoned by the Paris *parlement* for the publication of a work condemned as impious and blasphemous: his *Almanach des Honnêtes-gens*. The son of a Paris wine-merchant, Maréchal had trained as a lawyer, but never practised and had instead looked for a career within the 'Republic of Letters', becoming a bookseller and avowedly atheistic author.² As a start to his literary career, Maréchal dabbled in erotic poetry before turning his attentions to anti-religious propaganda. In 1784 he had published a parody of the Bible, his *Livre échappé au Déluge* (1784) and remained convinced of his atheistic beliefs, publishing his *Dictionnaire des athées anciens et modernes* in 1800. At the age of thirty-eight he published the *Almanach* that was to lead to three months' imprisonment and exile. This work was a calendar printed in double-page quarto format, in which the days of the year recorded the births and deaths of great men of literature, philosophy, art and science. It contained many features that would resurface in the Republican calendar, in particular the structure of the year. Maréchal's almanac was published 'pour la présente Année' which, the

² Jones, *Companion*, p. 370; Maurice Dommanget, 'Sylvain Maréchal, Précurseur du Calendrier Révolutionnaire', *International Review for Social History* 3 (1938), pp. 301-34. (b. 15 August 1750, Paris, d. 18 January 1803, Montrouge).

Almanach declared, was 'l'An premier du règne de la Raison'.³ In his scheme, the year began in March and the months were subdivided into three 'décades' of ten days. Clearly, Maréchal was convinced of the benefits of decimalisation. The remaining five days were ordained for festivals called 'épagomènes'. These harked back to the calendar of ancient Egypt and classical Greece and were dedicated to moral themes, such as the proposed *Fête de l'Amour* on 31 March and the *Fête de la Reconnaissance* on 31 August. Maréchal also provided alternative or Roman names for the twelve months: *Princeps, Alter, Ter, Quartile, Quintile, Sextile, Septembre, Octobre, Novembre, Décembre, Undécembre, Duodécembre*.

He suggested that this new formulation of the calendar could be consulted by the 'le Catholique et le Protestant, le Luthérien et l'Anglican, le Chrétien et le Mahométan, l'Idolâtre et l'Hébraïsan.' Such a suggestion was provocative, even blasphemous, especially when the rest of the calendar is considered. Maréchal's publication was clearly an attack on the commemoration of saints whose days were replaced by humanist heroes. One date remained empty: the 15 August, which, rather than some prescient homage to Napoleon, was Maréchal's own birthday, while Christ and Newton shared the 25 December as their common *anniversaire*. More respectfully, perhaps, Maréchal's father was also included in the calendar. Nonetheless, Maréchal was premature in declaring the age of reason to have begun, at least in his own case. The almanac was not seen or intended as just a work of whimsy, or a piece of entertainment, but was taken as an attack on the Catholic religion and was denounced as such to the *parlement de Paris*.⁴ His reputation as an atheist ensured that the case was prosecuted. Louis Antoine Séguire, *avocat du roi*, prosecutor of the *Encyclopédie* in 1759

³ Sylvain Maréchal, *Almanach des Honnêtes-gens*, reprinted in Bureau des Longitudes, *Le calendrier républicain de sa création à sa disparition suivi d'une concordance avec le calendrier grégorien* (Paris, 1989), pp. 100-1.

⁴ Although essentially a calendar, it was also called an *Almanach*, a word not without possible suggestions of devilish prognostication or, in this case, vanity.

and responsible for the mass requisition of books in 1770, condemned the almanac as an 'ouvrage d'impiété, d'athéisme et de folie.'⁵ All remaining copies of the almanac were impounded. The same day, in the presence of one of the clerks of the *grand chambre* they were burnt at the foot of the Palace's steps. The almanac's Parisian printer, Charles Gailleau, found himself exiled three leagues from the city and fines were to be imposed on anyone who attempted to sell the condemned work. Maréchal remained undaunted by these punishments and swiftly began to publish similar material after his release.

The existing calendar, perhaps in part due to an interest in the exotic, classical and oriental, was not seen as necessarily natural, or indeed fixed, at least by the elite. Any educated French man or woman knew of the variety of calendars which existed, not only in Europe (Britain had used a different calendar until 1752), but also amongst different religious groups. A reader of the *Encyclopédie* who had reached the third letter of the alphabet would also be aware of the numerous calendars used throughout history, from the Egyptians, the Greeks, and of the reforms of Julius Caesar and Gregory XIII in the *Inter gravissimas* of 1582.

The expansion of anthropological knowledge had begun to bring word of the complex calendar of the Chinese and, it seemed to western viewers and interpreters, the irrelevance of calendars and even time to the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africa.⁶ A recognised part of anthropological and travel writing was an assessment of the use of time in the culture in question (such as comments on the people's industry or punctuality), usually based on the assumption that 'primitive' people lacked

⁵ B. Paris, December 1726, d. Tournay, 26 January 1792.

⁶ For the Jesuit missionaries, the Chinese calendar appeared a bizarre and irrational method of keeping time, according to Fr. Kircher, in J.H. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Études de la Nature*, vol. 3, 1784 (Paris, 1804), p. 90.

modern, 'Enlightened' time-consciousness. The northern extremes of Europe could furnish examples of ethnological 'otherness', which could encompass complexity and local skill in timekeeping, as in the Swede Van Troil's letters describing Icelandic society of the 1770s:

Of The Employment of the Icelanders, and their Chronology:

[...] As the division of time amongst the labourers is not determined according to the course of the sun, but by their work, this is perhaps the most proper place to say something of it. Though they have, like us, four different seasons, they only count two; the summer [...] and the winter. [...] Day and night are not divided into a certain number of hours, but into the following divisions: *Otta* is with them three o'clock in the morning; *Nider morgen* or *Herdís risnal*, five o'clock; *Dagma*, half past eight; *Huadege*, eleven; *Noon*, three in the afternoon; *Midur afton*, six in the morning; *Nattenall*, eight; and *Midnatt*, twelve o'clock at night. When they want to know what o'clock it is, they attend to the course of the sun, and the flux and reflux of the sea; but more generally they make use of an art to discover the sun by their fingers. Watches are very rare among them; every peasant, however, has an hour-glass.⁷

The temporal structure of the year was also more complex than today, as the eighteenth-century year was layered with astrological and religious dates, as well as with the calendrical requirements of the civil and financial year. A rich variety of festivals and the importance of the seasons to a predominantly agricultural society ensured that the passing of the year was noted. Maréchal's trial suggests that the calendar had an almost sacrosanct position in the country's political, religious and cultural fabric. As well as the content of Maréchal's blasphemy, the use of the calendar form seems to have been of particular importance. His choice of an almanac as a vehicle for his polemic deployed a genre that had increasingly become a key form of

⁷ Van Troil, 'Letters of Iceland', in *Voyages and Travels*, John Pinkerton, ed., vol. 1 (London, 1808), p. 657.

text in the late eighteenth century. An examination of the almanac genre provides both a context for Maréchal's work, as well as the Republican calendar, and draws attention to the place of the printed calendar in eighteenth-century culture. I would also like to stress the importance of almanacs, which were ubiquitous elements of eighteenth-century print culture and were not to be ignored by any potential propagandist.

Almanacs, as well as containing a great amount of information unrelated to the passing of the year, were at heart structured around the idea of a calendar, especially by the end of the eighteenth century. Their roots in prognostication, typology and astronomy, as well as in the Book of Hours meant that they were based upon the passage of time and the prediction, or highlighting, of future events and expectations. Time was also linked to the sacred. By the end of the eighteenth century almanacs tended to share a core corpus of information based around a canon of astronomical and meteorological events (The word *almanac* is thought by some to derive from an Arabic term meaning 'book of the weather'). Accurate times, to at least the minute, of sunrise and sunset, the phases of the moon, the seasons and equinoxes, predictions of the weather and temperature were one stalwart of the form. Tables to relate mean to solar time, as well as a smattering of tidal times, and the movement of the zodiac might also be included.⁸ A calendar, with the names of the days, the saints, and astronomical and astrological indications (either symbols or numbers) such as eclipses were also a requisite, as were dates of fairs and markets. The year's metaphysical associations were present in widespread awareness of astrology. The relationship of the stars and heavenly bodies with science, religion, the occult and superstition was a complex one. The zodiac remained important for the popular classes and perhaps beyond and almanacs of the type sold by peddlers regularly contained prognostication. Zodiacal signs were still

⁸ Lise Andries, 'Almanacs: Revolutionizing a Traditional Genre', in *Revolution in Print: The Press in France 1775-1800*, Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds. (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 203-22. The reference is to p. 203.

included in the majority of almanacs. Popular astrology and astronomy alike relied on the zodiac, and almanacs of all types contained information on the rise and declination of the signs. The zodiac itself was still important and was used for weather-lore and navigational purposes, as well as by amateur astronomers. The scientific zodiac could be accommodated by the Republican calendar, and was indeed suggested in one of the proposed set of names of the new months. One petitioner wrote to Paris with a suggestion for a sundial based on the new calendar that could be used to place the festivals throughout the year by means of alignment with the zodiac.⁹

To place the year in some wider, temporal or cosmological significance, it was also usual for almanacs to include a series of dates, such as the numbers of years since the date of Creation, the year of the flood, or the invention of printing. In the *Annuaire du Jura, pour l'an VIII* the periods that had elapsed were given as 5800 years, 4144 years and 330 years respectively.¹⁰ To make time even more personal, one almanac included a useful reckoner for calculating, for any age, the average number of years of life left.¹¹ Around this central corpus, a variety of material was arranged, which reflected the almanac's particular audience. The form continued through the Revolution. The majority of almanacs now held by the Bibliothèque nationale are departmental almanacs, which listed the local fairs and markets, coach and water-bus departure and arrival times, the hours and frequency of the post between the main towns and cities, a conversion of

⁹ AN F⁷4436 Letter, Borel, Paris to Robespierre, 19 floréal II (8 May 1794).

¹⁰ *Annuaire du Jura, pour l'an VIII de la République Française contenant les Foires et Marchés des Départemens du Jura, du Doubs, de Saône-et-Loire, de l'Ain, du Léman; les taxes des Barrières, les nouvelles Mesures de la République, la nomenclature des départemens, le tableau des principaux Fonctionnaires publics, etc. etc.* (Lons-le-Saunier, Year VII), p. 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the local and metric weights and measures, and details of the committees and functions of the local administration.¹²

Almanacs were a typical accoutrement of an eighteenth-century home. Inventories suggest that the Bible and almanacs were the common bibliographic denominator. Almanacs were prominent within the domestic space, as they tended to be hung on a string from the ceiling or above the fireplace, or open on a wooden holder on the kitchen table. As such, it seems they were not only common across a wide geographical and socio-economic spread, but were well utilised. The almanacs were found to be endlessly useful. Such physical and practical detail of domestic reading practices comes from a variety of studies of the eighteenth century inventories combined with titbits of information from contemporary prints and prose.¹³ It is also possible to situate almanacs socially.

It is certain that almanacs existed in abundance amongst the better-off and more literate levels of society. Indeed, the *Almanach Royal* comes under Mercier's attentions. He claimed it to be worth some forty thousand *livres* a year to the publisher; far more, he points out, than the *Iliad* or *L'Esprit des Lois*. For Mercier, an almanac of this sort was a indictment on court society and sinecures; it was indeed a 'catalogue des vampires.'¹⁴ Almanacs were a popular format, produced by their thousands every year. They were a stalwart amongst the stocks of peddlers and booksellers that, as mentioned above, appear in inventories and other records of the middling and poorer

¹² Claire Gaspard, 'Les almanachs de l'an II: – Quoi de neuf en dehors du calendrier?', *A.H.R.F.*, 58 (1986), pp. 141-59.

¹³ Martine Sonnet, 'Les almanachs en langue française publiées et diffusées en France de 1789 à 1799' (Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université Paris VII, 1976-1977); Martine Sonnet, 'Les Almanachs politiques parus pendant la Révolution française', *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France*, 25 (1980), pp. 5-10; Andries, 'Almanacs'.

¹⁴ L. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris, Nouvelle Édition*, 20 vols. (Amsterdam, 1782), vol. 4., p. 12;

sections of society. Almanacs existed in what appears to be a popular genre, and were published as an adjunct to the circulation of the *bibliothèque bleue*. *Le Grand Calendrier*, published originally in 1493, has been seen as a prototype for an almanac for the 'gens de la campagne'. Such an extrapolation, however, perhaps mistakes the presence of rural concerns and motifs within the almanac with a popular or rural readership; rather almanacs could well have been intended for the literate and the affluent.¹⁵ Yet by the eighteenth century, almanacs were clearly designed for a widespread audience and diffused via colportage. Literacy had improved and although this meant that in 1790 only 37% could sign their names, group literacy increased the size of a reading public.¹⁶ By 1789, Johnson allows, 'there did exist almanacs in a format that may at last be called truly popular.' More sophisticated almanacs also continued to be produced and sold by booksellers.¹⁷

Almanacs therefore had a place within popular culture, yet the exact nature of their use is harder, if not impossible, for historians to discern. Typically, they have come to the aid of debates about the nature of popular, as opposed to elite, culture. Chartier in particular offers a 'third way' and warns against a rigid division of culture. Rather than inflexible delineation, he instead found 'evidence of fluid circulation, practices shared by various groups, and blurred distinctions'. The popular use of 'motifs and genres that were never considered specific to the lower echelons of society' was

¹⁵ Albert Soboul *et al*, *Le siècle des lumières* (Paris, 1977), vol. 1, p. 636; Neal Johnson, 'Popular French Almanacs of the Eighteenth Century', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 8 (1985), pp. 139-54.

¹⁶ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France* (Stanford, 1976), p. 67.

¹⁷ Johnson, 'French Almanacs', p. 149; Gaspard, 'Les almanachs de l'an II', p. 159; Sonnet, 'Les almanachs en langue française', p. 145.

common.¹⁸ Yet, as Neal Johnson suggests, although elite and popular cultures may have bought and read the same almanacs, they may have read them very differently, with the satire, political comment, and other allusion being missed by some. The almanac could be a multivalent form, with multiple levels of meaning and reader-response.¹⁹ The differences and similarities between elite and popular are therefore complex, but it seems certain that readers from both groups used almanacs for some of the same functions: that of both information and amusement. Maréchal's almanac was pitched at the level of educated journalism, a genre which was lively and amusing, but also capable of making political points.

The relationship between almanacs and politics has a long history. Although almanacs were produced for all political persuasions, they usually attempted to curry favour with the current regime. Francesco Maiello suggests three phases of the almanac genre, deriving an exact periodisation from the dates of the publication of individual works. From 1488-1572, he suggests Books of Hours clearly presented a religious world-view (although a number of contradictory currents are also present). The monarchy was supported in the mainly astrological almanacs published between 1553 and 1700, followed by a more secular, enlightened world view in the eighteenth century.²⁰ Aristocratic and counter-revolutionary almanacs, such as *L'Abeille Aristocrate* (Rome and Paris, 1790) and *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens de 97* (Paris, 1797) were resolutely *vieux style*. The *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens* entirely ignored the existence of the Republican calendar. Crucially, saints and religious days were included. Both these examples contained counter-revolutionary or royalist propaganda and entertainment at the expense of the new regime. Poetry, predictions, histories, and a 'Tableau de l'Anarchie'

¹⁸ Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, 1987), p. 3.

¹⁹ Johnson, 'French Almanacs'.

²⁰ Francesco H. Maiello, 'Il tempo dei calendari in Francia (1484-1805)', *Studi Storici*, 31 (1990), p. 456.

in the case of the *Honnêtes Gens* all commented on the mistakes of the Revolution.²¹ This format was shared by Republican and Jacobin almanacs, which typically contained a history of the successes and major events of the Revolution, as well as attacks on ignorance and superstition.

For legal reasons, almanacs tended to follow and reflect the political colours of the regime under which they were published (or at least the regime while the almanac was being written as the lead time required by the printer was up to a year before).²² Risks were, however, taken. One bookseller, Citoyen Habert of Avallon in the Yonne, was forbidden from selling an almanac which originated from Paris. The work was written under the name of Maribas and the Gregorian calendar 'est accolée à chaque ligne à l'ère nouvelle'. Such interdictions were not uncommon.²³ On the whole, almanacs tended to support the regime, and were often presented to the Convention for approval and recommendation. Those almanacs that

²¹ Anon., *L'Abeille Aristocrate, ou Étrennes de Honnêtes Gens* (Rome et se trouve à Paris, 1790) & P. Salles, *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens de 97. Contenant un Tableau de l'Anarchie, suivi de plusieurs Histoires qui ne sont pas des Contes, et de plusieurs Contes, qui sont des Histoires; de diverses Prophéties anciennes et modernes, du Thermomètre du jour, de nouvelles de l'autre Monde, &c.&c.&c.&c.*, (Paris, 1797); Jean-Jacques Tatin, 'Relation de l'actualité, réflexion politique et culte des grands hommes dans les almanachs de 1760 à 1793', *Annales historique de la Révolution Française*, 57 (1987), 307-16.

²² It would be interesting to discover whether Almanacs tended to go on sale ready for the 1 Vendémiaire, as many were dated, or 1 January, but as Sonnet argues, it is impossible to tell, Sonnet, 'Les almanachs en langue française', p. 53.

²³ Cited and quoted in C.H. Porée, ed., *Inventaire sommaire des Archives Départementales postérieures à 1790. Yonne, Archives de la Révolution - Série L* (Auxerre, 1911), p. 153; For example, the similar case of Tarbé, of Sens, Yonne, *Ibid.*, p. 147.

concentrated on religious information needed to follow a line at once 'discrète et courageuse'.²⁴

Almanacs always explicitly or implicitly supported a particular ideology. Swift shifts in editorial policy were taken during the Revolution. More subtly, almanacs reflected the growing influence of science on society through the eighteenth-century. By the 1790s, prognostication was played down, and almanacs' contents were more scientific and practical, rather than predominantly anecdotal, religious, or astrological. Prognostication, when present, was more tongue-in-cheek than before (such as the listing of sightings of ridiculous beasts), while meteorological and astronomical information was more common. Almanacs were an increasingly serious, usually respectable and ubiquitous genre that could easily be put to political purpose.²⁵

Maréchal was not the only author to attempt to alter the calendar of the Ancien Regime, or to produce a calendar influenced by Enlightenment ideas of what was worthy, although his was the most provocative and arguably had the most influence. Maréchal's calendar had a number of precedents, although he differed from them in execution. Gency's *Calendrier des héros ou Manuel des militaires* (1785) replaced Saints with notable men of war and Joseph Vasselier, a poet friend of Voltaire, published *L'Almanach nouveau de l'an passé*, which included not just soldiers, but celebrated figures from all fields.²⁶ The same year, Thomas Riboud, a magistrate and eventually a deputy, published *Étrennes littéraires ou Almanach offert aux amis de l'humanité*

²⁴ Jacques Choux, 'Calendriers ecclésiastiques imprimés à Nancy pendant la Révolution', *Annales de l'Est*, 5th series, 11 (1960), pp. 99-102.

²⁵ B. Baczeko, *Lumières de l'Utopie* (Paris, 1978), p.225; Jean-Jacques Tatin, 'Relation de l'actualité, réflexion politique et culte des grands hommes dans les almanachs de 1760 à 1793', in *A.H.R.F.*, 57 (1985), p. 307.

²⁶ Joseph Vasselier, *Almanach nouveau de l'un an passé, ou l'on annonce les choses arrivées, et qui arriveront encore; ouvrage curieux et profond, proposé par suscription* (Geneva, n.d.).

(1785).²⁷ This work held up exemplary men who had ‘honoré la religion par des vertus peu communes ou par des sacrifices éclatants’. Riboud also proposed civil, rather than religious, festivals.²⁸ Clearly there was a market, or at least the expectation of a market, for novel almanacs and calendars of this type. Maréchal may have had these prototypes in mind; in which case it might have lent the work an extra level of irony and gave a genre in which it could be placed. He had already produced a parody on the Bible; his *almanach* may well have been more propaganda than a serious proposal. Nonetheless, the fact that he really intended to change the calendar is not impossible. In 1780, Maréchal had suggested the need for calendar reform, so that all nations could be ‘éclairées par un seul soleil’.²⁹ Such reform was also mooted in the *Encyclopédie*. Maréchal’s calendar then, can be taken as an important, if extreme, example of more general Enlightenment views on the calendar and the case for reform.

The classical world was also an important source of intellectual and political precedents for the Jacobins. Although they were aware of the differences between modern France and ancient city states, a vast range of tropes and political arguments was provided by the histories of Athens, Sparta, and Rome. The Greek and Roman calendars also provided models to the men of the 1790s. The Olympiad proved to be a model for year-end festivals. These classical calendars were free of the complications of the modern religious calendar, which seemed to be perversely based on the lunar calendar for nine months of the year and the solar for the remaining three. These calendars were also free of the seemingly obsessive

²⁷ B. 1755, d. 1835.

²⁸ Cited and quoted in Dommanget, ‘Sylvain Maréchal’, p. 303.

²⁹ Maréchal, *Le livre de tous les âges* (Paris, 1780), pp. 195-196.

memorialisation of Christian saints; they were reminders of men who exhibited qualities more to the stoical and virtuous tastes of the Jacobins.³⁰

The Idea of a New Era

The publication of Maréchal's *Almanach* and his subsequent trial suggest the political and cultural importance that the calendar could be given. Calendars were not neutral instruments that simply measured time. They could also be used to attack or support the mental framework of a society. The almanac genre was also mutable and politically responsive. The *Almanach* thus illustrates the cultural context in which the Republican calendar was created, if it does not establish its direct cause. The structure and contents of the *Almanach* suggest that it may have influenced the development of the Republican calendar's final form. The Jacobins believed that a rational calendar would be free of religious associations, but would retain or even heighten the educational or propagandistic nature of the calendar. Maréchal's *Almanach* was also produced for the new era of reason. It was therefore possible to talk of new beginnings. The declaration of the new era also demonstrated the importance of the concept of the epoch for the eighteenth century mind; a theme which will be picked up again later in this dissertation. The new calendar was shaped by a belief in the value of defining points in time and an optimistic sense of France, even the world, entering a wholly new temporal phase. Inherent in this view, as the final chapter will examine in more detail, was a contradiction between a desire to escape history and a need to define this new beginning within a historical framework. Soon, the political climate was also more amenable to a calendar celebrating the 'new reign of reason.' By October 1793, France, or at least its administrators, had accepted a new calendar not dissimilar to Maréchal's *Almanach*. Although the Republican calendar had clear precedents and an understandable context, it did not simply appear

³⁰ Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins during the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), pp. 201-204.

spontaneously, but was a result of the workings of the Committee of Public Instruction.

Since March of 1793 a working party, under Romme's leadership, had been looking at how to bring the old and new eras into accord. Ever since the convocation of the Estates General people had begun to talk or write of 'the first year of liberty' or, in Maréchal's case, of the 'first year of reason.' Journals and private correspondence testify to the new style of dating. Mastheads, such as that of the *Moniteur*, soon carried the title 'The First Year of Liberty'. Maréchal's almanac suggests that the eighteenth century was not unfamiliar with the idea of a new era. Nonetheless, it does acknowledge the real sense of a new dawn that the events of 1789 ushered in. Maréchal began his calendar with a claim to herald a new reign of reason. This theme was a key part of Revolutionary discourse and thus of the new calendar. The Revolution spread Maréchal's hope of a new era throughout France.

Almost immediately following the storming of the Bastille pamphlets, journals and private correspondence referred to 'l'an 1^{er} de la liberté'. The habit continued and, as the Convention also began to refer to the year of liberty, the dating became ambiguous as to when the second year should begin. Did it coincide with the Gregorian calendar and clock another year on 1 January, or on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, or on the Declaration of the Rights of Man? On the 14 July, 1790 as the *Fête de la Fédération* was celebrated in Paris, the *Moniteur* was dated '1er jour de la deuxième année de la Liberté.'³¹ The Legislative Assembly decreed on 2 January 1792 that 'Tous les actes publics, civils, judiciaires et diplomatiques porteront l'inscription de l'ère de la Liberté et que l'an IV de la Liberté a commencé le 1er janvier 1792.' After the convocation of the Convention on 10 August 1792, the *Moniteur* carried on its masthead for the 21 August 'an IV de la Liberté et le I(ère) de l'Égalité'. This mode of dating was a commentary on the political situation, a noting of the new era that the

³¹ *Moniteur*, 14 July 1790.

French were now witnessing. It was given official approval by the decree of the 2 January 1792. The decree no doubt arose from a desire for order and coherence within administration, and showed the importance placed on the new style of dating. By December 1792, the coming New Year was threatening confusion; hence the desire to co-ordinate the use of recording of the year. It seems certain that it was in the working party that the idea for a wholly new calendar was first seriously mooted. Why did the committee go so much further than their brief?

The French Revolution was clearly a radical break with the past and was soon construed as such by contemporaries of various political hues. Condorcet, writing in hiding and in the face of his own troubles, provides an overwhelmingly optimistic assessment of the events of 1789: 'A happy event suddenly opened a vast arena to the hopes of the human race; a single instant put a century's distance between yesterday's man and today's.'³² Wordsworth, famously, wrote of a new dawn and Edmund Burke, whose hostility to events in France became defined far earlier than the poet's, clearly saw both the novelty and the violent rupture of the Revolution. Writing with a perceptible shudder, he declared: 'When antient [sic] opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer.'³³ As Keith Michael Baker makes clear, the Revolutionaries were accustomed to the 'use of the term "revolution" to describe sudden changes in the political order of a state, without any connotation of a return to an earlier point.'³⁴ The Revolution was not a cyclical event in the temporal order, but a fresh beginning in the history of

³² Quoted in Mona Ozouf, 'Regeneration', in *Critical Dictionary*, p. 538.

³³ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York, 1973), p. 91.

³⁴ Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, p. 218; Alain Rey, «Révolution» *Histoire d'un Mot* (Paris, 1989), p. 183; Rolf Reichardt and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Révolution à la fin du 18e siècle. Pour une relecture d'un concept-clé du siècle des Lumières', *Mots*, 16 (1988), pp. 35-68.

the world. This, as Ozouf has highlighted, was one of the central themes of the Revolution as it developed.³⁵ A new era had begun and an old era, the Ancien Regime, was defined and rejected. This concern with the new also gave the Revolution much of its uniqueness. Indeed, Hunt suggests that this represented a novel development and that 'the will to break with the national past distinguished the French from all previous revolutionary movements'.³⁶ The established idea of time, and the Revolution's place within it, could therefore be questioned. Events suggested that a new era had begun, in the traditional method of historians for denoting a general period. Yet the novelty and extent of the Revolution, combined with its emphasis on the beginning of the rule of reason, also suggested that a real rupture had taken place and that time was also renewed.³⁷

Within this framework, the symbolism of a new beginning was given great significance. As the sociologists Pitirim Sorokin and Robert Merton noted about chronological frameworks: 'In all cases the point of departure is social or imbued with profound social implication; it is always an event which is regarded as one of peculiar social significance.'³⁸ The calendar, because of its mode of dating the year from the foundation of the Republic was firstly a commemoration of this new beginning. This fresh start was marked by a destruction of symbols of the old regime. Iconoclasm was widespread throughout the Revolutionary period, but was, perhaps, most

³⁵ Mona Ozouf, 'Space and Time in the Festivals of the French Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17 (1975), pp. 372-84.

³⁶ Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1992), p. 27.

³⁷ William Scott, 'Ignorance and Revolution: Perceptions of Social Reality in Revolutionary Marseilles, 1789-1792', in *Interpretation and Cultural History*, Joan H. Pittock and Andrew Wear, eds. (London, 1991), pp. 237, 239.

³⁸ Pitirim Sorokin and Robert K. Merton, 'Social Time: A Methodological and Functional Analysis', *American Journal of Sociology*, 42 (1937), p. 623; Eviatar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Chicago & London, 1981), p. 87. See also Leith, *Space and Revolution*, pp. 33-5.

popular and widespread in 1789 (the dechristianising destruction of the Year II can be argued to have been more limited in its targets and participants). Peasants attacked the symbols and means of their material subjugation in the mills, rabbit runs, and grain stores of their *seigneurs*. In Paris, the attack on the Bastille came to represent the attack on the old regime. As the Revolution progressed and took a Republican turn, statues of the King and the church were attacked and destroyed. Revolutionary culture attempted to efface the past. The Republican calendar marked its new beginning.

The Archives nationales contain two petitions calling for amendment of the calendar. Reform was not an issue in the *cahiers de doléances*: a call for a decrease in religious feast days was the only issue raised which related to the calendar. Of the petitions, the first, signed by Cazeaux in December 1792, requested that the year should begin on the 21 September and that the months of the year carry the names of twelve citizens who died for *liberté* and *égalité*. The other petition, from François de Neufchâteau, the future Minister of the Interior and Director, suggested a competition and a prize for a ‘calendrier civil’.³⁹ Precedents, of course, also existed in Maréchal’s work. In 1790, an anonymous author published *Le Nostadamus moderne, almanach national et patriotique*. As well as predicting a year in which a marriage proposal may be received, a fine harvest, and a general adherence to the laws and warning of a coming cold snap, it argued that ‘la France est enfin à l’époque où ses usages antiques[...] vont céder la place à un nouvel ordre de choses’. It was time to reform ‘des chaînes de la routine qui asservissait nos peres’. Maréchal called the work a ‘réchauffé’ of his *almanach* and it did indeed include new names for the months of the year,

³⁹ J. Guillaume, *Procès-verbaux du Comité d'instruction publique de la Convention nationale*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1891), vol. 1, p. 237.

such as Voltaire, Jeanne d'Arc and Corneille. Maréchal also published a new edition of his almanac and sent it to the Convention.⁴⁰

Romme and the Committee of Public Instruction

Four *commissaires* were charged with the reform of weights and measures: Arbogast, Ferry, Romme, Prieur de la Côte-d'Or. The committee's minutes do not reveal who first proposed extensive calendar reform. Nonetheless, the committee was discussing reform of weights and measures when time became entwined as the minutes for the 21 December 1792 record. The French scholar Guillaume considered it highly likely that Romme took the initiative to use the Assembly's decree as a starting point for a wholly new calendar.⁴¹ Romme's most able biographer, Alessandro Galante Garrone, agrees with this assessment of his centrality to the creation of the calendar. Garrone points out that Romme soon went to work, as usual 'scrupuleux et obstiné' and, although he did consult several scientists, was soon the only member occupied by the calendar reforms.

Romme was born in 1750 in the provincial town of Riom in the Auvergne, the son of a lawyer. After the death of his father when Romme was thirteen, his mother succeeded in providing him with a good education at the college of the Oratorian order in Riom. Mathematics and science especially appealed to him and in 1774 he moved to Paris hoping for a career in medicine. For financial reasons, he became a tutor to the Russian Count Golovkin and then to the Count Strogonov, with whom he travelled to Russia. Romme was profoundly influenced by Rousseau's educational ideals and attempted to raise Strogonov accordingly. Science was also

⁴⁰ B.N. Lc²²20, *Le Nostadamus moderne, almanach national et patriotique, avec des changemens notables dans le calendrier, et des prédictions pour chaque mois; ENRICHI d'anecdotes et de traits remarquables, &c.* (Liege, 1790). Dommanget, 'Sylvain Maréchal', pp. 319-20.

⁴¹ James Friguglietti, 'Gilbert Romme and the Making of the French Republican Calendar', in *The French Revolution in Culture and Society*, David G. Troyansky, Alfred Cismaru, and Norwood Andrews JR., eds. (Westport, 1991), pp. 13-22.

emphasised in the young Count's schooling. Romme and the Count travelled widely in Russia and observed the Enlightened reforms of Catherine the Great when in St. Petersburg. After travelling in Europe, Romme returned to France during the Revolution and was involved in the founding of the Amis des Lois and the Society of the Tennis Court Oath. Strogonov returned to Russia in 1790; Romme returned to Riom and began to farm. In September he won election to the Legislative Assembly and to the Convention. He was soon a member of the Committee of Public Instruction.

The Revolution was the most important event of his life. As Garrone makes clear, the events following 1789 forced Romme to 'step out of the shadows'.⁴² Romme became increasingly radical politically, voting for the death of the King, breaking with the Girondin element and becoming active in the Parisian Jacobin Club, where he served as secretary. His sudden resignation from the *Comité d'analyse* in April 1793 was a clear sign of his hostility towards the Girondins. The same month, April 1793, he was captured by Federalists while on mission in Cherbourg. On his release he presented his plan for public education. Romme was not particularly associated with Robespierre, but became increasingly disillusioned with the Thermidorians, in particular with their tolerance for Catholicism and their repeal of the Maximum. After Thermidor, Garrone suggests, he was like a 'small stone abandoned by the sudden ebb of the tide.'⁴³ During the Prairial uprising he fatally implicated himself by calling for the release of imprisoned patriots, improved food supply to Paris and permanent meetings of the sections. Consequently, he was arrested in Normandy and brought back to Paris for trial. Found guilty, he stabbed himself to death on the way to the guillotine. (17 June 1796). In so doing he became mythologised as a 'martyr of Prairial'. Beyond the myth (albeit a minor one in the Republican pantheon) of a Plutarchian hero, a stoical, Spartan and fanatical defender of

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 408.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

the Revolution and the Republic, it is possible to see a more human picture of the man. His youth in the Auvergne continued to hold an importance for him. This was especially demonstrated in his concern with agriculture and the education of the peasantry. His concern for popular education was shown by his dedication to the work of the Committee of Public Instruction and in his journalism for the *Annuaire des cultivateurs*.

Garrone concludes that Romme was neither a moderate nor a man of the centre or of the Plain. After the October days Romme argued that 'Il faut que la raison soit précédée de la terreur'. By the middle of 1793 he was a man of the Mountain, pouring scorn on the 'vil Marais'. Despite his radical leanings, he was not heavily involved in the political events and dealings of the Revolution: rather he concerned himself with culture and ideology. He was suspicious of the Commune and uncomfortable with the *sans-culotte* movement, since he feared the risks of drastic action. Garrone suggests that 'Peu de révolutionnaires eurent autant de rigueur morale, autant de ferveur sincère que Romme.'⁴⁴ This moral certainty in his character also worked against the compromise and manoeuvrings typical of politicians, and was shown by his suicide. Ultimately, for Romme, the Republic, which was a republic of laws, was everything. His belief in the power of the law helps to explain his unwavering belief that the calendar could be changed by decree.

The development of his religious convictions and opinions is more obscure and, ultimately, unknowable. The original influence of his Catholic and Jansenist upbringing by the Oratorians of Riom was diluted by his travels, his experience of freemasonry, his contact with scientists, such as the atheist Lalande, and with freethinkers such as the Count Strogonov. While visiting Geneva with Strogonov he attended the Orthodox church with his pupil, but, as Romme wrote in a letter, also wished to take the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

young Strogonov to the Reformed French Church.⁴⁵ Romme was opposed to dogmatism and became increasingly hostile towards the clergy: he was suspicious of the power they held over the popular mind. A letter from 1789 expressed his wish that their role could be limited to spreading love of goodness and peace, together with education and consolation. In a Jansenist fashion he thought the church should be limited to its evangelical function. By 1790 he had moved towards a belief in a lay clergy, and a desire for state religion, or a form of civic piety: 'l'Évangile fonda la religion des consciences; la loi est la religion de l'état, qui doit avoir aussi ses ministres, ses apôtres, ses autels et ses écoles.'⁴⁶ At the end of 1791, he encouraged a vigorous repression of fanatical priests. The course of Romme's religious views mirrored those of the radical Revolution. He envisioned that the calendar could both secularise and also assist in the creation of a Republican religion and system of festivals.

It is clear that Romme took the initiative in the discussions with a variety of experts on the exact nature of reform, especially the necessary astronomical calculations. It thus seems certain that Romme was the key figure behind the calendar, even if the final result had many similarities to other projects, notably that of Maréchal. One similarity in particular is striking: the initial choice of the word *épagomènes* for what were first named *sans-culottides* and eventually *jours complémentaires*. It is possible that as Maréchal was an associate of Desmoulins, who attended the same Masonic lodge as Romme, he could have had contact with Romme.⁴⁷ The term is used by the *Encyclopédie* during a description of the Egyptian calendar.

While he was charged with the reform of the calendar, Romme was busy with other concerns. In April 1793 he was sent *en mission* to Caen along with his fellow deputy and colleague on the Committee of Public Instruction,

⁴⁵ B.N. N.A.F. 4789, Letter, Romme, Geneva to Boirat, Riom.

⁴⁶ cited in *Ibid.*, p. 413.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 328; *Ibid.*, p. 83, n.2 provides the information on the Masonic lodge.

Prieur de la Côte-d'Or. In June the Federalist rebels imprisoned them for two months. Work had already begun on the calendar, but it is possible that Romme and Prieur saw the need to harmonise the reforms of weights and measures with the new calendar and the period of imprisonment might have provided the opportunity to discuss such changes.⁴⁸

While Romme was absent from Paris the Committee seemed unconcerned with the calendar. Indeed, some members displayed hostility to the proposed reform. Siéyès was pessimistic about the likelihood of reform succeeding, as he expressed when the issue was discussed in the Convention:

Le temps n'est pas venu de faire des changements dans la division de l'année; nos habitudes, nos rapports si multipliés avec les habitudes des peuples environnants, et des siècles qui ont précédé immédiatement le nôtre, se présentent, à cet égard, comme une masse trop effrayante à remuer. Nous avons cru devoir nous contenter de notre calendrier.

[The time has not yet come for changes in the divisions of the year; our habits, our many relations with the habits of neighbouring peoples, and of the centuries which have immediately preceded ours, represent, in this regard, a mass too fearsome to move. We came to the conclusion that we must be content with our calendar.]⁴⁹

When Romme returned to Paris he attempted to put the issue back on the agenda and the names of the new months were discussed:

⁴⁸ Georges Bouchard suggest that the calendar was discussed at this point, *Un organisateur de la victoire. Prieur de la Côte-d'Or. Membre du comité de salut public* (Paris, 1946), p. 175. Garrone disagrees, see *Romme*, p. 329. The evidence is at best circumstantial, although the two prisoners had the time and facilities to plan the project in the Château de Caen.

⁴⁹ Guillaume, *Comité d'Instruction publique* vol. 1, p. XLIX. Siéyès continued to express opposition to the calendar, and came to see it as a clear attack on Catholicism.

On discute les noms des mois; on propose les noms des signes du zodiaque.

On les rejette. On rejette également la proposition de donner aux mois les noms des hommes qui ont servi la liberté et qui ont fait des lois, parce qu'on craint les idoles. Un troisième membre propose de donner aux mois des noms tirés des phénomènes de la nature et des travaux de la campagne.

[The names of the months were discussed; the names of the signs of the zodiac were suggested. This was rejected. The proposition that the months be given the names of men who had served liberty and made the laws was rejected, for fear of creating idols. A third member proposed to give the months names taken from natural phenomena and from rural work.]

The committee adjourned without agreement.⁵⁰ When the report came to be discussed in the Convention it again floundered on the same problem of nomenclature. Romme presented his report on the 20 September, with the intention of introducing the calendar in time for the Autumnal equinox (21 September), but had to wait until the 5 October for the final debate and its adoption. Romme presented the Convention with a plan similar to the one that he offered the Committee, but had added a table listing the various names suggested for the months. The Convention appeared to seize on this opportunity to discuss the naming of the months, expressed unhappiness with those offered and referred the report back to the Committee of Public Instruction, this time under Fabre d'Églantine.⁵¹ For the time being, the Republican calendar was adopted, with an ordinal denomination for the months, *décades* and days.

Although Fabre d'Églantine also fell foul of Republican justice he was of a very different personality to Romme. The son of a cloth merchant, he was like Romme born in 1750, and baptised Philippe-François-Nazaire Fabre. In 1771 he claimed for himself the suffix Églantine, because of his sonnet in honour of the Blessed Virgin which he entered for the Académie

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 431-39.

⁵¹ b. 1750, d. 5 April 1794.

des Jeux Floraux in Toulouse.⁵² Initially a lay teacher for the Doctrinaires, he hankered after something more flamboyant and began a reasonably successful career in the theatre. He was living in Paris at the time of the Revolution and was soon associated via his journalism and activities in the Cordeliers with Danton and Marat. He was elected by Paris to the Convention and sat with the Montagnards. His dealings with the East India company and military contracts led to his expulsion from the Jacobin club in December 1793 and, also as a result of his Dantonist associations, he was guillotined in January 1794.

Fabre d'Églantine reported to the Convention on the 24 October 1793. The Convention had already declared, on the 7 October ('16^e jour du 1^{er} mois'), that government officials would take their rest day on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each of the new months. It now accepted the suggestions of Fabre's report. The names of the months, despite being applicable to only the Northern hemisphere, indeed the north of France, were approved: *vendémiaire* (vintage), *brumaire* (mist), *frimaire* (frost), *nivôse* (snow), *pluviôse* (rain), *ventôse* (wind), *germinal* (germination), *floréal* (flowering), *prairial* (meadows), *messidor* (harvest), *thermidor* (heat), *fructidor* (fruit). Each month had thirty days, which were divided into three weeks, or *décades* of ten days. The days took their name from a numerical sequence: from *primidi* through to *décadi*. The five remaining days making up a solar year were given the title *sans-culottides* and were earmarked for festivals. The year began on the autumnal equinox, when the sun moved into the sign of Libra, representing the harmony and balance desired by the Revolutionaries, as observed at Paris. By fortuitous coincidence this also marked the date of the declaration of the Republic. This coincidence may have clinched the decision to begin the calendar on the 22 September. Hours and seconds were also decimalised. The Republican day contained ten hours rather than twenty-four and each hour consisted of a hundred minutes, or 10,000 seconds. On

⁵² J.M. Thompson, *Leaders of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1968), p. 137.

the 4 frimaire II (23 November 1792) these decrees were combined and published in a final form.

The form and structure of the calendar contained classical references, and was identical to the Greek astronomical calendar in terms of months of thirty days. The Athenian calendar, in theory, if not in practice, also used thirty-day months. Similarly, the Egyptian calendar, the *Encyclopédie* recognised, consisted of twelve months of thirty days and five days of holidays. The new months of the Republican calendar were in line with the zodiac and the understanding of the seasons, all of which were important considerations in the scientific world-view of the time.⁵³

It may seem somewhat ironic, or even incomprehensible, that the Convention found the denomination of the months rather than the practicalities of introducing a whole new measure of time to be the main problem with the proposal. Yet it was seen to be a practical and beneficial reform and the idea of introducing a new calendar, based on the decimal system, was easily accepted, approved, and even desired by the Convention. That this was the case is illustrative of the radicalism of the political and cultural moment. The idea of a new era, as has been argued above, was also a common notion. Significantly, the new calendar was introduced at the height of the Terror and the period of the most radical of the Jacobin institutional innovations. The Law of Suspects was passed the day Romme read his report to the Committee of Public Instruction. The General Maximum was also introduced at this time. Five days after the Convention adopted the Republican calendar, the Constitution was suspended and Revolutionary government declared. The wearing of *cocardes* was supposed to be obligatory for women and throughout France, *représentants en mission* were violently engaged in the 'war of national defence'. Marie-Antoinette was guillotined in the time between the debate on Romme's report and Fabre d'Églantine's final report on the introduction of the Republican

⁵³ Abbé J.-J. Barthelemey, *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis* (Paris, 1788), p. 225.

calendar. It was this radical political context which made the calendar possible.

Science and the Calendar

The Revolutionaries recognised both the symbolism and the utility of the rational calendar. For Romme and other supporters of the calendar, it eliminated the embarrassment of the Gregorian calendar and introduced a scientific and rational replacement. The calendar was heralded as necessary and rational because it was scientific. The culture of science by the time of the Revolution ensured that the scientific community had contact with or knowledge of the other members. A number of men of science assisted Romme and the Committee. The astronomer Lalande recalled in his *Histoire du calendrier*, a brief manuscript apparently written as a response to a request by the Council of the Five Hundred to explain his part in the Republican calendar, that Romme had contacted him for advice:

Le 31 janvier, 1793, Romme m'écrit pour aller conférer avec les Commissaires du Comité d'instruction publique, pour accorder l'ère vulgaire avec l'ère de la République. Le 8 mars il m'écrit: J'ai reçu votre mémoire, j'en ferai usage pour le travail dont le Comité m'a chargé.

[On the 31 January 1793, Romme wrote and asked me to confer with the members of the Committee of Public Instruction, to reconcile the common era with the Republican era. On the 8 March he wrote to me: I have received your paper, I will make use of it for the work with which the Committee has charged me.]⁵⁴

Romme's report also mentioned assistance given by the mathematicians, astronomers, and deputies Pingré, Lagrange and Monge.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Bibliothèque de l'Observatoire de Paris, MS B 57, Lalande, *Histoire du Calendrier*, 1799.

⁵⁵ Lagrange, b. 25 January 1736, Turin, d. 10 April, 1813, Paris. Italian-French mathematician who made important contributions to number theory and to celestial and

To use Albert Mathiez's phrase, the 'mobilisation des savants', or the role of sciences during the Revolution and the Terror, was complicated since many leading figures were associated with the Ancien Regime. Despite the general interest in science held by many deputies, the Revolution, especially its more radical phase, was not accepted without question by all scientists. Several leading figures fell foul of the regime. Condorcet was denounced in July 1793 due to his Girondist connections. He was forced to go into hiding and chose suicide after his arrest. Lavoisier's arrest of the 24 September was suspended to allow him to continue work on the temporary Commission on weights and measures. He, of course, was eventually guillotined on 19 floréal II (8 May 1794) because of his Ancien Regime past as a *fermier général*.⁵⁶

The new Republic had a particularly difficult relationship with the Observatoire National, which was created out of the old Observatoire Royal (founded in 1679). Accurate timing is crucial for astronomy, and celestial movements themselves were the basis for the calendar. As such, relations between the Republic and astronomers were important for the development of the calendar. It was not to be a propitious start to this relationship. At 6

analytic mechanics, especially in his work *Mécanique analytique* (Paris, 1788) which became the basis for all subsequent work in this field. His contributions to mathematics and astronomy were well recognised by contemporaries, including Frederick the Great who wished, as 'the greatest king in Europe', to have the 'greatest mathematician in Europe' in his court and invited him to Berlin. His scientific and mathematical brilliance earned him continued respect during the Revolution. As well as assisting in the creation of the metric system, he became, with Monge, the leading professor of mathematics at the École Polytechnique. He became a senator and count of the empire under Napoleon. His devoted interest in science and mathematics and gentle nature, it seems, enabled him to avoid any real political entanglements. Gaspard Monge, b. 1746 Beaune, d. 1818. Mathematician, physicist and founder of descriptive physics. In 1805 he was made a senator and Count of Pelusium.

⁵⁶ Bouchard, *Prieur*, p. 294.

a.m. on 16 July 1789 the Paris Observatoire was stormed by some 300 armed men who were searching for gunpowder and weapons. Instruments were damaged as they searched the basements and Cassini complained to the National Assembly, seeking compensation.⁵⁷ In September 1790, following a decree by Le Brun, the National Assembly agreed to pay an annual sum of 8700 *livres* towards the running costs of the Observatoire. In October 1793, despite being a member of the Commission of Weights and Measures and responsible for geodesy, Cassini refused to assist in the calculation of the meridian, and received an order to leave the Observatoire within twenty-four hours. It seems likely that this move was designed by the authorities to oust the astronomer, who was increasingly hostile towards the regime and, like a number of scientists, tarnished politically by his associations with the previous regime.⁵⁸ The astronomer was imprisoned, but was released and, reluctant to return to the Bureau, retired to his family home in Thury, although he continued to work on the Observatoire's most important publication, *La Connaissance des temps*, editing the editions for 1795 and 1796. This almanac contained highly detailed scientific information about astronomical and celestial events for calculating longitude: vital information for mariners and the navy. Lalande was elected as Cassini's replacement in charge of the Bureau.

Yet the calendar was a scientific as well as political institution. It was a clear continuation of the Enlightenment's concern with the proper way to record the natural world. Most agreed that this involved a numerical base of ten, as opposed to the more flexible (but perhaps harder to calculate) mixture of duodecimal and sexagesimal bases, traditionally believed to be

⁵⁷ Cassini, b. 30 June 1748, Paris, d. 18 October 1845, Thury. Geodesist and astronomer, who completed his father's (César-François Cassini de Thury) famous map of France, which became the basis for the *Atlas National* (1791). He also followed in his father's footsteps as director of the Observatoire de Paris in 1784.

⁵⁸ J. B. L. Delambre, *Histoire de l'astronomie au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1827), part. ii; C. Wolf, *Histoire de L'Observatoire de Paris de sa Fondation à 1793* (Paris, 1902), pp. 321-331.

derived from the Babylonians. The decimal system was thought somehow to be more rational, although dissenting voices, who argued for the easier division of the old system, were sometimes raised.⁵⁹ Overall, the decimal was associated with the rational.⁶⁰ The author of the entry on the decimal system in the *Encyclopédie* thought that it might eventually even be applied to the division of the day. A report (29 May 1793) by a committee of the Académie des Sciences de Paris, composed of Borda, Condorcet, Lagrange, Lavoisier and Tillet, concluded ‘que l’échelle décimale doit servir de base à toutes les divisions’. Indeed, the success of such reforms depended upon it. Condorcet, of course, was a long-standing supporter of the decimal system.⁶¹ Lavoisier had also previously recommended decimal measurements for chemistry. The National Assembly indeed accepted the decimal system as a basis for the reform of weights and measures on 26 March 1791. The Republican calendar explicitly related to these reforms.⁶² Once the calendar was accepted by the Convention, it continued to demand the attentions of scientists. Astronomical tables, necessary for the calculation of longitude by seafarers, had to be re-written in a decimal fashion.

The Republic’s new, scientific measurements were in part a practical outcome of a Republican discourse that sought to replace obscurantism and irregularity with reasoned, modern knowledge, truth and regularity.⁶³

⁵⁹ J. L. Lagrange, *Oeuvres de Lagrange*, 1867-92 edition (Paris, 1867), vol. 1, p. xxxix; Bouchard, *Prieur*, pp. 286-313.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-313.

⁶¹ *Histoire de l’Académie pour 1788* [sic], pp. 1-6, quoted in Joseph Fayet, *La Révolution française et la Science 1789-1795* (Paris, 1960), p. 460; Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago & London, 1975), pp. 122-23.

⁶² Romme, *Rapport*, p. 19.

⁶³ William Scott, ‘Ignorance and Revolution: Perceptions of Social Reality in Revolutionary Marseilles, 1789-1792’, in *Interpretation and Cultural History*, Joan H. Pittock and Andrew Wear, eds. (London, 1991), pp. 248-9.

Although the final form of the reform of weights and measures (leading to standards such as the metre, the gramme and the degree centigrade) had not yet been settled, it had been decided in 1791 that the future system would be a decimal one.⁶⁴ Time and space were to be linked in the new order of weights and measures:

Les nouvelles mesures ont été déduites de la grandeur de la Terre[...] pour retrouver le mètre, il ne sera pas nécessaire de recommencer les opérations sur le quart du méridien. On y parviendra au moyen d'une expérience simple et facile sur le pendule qui oscille au 50^e parallèle (le 45^e vieux style). Il convenait d'étendre aussi le système de la division décimale à la durée du jour[...] de cette manière la nouvelle seconde est à peu près les 6 septièmes de l'ancienne.

[The new measures have been deduced from the size of the Earth[...] to find the metre again, it will not be necessary to resume the operations on the quarter of the meridian. One can discern it by means of a simple and easy experiment on a pendulum that oscillates at the 50th parallel (or 45th in the old system). It was right to extend the system of decimal division to the length of the day[...] in this way the new second is more or less 6/7 of the old.]⁶⁵

Romme also considered the new calendar not just alongside reforms of weights and measures, which led to the geographical endeavours of Delambre and Méchain, but as part of an agricultural regeneration of the nation.⁶⁶ Romme had already demonstrated his concern with agriculture by

⁶⁴ Bouchard, *Prieur*, pp. 286-311.

⁶⁵ 'Notice sur le système des mesures, déduites de la grandeur de la Terre' in *Connaissance des temps a l'usage des navigateurs et des astronomes pour l'année 1795. Du 12 Nivose de l'an 3 au 10 Nivose [sic] de l'an 4 de l'Ère Républicaine* (Paris, Year II), p. 283. Please see fig. iii. (below) for an example of a dial which tells decimal time.

⁶⁶ Fayet, *La Révolution Française et la Science*, p. 462. Delambre, b. 19 September 1749, Amiens, d. 19 August 1822, Paris. Astronomer who plotted the course of Uranus. From

providing his horticultural advice in the *Feuille Villageoise* and the *Feuille du Cultivateur*. Together with Dubois and Lefebvre, who had also written for the *Feuille du Cultivateur*, Romme produced the *Annuaire du Cultivateur*. This was an almanac for the new Republican year, containing agricultural advice and information for each day. He received advice from such agronomists and horticulturists as Thouin, Parmentier (who was responsible for the park at Enghien) and Daubenton.⁶⁷ Romme presented the almanac to the Convention on the 30 pluviôse II (18 February 1794) and an impression was ordered. He was again away on mission while the *Annuaire* was being prepared for press and unable to check the proofs. The first edition, he complained in the next impression, was full of mistakes.

Errors were also to be found in the propagation of the calendar beyond Paris. A number of local judges noted that the months were spelt incorrectly, or listed in the wrong order, resulting in the month of germination following the month of flowering.⁶⁸ Indeed, the Republican calendar seemed to spawn typographical errors with a worrying ease. The 1796 edition of the *Connaissance des Temps* was delayed because it had been

1792 to 1799, he was engaged in measuring the arc of the meridian from Dunkirk to Barcelona. He also served on the Bureau des Longitudes and wrote histories of astronomy. François-André Méchain, b. 16 August 1744, Laon, d. 20 September 1804, Castellón de la Plana, Spain. Astronomer and hydrographer, who, together with Delambre, was responsible for the measurement of the meridian as the basis for the metric system.

⁶⁷ Garrone, *Romme*, p. 335. Louis-Jean-Marie Daubenton b. 29 May 1716, Montbard, Côte-d'Or, d. 1 January 1, Paris), French naturalist who pioneered the disciplines of comparative anatomy and palaeontology. In 1793 he became director of the Museum of Natural History.

⁶⁸ Friguglietti, 'Social and Religious Consequences', p. 19.

prepared according to the old fashion.⁶⁹ The calendar also had its flaws. As well as its detractors' complaints (such as the problems of France alone using the calendar, or the labours of a ten-day week), the new calendar had problems in dealing with leap years and, especially, in accurately calculating the beginning of each new year. Romme committed suicide before he could resolve these defects. In practical terms these astronomical considerations meant little, but for astronomers the fault ensured that the calendar was severely compromised. Observation of the equinox, with opportunity for human error, rather than a fixed period of time, meant the length of the year might vary by a number of seconds. These, rather than overtly political or social justifications, were the issues on which the reasoning for the abrogation of the calendar in 1806 was based, according to the final report of the committee, on the concordance of the two eras.⁷⁰

Romme did turn his attentions to the question of intercalation and proposed a solution that satisfied scientists and mathematicians, Lagrange, Laplace and Delambre.⁷¹ Romme's suggestion followed the Gregorian law

⁶⁹ A.N. F¹⁷3702, Report on the calculation of the *Connaissance des Temps*, Nouet, Professor of Astronomy at the Observatoire de la République, 5 messidor III (23 June 1795). Nouet also requested more money to undertake the calculations.

⁷⁰ Lalande, who had by then a long-standing dislike of the Republican calendar, was a member of the committee.

⁷¹ Pierre-Simon Laplace, b. 23 March 1749, Beaumont-en-Auge, , d. 5 March 1827, Paris, French mathematician, astronomer, and physicist. After showing brilliant promise as a young student, Laplace was appointed to a professorship in mathematics at the École Militaire on the recommendation of d'Alembert. His scientific work explained the physical basis for the stability of the solar system. During the Revolution he assisted on the creation of the metric system, helped to found the Society of Arcueil, and was director of the Bureau des Longitudes. He served for six weeks as Minister of the Interior under Napoleon.

for leap years.⁷² There is, however, some confusion over whether the solution was promulgated and a rumour was spread that this was because the publication of the report coincided with Romme's death. This irony appears to be false as the report was indeed published before Romme's suicide. The new rule would not come into effect until after the calendar was abolished.

Printing schedules also caused problems with intercalation to arise, as Lalande, writing in 1799 in his short history of the *Calendrier de la République Française* suggests:

dans un petit voyage que je fis dans l'automne de 1793, j'avois laissé au député Romme un Calendrier régulier, avec une forme constante d'intercalation; mais il déranger tout par l'article III du décret du 4 frimaire an 2 (24 novembre 1793) où il est dit *Chaque année commence à minuit avec le jour où tombe l'équinoxe vrai*; ce décret fut rendu en mon absence. [...] Il est vrai que le pénultième jour de l'année 3 (21 septembre 1795), je fus mandé au comité d'instruction pour rédiger un nouveau décret; mais les calendriers étoient imprimés, et j'aurais mis dans le public une confusion pire que l'inconvénient.

[for a short trip that I took in the autumn of 1793, I left with Romme a correct calendar with a constant scheme of intercalation, but he threw it into disorder by article III of the decree of the 4 frimaire II (24 November 1793), where it is said *each year begins at midnight of the first day of the true equinox*; this decree was drawn up in my absence. [...] It is true that the penultimate day of the Year 3 (21 September 1795), I was summoned by the

⁷² In the Gregorian calendar, every fourth year is a leap year, as are all century years that are divisible evenly by 400, such as the year 2000. All other century years are common years.

Comité d'Instruction to draw up a new decree; but the calendars had already been printed, and I would have put the public into worse confusion.]

The Republican Calendar and Dechristianisation

The main legacy of the Republican calendar has been its use as an illustration of excessive Republican zeal and, especially, the anti-Christian instincts of the deputies of the Year II. Georges Lefebvre, for example, argued that the calendar was an 'attempt to dechristianise daily life'.⁷⁴ The reaction to Maréchal's almanac, even more than his intention, demonstrates the link contemporaries could make between religion and the symbolism of the calendar. The calendar undoubtedly led to an increase in the dechristianising campaign, but its relationship to the motives behind the campaign is uncertain. A breach with Catholicism was clearly intended by the introduction of the calendar, but the dechristianising campaign was not its intention. Its destruction of Sunday, in part an accident of metrification, ensured that the battle for the Sunday would be joined by the battle for the *décadi*. Attacks on Sundays would have occurred without the *décadi*. With it, there was an additional justification and cause.

Yet the Republican calendar's genesis suggests that science and education were the primary motivating factor rather than an attack on religion. It is incorrect to view the new calendar as simply a tool of dechristianisation from its outset, but more accurate to see the attitude to religion develop

⁷³ Bibliothèque de l'Observatoire de Paris, B 57, Manuscrits divers, 1799, Addition to *Calendrier de la République Française*, p. 229.

⁷⁴ Georges Lefebvre, trans. John Hall Stewart & James Friguglietti, *The French Revolution from 1793 to 1799* (London, 1967), p. 77. Norman Hampson sees the adoption of the calendar as the inflation of 'widespread anti-clericalism into a positive campaign for the dechristianization of France' and 'a big step towards the elimination of Christianity from everyday life' in *A Social History of the French Revolution* (London, 1963), pp. 200-201. Hampson gives some support to the theory that the campaign was a political move by Hébert and his supporters, p. 202.

together with the Revolution. Indeed, by the time of the later Directory, it was being defended by some as a neutral institution that supported all religions by favouring none. Romme may well have wanted to replace or destroy the hold of the Catholic Church, but, as Friguglietti argues, there is no direct evidence that this was his 'primary motive'.⁷⁵ Unreliable evidence does, however, exist. The Abbé Grégoire recorded this encounter in his memoirs:

J'ai mentionné ailleurs la création du calendrier nouveau, inventé par Romme pour détruire le dimanche: c'était son but, il me l'a avoué; le dimanche, lui disais-je, existait avant toi, il existera après toi.

[I have commented elsewhere on the creation of the new calendar, invented by Romme to destroy Sunday: that was my aim, he confessed to me. The day of Sunday, I told him, existed before you; it will exist after you.]⁷⁶

Grégoire's memoirs were written several years after the conversation in question, in a very different political context to the one in which he was a member of the Committee of Public Instruction. The memoirs are clearly self-justifying. The evidence, therefore, is tantalisingly unreliable. In comparison, the mathematician and astronomer Delambre also felt it necessary to renounce his association with the calendar in an exchange of endnotes between himself and a reviewer.

Au chap. XXXVIII de mon *Astronomie*, tome III, p.689, j'ai dit: Les Grecs divisaient les mois en décades, usage qui était plus commode que de la semaine, et que cependant on a vainement tenté de renouveler de nos jours dans le calendrier français. L'auteur en induit que j'ai eu regret à la suppression de ce calendrier.

⁷⁵ Friguglietti, 'Gilbert Romme', p.19.

⁷⁶ Abbé Grégoire, *Mémoires de Grégoire, ancien évêque de Blois, député à l'Assemblée Constituante et à la Convention Nationale, Sénateur, membre de l'Institut*, 1989 edition. (Paris, 1808), p. 57.

Je puis assurer qu'il a mal saisi mon intention. Ce Calendrier, à l'établissement duquel nous nous sommes opposés de toutes nos forces, n'a paru incommode à personne autant qu'à moi. *Voyez* ce que j'ai mis dans la *Connaiss[ance] des Temps* de l'an VII, et en tête de mes Tables de Soleil; *voyez* enfin, dans *Connaiss[ance]. des Temps* de l'an 1808, les motifs que j'ai fournis à l'orateur du Gouvernement, pour demander le rétablissement du Calendrier grégorien.⁷⁷

[In chapter thirty-eight of my *Astronomie*, vol. III, p 689, I said: 'The Greeks divided the month into decades, a form more convenient than the week, and which nevertheless a vain attempt has been made to revive in our day the French calendar [or Republican calendar]. The author induced from this that I had regretted the suppression of this calendar.

I can assure that he has misunderstood my intention. This Calendar, to the establishment of which we were opposed with all our strength, has seemed inconvenient to no-one more than to me. *See* what I put in the *Connaiss[ance] des Temps* for the Year VII, at the head of my Tables of the Sun, *See*, lastly, in *Connaiss[ance] des Temps* for the Year 1808, the grounds that I provided the Government speaker in demanding the reestablishment of the Gregorian Calendar.]

An examination of the text of the various memoirs referring to the calendar therefore does not supply definitive answers, but only evidence of the later political embarrassment which association with the Republican calendar could cause. It was clearly unveiled in an atmosphere of increasing hostility towards the church, but the primary motive (or at least Romme's) appears to have been the advancement of science and rationality. It does not seem to be the destruction of religion for its own sake.

Romme's *Rapport sur l'ère de la République* (20 September 1793) begins by placing reform of the calendar within the context of a systematisation of weights and measures: 'une des opérations les plus importantes aux progrès

⁷⁷ Delambre, *Histoire de L'Astronomie Moderne* (Paris, 1821), vol. 1, p. 62.

des arts et de l'esprit humain'. Logically, progress demanded 'nouvelles mesures de la durée' freed from errors that credulity and 'une routine superstitieuse' had passed down through the centuries. He asked whether a free people would want written on the same calendar the crimes of kings and religious deceits. No, answered Romme: 'l'ère vulgaire fut l'ère de la cruauté, du mensonge, de la perfidie et de l'esclavage; elle a fini avec la royauté, source de tous nos maux.' The new calendar marked the opening of a new book of history, and would be used to record the annals of a regenerated France. The calendar was a tribute to the new era.

This introduction was followed by an explanation of the errors of the old calendar, beginning with the Egyptians and the Babylonians, and summarising the Julian and Gregorian reforms in a number of countries. Today, Romme suggested, one sensed the uselessness of these inferior past reforms, to the despair 'des chronologistes, des historiens et des astronomes.' What was needed, Romme made clear, was a fixed point in the celestial movements that could easily align the civil and solar annual cycle, without accumulating small errors over the years. The solution was the autumnal equinox, happily matching the declaration of the Republic. He then proceeded to describe in detail the divisions of the year, month and week and concludes with a summary of the advantages of the new calendar. His main point was that the new era of a free people demanded a new calendar, which would then become an emblem of the Revolution. Furthermore, the phase of the moon, which the farmer and the traveller needed to know, would be found with greater ease. Almanacs would be no longer filled with confusing dominical and golden letters. Everywhere, the old calendar had been a powerful talisman that priests had always successfully controlled and used to spread lies. The new calendar, in contrast, would usefully spread truth, justice, and would encourage love of *la patrie* and all that led to prosperity.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Guillaume, *Comité d'Instruction publique* vol. 1, pp. 440-4.

Romme's decree advanced the new calendar as scientific and 'pure' in contrast to the superstitions and irrationalities of the Gregorian calendar. This rhetoric employs a discourse of Enlightenment, education and rationality, counterpoised with the corruption of the previous regime. Catholicism was not necessarily condemned by this Enlightened language, as many educated churchmen adopted certain strands of modern thought and church reforms were implemented. On the whole, religious interference with the natural and scientific order was an anathema to Romme and others like him. Religion was not necessarily incompatible with rationality, but its non-rational influence based on tradition and privilege was. The report, however, suggested that Catholicism *per se* was not its target, unlike superstition, religious obfuscation, and backward priests. Nonetheless, the Republic replaced the Church as the arbitrator and propagator of truth. The calendar can be seen as a dechristianising instrument, but Romme's text also supports a reading that views it as incidentally attacking religion, and even monarchy, in a desire to put in place a new system. Alternatively, or correspondingly, one aspect of the Church was attacked: that which linked Saints with calendar days, and insisted on an incorrect and complex relationship between the religious year and the solar year. On balance, even if destruction of religion was not Romme's aim, his project was certainly not hostile to the prospect. The tone of debates in the Convention also points to the growing anti-Catholic feeling. Pierre-Joseph Duhem worried that the proposed moral names could be corrupted, as had been the calendar of Saints. He also cautioned that oath-taking priests wished to 'religionner notre révolution'.⁷⁹

Fabre d'Églantine's report on the 24 October was more explicit in its attitude towards the Catholicism of the Gregorian calendar. In its preamble he quickly identifies the Gregorian calendar as 'aujourd'hui la source de ses

⁷⁹ Pierre-Joseph Duhem, b.1758 d.1807. At that time (for January, at least) a member of the Committee of General Defence; *Le Moniteur*, 'Discussion sur le nouveau calendrier', 5 October 1793, p. 56.

erreurs religieuses'.⁸⁰ For Fabre d'Églantine, the old calendar was a commemorative instrument dedicated to the memory of the saints, church rituals and the Nativity. The removal of this corruption became one of the main aims of the calendar reform. As an aide to memory and a benefit to the peasantry, Fabre d'Églantine suggested a series of 'natural' names, based on the meteorological and agricultural year. The report continues with a long list of complaints of Catholic corruption of the calendar. Priests, 'ces hommes en apparence ennemis cruels des passions humaines et des sentiments les plus doux', by their encouragement of such a large number of ceremonies and feast days contributed to the corruption of morals. Furthermore, they wished to subjugate 'la masse des cultivateurs' by distracting them from the contemplation of nature and the correct observation of the seasons.

This shift in tone and language may have derived from Fabre d'Églantine's own disdain for the clergy or his rhetorical need to defend the changes in the calendar. The political situation had also changed in this short period of time. Revolutionary government had been declared. Two weeks after the report, Gobel's resignation as Archbishop of Paris marked the beginning of a wave of dechristianisation. Crucially, the calendar's displacement of Sundays and the Convention's discussion of *fêtes décadaires* and other civil festivals ensured that dechristianisation and the Republican calendar were soon linked in the popular mind, as well as in the minds of the Revolutionaries. The calendar was both a means and an end in the

⁸⁰ Fabre d'Églantine, *Rapport fait à la Convention nationale dans la séance du 3 du second mois de la seconde année de la République française, au nom de la commission chargée de la confection du Calendrier*, par Ph. France. Na. Fabre d'Églantine (Paris, Year II).

spread of this Revolutionary culture. The wider consequences of this Jacobin calendar now need to be examined.

CHAPTER 3

JACOBIN TIME: THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE CALENDAR

‘Le plus grand malheur de l’homme, c’est l’ignorance foutre’,

– J.-R. Hébert¹

A Republican Institution

The calendar was intended to be a central element of a regenerated France. The body which oversaw its introduction, the Committee of Public Instruction, was concerned with education and propaganda. The new system of measuring time was intended to spread and embody the ideals of the Republican state. As a Republican institution, a term suggesting both its didactic purpose and its role as an element of the French state, the new calendar was meant to facilitate the spread of the new order and embody its ideals.² These aims contrasted wildly, even violently, with the unique social, political and military contexts within which the calendar was promulgated. Calendar reform had implications for the creation of a Republican culture, the Republic’s relationship with organised

¹ *Le Père Duchesne*, no. 349, pp. 1-2.

² The French word ‘institution’ has at least two distinct meanings and from at least the early sixteenth century has been used to mean both education and an organisation or structure: Montaigne wrote of ‘l’institution des enfants’, that is, their education, while Montesquieu discussed laws, which were ‘des institutions du législateur.’ (*Le Petit Robert* (Paris, 1970), p. 918). Republican rhetoric employed the word ‘institution’, meaning an establishment or organisation (especially in relation to the law and civil state), but the word also has an educational sense.

religion, and created noticeable changes in administration. The extent of success and the nature of the conflicts that it created are the subject of this chapter.

Members of the National Convention were no strangers to legislation and the process of law: in common with many legislatures, a great number were members of the legal profession.³ Yet legislation has its limits and, despite the Convention's pleasure in debate and the desire for a new society framed by rational laws, its implementation was troublesome. As the Revolution developed the proposed answer to the perennial question of civil obedience was twofold. Firstly, as the new legislation clearly expressed rational good sense every good citizen would see the virtue in following it. If citizens did stray then, since the laws were just, such disobedience arose from a peculiar stubbornness of character and thus cast suspicion on the citizen's feelings towards the Revolution. Harsh punishments were seen to be the only answer to such blind superstition or attachment to old tyranny. Lack of control, or even the existence of effective organised policing, also affected the Convention's ability to implement its programme. Its answer to these dilemmas, Revolutionary justice, the 'people's army', *représentants en mission*, and Government by Terror created almost completely autonomous institutions with great power.

Yet a good deal of reform was implemented without bloodshed or insurmountable opposition. The great administrative reform of departments and the destruction of corporate and absolute society demonstrated the rule of law, even if much was hotly or violently contested. For the *conventionnels*, the difficulties of implementation and practicality of a reform were not to come in the way of their mission to regenerate France. The reform of the calendar was seen to fall into this latter category. Indeed, its implementation demonstrates the two aspects of Republican law-making:

³ 47.7% (by far the largest percentage) of the Convention (October 1792 – October 1795), were lawyers with either public or private posts, Jones, *Companion*, p. 168.

its proponents believed that its rightness would induce observance, combined with an element of coercion. Government officials and employees could be required to follow the new scheme of rest-days, but it was by suggestion alone that the population in general would come to see the utility of the new system. Romme's report of October 1793 simply described the working of the new calendar and, while attacking the old as a corrupt instrument of superstition and backwardness, suggested that his calendar's virtues would lend it to being voluntarily adopted. Legislation was introduced only for government employees who had to follow the new system of rest days.

The Convention's decision to change France's calendar represented a massive undertaking, but it paled in comparison with the difficulties facing the Republic at the end of the summer of 1793. Although the Republic had just survived the military threats of the summer, with victories at Hondchoote and, as the calendar was introduced, at Wattignies, the situation was still bleak. In such a situation the reform could be seen as superfluous to the Jacobin project: it was an unnecessary distraction from far more pressing matters. Yet the majority of the Convention inaugurated the calendar with enthusiasm: perhaps a triumph of Jacobin ideology over pragmatism. Its initiators did not see the calendar as an additional problem to be faced by the Republic, but as an important tool in the Jacobin aim of recreating France as the Revolution entered its most radical period. As political rhetoric and texts relating to the new calendar demonstrate, it was conceived as a key element of the new Republic. France, its supporters argued, could hardly continue to use the same calendar as feudal France: just as France's physical space had to be re-mapped and denominated afresh, so did its divisions of time.⁴ Such concern for reform heralded a number of implications for the administration, the production of propaganda, and private and public life.

⁴ Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements* (Paris, 1989).

The calendar's introduction to a locale could involve the threat of violence and arise from a complex of causes, such as dechristianisation, but its peaceful introduction via the local administration was also envisioned, simultaneous with its welcome adoption by good citizens and by popular societies. Romme's intention to teach a peasant audience about scientific approaches to agriculture through his publication, the *Almanach des cultivateurs* illustrates the propagandistic and educational aspects of the calendar.⁵ In a number of important ways the new calendar was thrust close to the centre of Republican culture, but also to the variegated patterns of power and resistance within local communities and between Paris and the provinces.

Precedents

The Convention's attempt to introduce a new calendar was not without historical precedent, either in classical history or within France's more recent past. This fact provides some scale against which to measure the success of the calendar. Proponents of calendar reform, such as Romme, used these examples to demonstrate the possibility of change. They argued that change was necessary by showing that the calendar that the Republic was inheriting was corrupted by discredited historical figures. The Gregorian calendar was by no means a unique means of reckoning time, nor were the educated men and women of the eighteenth century ignorant of the variety of calendars used around the world, such as in the Turkish Empire, Russia, and, within France, the Hebrew calendar.

The Gregorian reforms of the calendar, which were begun in the late sixteenth century and were introduced without much difficulty, provide something of a yardstick against which to measure the success of the calendar's implementation. Ten days of the year were lost without much trouble and England and Wales and Norway had adopted the calendar used

⁵ Museo del Risorgimento, Milan, A2 Romme, dossier 65, carton 3 contains a draft of this publication.

by most of Europe. Did this mean that reform of the calendar would be simple? These changes were a subtext for the proponents of reform, rather than a systematic comparison. Nonetheless, they provide the historian with a point of comparison to assess the difficulty of the change suggested. The more recent reforms in Britain and Norway perhaps provide the most important and appropriate comparison of calendar reform, rather than the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in France in the seventeenth century. Use of calendars and the importance of time more generally to society differed greatly between the seventeenth century and the late eighteenth century. The mid-century reforms in England and Wales took place in a society more comparable to that of late eighteenth-century France than the late sixteenth century, at least in terms of speed of communication and the beginnings of proto-industrialisation. As Poole has demonstrated, the introduction of the new calendar, which was possibly seen as papist, did not meet with riots demanding ‘Our Eleven Days’. Rather, it seems that the new arrangement of time met with general acquiescence, some educated chit-chat and erudite exchanges but not great amounts of confusion.⁶ The introduction of the Gregorian calendar in France was more gradual, and was linked to the spread of almanacs and a more modern time awareness: the two changes were concurrent and because calendars only gradually became more important, the transformation was attained without much difficulty.⁷

These anterior changes demonstrate that that reform was possible, but key differences should be noted. The magnitude of change was far greater with the Republican calendar. The structure and content of the calendar were being reformed, from the starting date of the year to the names of the days themselves, rather than a mere jump in dates being proposed. The political context was also far more extreme and dangerous, affecting the opposition to reform and the possibility of enforcing change as the new

⁶ Poole, “Give Us Our Eleven Days!”

⁷ Maiello, *Storia del calendario*.

Convention attempted to assert its authority. A further incidental factor was the increased importance of time in society. Its regulation had increased and technical developments (such as the introduction of second hands on clocks and watches from the late seventeenth century) heightened the awareness of time in everyday life.⁸ By the mid-eighteenth century, although the church dominated the control of time in France, secular society and the state were becoming increasingly powerful. The state authorities, as far as they can be separated from the church, increasingly legislated for time use. Merchants and urban dwellers had more use for agendas than liturgical calendars. Ironically, this increasingly secular calendar was overthrown by the Revolutionaries, but they also, as governments before them, had to legislate.

The reforms of weights and measures provide another useful measurement of the success of the calendar. Indeed, compared to the metrification of the measures of the marketplace, the new calendar could be judged to have had more of an immediate and powerful impact.⁹ Indeed, the calendar must be seen alongside the Revolutionaries' social and cultural programme of reform and regeneration. Linguistic uniformity, the creation of a secular state and urban planning have been shown by historians as revealing of the desires and assumptions of the Revolutionary project. The calendar similarly expressed the ideals of the Republic, but like these other social and cultural reforms, had only limited initial success.

Administrative Reform

Government and local bureaucracy had most cause to use the new calendar. Official decrees already had to concur with the decree of 2

⁸ Technical innovations, in particular Huygen's deployment of the pendulum and the balance spring, allowed for ever greater accuracy in timekeepers and the measurement of ever smaller amounts of time. See Landes, *Revolution in Time*, pp. 129-131 for a description of the spread of second hands.

⁹ Witold Kura, trans. R. Szreter, *Measures and Men* (Princeton, 1986).

January 1792, which stated that all public, civil, judicial and diplomatic acts would be inscribed with the First Era of Liberty. From the 22 September 1792, the newly inaugurated Republic's National Convention adjusted this method of dating, decreeing that all public acts were henceforth to be dated from the Year I of the Republic. The various decrees pertaining to the new calendar were combined into a single decree on 4 frimaire (24 November) and a manual explaining the new system and setting out how it was to be employed was published and distributed to the departments. The Convention limited itself to demanding that only government officials must follow the new calendar. When the Republican calendar was adopted by the Convention in October of 1793, it declared, on the 7 October, that 'les agents ou fonctionnaires publics' could only take holidays on the tenth, twentieth and thirtieth days of each month. Government officials, therefore, had to work every day except the *décadi*, as it was finally called on the acceptance of Fabre d'Églantine's proposals on the 3 brumaire (22 October 1793).¹⁰ The army, as school of 'civisme' also played an important role in educating, or propagandising, Frenchmen. During military service, the troops received a great deal of propaganda and political education. Soldiers were paid according to the new calendar and military routine had to conform strictly to the calendar.¹¹

Hopes that the perfection of the new calendar would simply induce good citizens to follow it were expressed and so strict enforcement was not suggested in the Convention. Yet how could it be expected that the French would simply adopt a new calendar without coercion? Perhaps it was thought that such a requirement would be an infraction of the Revolutionary principles of liberty. It would certainly have constituted an attack on the principle of religious freedom, something that the Republic still, theoretically, upheld. It seemed that they must have believed that, since

¹⁰ *Le Calendrier Républicain* (Paris, 1989), pp. 102-5.

¹¹ Bianchi, 'La «Bataille du Calendrier»', p. 248; A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 472, Circular, Minister of War, 12 brumaire II (2 November 1793).

the calendar was believed to be an advance on the Gregorian, all Republicans and good citizens would naturally adopt it without the need for coercion or legislation. Serious legislative measures were made, such as requiring almanacs to print the new calendar and demanding that journals use its dating. The calendar was also a form of propaganda: by its rational nature it would advance itself and at the same time carry messages about the new France. The Republic may have deemed it futile to impose what must be taken to heart. Finally, pragmatism might have informed the Convention of the difficulty of imposing the calendar.

Central government swiftly adapted to the new form of dating and made arrangements for a ten-day week, yet its spread to the departments depended on the vagaries of the postal system (and on the actions of Vendéen rebels and federalists) and, once received, to the recipient's political fervour and bureaucratic efficiency. The new calendar often generated just a few notes in the minutes of the department's central administration, and sometimes not even that. It was soon put in use by officials without much fanfare. In Toulouse, Republican dating was employed from the 1 November, although it took twenty days until Fabre d'Eglantine's more poetic names of the month were used instead of the prosaic '1er mois'.¹² In Besançon, the secretary of the *Justice de paix* of the fifth and sixth Sections began writing or printing '4^e an de la Liberté' at the top of minutes from the 7 June 1792. 'L'an premier de la République française' made its first appearance on 29 September of that year. It employed the Republican calendar from the 16 brumaire (the tribunal had not met since the 29 September).¹³ It appeared in the registers of the canton of Beaune-en-

¹² J. de Rey-Pailhade, 'Étude historique sur l'emploi du calendrier républicain et sur le temps décimal à Toulouse pendant la Révolution', *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Toulouse*, 4 (1908), p. 436.

¹³ B.M. Besançon, I 3 1, *Justice de Paix*, 5th & 6th Sections, 30 October 1790 - 29 ventôse X (20 March 1802).

Gatinais, in the Ile-de-France the day after.¹⁴ Avignon began to use the new method of dating from the 20th of the second month (20 frimaire). Despite delays imposed by the printing and diffusion of almanacs or concordances, clerks were able to learn the details of the new system from Paris publications such as the *Moniteur*.¹⁵

Inaccurate printing and editing of departmental almanacs continued to cause problems. Not only were the spellings of the months sometimes incorrect, but some months, especially ventôse and pluviôse, were placed in the wrong order. Confusion was not uncommon. The Convention received complaints and worries from a number of departments. The watch committee in Alsace wondered if there was some plot at hand, with the Republic's enemies scheming by means of confused calendars to disrupt military affairs.¹⁶ One commune in Calvados, while approving of a calendar 'plus commode pour le peuple entier', was unsure whether the *sans-culottides* could not be used for judicial business. The commune remarked that a free people, such as the French, could in no way afford to have less time available than enslaved peoples.¹⁷ In general, however, it seems most departments, or at least their clerks, quickly began to use the new system, even within village municipalities. Bianchi comments:

Nous sommes frappés par le double aspect de conformité (relativement) rapide et d'irréversibilité de la pratique municipale des villages franciliens en matière d'intégration du calendrier républicain[...] Ce qui dénote une

¹⁴ Renée Simon, 'La Révolution vécue par un bourg d'Ile-de-France: Beaune-en-Gatinais, 1789-1799 (d'après les registres municipaux)', in *R.H.M.C.*, 18 (1971), p. 253.

Beaune-en-Gatinais received the name Beaune-la-Rolande on 27 August 1823.

¹⁵ De Rey-Pailhade, 'calendrier républicain', p. 440.

¹⁶ A.N. F¹⁷ 1008 D, Report, 27 nivôse II (16 January 1794).

¹⁷ A.N. D III 37, Letter, Calvados to the *Comité de Legislation de la Convention Nationale*, 18 frimaire III (8 December 1794).

efficacité mal connue du fonctionnement de ces municipalités villageoises élues.

[One is struck by both the (relatively) rapid conformity and the irreversibility of municipal village practice in the Ile-de-France concerning the integration of the Republican calendar [...]. This demonstrates a largely unrecognised efficiency in the functioning of these elected village municipalities.]¹⁸

Nonetheless, slips by clerks continued, albeit in minor fashion, such as mistaking the year or month in long lists in *registres*. This type of error could suggest continued use of concordances of some kind, rather than use of the calendar from memory. Yet in general, in the vast majority of official correspondence and business, the calendar was quickly and effectively employed. Such effective bureaucratic change had consequences for society in general. It is probable that the majority of people only encountered the new calendar in this official, yet important, form, but this was not without importance. All posters and proclamations, as well as the original *affiches* announcing the new calendar, were dated according to this strange *nouveau style* ('*n.s.*') as well as, in smaller point-size, '*v.s.*'. Not only was the Revolution changing the money and probably doing away with the local weights and measures, but now it had also changed the calendar. The calendar not only altered the manner in which events were recorded, but the introduction of a ten-day week also overthrew the existing basis for most regular, timetabled community events. Meetings of all sorts were in theory to be arranged on a decimal, rather than hebdomadal, basis. Quite apart from the restrictions placed on what could take place on *décadis*, it is clear that the *décade*, rather than the old seven-day week structured the routine of a great many committees, juries and tribunals. In the Year II, for example, the *officier municipal* for the Commune of Paris, warned that assemblies for October, November, December and January would be arranged according to the

¹⁸ Bianchi, '«Bataille du Calendrier»', p. 247, n. 12.

décade and would not take into account the old days of the week.¹⁹ The Convention decided on the 21st of the first month of the second year of the Republic to receive petitions only on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month.²⁰ Such arrangements were not limited to the Paris Commune and Convention. By thermidor of the Year II, it was felt by the Nantes *Tribunal de Commerce* that their habit of meeting on Monday, Wednesdays and Saturdays, promoted the old calendar. It was suggested that the *Tribunal* ought to make arrangements according to the new:

Les juges du tribunal de commerce, assemblés en la chambre du conseil, considérant que ce serait perpétuer l'ancien Ère de continuer à donner les audiences du tribunal les lundis, mercredis et samedis, vieux style, qui n'ont eu lieu jusqu'à ce jour qu'en attendant de moment à autre que la municipalité eût fait changer les jours des marchés, ont arrêté, de donner les Audiences les tridi, sextidi et nonidi de chaque décade, à commencer au mois de fructidor prochain; si la municipalité des affaires le nécessite, tous les jours, et si les citoyens ont besoin de faire régler leurs différents dans ces intervalles, ou leur donnera audience publique à leur première demande.

[Judges of the *tribunal de commerce*, convened in the *chambre de conseil*, believing that to hold court hearings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, *vieux style*, would be to continue to perpetuate the old era, which hearings have only taken place up until this point as a product of waiting, from one moment to the next, for the Municipality to change the market days, have ordered hearings on the *tridi*, *sextidi* and *nonidi* of each *décade*, beginning with

¹⁹ 'Le citoyen Tonnelier, officier municipal, chargé de recevoir les actes préliminaires du divorce, prévient les citoyens à qui il a été indiquée des jours pour des assemblées, pour paraître dans les mois d'octobre, novembre, décembre et janvier, que ces assemblées auront lieu quoi-qu'elles [sic] tombent à des jours de décadi', 'Commune de Paris. Suite de la séance du 1 jour de la troisième décade', *Journal du Matin des amis de liberté et de l'égalité*, no. 895 (II), p. 4.

²⁰ *Moniteur*, 21 vendémiaire II (12 October 1793).

the month of fructidor next; or every day if the business of the Municipality necessitates it, and, if citizens have need for judgements outside these intervals, to give them public hearing at their first demand.]

Although the days were altered slightly in the Year VI, this pattern was continued, until the Gregorian calendar was reinstated by Napoleon.²¹ In the Côte-d'Or, legislation similar to that passed by the Directory concerning the strict observance of the Republican calendar in the Years VI and VII was passed, 'considérant qu'il importe d'adapter à la nouvelle division du calendrier, l'époque des différentes assemblées civiles et politiques'. Fairs and markets had to be held according to the new calendar and all general councils, tribunals and judiciary meetings had to observe the *décadi*. Schools were to cease teaching for 'jours congés' on the 5th and 10th days of each *décade*.²² A member of Dijon's surveillance committee said he believed it to be

nécessaire de surveiller les particuliers qui affectent de travailler le jour de *décadi* et de se reposer les jours des ci-devant fêtes et dimanche. En conséquence on rédige la motion que tous les membres du comité surveillent eux-mêmes les citoyens qui cherchent à faire un mépris de la Convention en dédaignant les jours destinés au repos.

[necessary to watch the [individuals] that tend to work the day of the *décade* and rest on the former feast-days and Sundays. As a result, a motion is to be passed that all the members of the committee will themselves keep an eye on the citizens who seek to pour scorn on the Convention by paying no heed to the days intended for repose.]

²¹ A.D. Loire Atlantique, L 2113*, Register, *Tribunal de Commerce*, Nantes, 1791-1849. Entry for 24 thermidor II (11 August 1794).

²² A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 1660, *Arrêté du directoire du département. de la Côte-d'Or concernant l'application de la division du nouveaux calendrier, aux époques des assemblées civiles et politiques*, October 1793.

The proposal was passed unanimously and recorded in their register.²³

The more established and official aspects of government therefore swiftly adopted the new system. Although meetings of central administration and national government were perhaps less linked to the days of the week, either new or old, as they often had to respond to events and took little heed of Sundays and *décadis*, they did more or less follow the Republican calendar. The *juges de paix* usefully provide evidence of more local and flexible responses to the new calendar.

The Justice de Paix

In 1790 Thouret had argued that it was necessary to procure ‘for the inhabitants of the countryside a prompt, simple, and domestic justice, so to speak, which does not require the apparatus of a ruinous procedure and which demands no other laws than the indications of common sense’.²⁴ The *juges de paix*, based to some extent on the English system, were the answer. A magistrate, who did not require previous legal experience, was elected in each canton for two-year terms. The number of cantons in France varied from an initial 5250 or so to some 5400 under the Directory. Property qualifications affected eligibility to stand and to vote, but nonetheless, in rural areas especially, the *juges de paix* provided a close link between the government (or at least its representative) and the populace. Pay was modest, set at 800 *livres* in rural areas and 1600 *livres* in urban areas, as *juges de paix* were meant to be amateurs rather than full-time officials.²⁵ *Juges de paix* were, first and foremost, local men. As Andrews makes clear, at

²³ *Ibid.*, Register of the *Comité des surveillances*, 12 floréal II (1 May 1794). For similar provisions in the Dordogne, see Henri Labroue, *L'esprit public en Dordogne pendant la Révolution* (Paris, 1911), pp. 94-102.

²⁴ AP XVI 737-738. Quoted and trans. in Isser Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s* (New York & London, 1994), p. 307.

²⁵ Woloch, *The New Regime*, pp. 36, 307.

least for Paris, such men could be independent from central political will.²⁶ Their responses to the Republican calendar therefore help to reveal the calendar's local impact.

The dates on which audiences with the *juges de paix* were held show a striking level of observation of the new calendar after the Year VI, as the contrast between figures ii and iii illustrate, and can be seen in more detail in figure ii. In Avignon, Besançon and Nantes, the meetings of the *Justice de paix* of the central districts soon followed the new calendar and continued to follow it until well after thermidor of the Year II.²⁷ In the commune of Nantes, the *Justice de paix* for the first *arrondissement* held its first recorded meeting for the Year II on the 28 nivôse (9 January 1794). It continued to meet on the *octodi* and *tridi* of each *décade*, with no regard for *ci-devant dimanches*, until messidor III (June 1794). The court continued to be an accurate barometer of the regime's concern for the strict observance of the Republican calendar. Records for the Year IV are not available, but the Year V showed the court meeting according to an irregular pattern, roughly at the beginning and the end of the seven-day week. However, in the Year VII the court began to follow the *décades* again, meeting on every *primidi* and *sextidi*, in line with the new regulations. This routine continued until at least the Year VIII.²⁸ The rhythms of public life in Marseilles, Meinzer concludes, were determined by the Republican calendar to a striking degree. The new weekly rhythm of the *décade* was quickly and strictly imposed in the Year II on the city's *conseils* and administration. The departmental *conseils* also quickly submitted to the new regulations and prison sentences were dictated

²⁶ Richard M. Andrews, 'The Justice of the Peace of Revolutionary Paris, September 1792-November 1794 (Frimaire Year III)', *Past and Present*, 52 (1971), pp. 56-105.

²⁷ B.M. Besançon, I 3 L, *Justice de paix* 5th and 6th Sections, 30 August 1790-29 ventôse X (20 March 1802), A.D. Vaucluse, 18 L 2, *Justice de paix*, 1790-Year VIII; A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 2318, *Justice de paix*, Years II-VII.

²⁸ A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 2318, *Justice de paix*, 1st arrondissement of the commune of Nantes, Years II-VIII.

according to the terms of the new calendar.²⁹ On 18 germinal III (7 April 1795), for example, one troublemaker, Jean François Gabry, was given a fine of 30 francs and imprisoned for one *décade*.³⁰

What, then, can be said of the reaction to the calendar throughout France as a whole? Each of the areas studied seems to have had a similar reaction to the introduction of the calendar. The same can be said of other studies. Marked differences existed between town and country. Evidence from the records of the *juges de paix* concurs with Meinzer's data, suggesting that the Republican calendar was followed less in rural communes than in the cities, although it could have influence in resolutely Republican communities: politics could on occasion surmount habit. A full account of this evidence can be found in the Appendix, but the following two graphs are illustrative of the changes in the pattern of meetings between the Years V and VII.

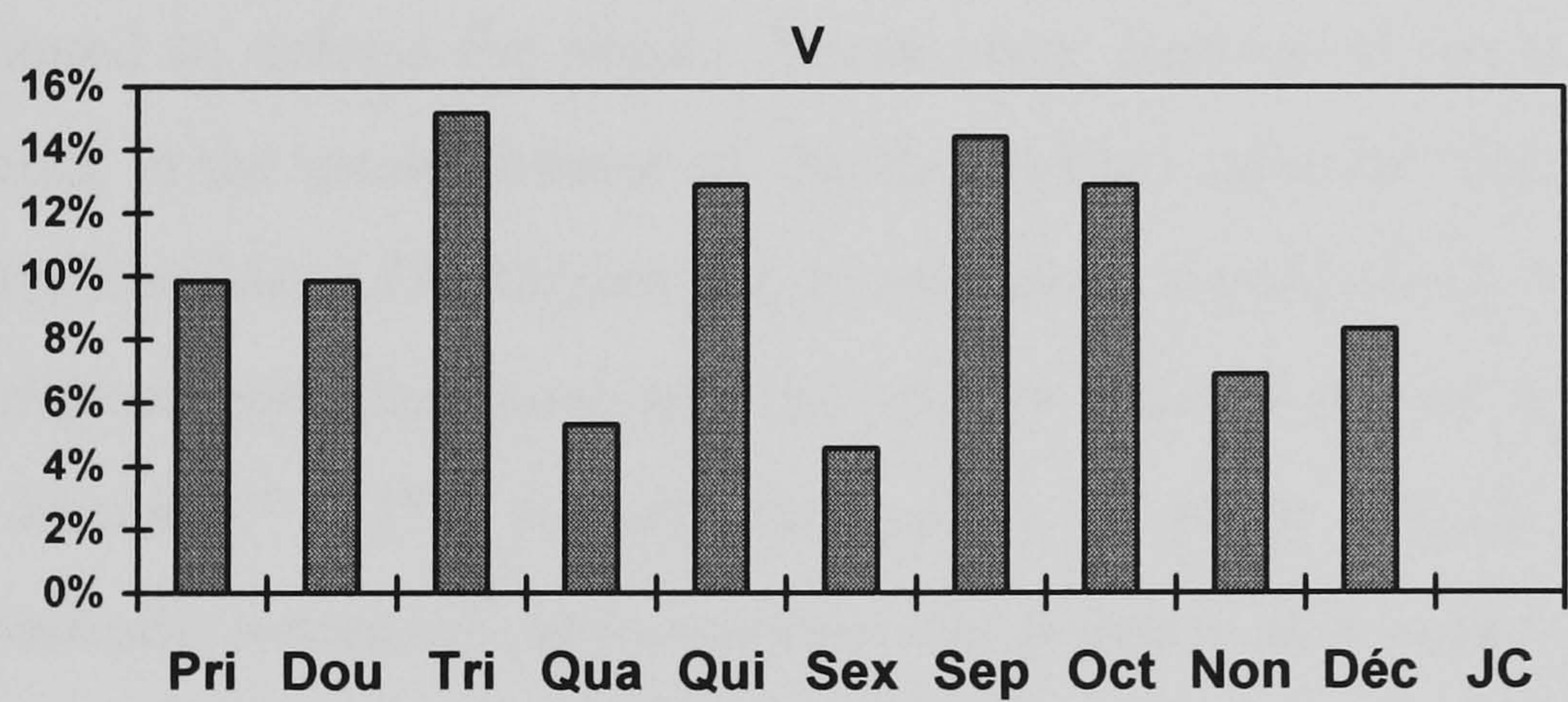


Figure i: Meetings of the *Justice de paix*, Avignon, Year V

²⁹ Meinzer, *Französische Revolutionskalender*, section D.II.1.

³⁰ A.D. Doubs L 245, Letter, commune of Besançon to the Minister of Police, Paris, 18 germinal III (7 April 1795).

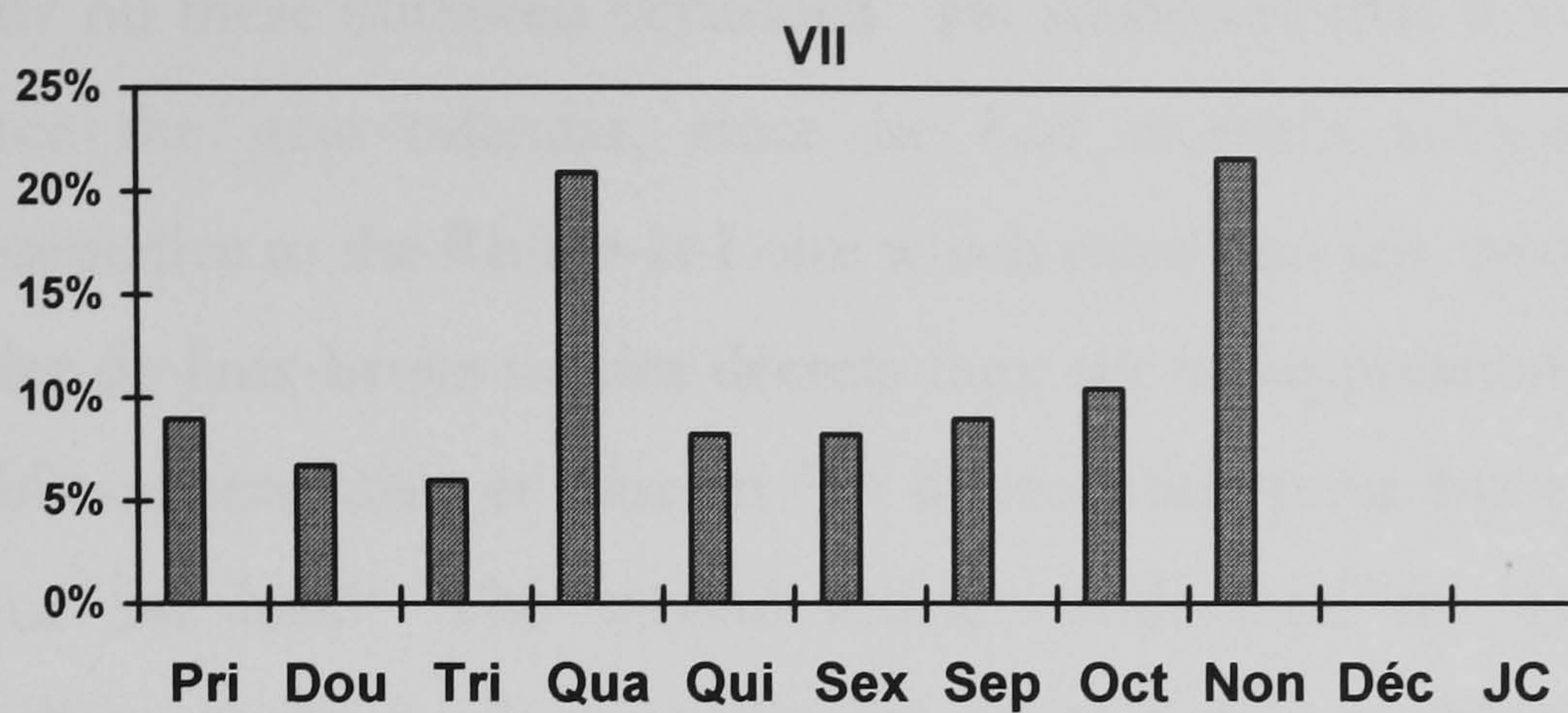


Figure ii: Meetings of the *Justice de paix*, Avignon, Year VII

Public Societies and Private Emulation

Jacobin clubs were also quick to adopt the new style of dating, such as the *Société des Amis de la Constitution* at Artonne in the Auvergne. The club began to use the new style of dating on the 25 brumaire II (15 November 1793) and changed its constitution to take account of the *décade* as article XIII of the Convention's decree of 5 October 1793 demanded.³¹ The club continued to defend the *décadi*. Priests were harangued for causing a great nuisance in the establishment of the Republican calendar (they were held to be 'très nuisibles à l'établissement du calendrier républicain'). Outward signs of religion were destroyed and the society assisted in the organisation of *fêtes décadaires*.³² The society was typical of many. Such societies had dramatically increased opportunities for political and other discussion in public and also via correspondence, some of which reached the committees of the National Convention. A number of pieces offering opinions on the new calendar were received from all over the country. Tailhand, the municipal officer at Riom complained that 'les jours des fêtes et dimanches sont exactement observés par la paresse et l'oisiveté'. He asked for clarification on the laws that he could apply and encourage useful work and

³¹ A.N. AD VIII 15, *Décrets relatifs à l'établissement de l'ère républicain*, 5 October 1793.

activity on these outlawed occasions. He suspected that it was possible to enforce the new calendar, since he had received authority from the representative to the Rhône-et-Loire which ruled that any ‘personne qui fera circuler de faux bruits ou des décrets faux sur la suppression du calendrier républicain sera saisie et mise en état d’arrestation pour être poursuivie à la rigueur des lois.’ The second article condemned the interruption to agriculture, to the production of saltpetre, to public establishments, and to the production of arms caused by resting on Sundays. Those who did must be referred to the Representative of the people within twenty-four hours (use of decimal time had not extended this far). The third article invited citizens and popular societies to redouble their surveillance of others and to increase their own zeal for educational institutions such as the celebration of *fêtes décadaires*.³³ Indeed, communes were given the powers in floréal to refuse grain ration to those who did not work on the *ci-devant dimanche*.³⁴ The use of the wrong calendar attracted moral or political condemnation: in Rouen, for example, the *Gazette Révolutionnaire* criticised the *conseil général* for its use of ‘l’ère chrétienne’.³⁵

The calendar became an occasion for differences between communities to be marked. Complaints were not just made against priests, but also against other communes. Those communities that observed the *décadi* were being undermined by their neighbours who were lax, even to the point of counter-revolutionary, in such matters. In Gevrey, just south of Dijon, a number of measures were put in place to support the *décadi*, such as the

³² Fernand Martin, ed., *Les Jacobins au village. Documents publiés et annotés* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1902), pp. 67-159.

³³ A.N. F¹cIII Puy-de-Dôme 9, Gilbert Tailhard, Municipal Officer, Riom to the Comité de Salut Public, 16 floréal II (5 May 1794).

³⁴ Albert Mathiez, *La vie chère et le mouvement social sous la Terreur* (Paris, 1927), p. 443.

³⁵ Eric Wauters, *Une presse de province pendant la révolution française: journaux et journalistes normands (1785-1800)* (Paris, 1993), p. 162.

reading of the laws on the *décadi* announced by a drum call, but their efforts were being undermined by those who continued with their usual business. The *société populaire* remarked that ‘il existe dans notre canton une difformité de conduite qui choque l’esprit de la société.’ They petitioned the departmental administration for ‘un arrêt pour tout le département qui abolisse cette sorte de schisme, et qui fixe la liberté ou la nécessité de vaquer à ses travaux le jour de la décade.’³⁶ This canton continued to make complaints about those who lacked in enthusiasm in observing the work restrictions on the *décadi* and, in consequence, set a bad example for the more easily influenced citizens. In brumaire VII (November 1798), Gevrey complained about non-observance of the *décadi* in Dijon Extra-Muros, which was in fact having problems enforcing the *décadi* due to a lack of national guardsmen. The result was that the good citizens of Gevrey were being put at a disadvantage.³⁷ Unfair economic advantage (by working when others did not) for one area and general anti-Republican behaviour provided two, possibly complementary, motives for complaint and outrage on behalf of the local popular society or administration.

Working in public view on the *décadi* was a visible, obvious rejection of the new calendar. The fact that these infractions were the object of complaint demonstrates that such behaviour was probably not done out of ignorance of the law, but after a consideration of its irrelevance, impracticability or stupidity. More positive motives behind non-observance of the *décadi* also held sway, ranging from the economic need to work, to religious or political conviction. Many considered the seven-day week to be ordained by God and hence unalterable. Religion, and the nature of Sundays in an officially secular state became increasingly vital issues.

³⁶ A.D. Côte-d’Or L 1660, Letter, *Société populaire* of the canton of Gevrey to the Department of the Côte-d’Or, 20 frimaire II (10 December 1792).

³⁷ A.D. Côte-d’Or L 476, Letters, canton of Dijon Extra-Muros, 25 floréal VI (14 May 1798) and Canton de Gevrey, 21 brumaire VII (11 November 1798) to the Department of the Côte-d’Or.

Old jealousies, political opinions, or current squabbles between communities sometimes surfaced because of the calendar. The financial and symbolic qualities of time meant that conflict between occupations could also arise. By the Year VII, urgent or necessary work could be officially sanctioned by the authorities, but this sometimes created jealousies between the different classes. Ploughmen in the canton of Messigny in the Côte-d'Or were given permission to work, leading to grumbling amongst the wine growers of the region who were liable to fines for dressing their vines on the *décadi*.³⁸ The calendar thus had the power to heighten social differences, whether political, geographical or trade.

Decimal Time

Public clocks and watches also played a role in the spread of Republican, decimal time. Romme's initial report on the Republican calendar had decreed that the days of the year were divided into ten hours, a thousand minutes and a hundred thousand seconds.³⁹ This decimal division continued down to 'la plus petite portion commensurable de la durée'. A range of new measures was created.⁴⁰ The alteration of the calendar required, in theory, the technology of the printing press, although in practice the measuring of the new hours and minutes was not as simple as the publication of new calendars. Decimal time posed new problems for horology. It was easy to adjust clocks and watches by simply replacing the twelve-hour dial with one containing five hours, if the minute hand were to be ignored. Such a solution was reasonable, especially as the watch and clockmaking process was decidedly divided between manufacturers of the

³⁸ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 476, Letter, canton of Messigny to the Department of the Côte-d'Or, 2 fructidor VII (19 August 1798).

³⁹ Romme stressed the parallels between the *seconde décimale* and the natural world. He claimed the duration to be that of the human pulse when walking at double speed, or at a quick march.

⁴⁰ Romme, 'Concernant l'éra français', 5 October 1793, Article XI.

clockwork innards, or *boîtes*, and dials and mounts. The most fashionable technical advances of the century, minute and second hands on portable watches, were rendered insensible by simple replacement of the dial. Without alterations clockwork bells would not sound correctly on the hour or quarter hour and the second and minute hands advanced at the incorrect interval. Yet scientific instruments (which needed to count *secondes décimales*) and timepieces with alarms or bells posed technical difficulties. Many more expensive clocks and watches also incorporated calendars that would have needed be altered.

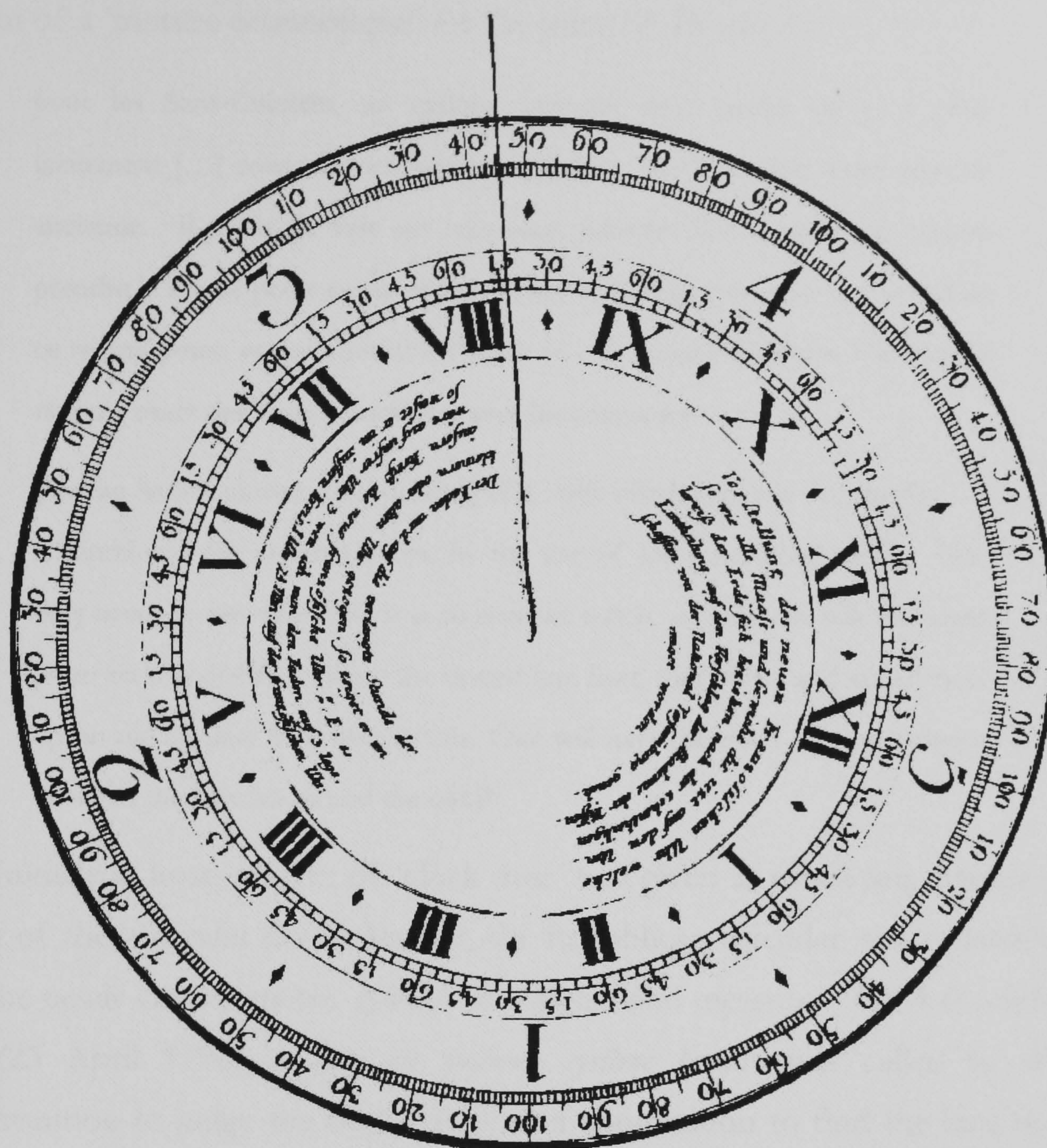


Figure iii: German *Cadran comparatif* for the Year III, reprinted in Siegfried Seifert, *Die Zeit schlägt ein neues Buch in der Geschichte auf Zum französischen Revolutionskalender und zu seiner Aufnahme in Deutschland* (Weimar, 1989). A piece of cotton was to tell the corresponding time.

Nonetheless, one solution was advertised in *Les Décades républicaines* in the form of a ‘montre économique’ for the price of 15 *sols*:

pour les Sans-Culottes, un cadran indicatif, avec lequel on peut très-facilement [...] connoître les heures décimales, par le moyen d'une montre ancienne. Il suffit de voir sur une autre montre l'heure qu'il est, ensuite prendre le même point sur ce cadran et suivre la ligne ponctuée qui prend de ce même point, et qui aboutit à l'heure et à la minute décimale. On aura le rapport exact des heures nouvelles avec les anciennes.

[for the Sans-Culottes, an indicating dial, with which one can very easily [...] comprehend the decimal hours, by the use of an unmodified clock. One only needs to see what time it is on another watch, and then to take the same point on this dial and follow the dotted line from that point, and which ends up on the decimal hour and minute. One will have the exact correspondence between the new hours and the old.]⁴¹

Initially at least, reform of ‘clock time’ was given as much importance as that of the ‘calendar time’. Indeed, the Republican calendar was embedded in the newly created metric system of weights and measures. On 4 fructidor II (23 April 1794), a *Jury au nouveau système horaire* was called by the Convention to judge the best entries to a competition to find the best way of adapting timepieces to the new manner of time-keeping. It first met on the 9 fructidor in the *Salle du Bureau de Consultation des Arts & Métiers* in the Louvre. On the 22 fructidor Lepaute was voted *président*. It reported in the Year IV. Its members consisted of the well-known clock-maker Ferdinand Berthoud and the mathematician and astronomer Charles Lagrange, as well as three other men involved in science and horology: Lepaute ‘l’oncle’, Charles ‘le physicien’, Janvier (another clockmaker), Lépine ‘le jeune’ and Mathieu ‘l’aîné’. Mabile, Nuré, Laurent and DeBelle were reserves. The four best entrants were to receive, in order of merit, 3000 *livres*, 2500 *livres*,

⁴¹ B.N. Lc-815, *Les Décades républicaines ou Histoire abrégée de la république française* (Paris, Year II), vol. I., no. 6 (18 pluviôse II).

2000 *francs* and 1500 *francs*. The committee examined 191 plans. Their reports on a number of designs were often very scathing. Eventually they whittled the designs down to a small number and settled on the winner: a design from a clockmaker in Carrouges.⁴²

The committee held a number of assumptions. One was a profound belief in the importance of horology as ‘un art également utile à la société & au commerce’.⁴³ They also stressed the difference between the needs of science and the needs of the public and as a result they divided the competition into two. One section was for highly accurate scientific instruments, the other for personal watches and public clocks, albeit ‘les machines les plus importantes à l’usage de tous les citoyens.’ Lastly, there was disquiet about the impact reforms would have on the watch and clock trade. It was feared that the loss of foreign markets would be a disaster for the already struggling French watch trade.⁴⁴ Materially and ideologically it was important to support the industry. Clock manufacture was economically important and as the heirs of the Enlightenment, it was important that France could boast superiority in the horological arts.

In the first few months following its introduction, efforts were made to introduce decimal time, especially amongst Jacobins. Decimal time was a clear demonstration of one’s political position. Saint-Just carried a decimal watch made by A. Elyor, a clockmaker with a workshop in the Galerie de l’Égalité (Palais-Royal). A number of *conventionnels* had true decimal watches (that is, ones that were specially constructed, rather than old watches with

⁴² A.N. F¹⁷1135 85, Jury au Nouveau Système Horaire, *Rapport sur les questions relatives au nouveau système horaire, fait par le Jury nommé par le Décret de la Convention Nationale, du 4 Fructidor, l’an deux & assemblé au Louvre, dans la Salle du Bureau de Consultation des Arts & Métiers, pour juger les Pièces du Concours* (Paris, Year IV).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

altered dials).⁴⁵ One *horloger*, Alric, was arrested and incarcerated on 7 December 1793 on the suspicion of holding royalist opinions. The *comité de surveillance de Toulouse* responded on 6 thermidor II (24 July 1794) to Alric's plea to be released by ordering him to be set to work on his plan for making decimal watches. Over a month later, on 10 fructidor (27 August) he was released because of the need for his work.⁴⁶ Decimal time, albeit a short-lived phenomenon, was not limited to Paris. News of the competition was disseminated throughout the departments. The authorities in Dijon were informed by the Department of the Côte-d'Or that all acts had to be dated and time-stamped according to the new hour. A paper *cadran comparatif* was included with the message to ensure that mistakes were not made in the translation of time. The administration in Marseilles used decimal hours for recording their minutes.⁴⁷ Several Jacobins in Toulouse carried decimal timepieces, although this only accounted for a handful of people. In Toulouse the *administration départementale* ordered the *décret* on the new time to be reprinted and sent to the principal clockmakers in the Haute-Garonne. The Jacobin municipal administration soon decided that the clock on the Capitole ought to be altered to the new time for the benefit of Toulouse's citizens.⁴⁸ Virebent, an engineer, was commissioned to study the means of decimalising the Capitole's clock. Alterations were finished by the end of thermidor, four months after the work went out to tender, although technical difficulties prevented the bells from being altered. For five years (Years III-VIII), Toulousains could take the time from a decimal dial on the

⁴⁵ Kennedy *Cultural History*, p. 348 suggests that such watches were 'extremely rare', although the true figure is uncertain.

⁴⁶ De Rey-Pailhade, 'calendrier républicain', p. 451.

⁴⁷ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 1701, Letter, Department of the Côte-d'Or to the municipality of Dijon, 29 pluviôse III (17 February 1795); Kennedy, *Cultural History*, p. 348.

⁴⁸ The clock dated at least from 1750 and consisted of an hour hand alone, de Rey-Pailhade, 'calendrier républicain', p. 445.

front of the Capitole.⁴⁹ The clock in the Convention Nationale took much longer to alter. First suggested on 17 frimaire II (7 December 1793), this clock was technically challenging and consisted of four faces telling the time and date according to different systems. Two faces were decimal and one contained a dial for the Republican calendar year.⁵⁰ Indeed, it seems probable that a number of clocks throughout France were modified or had alterations mooted. Thomas Bugge, a Dutch scientist who had been invited to France to work on the new measures, recorded that he saw two clocks divided 'according to the new time' during his visit to Paris in 1798.⁵¹ In the Year II, the *Courrier patriotique* announced the sale of decimal public clocks made in Névache in the Briançonnais 'à la nouvelle dimension du temps'. These instruments displayed both the old and the new hours and sounded quarter and half hours, as well as 'les assemblées populaires.'⁵²

By the end of the Year IV, however, decimal time was sidelined by the Convention.⁵³ Despite favouring the Republican calendar, the Directory appeared to show little concern for decimal time. De Rey-Pailhade argues that, in Toulouse at least, the number of tables of concordances between the old and new systems printed was too small to have any impact on the

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

⁵⁰ A.N. C 445, Hurcault, Report on the clock for the *Corps Législatif*, Year VII: 'Pour tous les travaux faits à la grande horloge à Equation sonnant les heures et les quarts, marquant les heures et les minutes sur quatre grands cadrans, dont deux indiquent le tems en division décimale, placés dans le pavillon de l'unité du Palais National du Conseil des Anciens'.

⁵¹ A.N. C 445 & O¹3510; Catherine Cardinal, ed., *La Révolution dans la mesure du temps: Calendrier républicain heure décimale 1793-1805* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1989), p. 71.; Herbert Arthur Klein, *The Science of Measurement: a Historical Survey*, 1988 ed. (New York, 1971), p. 124.

⁵² Jean Nicolas, *La Révolution Française dans les Alpes-Dauphiné et Savoie 1789-1799* (Paris, 1989), p. 256.

⁵³ Guillaume, *Comité d'instruction publique*, vol. 2, p. 894.

general public.⁵⁴ In Paris the number of such concordances published was greater, yet one suspects that for the majority decimal time was an unnoticed novelty. Yet documents do exist which attest to its use by some committed Republicans, such as Saint-Just, and administrators. An example from Montélimar in the Drôme of a sale of *biens nationaux* is revealing. The clerk recorded the sale as taking place on the 20 germinal (9 April) at ‘trois heures, sept *décemes* temps moderne’ corresponding to nine hours in the morning old-style.⁵⁵ Clearly, the traditional twenty-four hour day was being used in practice, even if it was then also recorded and transcribed in the new fashion. Apart from prescriptive literature, the occasional advertisement for decimal dials, and concordances, the traces of these brief reforms are undetectable in the wider culture. This differed from calendar reform, which did attract the attentions of popular theatre and counter-revolutionary rhetoric and propaganda.

Propaganda and Performance

A number of educational and moral themes could be drawn from the new measure of time. Indeed, this aim was one of the justifications for the calendar’s introduction. Republican culture, whether festive, literary or theatrical, could present a range of pedagogic, celebratory, and propagandistic messages. The calendar gave scope for all these. Its structure provided the basis for a system of festivals and points of contemplation, education, and celebration throughout the year, while its content emphasised the newness of the regime, the break from the past, the importance of reason and men and women’s relationship to the natural world and the nation.

Bordeaux’s Grand-Théâtre, for example, staged a ballet entitled ‘Le Calendrier Républicain’ during the *sans-culottides* of the Year II (17-21

⁵⁴ De Rey-Pailhade, ‘calendrier républicain’, p. 448.

⁵⁵ A.D. Drôme, J 76 bis, Caprais Favier, Sale of *biens nationaux*, quoted in Nicolas, *Révolution*, p. 256.

September 1793). Composed by Marc-Antoine Julien, an envoy of the Committee of Public Safety, the backdrop to the stage was a Temple, in front of which dancers dressed in costumes representing the twelve new months processed, each followed by other dancers representing appropriate agricultural activities or related to meteorological phenomena. Vendémiaire appeared first, wearing a pair of flesh-tone trousers, draped vines and bearing grapes like the male and female grape-pickers who followed with their harvest. Brumaire followed, dressed in grey gauze, and was accompanied by four similarly dressed children who portrayed the gathering of storm-clouds and dark mists ('d'épaisses nuées et d'obscurcs vapeurs'). Frimaire arrived dressed in the skins of wild animals and carrying a bow and arrow, while Nivôse was dressed as white as snow, holding a trivet with a flame achieved by means of 'esprit de vin'. Pluviôse was portrayed by an urn-carrying water-nymph and an entourage of umbrella-carrying old men and women. Ventôse and its retinue were dressed as winds. Germinal wore flowers, with a flowering cherry branch in hand. Floréal, dressed as Flora arrived amidst 'petits zéphyr's' and garlands of flowers. Dressed entirely in green and with a belt of violets, she was accompanied by four children bearing watering cans. The figure of Messidor was crowned with ears of corn (*épis*). Thermidor entered almost nude, wearing a large sun on his chest, his face covered with sweat and holding flaming torches in his hands. Four peasants wiped his sweating brow. Finally Fructidor arrived 'comme l'est ordinairement Pomone' with a horn of plenty.

The procession of the months was followed by the five *sans-culottides*, dressed in costumes representing Genius, Virtue, Work, Opinion and Recompense. These were then succeeded by a troupe of young girls carrying a small card model of the French Panthéon. More allegorical figures followed: Liberty (carried by four *sans-culottes*); Equality (carried by labourer, a rich man, a Moor and a mulatto); Fraternity represented by two white women with a black woman in between them (with pointed racial symbolism for a ballet performed in a city with such strong links with Saint Domingue), all sharing the same coat 'comme *Paul et Virginie*'; Surveillance

possessed an eye on his front, a triangle on his chest, and wore a cloak decorated with eyes and, finally, Victory, and Reason entered carrying the Rights of Man. The months arranged themselves as the four seasons and performed a dance. The performance finished with an ‘adoption’ (of a law), a civic hymn, and a celebration of marriage and the production of children.⁵⁶ The calendar was used as a framework for the presentation of the ideals and concepts of the Revolution. Classical allusions, recalling a more virtuous and noble era, were made through dress and use of classical tropes, while the harmony between the Republic and nature was stressed. Finally, the ballet emphasised the virtue to be found in marriage and children. What the Bordelais made of this performance is not known.

The Parisian theatre also responded swiftly to the new calendar. The one-act *L’Heureuse Décade* was performed in the Théâtre du Vaudeville on 5 brumaire II (26 October 1793) and was subtitled as a ‘divertissement patriotique’. The play was set in a village square and celebrated the *décadi* as a day of rest. This was contrasted with the Sundays and feast days which, it was claimed, undermined the efforts being made in the name of the Republic: As the main character Père Socle sings, ‘Les jours aux fêtes consacrés,/ Etaient perdus pour la patrie’ (Scene 1). The published play went into at least two editions.⁵⁷ A two-act sequel followed on the 4 nivôse II (24 December 1793) entitled *Seconde décade ou le double mariage* and performed at the Théâtre Patriotique. Père Socle continued to offer advice to his now newly married son: ‘Sans doute, être dans sa jeunesse soldat & laboureur, c’est se rendre doublement utile à sa patrie, & remplir

⁵⁶ R. Brouillard, ‘Un ballet original’, in *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du Département de la Gironde* 5 (1912), pp. 277-78.

⁵⁷ Barré, *L’Heureuse Décade, divertissement patriotique, en un acte et en vaudevilles* (Paris, 1793), in *Répertoire du théâtre républicain ou recueil de pièces de théâtre imprimés avant, pendant et après la République Française et qui presque toutes, ont été représentées, 1788-1810* (Geneva, 1986), vol. 7.

glorieusement la tâche de républicain.⁵⁸ Clearly, the use of one's time was associated with the cause of the Republic. The state could make a claim to one's time, as Jacques Largetau and Duray Longua, merchants from Libourne in the Gironde were accused of 'égoïsme'. They had never attended the meetings of the *sociétés populaires* or their sections and contributed nothing to the Republic. The *commission militaire* fined them 10,000 *livres*. The *Courrier républicain* approved of the judgement of the two men for 'n'avoir consacré leur temps qu'à des spéculations de commerce, et quoique très-riches, de n'avoir fait aucun sacrifice à la République'.⁵⁹ In the new Republic, citizens had to account for their time.

The calendar made its appearance, in passing, in other plays. *L'Intérieur d'un Ménage Républicain*, performed in the Théâtre de l'Opéra-comique on the 15 nivôse II (4 January 1794) contained a scene discussing the end of fêtes and Sundays (the day being 'le jour de la Toussaint! Une des plus grandes fêtes de l'année'). Amelie, the sister of the young Republican, sings: 'Il est un autre changement/ Qui te causera plus de peine,/ C'est que sans nul ménagement,/ L'on vient d'allonger la semaine.' Mme. Rose commented that 'je crois être dans un nouveau monde'.⁶⁰ The calendar was also celebrated in verse.⁶¹

Obviously, the calendar also appeared in another aspect of culture, that of the printed calendar or almanac. Writers and publishers of almanacs, sensing a market and the opportunity to educate, produced variants on the

⁵⁸ *Seconde décade ou le double mariage*, p. 25, reprinted in *ibid*.

⁵⁹ *Courrier républicain*, 21 brumaire II (11 November 1793).

⁶⁰ *L'Intérieur d'un Ménage Républicain*, Opéra-Comique, pp. 7-8 reprinted in *Répertoire du théâtre*.

⁶¹ F.R.R.C. 12 788, Durat-Cubières, *Le calendrier républicain, poème [sic] suivi d'une ode au vengeur* (Paris, IV); Cubières, *Le calendrier républicain, poème [sic] en deux chants, suivi de trente-six hymnes civiques pour les trente-six décadis de l'année*, 3rd edition (Paris, Year VII); N.Y.P.L. *KVR 3131, J.A. Raffié, *Discours en vers sur les fêtes décadaïres* (Troyes, Year III).

new calendar. In the Year II a publication titled *Decadaire* [sic] *républicain ou Calendrier des Vertus* was printed in Paris. It expressed the hopes and fears of the Jacobins. Deforges, the author, hoped

Dire aux hommes qu'il n'est de bonheur pour eux que dans la vertu, ce n'est que leur répéter ce que la voix secrète de leur cœur leur fait incessamment entendre[...] Nous ne voulons que leur rendre la pratique des vertus facile et désirable, en déroulant à leurs yeux le tableau enchanteur des jouissances délicieuses.

[To tell men that there is only happiness for them only in virtue, is only to repeat that which the secret voice of their heart makes them understand [...]]

We want to make the practice of virtue easy and desirable, by displaying to their eyes the enchanting tableau of charming delights.]⁶²

Each day of the month was provided with a Republican, Jacobin virtue, such as chastity or zeal. He also expressed a wish that his almanac would help punctuality, another virtue 'd'un grand mérite qui consiste à faire exactement et à point nommé tout ce qu'on a promis.' The *decadaire* shows hope and fear for the future, which were expressed in its views on children. One of the proposed festivals, the *fête de l'enfance*, told fathers and mothers: 'soignez scrupuleusement le trésor et l'espoir de la nature et de la République'. The *fête de la jeunesse* was dedicated to an 'age heureux et dangereux des passions'. Youth was told, 'évite les dangers, si tu veux trouver ton bonheur et faire celui des autres. Les dangers sont dans l'excès qui est toujours le père du mal et le fléau du bien.'⁶³

Almanacs and periodicals using the old calendar were forbidden and the sources of such illicit material hunted out. The diffusion of the *Berne Almanach* attracted the authorities' attention in the Jura and the Doubs. In October 1794 (the year was given as the Year II, although the correct month

⁶²Deforges, *Decadaire* [sic] *républicain ou Calendrier des Vertus* (Paris, Year II), p. i.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. i, 73-74.

was not yet known), the administration attempted to suppress its circulation because of its political and religious message:

Un exemplaire de cet infâme libelle est tombé entre nos mains, c'est le dernier effort de l'aristocratie expirante. L'on y lit tout au long le testament du dernier des tyrans avec commentaire; une ode à la louange des suisses à la journée du dix août, et plusieurs dialogues incendiaires très propres à réveiller la haine mal associée des Suisses contre les Français, corrompre les âmes faibles et leur faire regretter l'ancien esclavage. Joignez-vous à nous citoyens collègues pour étouffer le monstre encore au berceau.

[An example of this infamous lampoon has fallen into our hands, it is the last gasp of the expiring aristocracy. One reads throughout in it the testament of the last of the tyrants with commentary; an ode praising the efforts of the Swiss [Guards] on the *journée* of the 10 August, and several inflammatory dialogues aimed to wake the hatred ill associated with the Swiss against the French, to corrupt weak souls and make them miss their former slavery. Join us, citizen colleagues, in smothering this monster in its cradle.]⁶⁴

According to the *agent municipal* in Pontarlier in the Doubs, the almanac was still exerting its malicious influence in the Year VI. Three weeks after the almanac arrived, people were neglecting the *décadi* and again taking Sunday as a day of rest.⁶⁵ The administration in Nantes also faced the same problem of corrupting almanacs; areas in which religion was a counter-revolutionary threat seemed to be especially vulnerable to their influence:

J'ai dans ce moment, sous les yeux, un de ces almanachs imprimés chez un nommé Bouguet de Falaise, [...]; cet ouvrage qui, pour tromper les lecteurs, porte en tête et dans plusieurs endroits, les formes consacrées par la

⁶⁴ A.D. Doubs; L 201, Letter, the Department of the Jura to the Department of the Doubs, 3 October 1793.

⁶⁵ Ludovic Sciout, *Histoire de la constitution civile du clergé (1790-1801). L'église sous la terreur et le directoire*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1881), p. 13.

République, contient des choses [portant] offense contre la Révolution toute entière, contre ses plus grandes époques[...] et cependant il m'est désigné comme l'un des moins dangereux de ceux qui se répandent dans les campagnes: vous devez juger ce que sont les autres.

[I have at this moment, in front of my eyes, one of these almanacs printed under the name of Bouguet de Falaise [...]; this work that, to mislead readers has on its masthead and in other places Republican formulas, contains things attacking the entire Revolution, its greatest moments [...] and yet I have been told that it is not as harmful as some that are propagated in the countryside: you have to judge what the others must be like.]⁶⁶

Some almanacs were clearly considered to be worse than others. In these cases, and as the majority of the accounts from the police archives in the previous chapter attest, religion and its anti-Republican associations were the important factor in problems with the observance of the calendar. Not only did the administration report the dubious calendars, but zealous Jacobins also felt it their duty to report bad examples. Indeed, the administration may have lacked any enthusiasm for dealing with the problem. The Jacobins of Wissembourg, for example, informed the Minister of Police of an almanac that mentioned Christmas, Easter, the Saints, and the old weights and measures. They denounced it as anti-Republican and fanatical. The Minister took the denunciation seriously and enquired what action had been taken. The local *juge de paix* replied that it was hard to enforce such matters and he was not helped by unconcerned local officers.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, political and moral pressure was exerted via a variety of texts and performances in order to encourage citizens to follow the new calendar. Those who followed the Gregorian system were vilified

⁶⁶ A.D. Loire-Inférieure, L 352, Minister of Police to the *commissaire de police*, Nantes, 3 nivôse VI (23 December 1797).

⁶⁷ A.N. F⁷ 7117 cited in Sciout, *Histoire de la constitution civile*, p. 4671 n. 1.

as corrupt or accused of being prostitutes. The *Journal Révolutionnaire de Toulouse* poured special bile on women, whom it saw as particularly stubborn in their affection for the Church and *ci-devant dimanches*.⁶⁸ Other non-governmental institutions and organisations adopted the calendar. Meinzer, making use of a series of records of the dates of meetings, argues convincingly for the adoption of the Republican calendar by the fishermen's fraternity in Marseilles.⁶⁹

Individuals also adopted the calendar and as such introduced the calendar into private life. A rushed note at the foot of a memo by Delambre to the Minister of the Interior reveals a certain familiarity with the calendar: 'Je reste à Paris pour faire *décadi* la visite de l'observatoire, et *primidi* pour assister à la première séance de l'institut national. Je n'attends pas davantage et je partirai *duodi* de grand matin [my italics]'.⁷⁰ Either social pressure or Republican sentiment induced changes in household working practices in the Year II, at least in areas of the Puy-de-Dôme: 'Les dimanches on voit disparaître des fontaines et des lavoirs les groupes de femmes qui y lavent les linges sales'.⁷¹

⁶⁸ B.N. 1c989 (78), *Journal Révolutionnaire de Toulouse*, no. 153, 2 ventôse II (20 February 1794).

⁶⁹ Meinzer, *Französische Revolutionskalender*, pp. 29-132.

⁷⁰ A.N. F¹⁷ 3702, Letter, Delambre to the Minister of the Interior, 28 frimaire IV (19 December 1795).

⁷¹ A.D. Puy-de-Dôme, L 2444, register, canton of Volvic, 15 nivôse VII (4 January 1799), quoted in Phillipe Bourdon, *Des lieux, des mots, les Révolutionnaires. Le Puy-de-Dôme entre 1789 et 1799* (Clermont Ferrand, 1995), p. 429.

Diaries, journals and personal correspondence that survive not only reveal both acceptance and rejection of the calendar, but also its rhetorical and political associations. Michel Célarié of Bégoux in the Lot, whose journal recorded personal and village life, used the calendar until its abolition 'par ordre du gouvernement impérial ou pour mieux dire par ordre de Bonaparte, empereur de France.' Célarié was a member of the *Comité de surveillance* in Bégoux and generally a supporter of the Revolutionary and Republican cause.⁷² In contrast, Claude Bailly, an artisan from Chinon, rejected the calendar in his record of the Revolutionary period. Within his journal of the events in Chinon, he used the Gregorian calendar and regularly criticised, with a dry humour, attempts to impose observance of the *décadi*. He comments on the announcement of the introduction of the calendar in November 1793:

le même jour on a annoncé au son du tambour que les dimanches sont abolis ainsi que toutes les fêtes fondées par l'église, qu'il faut travailler ces jours-là et faire la décade.

[The same day a drum roll announced that Sundays were abolished along with all holidays created by the church, and that one must work on those days and observe the *décadi*.]⁷³

Bailly was generally hostile to the Revolution, especially towards its consequences for Catholicism. The internal textual evidence of the diary suggests that he composed his account several months after the event, as at this point his journal was a summary of the year, rather than a daily record of events written soon after or during the occasion. Events subsequent to the introduction of the calendar may have coloured his interpretation of the motivations behind it, in particular the dechristianisation in Tours and the

⁷² Christiane Constant-le Stum, ed., *Journal d'un bourgeois de Bégoux: Michel Célarié 1771-1836* (Paris, 1992), p. 178. Célarié: b. 5 February 1754, d. 16 September 1842.

⁷³ Luc Boisnard, ed., *Journal d'un artisan tourangeau 1789-1830 tenu par Claude Bailly artisan sellier à Chinon au no. 27 de la rue Saint-Etienne*. (Chambray-lès-Tours, 1989), p. 34.

Terror in Paris. One has a sense that he is writing for a potential reader other than himself, perhaps primarily for posterity. His selection of events and arrangement of the text clearly relates the calendar to the process of dechristianisation and the terrors of the Revolution. Bailly records that sixty Catholics were arrested in Chinon on the first day of the new calendar. These were the first of such arrests. He asks the reader to imagine the grief felt at the news from Paris of the guillotining of a thousand persons each *décade*. The time of the new calendar is linked for the prospective reader of Bailly's journal with the mounting bloodshed and disorder that the Revolution unleashed. To Bailly's mind, the calendar had become a cipher for the evils of the Revolution.⁷⁴

Both writers reveal acute local awareness of the calendar, even if it was unpopular and brought with it rather dreary civic commitments every ten days. They demonstrate how individual political and religious attitudes affected responses. Furthermore, the journals reveal how the creation of history and the passage of personal and national events were beginning to create links between personal and more communal time. These insights will be considered in more depth in chapter eight. Here, they are pertinent to the question of the meaning of the calendar in the Years II and III. The calendar was not seen as a neutral institution, but could be interpreted as an attempt to destroy religion or superstition. The religious question soon came to dominate the issue of the calendar.

Secularisation, Republican Religion and Dechristianisation

The previous chapter has described the Republican calendar's complex relationship with religion and the process of dechristianisation. Secularising impulses soon became mixed with more strident anti-Catholicism and desires to destroy outward symbols of religion. Furthermore, since this thesis examines time defined more widely, questions of religion, secularisation and Republicanism also have a bearing on the issue. A

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 41.

secularisation of the French state was always inherent in the principle of the sovereignty of the people, as opposed to a monarch or a religious authority such as the pope. As the self-appointed heirs of the Enlightenment, and with precedents in the separation of government and religious authority available in the newly constituted American Republic, a break between church and state was, if not inevitable, then highly likely, especially after the Convention's inept handling of the issue of a civil clergy. Dechristianisation has attracted a great deal of historical writing, ranging from investigations into political, Paris-based plots of Hébert and his allies to changes in eighteenth-century piety. Michel Vovelle concludes that dechristianisation is a deeply ambiguous phenomenon: neither quite an 'extraneous Machiavellian plot, nor the spontaneous flowering of a popular movement.'⁷⁵ It remains a complex historical event. Tellingly, evidence of conflict is much easier to uncover than evidence of acquiescence or acceptance of religious policy because such disturbances or insurrections were more likely to leave their mark in official reports.

Historians have often linked the calendar with this complicated process.⁷⁶ Just as secularisation became linked with dechristianisation, so was the calendar, particularly because of the sometimes bloody conflicts created by attempts to mark Sundays. Richard Cobb argued that the calendar should be viewed as a 'sensational innovation' that constituted an attack on the custom and habit of the French and an attempted destruction of Catholicism.⁷⁷ Contemporaries and participants in the Revolution would have agreed wholeheartedly with this assessment. The meeting of the *conseil général* of the commune of Paris for the 18 brumaire II (8 November 1793) agreed with the following proposition proposed by Léonard Bourdon:

⁷⁵ Michel Vovelle, trans. Alan José, *The Revolution and the Church* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 176.

⁷⁶ See for example, Hugh Gough, *The Terror in the French Revolution* (London, 1988), p. 47.

⁷⁷ Richard Cobb, trans. Marianne Elliot, *The People's Armies* (New Haven, 1987), p. 446.

[...] pour faire disparaître entièrement les images de la superstition, le conseil invite les sections d'indiquer une fête où tous les citoyens, revêtus et chargés[...] de chasubles, d'étoles, [...] de surplis, de calices,[...] de saints-sacrements, d'encensoirs, &c., jolies et saintes bagatelles qui servent à entretenir les erreurs du peuple, iront déposer toutes ces riches futilités sur le bureau de la Convention. Il demande aussi que les jours de décade il soit institué des fêtes civiques, où les citoyens recevront des instructions de morale, chanteront et entendront chanter des hymnes patriotiques, en présence et sous les auspices de la statue de la liberté.

[[...] with the aim of removing entirely all signs of superstition, the *conseil* invites Sections to announce a festival for all citizens who, dressed and burdened[...] with chasubles, stoles, [...] surplice, chalices,[...] of saintly sacraments, censers, etc., pretty and holy trifles that serve to maintain the errors of the people, will deposit all these rich futilities at the office of the Convention. It asks also that on the days of *décade* it will institute civic festivals, when citizens will receive moral instructions, will sing and hear sung patriotic hymns in the presence and under the auspices of the statue of Liberty.]⁷⁸

As Bailly's journal demonstrates, those that were hostile to the Revolution also recognised the anti-Christian and secular consequences of the calendar. If the calendar was initially intended to be a modest contribution to a secular state, it soon became entangled with the more divisive battles between the Republic and religion.

The calendar's religious consequences and its relationship with the often anarchic dechristianising movement were not simple. Nor should it be seen purely in a religious context. As outlined above, its initial impact (perhaps two weeks after the Convention decreed it) was administrative. Official encounters would have to be made according to the new system. This included the recording of births, deaths and marriages. Popular societies

⁷⁸ *Courrier Républicain*, 20 Brumaire II (10 November 1793).

were a second, and very important route of transmission. Thirdly, *représentants en mission* and *armées populaires* imposed the new system, but rarely for reasons of science, as Romme might have hoped. Jean-Baptiste-Jérôme Bo, on mission to Nantes in the Year II, railed against the problems caused in the countryside by obstinate use of the Gregorian calendar. Superstition, which had caused so much trouble in the Vendée, still had its hold. Observance of religious feasts and Sundays led to idleness. The good citizen had a duty to work regardless of the old calendar:

Lorsque votre repos est superflu et nuisible à l'intérêt commun[...] vous êtes des mauvais Citoyens[...] L'homme qui travaille a besoin de délaissement, et vos Législateurs ont consacré au repos le dixième jour de chaque Décade[...] autrement] le travail est un devoir, une vertu, et le repos serait un crime.

[When your rest is excessive and harmful to the common interest [...] you are bad Citizens[...] The working man has need of rest, and your legislators have dedicated to rest the tenth day of each *Décade* [...] otherwise] work is a necessity and a virtue, and rest would be a crime.]

Bo, in this *affiche*, exhorted his readers to attend the temple of reason and to work hard, in order to gain strength and avoid vice.⁷⁹ Observation of Sundays and *décadis* did not pass unobserved by the authorities. The reports of *surveillance administrative* in series F⁷ of the Archives nationales provide some information on the situation in a number of departments and

⁷⁹ B.1743 d. 1814. Elected by Aveyron to the Legislative Assembly and Convention. Prominent in educational reform and poor relief. He was also sent on several missions: 1793 Aveyron and Tarn with the Army of the Ardennes and in the Marne; 1794 in departments of Lot, Cantal, Tarn, Aveyron, Lozère and at Nantes; 1795, with the Army of the Pyrénées. After a spell in the civil service he returned to medicine in 1809 at Fountainbleau; A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 99, Bo, Représentant du Peuple, *Le représentant du Peuple à Nantes, près de l'Armée de l'ouest, & dans les Départements en dépendants, Aux habitants des Campagnes*, 4 messidor II (22 June 1794).

municipalities.⁸⁰ Many remark that the *décadi* is frequently ignored and that superstition and *habitude* drive the ignorant to observe Sundays. Several correspondents informed the authorities the *décade* meant too much work since rest days came only every ten days instead of every seven. The *accusateur public* of the *Tribunal criminel* for the department of the Ain denounced Valentin Duport of St Martin who publicly attacked the *décade* because ‘les hommes et les animaux ne peuvent travailler neuf jours consécutifs’.⁸¹ A clash occurred in Havre Libre (the Revolutionary name for Roye in the Somme) between the majority of the village who affected to celebrate Sundays and religious festivals with dances and games, and insulted the remaining *patriotes* who only recognised *fêtes nationales*. The *patriotes* demanded assistance.⁸² In areas where the popular societies had more influence, public observance of Sundays and lack of respect for the *décadi* was dangerous. A family near Bordeaux was denounced by the popular society of Trequier to the *comité de surveillance* for foolishly walking ‘insolemment dans les rues’ on the *décadi*. They were also under suspicion for being related to *émigrés*.⁸³ The reports are brief and do not reveal exactly what action the local authorities took, although attempts to improve the situation are claimed.

Décadis were often the occasion for popular dechristianising activity. Thus in Nancy on the ‘deuxième décadi de l’an 2’:

On y a brûlé tous les confessionnaux au pied de l'échafaud de la guillotine, aux acclamations universelles d'un cortège de plus de quatre mille citoyens; de sorte que le peuple de Nancy est aujourd'hui le plus raisonnable et le plus énergique qu'il puisse y avoir dans la république. Cette fête a été terminée par le brûlement [brûlent] des lettres de prêtrise d'un prêtre marié. [...]

⁸⁰ A.N. F⁷³⁸², *Surveillance administrative*, Year II.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 6 messidor II (24 June 1794).

⁸² *Ibid.*, 12 messidor II (30 June 1794).

⁸³ *Ibid.* 6 floréal VI (25 April 1798).

Jeunesse, âge mur, pères, mères, tout a renoncé au charlatanisme sacerdotal.

Toute la journée, l'air retentit des cris répétés de vivre la république!

[Confessionals were burnt there at the foot of the scaffold of the guillotine, to universal acclaim from a procession of more than four thousand citizens, showing that the people of Nancy now are the most open to reason and most energetic that the Republic can offer. This festival was ended with the burning of the letters of holy orders of a married priest, and the [...] young, old, fathers, mothers, all renounced sacerdotal charlatanry. All day long, the air resounded with the repeated cries of *vivre la république!*]⁸⁴

The Republican calendar provided a new, iconoclastic punctuation of a reformed week and year.

Dechristianisation came from a number of quarters. Representatives on mission, Revolutionary armies, popular societies and local gangs were in the main responsible, with intensity varying from region to region. Visible, or aural, signs of religion and piety, such as crosses and bells, were attacked or destroyed. Mass and other religious services were obvious signs of Catholicism and could be condemned. The Jacobin authorities also tended to interpret traditional patterns of work and rest as signs of religious fanaticism, as in the Donjon, where the peasantry continued to 'suivre l'ancien ordre des dimanches'. The local *comité révolutionnaire* wished to draw attention to this 'nouvelle manie du fanatisme.'⁸⁵ In some communes, as in Montperat in the Lot, *cabarets* remained closed out of respect for the *ci-devant dimanche*, again drawing the attention of the local popular society.⁸⁶

Dechristianisation was not entirely destructive or purely violent, but was also an attempt to institute a new form of civic ceremony. Charitable

⁸⁴ *Courrier Républicain*, 30 brumaire II (20 November 1793), p. 163.

⁸⁵ A.N. F⁷3822, *comité révolutionnaire* of the district of Val-libre, Tarn, 11 thermidor II (29 July 1794).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *comité de surveillance* of Montpezat, Lot-et-Garonne, 30 prairial II (18 June 1794).

donations, for example, were gathered on a voluntary, or perhaps more compulsory, basis on the *décadi*. André Dumont, representative to the departments of the Somme and the Oise informed the Committee of Public Safety on 24 pluviôse II (12 February 1794):

J'établis partout des fêtes au profit des Pauvres les jours de décade, celle qui eut lieu à Abbeville leur procure 900 [francs]. Il faut ces fêtes pour faire disparaître même de la mémoire les ci-devant Dimanches.

[I am establishing festivals everywhere that profit the poor on the days of the *décadi*. The one that took place in Abbeville brought in 900 *francs*. These festivals are necessary to make the memory of what was known as Sunday disappear.]⁸⁷

Romme's final letters to his wife also suggest that they gave alms to the poor every *décadi*.⁸⁸ In some areas it seems a new form of Revolutionary religion was fostered as a displacement of Catholicism. Dechristianisation was also opposed by attempts to instigate the deistic Cult of the Supreme Being, partly a political move by Robespierre and his allies in a counterattack on the influence of the Paris Commune. From its inception, the structure of the new calendar had provided a ready-made structure on which to base the new form of religion, or at least a schema for civic and national celebration.

The Bouleversement of Everyday Life

Attempts to impose a new weekly routine and redefine the content and marking of the year were not the only disruptions to the temporality of French life in this period. Broader changes in work practices and shifts in mentalities are examined more closely in the final chapters, but the events of

⁸⁷ A.N. F¹1c I, Letter, André Dumont, Amiens to the Comité de Salut Public, 24 Pluviôse II (12 February 1794).

⁸⁸ Françoise Brunel & Sylvain Goujon, eds., *Les martyrs de prairial. Textes et documents inédits* (Geneva, 1992), p. 295.

the Year II also had a unique and significant impact on the timing of French life. On one important level, much was left undisturbed: Paris and other large towns and cities still bustled with the periodic oscillations of traffic and trade recorded in Mercier's *Tableau de Paris*. According to Mercier, the hours in Paris provided a constant variety of movement and activity by different social classes:

Les différentes heures du jour offrent tour à tour, au milieu d'un tourbillon bruyant & rapide, la tranquillité & le mouvement. Ce sont des scènes mouvantes & périodiques, séparées par les tems à peu près égaux.

[The different hours of the day present, in turn, amidst a noisy and speedy whirlwind, tranquility and movement. These are changing, periodic scenes, separated by more or less equal lengths of time.]⁸⁹

He continues to list the activities that took place during the different hours of the day in Paris. At seven in the morning vegetable sellers came to supply the stomachs of Paris, weighed down with produce and slowly driving their carts. At the same time, in more salubrious surroundings, the *commis de bureau* dress, curl their hair and prepare to leave for their offices. At ten one could observe the various officials of the law courts making their way towards Châtelet. Then, at midday,

tous les agents de change & les agioteurs se rendent en foule à la Bourse, & les oisifs au Palais-Royal. Le quartier Saint-Honoré, quartier des financiers & des hommes en place, est très-battu, & le pavé n'est rien moins libre.

[All the stockbrokers and the speculators make their way in a crowd to the Bourse, and the idle to the Palais-Royal. The quarter of Saint-Honoré, the quarter of financiers and placemen, is very pressed and the streets are no less unoccupied.]⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*. vol. 1, p. 146.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-8.

This typical Parisian day then continues with its flux of congestion and calm, with Mercier commenting on the capital's morals as such opportunities as the opera or drinking times present themselves to the journalist's magpie eye.

In the countryside, agricultural routines remained undisturbed and linked to rural tradition and the seasons. Fields and vineyards were occupied and emptied according to the rising and setting of the sun and the needs of the crop or animal husbandry. Boats depended on the tides in the same fashion. Yet many things were altered. Mail and coaches, according to contemporary almanacs, now operated without regard for Sundays, their timetables based on the ten-day week.⁹¹ The memory of the *journées* of the Revolution, the diffusion of news and the impact of Republican policies on individual lives heightened the awareness of the present era.⁹² The greatest changes resulted from the religious consequences of the Revolution. Within the world of the everyday, church services and festivals marked the passing of the weeks. Its influence had declined, as marked by reduced attendance figures and an increasing tendency to refer to civil dates, rather than saint's days, but the presence of the church and its integration into all aspects of life gave structure to daily routines. As Corbin and a number of historical geographers argue, aural time orchestrated the day's routine. Few populated places were beyond the call of the tolling of the bell at noon or

⁹¹ For an example of such timetables see *Calendrier républicain de l'ère des français, pour l'antroisième de la république française, avec les jours correspondans de l'ère vulgaire, contenant divers articles d'utilité publique* (Bordeaux, Year III). Like so much of the attempt at new decimal rhythms, old patterns remained, as the Administration of the Côte-d'Or discovered, A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 472, circular, 8 germinal VII (29 March 1800).

⁹² Claude Labrosse, 'Le temps immédiat dans la presse parisienne de 1789', in *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: la Révolution Française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures? Actes du colloque organisé à Marseille par la Commission Scientifique régionale pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution Française et le Centre Méridional d'Histoire sociale des mentalités et des cultures* (Aix-en-Provence, 1990), pp. 110-20.

for vespers on Sundays. The care many villagers took in maintaining the bells and the costs which this incurred demonstrates the importance of bells within the community. This was further confirmed by the restoration of bells after the Revolution, although these repairs were in part a reaction to the Revolutionary experience.⁹³ Opposition to the Republic's religious policy reveals not just strength of feeling for the church, but a defence of the local community against an external imposition. These conflicts continued to dog the history of the calendar.

Conclusions

In all three areas discussed – government administration, the creation of a Republican culture, and the Republic's relationship with religion – the calendar had an important impact on the Revolutionaries' plans and on French society. Each aspect of this change was contentious, but to a different degree. Administrative reforms were achieved with the most ease, although not without teething troubles and delays. After problems with almanacs were corrected and clerks became familiar with the new calendar, it remained in everyday use for well over a decade. The bureaucracy of the expanding French State spread the use of the calendar throughout the globe, at least where the French had control. The French Governor of Louisiana, for example, used the Republican calendar. In the Year VII the poet Cubières wrote that the calendar was in use in the Cisalpine Republic and had begun to be accepted by the Roman Republic. He had also heard reports of its use in the Batavian and Helvetian Republics.⁹⁴ The calendar also remained the centre of the Revolutionaries' attempts to regenerate

⁹³ Corbin, *Village Bells*, pp. 1-44; Nigel Thrift, 'Vivos Voco. Ringing the Changes in Historical Geography of Time Consciousness', in *The Rhythms of Society*, Michael Young and Tom Schuller, eds. (London, 1988), pp. 53-94; Glennie & Thrift, 'Thompson's "Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism"', pp. 275-99.

⁹⁴ N.Y.P.L. *KVR 756, Cubières, *Le calendrier républicain, poème [sic] en deux chants, suivi de trente-six hymnes civiques pour les trente-six décades de l'année*, 3rd ed. (Paris, Year VII), p. 14.

France and create a Republican culture. Indeed, within a few years, as the following chapter demonstrates, the system of Republican time would become even more central to the project of the creation of a new France.

The regeneration of France was also to be achieved in part through the system of festivals and a Republican, secular year. Yet a problem remained, in that many of the major festivals had been planned before the Republican calendar. Dechristianisation, which flared up again under the Second Directory, also became inextricably associated with the calendar because of the Sunday question. Such cultural conflicts continued to hold lasting importance: the religious and political map of France was inscribed for generations by the profound religious and political reactions of this period.⁹⁵ They were essentially divisive. Appropriately, by 9 thermidor II (27 July 1794), the divisions within France were reflected by the use of two different calendars.

⁹⁵ Vovelle, *Revolution and the Church*.

CHAPTER 4

THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE CALENDAR

(YEARS VI-VIII)

The new system of measures was not just linked to the extremes of Republican culture, but also represented the ideals of the Republic, as a note from the French *chargé d'affaires* in Spain in the Year VI suggests. He asked for an example of the new metre measurement to be sent via the Spanish Ambassador in Paris in order to produce a new map of the country. A note by the Minister of Foreign Relations commented that it was interesting to see how relations between the two nations were increasing.¹ The new measurements, it seemed, were not limited to the realms of science or industry, but had more general implications. In this case, the spread of the metric system was interpreted in a diplomatic context and the metre and the Republic were linked ideologically.

Similarly, the new measurement of time was not neutral in this period, but related explicitly and by association to changing political currents. In part, such political associations explain the revivification of the Republican calendar by the Directory. The fall of Robespierre and the subsequent political reaction to the extremes of the Jacobin regime had led to a decline in use of the calendar, most noticeably amongst the general population, though also amongst the administration.² Yet, the bloody end of the 'twelve who ruled' did not mean the death of the calendar, since 'to renounce the

¹ A.N. F¹² 1298, Letter, Minister of Foreign Relations to the Minister of the Interior, pluviôse IV (January/February 1796).

² Pascal Frand, 'Le Calendrier Républicain dans les Annuaires datés de l'an IV à l'an XIII,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 298 (1994), pp. 671-86.

calendar was to acknowledge that the events of the Revolution could be undone: this a regicide Assembly could not tolerate.³ Indeed, an opportunity to end the calendar was presented by a meeting of *savants* on 29 germinal III (18 April 1795) to solve the problem of intercalation, which was flawed. Michel Froeschlé suggests that the Thermidorians and the astronomers could not risk losing one of the symbols of the Republic.⁴ Yet the new political situation did mean a decline in the use of the calendar, although the institution retained and strengthened its political associations as Jacobin culture was defined retrospectively. Vernerey, the president of the administration of the department of the Doubs, commented that the *fêtes décadaires* were little observed.⁵ But by the time of the coup of the 18 brumaire, the Republican calendar was again an important part of government social policy and, even if it was not necessarily observed to a great extent in practice, its political and religious connotations remained the cause of continued and sometimes fractious social conflict. The final years of the calendar were as closely tied to politics and ideology as were its first. Indeed, as Woloch comments: ‘To an extent that ought to astonish us, the Directory made the Republican calendar a touchstone of its political ideology and administrative practice.’⁶

Indeed, for a period, the calendar had been allowed to lapse. It was resurrected in a minor way in article 373 of the Constitution of the Year IV which stipulated that *l'ère française* began on the 22 September 1793, the day of the foundation of the Republic, but as official almanacs show, the Republican calendar was used less frequently. More important calendar

³ Ozouf, ‘Revolutionary Calendar’, in *Critical Dictionary*, p. 544.

⁴ Michel Froeschlé, ‘À propos du calendrier républicain: Romme et l’astronomie’, *A.H.R.F.* (1996), p. 316.

⁵ A.D. Doubs, L 380, circular, Besançon, 17 frimaire VI (7 December 1797).

⁶ Isser Woloch, “‘Republican Institutions,’ 1797-1799”, in *The French Revolution and the Creation of a Modern Political Culture: The Political Culture of the French Revolution*, Colin Lucas, ed., (Oxford, 1988), vol. 2, p. 383.

legislation was to follow. By fructidor VII (August 1799), municipal officers were patrolling the streets in search of people working openly in public view on the *décadi*. In Besançon on 1 fructidor VII (18 August 1799), the *commissaire de police* saw and reported eight masons working between seven and eleven in the morning. The *adjoint du maire* replied that he had a good idea who the suspects would be.⁷ Active policing of the use of people's time had occurred during the Years II and III, but not to the same extent as during the second Directory. Increasingly strict rules governed behaviour on the *décadi* from the Year VI because of the Directors' neo-Jacobin attitudes towards both religion and education, although, as the next chapter argues, practice differed wildly from prescription. Time and its organisation could be highly political. The desire for social order, education, and the importance of the religious question became entangled with the two calendars.

The calendar was often attacked in the years subsequent to Robespierre's fall. Lanjuinais assaulted the calendar as one created by 'tyrants'. He criticised its practical and ideological failings. The majority of the citizens rejected and scorned it. Furthermore, the names of the seasons were a 'mensonge perpétuel', it posed a great threat to commerce and was not in harmony with nature, since neither man nor beast could bear ten days of consecutive work.⁸ Faure, deputy for the Loire-Inférieure, demanded that the 'calendrier prétendu républicain' should be reconsidered and that all work on the *Fêtes décadales* ought to be suspended. The calendar was explicitly associated with *terrorisme*.⁹

⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Letter, Voisard, *commissaire de police* of the commune of Besançon, 1 fructidor VII (18 August 1799).

⁸ B.L. F 1185 6, Lanjuinais, *Sur l'introduction du calendrier des tyrans* (Paris, Year III).

⁹ B.N. le³⁸1210, *Sur les fêtes décadales*, (Paris, Year III), p. 7.

The Political, Religious and Legislative Context

A number of pieces of legislation supported the observance of the Republican calendar: the most strident of these were introduced in the Years VI and VII. Historically, laws affecting the observance of the calendar were limited since it was expected that the calendar would be put into general use without the need for any coercion. The law of 4 frimaire II (24 November 1793) abolished the Gregorian calendar for civil use and ordered the production and distribution of a manual explaining the new system.

Changes in the nature of France's government had important consequences for the role of the calendar in French society. The new concern for strict enforcement of the calendar resulted from a political decision within the Directory and from the influence of the neo-Jacobins. The Directory has been a period neglected, until recently, by historians. In general, it has been seen as an interlude between Robespierre and Napoleon characterised by financial incompetence, warmongering, and Machiavellian plots. A succession of coups, attempts to gain and hold power by manipulation of Jacobin, centrist and royalist opinion, and electoral interference have led historians, until fairly recently, to concentrate on the high politics and back-room deals of the period. Yet, despite the intense politicking, the era was one of important social change and development of the French State.¹⁰

As a consequence of the Fructidor coup orchestrated by the 'Triumvirs' Barras, Reubell and La Révellière-Lépeaux, 177 deputies were removed and the election results in 49 departments were annulled. The right-wing press was repressed, *émigrés* barred from public office and troublesome priests

¹⁰ I. Woloch, *Jacobin Legacy: the Democratic Movement under the Directory* (Princeton, 1970); Woloch, *New Regime*; Georges Lefebvre, trans. Robert Baldick, *The Directory* (London, 1965), p. 156. For a more nuanced view of the politics of the earlier Directory than is given by Lefebvre, see Lucas, 'The Rules of the Game'.

expelled. France again had an increasingly radical government. The replacement as Directors of the royalist Barthélemy by Merlin de Douai and of Carnot with Neufchâteau on 22 fructidor Year V (8 September 1797) consolidated the regime's radical position, in part because they held two of the most important posts. Merlin became Minister of Justice and then Police and Neufchâteau, a enthusiastic supporter of calendar reform, had been appointed to the Ministry of the Interior. The Directors used these positions as an opportunity to increase their own political power, and, because of developments in the efficiency in France's administration had increasing influence over many aspects of daily life. Barras' memoirs suggest that Merlin was increasingly influential in the Year VI and his hand in particular could be felt in the law of 14 germinal VI (3 April 1798) on the strict observance of the calendar. Merlin was also concerned by the numbers of priests who had retracted their oath of obedience to the state. The Directors were anxious for religion to be subservient to the Republic.¹¹

Chenier had first proposed a system of civic festivals in every canton on 1 nivôse III (21 December 1794), but they were actually instituted by Neufchâteau and reflected his enthusiasm for antiquity and 'pagan pomp'. He had also, of course, previously proposed civil calendar reform.¹²

Following the Treaty of Campoformio (27 vendémiaire V (18 October 1797)), France's military position was also less precarious and its territorial expansion was recognised by the Austrians, allowing the Directory to concentrate on internal policy. The Directory attempted to consolidate the radical gains of the Revolution with strict social legislation. In brumaire VI (November 1797) the Directory decided that all candidates for the civil service should be required to have attended state schools, and ex-nobles were considered in law to be aliens and hence ineligible for public office. In

¹¹ Mathiez, *La théophilanthropie et le culte décadaire 1796-1801. Essai sur l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution* (Paris, 1903), p. 415; Ch Aimond, *Histoire religieuse de la révolution dans le département de la Meuse et le diocèse de Verdun (1789-1802)* (Paris, 1949), p. 389.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 435-437.

frimaire VI (November/December 1797), Siéyès went further, proposing that all ex-nobles should lose all their civic rights. Other harsh measures were introduced as a response to fears of crime and brigandage, evidenced in contemporary newspapers; the death penalty was to be employed by military commissions. When the military position was again uncertain, then internal opposition was seen as an even more dangerous problem, and the structures of government were increasingly in place to deal with dissent. Although the judiciary, police and military were centralised, they were also given increasing power to an extent that ultimately compromised the Directory. The policies imposing strict observance of the Republican calendar were therefore a result of the twin desire to propagate the Republic and its ideals throughout France, and to guarantee public and political order. A concern for control, regulation, and education of communities informed the attempted resurrection of the calendar as well as the religious battles of the period.

These concerns – that is, the quest for order and an answer to the questions posed by the Revolution – came to dominate the public and private political discourse of the period. The Directorial regime was Republican, anti-clerical and based on limited suffrage. It was defeated by its attempts to find an alternative to the extremes of both Royalist and Jacobin opinion.¹³ Despite political machinations and changes in personnel, the Directory remained strongly anti-clerical. This had important consequences for the history of the calendar. The Cult of the Supreme Being was largely discredited, Theophilanthropy remained on the edges of political acceptability at best, but the regime still remained resolutely hostile to the Catholic Church, especially the refractory wing. Religious toleration in theory allowed the exercise of Catholicism, but in the eyes of the majority of Republicans the Church was fatally compromised both by its opposition to the Revolution and its lack of toleration. Public worship and display of religious symbols were seen as an affront to toleration and ought

¹³ Martin Lyons, *France under the Directory* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 238.

to be relegated to the private sphere. In many ways, as Martin Lyons argues, the Directory made 'a praiseworthy, if modest, attempt at reconstruction after the Terror'. Ultimately, however, the regime did not just fail to resolve the religious question, but it also intensified the conflict between the various factions of religion, dechristianisation and secularism.¹⁴ By the Year VI, the politics of religion were clearly defined, although this meant that rhetoric had become more extreme and Republicans and Catholics were described as fanatics by either side. As Suzanne Desan has demonstrated, Catholicism and Republicanism were not incompatible.¹⁵ Yet the unifying feature, if one can be found, in the Directory was that of anti-clericalism. The revivification of the calendar was, at least in part, an attempt to destroy public expression of religion.

Despite the divisions between the refractory and constitutional churches, Catholic worship had begun to recover after the repression of the Years II and III. By the middle of the Year V, 40,000 parishes were holding regular masses. Calls were made for the legalisation of the ringing of church bells and for the relaxation of the laws on refractory priests.¹⁶ The fructidor coup, in contrast, heralded an era of religious intolerance. A new oath of allegiance was instituted, declaring hatred of royalty. Ten thousand priests were sentenced to deportation and church property was sold cheaply, rather than for profit, in order to prevent its religious use. As the following chapter suggests, this policy was not applied equally, but depended on the religious and political tone of each locality. Yet this anti-Catholic determination by the Directory continued to inform legislation, both on social policy and, more particularly, on the observance of the calendar.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁵ Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (Ithaca & London, 1990).

¹⁶ Lyons, *France under the Directory*, p. 105.

Abolition of all religion was rarely the intention of the Revolutionaries. Rather, like so much of eighteenth-century society, they sought to improve it. Voltaire considered religion necessary for the popular classes for reasons of social order if nothing less. Numerous religious and deistic movements testify to the place of some form of rational religion amongst the political elite. Anti-clericalism (and the political dangers of atheism) led to a desire to replace the church with a form of civil, moral improvement, rather than the destruction of public worship. This provided the impetus to replace the system of Catholic festive ritual with some form of civic programme. If Catholicism and its associated royalism and superstition were to be destroyed, then something was needed to replace it. Theophilanthropy, although largely exclusive to the urban elite, was seen as being over-influenced by Jacobinism and so was another reason for the creation of a form of religion or public ceremony for the harmony of the nation. Discussions of religious policy amongst Republicans and Revolutionaries are interesting for what they elide and for what they assume. Religion and its development into civic ceremony were considered according to a particular cultural mindset. Political rhetoric made easy use of casting (religious) fanatics and royalists as the enemies of the Republic, but religious doctrine and its perceived rational flaws were rarely discussed, except when swiftly dismissed as superstition and lies. Republican religion did not concern itself with eschatology or abstract theology, but concentrated on science and nature, and on public and private morality.¹⁷ Religious activity such as masses and processions were the focus of most attention and denunciation. It was on these occasions, the Republicans thought, that popular religious support, public observation, and the clever rhetorical tricks of priests could generate rebellion against the Republic. Some of the Revolutionaries' problems with and suspicion of the Church was due to its exclusivity and lack of accountability. Civic festivals, in contrast, although

¹⁷ Martin S. Staum, *Minerva's Message: Stabilizing the French Revolution* (Montreal & Kingston, 1996), pp. 120-121.

drawing on the routine and form of some religious festivals, such as processions, hymns and sacred dates, were resolutely public and inclusive. Furthermore, the new schemes consciously attempted to draw upon one of the same sources of strength as religion, that of a festive calendar which had a mixture of regular communal events and less regular special festivals. This was also in tune with other ideas about the importance of regularity and order within the nation. Festivals were to be celebrated with due solemnity, but at the same time and throughout France.

The Strict Observance of the Calendar

As a result of these concerns, the calendar became one the most important 'Republican institutions.' In 1798 the *calendrier républicain* became known as the *Almanach de la République*, the official basis of the civic year.¹⁸ The legislation was not simply negative in that it was an attempt to stamp out the old-seven day week with its religious associations, but it was also a real attempt to enforce the Republican calendar. Such action did not simply represent dechristianisation for its own sake, but a propensity to support Republican institutions. The special commission concerned with the Republican calendar concluded that the new measure represented 'une belle & grande conception de l'esprit humain' and was regular, simple, uniform and based on the certainties of nature. The calendar was to be strongly supported: 'ses dispositions sont justes, sages, & indispensablement nécessaires.' A concern for secularisation and the eradication of superstition was another, related, motive.¹⁹ Soon after the coup of the 18 fructidor Fouché disseminated a circular requesting the clergy to 'sanctify the *décadi*'. On 14 germinal VI (3 April 1798) the Directory decreed, to the protests of Grégoire, that all official acts had to be dated according to the Republican calendar. It was also argued that observance of the calendar

¹⁸ Lefebvre, *Directory*, p. 156.

¹⁹ A.N. AD VIII 15, Lenoir-Laroche, *Rapport... sur la résolution du 21 thermidor, relative à l'annuaire de la République. Séance du 23 fructidor an 6* (Paris, Year VI), p. 4.

would help bring about social order. The decree began with a defence of the Republican calendar. It prescribed its adoption for all *caisses publiques*, the postal and message services, public schools, spectacles, commercial meetings such as bourses, fairs, markets, contracts and agreements and all public agencies, by demanding that they be regulated by the *décade*, the new months, and the *jours complémentaires* (the replacement for the *sans-culottides*). The *Conseil exécutif*, the civil service and the municipalities were encouraged to take all the measures that would lead to a love of order and the public good, in order ‘to accelerate the changes demanded by the new division of the year.’ It was for all good citizens to provide an example by following the new calendar in all their correspondence, whether public or private. The Constitution recognised only one calendar, which would also help remove the ‘last traces of the royal, noble and sacerdotal regime.’ Article One of the decree denounced all those who regulated their meetings by Sundays and fêtes of the previous calendar. Article Two ordered all public officials to regularise their audiences by *décade*. State schools were also regulated and had to observe the *décadi*. Article Seven decreed that all canals, rivers and public carriages of all types would not be used on the *décade*. Finally, dates on periodicals were to follow the new style, as the old era ‘no longer exists for French citizens.’ Details of the decree concerning the strict execution of the Republican calendar, were circulated in the *Bulletin des lois*, number 194.²⁰

Yet even these requirements, some suggested, fell short of what was necessary for the enforcement of the Republican calendar so three further pieces of legislation were introduced. The Law of the 17 thermidor VI (4 August 1798) demanded that shops and boutiques had to close their doors on *décadis* and on national festivals. This was followed by the Law of 13 fructidor VI (30 August 1798), which stipulated a fête for every *décadi* and enforced the *décadi* as the only day when marriages could be celebrated. The law of 23 fructidor (9 September) confirmed the desire to forbid the old

²⁰ A.D. VIII 15, Directoire Exécutif. *Arrêté du Directoire Exécutif qui prescrit des mesures pour la stricte exécution du calendrier républicain*, 14 germinal VI (3 April 1798).

calendar ‘dans toutes les actes ou conventions, soit publics, soit privés,[...] ouvrages périodiques, affiches ou écriteaux’. The offence carried a fine of ten francs for ordinary citizens and fifty francs for government employees and notaries. Where markets were held in communes according to the old calendar, new arrangements had to be made.²¹ The later legislation demanded that teachers take their charges to the *fêtes décadaires*, and the school could face closure if the school neglected these duties. Numerous circulars were sent to departmental authorities by Fouché, Neufchâteau, Lambrecht, and others, demonstrating the importance given to the strengthened policy by the Directory.²² In one circular from the Minister of Police, it was argued that the laws of 17 thermidor, 13 and 23 fructidor formed the first foundations of Republican institutions through these institutions composed people’s opinion and morale.²³ The Minister of the Interior, recognising the difficulty of applying the law in all localities, actively sought advice from local officials on the best means of pursuing such a policy.²⁴

Unlike the reform of weights and measures, which could draw upon a tradition of bureaucratic involvement and state coercion, the calendar had no official commissioners or inspectors. Rather, it came within the brief of the Committee of Public Instruction and was seen as an aspect of public education and scientific utility. Attention was focused not so much on its use (except no doubt by Revolutionary Tribunals), as on finalising the calculations necessary for accurate navigation and astronomical prediction and on the production of school books and pamphlets for the army. In theory markets were to be held in accordance with the new system: in

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² F.R.R.C., 8, Circular, Lambrecht, , Paris, 29 germinal VI (18 April 1798).

²³ F.R.R.C., 8, Circular, Duval, Minsiter of Police, Paris, 26 frimaire 7 (16 December 1798).

²⁴ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Letter, Department of the Doubs to the municipality of Besançon, 5 floréal VI (24 April 1798).

practice the markets were often simply, and gradually, fixed according to old calendar dates, but recorded by officials under the new calendar.

Crucially, the law forbade markets and fairs on the *décadi*, and on old (that is, pre-1789) festive days.²⁵ The new dates were to be in line with the Republican calendar and not based around the hebdomadal week. There was a strong ideological motive, as a letter from the Minister of the Interior reveals:

[Les foires et marchés sont] encore presque partout indiqués par les dénominations de l'ancien calendrier, dont chaque jour rappelle l'idée d'un culte dominant, lorsque la République n'en reconnaît aucun et que ses principes seuls doivent dominer. Il importe, pour ôter au fanatisme tout moyen de se perpétuer et s'agiter, de fixer les jours de foires et marchés d'après l'ère républicaine.

[Again almost everywhere [the days of fairs and markets are] indicated by denominations of the old calendar, each day of which suggests the idea of a dominant religion, whereas the Republic recognises none; its principles alone must predominate. It is important, to prevent the perpetuation and growing restlessness of fanaticism, to fix fairs and market days according to the Republican era.]²⁶

Under the décret of 18 vendémiaire II, the Departments were in charge of drawing up the table of fairs and markets according to the new calendar. This was followed in some Departments, such as the Doubs, with some

²⁵ *L'Ancien Moniteur* (Paris, 1863 ed.), vol. 29, pp. 150-51; F.R.R.C. 6, *Loi contenant des dispositions nouvelles pour l'exacte observation de l'Annuaire de la République*, 23 Fructidor 6 (9 September 1798).

²⁶ Quoted in Jack Thomas, *Les Temps des foires: Foires et marchés dans le Midi toulousain de la fin de l'Ancien Régime à 1914* (Toulouse, 1993), p. 208. Lambrecht, the Minister of Justice, believed that this would efface 'jusqu'aux dernières traces d'usages bizarres', F.R.R.C. 6, 'calendrier républicain', Letter to the *Administrations centrales*, Paris, 29 Germinal VI (18 April 1798).

initial problems as the various towns and villages competed to hold markets.²⁷ Under article V of the Law of 23 Fructidor VI each Department was ordered to draw up the table anew, in accordance with the *Annuaire de la République*. A number of instructions and letters from the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice continued to stress the importance of the new measure and set about collecting data from each Department to ensure they were complying with the new scheme.

Strict observance of the calendar, then, was attempted amidst a whirlwind of bureaucracy. *Comptes décadaires* regularly had sections dealing with the calendar and its observance and, as noted earlier, cantons had to report on the measures taken to organise the *fêtes décadaires* and had to provide an account of each ceremony. Indeed, as Vernerey argued, it was government functionaries and their families who would provide the best example to their fellow citizens:

D'abord, il serait superflu de vous dire que tout magistrat, tout fonctionnaire public et tout employé par le gouvernement doit fêter le jour de la décade et y assujettir sa famille. Il en est de même des instituteurs publics et de leurs élèves, puisque c'est à eux à se montrer les plus zélés observateurs des fêtes nationales, et à se rencontrer toujours aux cérémonies ordonnées pour les célébrer.

[Firstly, it would be superfluous to tell you that all magistrates, all public officials and all government employees must celebrate the day of the *décadi* and subject their family to it. It is the same for schoolteachers and their pupils, since they have to show that they are the most zealous observers of *fêtes nationales*, and always attend the prescribed ceremonies in their celebration.]²⁸

The Years VI and VII mark a profound attempt to orchestrate the nation's time, in a way never attempted before.

²⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 316, Correspondence concerning fairs and markets.

²⁸ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Circular, Besançon, 17 frimaire VI (7 December 1797).

The calendar had, of course, been a challenge to the Church. Indeed this was one of the main reasons for the difficulty that had been encountered in imposing it since Year II: in the words of an *agent national* in the Gironde, there were many ‘qui ne solennisent pas le jour de la décade & ne célèbrent que le jour de dimanche.’²⁹ The hard line view expressed by this Jacobin *agent national* became part of government policy in the Year VI as decrees on the strict enforcement of the Republican calendar were congruent with the religious policy of the Directory. External symbols and signs of religious activity and faith, such as the display of crosses and the ringing of church bells, were prohibited. Attempts were made to encourage priests to move the mass from Sunday to the *décadi* and, as is shown in this circular from the Doubs, local officials were exhorted to make efforts to set this about: ‘vous devez engager les ministres de tous les cultes à transporter aux décadis leurs fêtes et leurs cérémonies religieuses les plus importantes’.³⁰ Although some of the civil clergy were obliging, the majority were not. Some examples do exist, as in departments like the Nord, where ‘les ministres du culte du canton de Maroilles ont transporté aux décadis leurs cérémonies des dimanches’.³¹

Administrators might be exhorted to apply the Directory’s religious policy, but not all thought it wise to do so, as one *commissaire* in the Doubs, reported:

Loin de moi, citoyen, l’idée ridicule d’entraver le droit sacré de tout citoyen français, pour le libre exercice du culte qu’il s’est choisi; je sais qu’aucun

²⁹ A.N. F¹cIII Gironde 8, Laporteries, *Agent national* of the commune of Martien, Gironde, to the Comité de Salut Public, 23 ventôse II (13 March 1794).

³⁰ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Circular, Besançon, 17 frimaire VI (7 December 1797). The author could have had in mind Christmas masses in his reference to ‘les plus importantes’ ceremonies.

³¹ A.N. F¹⁷1454, Department of the Nord to the Committee of Public Instruction, 25 prairial VI (13 June 1798).

gouvernement ne peut protéger, ou proscrire une idée religieuse, quelle qu'elle soit...

[Far from me, citizen, the ridiculous idea of hampering the sacred right of all French citizens to the free exercise of the religion they choose; I know that no government can protect or prohibit a religious idea, whatever it may be...]

Despite these reservations, the official continued to attack the canton of Mouthe for the ringing of bells on Sundays, which went against the law of 7 vendémiaire IV (29 September 1795).³²

The religious and political context of these new measures for the strict observance of the calendar differed subtly from the Year II. Unlike the calendar's initial introduction, a variety of measures and penalties were put in place to enforce the new system. Such action had practical consequences. Central government had a more mature relationship with the provinces and a more established system of local administration. Its enforcement no longer depended on the help of Jacobin clubs or popular enthusiasm, but on the assistance of local officials. The decree of 14 germinal VI, for example, was received in the Marne on 5 floréal VI (24 April 1798) by the central administration. It was distributed to all municipal authorities who then printed and displayed posters detailing the forbidding of dances on the *décadi* as other regulations.³³ Decrees were followed up with notices from the Minister of the Interior and required a response from the local administration. Such bureaucracy did not necessarily lead to any practical improvement: posters might remain unread through illiteracy or lack of interest, local officials might lack zeal for what must have seemed an impossible task, and local reports might have exaggerated the efforts made. Nonetheless, the structures that were in place offered the possibility that

³² A.D. Doubs L 246, Circular, 4 frimaire VII (24 November 1798).

³³ A.N. A.D. VIII.15, *Arrête de l'administration centrale du département de la Marne*, 5 floréal VI (24 April 1798).

social legislation could have a real impact. As Woloch has consistently shown, the history of the Directory is as much one of bureaucratic and administrative development (or meddling) as of political scheming.³⁴ The amount of paper evidence that was generated and still exists testifies to the importance the bureaucracy placed on the Republican calendar. The development of an effective administration was important to the history of the calendar, but also had implications for temporality more generally. Society and the state involved themselves in the control of temporalities in a number of ways. Previously, the Church and the state worked together to impose the Gregorian calendar with strong religious elements, but increasingly, the state was the arbiter of the organisation of time. Work days, public festivals and, eventually, holidays and working hours, were decided by the state rather than the Church alone. Nonetheless, Easter, Assumption, and Christmas retained their strong popular hold. The patterns of administration and the civil year, however, gained importance as the state involved itself more closely in everyday life.

Even after these ordinances, calls continued to be made for the complete destruction of the Gregorian calendar. Joseph-Clément Poullain-Grandprey, an anti-royalist and pro-Fructidorian member of the Council of the Five Hundred called for the ‘absolute abolition of the former calendar and the obligation of all French citizens to conform with the Republican era.’ The Republican calendar, which he considered to be based on natural, physical laws, had to be supported, as it was a constant reminder to counter-revolutionaries of the foundation of the Republic:

L'ère républicaine, dont la nature elle-même semble avoir tracé les règles, et que des lois ont consacrée, leur offre le souvenir importun de la fondation de la République.

³⁴ Woloch, *New Regime*.

[The Republican era, the rules of which Nature herself seems to have traced, and which has been consecrated by the laws, offers them the importunate memory of the foundation of the Republic.]³⁵

He considered the measures in place, despite the good example set by the Representatives in observing the *décadi*, to be inadequate:

[...]nous rappelons sans cesse cette division de l'année qui déconcerte en même temps les calculs du fanatisme et ceux des partisans des rois. Déjà plusieurs lois ont tracé des obligations à cet égard aux fonctionnaires publics; mais elles sont insuffisantes.

[[...] we constantly recall this division of the year which confounds both the schemes of fanaticism and those of the partisans of kings. Already several laws have established the obligations of public officials in this regard; but they are insufficient.]³⁶

Poullain-Grandprey called for the suppression of the Gregorian calendar in both the public and private realms. He demanded a special commission to ensure that journalists refrained from using the old calendar and to examine the issue of the timing of fairs and markets with regard to the *décadi*. The same commission would also control, with the threat of punishment, the means of dating 'dans les actes sous signature privée'.

³⁵ A.N. A.D.VIII 15, *Arrête de l'administration centrale du département de la Marne*, 5 floréal VI (24 April 1798).

³⁶ B.1774-d.1826. Poullain-Grandprey was a magistrate at Mirecourt, then Procureur-Général-Syndic of the Vosges in 1790 before becoming a member of the Convention, Conseil des Anciens and then the Conseil des Cinq-Cents until 1799. As a supporter of Siéyès during the events of prairial VII, he declared on 28 Prairial (6 June) that the Conseil des Cinq-Cents should remain in permanent session until the Directory provided a satisfactory explanation of the military situation. He opposed the coup of Brumaire and returned to his legal career; Poullain-Grandprey, *Motion d'ordre[...] Sur l'abolition absolue de l'ancien calendrier, et l'obligation à tous les citoyens français de se conformer à l'ère républicaine* (Paris, 1798).

Festivals

The scheme of national festivals had an overt philosophical framework. Debates on Republican festivals stressed their importance for the creation of public spirit and for the education of citizens in both the ideals and the events of the Revolution. Lakanal, for example, stated that ‘fêtes nationales’ enforced ‘la morale publique’ and should be strongly supported and controlled by the state. In this he was typical of those who publicly expressed views on the purpose and importance of festivals.³⁷ A central report concluded that in the Year V ‘les fêtes nationales sont le moyen le plus propre à régénérer l’esprit public’.³⁸ Public morals, or civic standards, were engendered by festivals that celebrated important events and demonstrated particular political ideals. The 14 July, for example, represented the power of the people and the importance of liberty. Festivals such as that of Labour, one of the *jours complémentaires*, celebrated the importance of work and condemned idleness. Speeches and tableaux enforced these lessons. A great deal of effort and thought went into their planning.

The nature of civil festivals was debated in nivôse and pluviôse III (December 1794-February 1795), half a year after Robespierre’s fall. This debate revealed the problems in attempting both to conceive of the Revolution as a whole and examine its relationship to history and time. Ultimately, local conflicts occurred throughout France as a result of the attempt to impose a system of *fêtes décadaires*; the planning of which had been ongoing since the calendar’s introduction. Faure, deputy for the Seine-Inférieure, called for the suspension of the work on the *fêtes décadaires* until the people had been consulted on ‘le calendrier prétendu républicain’,

³⁷ *Moniteur*, vol. 21, 26 fructidor II (12 September 1794), p. 743.

³⁸ A.N. F¹1cI 84, Memo, ‘Analyse des travaux du bureau des fêtes, des théâtres et des monumens, depuis le 12 brumaire jusqu’au 30 floréal’ [V?] (9 May [1797?]).

indicating his dissatisfaction with the calendar.³⁹ For Faure, Romme's calendar was associated with the Terror and that part of the regime tarnished by Robespierre's fall. Nonetheless, following the publication of the report by the Committee of Public Instruction on the civic festivals, the majority of deputies expressed support for some form of civil ceremony on the *décadi*. Support for introducing, controlling and supporting the *fête* was congruent with the tenor of the Thermidorian Reaction and its attitude to the recent reign of Terror. Although *fêtes décadaires* might have been dismissed as a continuance of Jacobin policies and a gathering of 'blood drinkers', they were instead promoted as a vital opportunity to increase harmony and social peace after the discord of the Terror. Improvement of public morality and the regeneration of the nation were still active phrases and aims of the deputies and the idea of the Republic continued to need public support. The existence of such sentiments is clear from a survey of contemporary political pamphlets and speeches.

Rameau de la Côte-d'Or, in the text of a speech to be delivered to the Convention, considered the issue to be one of the most important that could be considered by 'une assemblée de réformateurs des préjugés, [et] de régénérateurs des mœurs'.⁴⁰ He recognised the potential problems with the *décadis*, in particular the difficulties of holding them in the countryside and the degree of tedium that greeted them. To answer these complaints, Rameau proposed shortening the length of the ceremony, and increasing the amount of recreation planned for the day. Festivals celebrating the beginning of the year and the great days of the Revolution should be celebrated on the *décadi* to avoid a superfluity of festivity. This idea was also

³⁹ P. J. D. G. Faure, Député de la Seine-Inférieure, *Sur les Fêtes Décadaires* (Paris, Year III), p. 7, B.N. le³⁸1210.

⁴⁰ B.N. Le³⁸1206, J. Rameau de la Côte-d'Or, *Aperçu philosophique et politique, sur la célébration des Décadis & des Fêtes Nationales, Discours destiné à être prononcé à la tribune de la Convention, sur le rapport du Comité d'Instruction Publique, concernant les Fêtes Décadaires* (Paris, Year III), p. 1.

proposed by Marcox, who worried that a multitude of *fêtes* harmed agriculture: a complaint common to social commentators and economic modernisers alike.⁴¹ Faiguet de Villeneuve, in the *Encyclopédie*, had estimated the cost to industry caused by the number of religious fêtes in the old regime at around 96 million *livres*. Festivals, when they were not being attacked as opportunities for vice, were accused, by the poor as well as by philosophes, as a hindrance to necessary work.⁴² It was noted in the *Gazette historique* that the Chinese, 'le peuple le plus laborieux du monde et le plus moral' had no fixed day of rest, neither Sunday nor *décadi*; the religious could go each day to the temple for an hour, but still worked every day.⁴³

Opposition to the Republican calendar itself was also voiced, although not without internal tensions and external criticisms. Duhem, for example, worried during the debate on the calendar in October 1793 that such a programme as was suggested held dangers of idolatry and preferred a neutral, numerical system. Terral, of the Haute-Garonne, lambasted the system as an invention of the disgraced Fabre d'Églantine and claimed that it had been used to assert Robespierre's tyrannical and egomaniacal schemes. In Terral's view, Robespierre had attempted to replace the superstitious and Ancien Regime Catholic religion with an equally irrational 'religion nationale'. This tendency had now to be checked and indeed was ridiculed: 'Depuis la chute de ce dernier tyran, l'on a affaibli l'idée de l'existence de l'être suprême & de l'immortalité de l'âme, par le juste ridicule que l'on a jeté sur les projets du tyran'.⁴⁴ Terral was not adverse to months with an equal number of days, but he held that seventeen centuries of observation

⁴¹ B.N. Le³⁸1208, Marcox, *Objet et ordre des fêtes décadaires de la république française* (Paris, Year III), p. 2.

⁴² J. Maarten Ultée, 'The Suppression of *Fêtes* in France, 1666,' *The Catholic Historical Review*, 62 (1976), pp. 181-99.

⁴³ 'Réflexion sur les jours de repos périodiques. Extrait de la gazette historique', *Journal de Rouen et du département de la Seine Inférieure*, 3 fructidor VI (20 August 1798).

⁴⁴ B.H.V.P. 950845, Joseph Terral, *Réflexions sur les Fêtes Décadaires* (Paris, Year III), p. 3.

of Sundays could not easily be forgotten. He proposed the end of the *décadi* and suggested combining civic with religious ceremonies on *ci-devant dimanches*. Again, this was a common suggestion.

Despite these reservations, the principle behind the festival was readily accepted and indeed needed to be fortified by 'l'habitude de toute la vie', especially in the young, since the next generation could be raised without the prejudices of the present.⁴⁵ Most deputies approved of the concept of civil festivals, even if they had some reservations about the detail. Thirion, who had remained a Jacobin, wondered if the plans for the *décadi* would be enough to replace fanaticism and superstition. He raised the importance of some form of education every day and cautioned against rushing into solutions, rather than wanting to find the best one. Yet, again, his support for the Committee's aims was strong.⁴⁶ Ecshasseriaux, the member of the commission charged with producing a report on the nature of the *fêtes décadaires*, wrote of the need for a ceremony that 'spoke to the heart of the citizen.'⁴⁷ The need to enflame the Republican virtue that was expressed in this report provided a central theme for the debate. Many calls were made for a national scheme of festivals in the Directorial period, including in the pages of *La Décade philosophique*.⁴⁸ The aim of the government was to use 'tous les moyens que les localités et les circonstances permettent' to give to the *fêtes nationales* all 'la pompe et l'éclat dont elles sont susceptibles.'⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Rameau, *Aperçu philosophique*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ B.N. Le³⁸1207, Thirion, *Motion d'ordre, sur les Fêtes Decadaires* (Paris, Year III), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷ B.N. le³⁸1205, Eschasseriaux, *Rapport et projet et décret sur les fêtes civiques* (Paris, Year III).

⁴⁸ *La Décade philosophique* 20 germinal IV, *ibid.*, 30 prairial IV *ibid.*, 30 messidor IV; Mathiez *théophilanthropie*, pp. 27-29.

⁴⁹ A.N. F¹cIII Loire-Inférieure 10, Report, *esprit public*, 15 prairial 6 (3 Jun 1798).

Conclusions

These debates demonstrate that the calendar was linked to politics, religion and a desire for a Republican society. The use of the Gregorian calendar was associated in political rhetoric with royalists and the refractory Church, while religion and politics were combined in the Directory's policy on calendrical conformity. This policy would continue for the first few months of the Consulate. The post-Fructidor Directors and the Interior and Police Ministers were anti-clerical by temperament and they were encouraged in their religious policies by the association of royalist politicians with religion. At the same time, the influence of Theophilanthropy, with its Jacobin associations, had to be limited. This resulted in an attack on the public display of religion, which was taken as an assault on the Republic, and the attempted creation of a form of civic ceremony, celebration and moral teaching. In political propaganda and debate the old Gregorian calendar was increasingly linked with Catholicism, leading to attacks on its use along with the other exterior signs of religion, such as the ringing of bells and the presence of crosses. As a result, the Republican calendar was seized upon as a weapon in the battle against the perceived habit and superstition of the peasantry and seen as an important framework for the support of moral and social order and the opportunity for mass education. In contrast to the meagre efforts made in the Year II to impose the calendar, the Directory placed a great deal more importance on it and displayed a concern with conformity to this Republican institution in their legislative programme. Weekly departmental and communal *comptes décadaires* had to record in detail how the Republican calendar was being observed alongside notes on the control of exterior signs of religion and notes on *émigrés*.⁵⁰ Circulars and memoranda on the best method of imposing the calendar circulated around the nation. Attempts were also made to impose it in France's sister republics and conquered territories. The possibilities for accidentally becoming entangled with the 'second Terror'

⁵⁰ A.D. Doubs, L 246, 'comptes décadaires.'

were thus greatly increased. As George Lefebvre notes, such a policy 'managed to disturb everybody's habits, [and] alienated the indifferent. Altogether, without being as violent as the *terroristes*, the Directorials made themselves no less unbearable.'⁵¹

⁵¹ Lefebvre, *Directory*, p. 157.

CHAPTER 5:

FESTIVE TIME

The grand schemes for a system of civic festivals discussed by the Convention and the Council of the Five Hundred were offered to a population that was at best bemused and, at worst, violently opposed to suggestions of changing the very nature of the week. While officials throughout France were pestered by an almost continuous flow of bureaucratic literature exhorting them to new efforts in the promotion of festivals and the Republican calendar, citizens in the main continued in their usual routines. Examples of joyous and enthusiastic celebration when *fêtes décadaires* were reportedly celebrated with zeal exist in the archives, but in the main the sources reveal an 'inexhaustible, tiresome literature born of the thorny problem of co-ordinating the calendars'.¹

Yet the Revolution had once been the occasion for truly popular festivals, whether spontaneous or meticulously planned. The upsetting of the traditional order and the creation of a new symbolic order were asserted by a great range of festive elements, involving speeches, military displays, processions, dioramas, communal feasting, dancing and drinking. Republican festivals, as Ozouf demonstrates, used the materials of the Ancien Regime to create the new world.² However, the old temporal order retained a limpet-hold on French life. The Gregorian calendar, Church and local calendar customs, the routine of the seven-day week, and patterns of Sunday leisure or traditions ensured that the Directory's emphasis on the propagandist, Republican *fête décadaire* was a policy certain to create friction. These festivals, held every tenth day (the *décadi*) were seen by the

¹ Mona Ozouf, trans. Alan Sheridan, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), p. 158.

² *Ibid.*

Revolutionaries to be a key element of the Republic's mission to regenerate France. This chapter examines their nature, that is their purpose and popularity, and places them within the context and rhythms of eighteenth-century time.

The nature of opposition and the extent of its temporal basis are important. Without undermining the importance of counter-revolutionary feeling, opposition could take other forms. Dissatisfaction with government policy in particular areas, such as religion, did not necessarily mean opposition to the Revolution, even if in the scorched earth rhetoric that often flared during the period it could be interpreted as such. Direct opposition to the *décadi* can hardly be described as apolitical, but non-attendance is not so clearly political or necessarily related to views about the Republic. There were other reasons to neglect the ceremony. Where political considerations were the primary motivation, it could well have been a matter of local politics and personal dislike of the mayor or other official functionary. The traditions of the village, the inherent tedium and possible ridiculousness of some *fêtes décadaïres*, and issues of popular temporality could also play an important part in the reception of Republican Festivals. The relationship between habit and the new political world was complex. As Desan concludes, in an assessment of popular adherence to saints' days, 'it is often hard to untangle religious motivations from the desire for recreation, commerce, or political opposition.' She argues that the true political meaning of events was local activism and dynamics, rather than a rejection of everything for which the Revolution stood.³

In my examination of the relationship between festivals and time, I have concentrated mainly on the *fêtes décadaïres*, although conclusions are also drawn from the less regular national festivals (the two were often directly related in proposed festive schemata). In the main, the evidence is derived from the Directorial period, although some examples have been found

³ Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred*, p. 174.

from the Year II. I hope that the importance of temporality can be seen; to this end, the final section assesses the importance of the persistence of traditional timing. I begin by describing the festivals, as well as the efforts made to generate interest in them.

The Nature of Festivals

Festivals provoked debate about the nature of France, the independence of the locality and the relationship between society, the state and religion. Social and cultural anthropologists have long argued that ritual and public ceremony can reveal deep social and mental structures and can be used to demonstrate social and gender hierarchy and to elaborate religious world views. Anthropologists are more cautious of drawing distinctions between modern and 'traditional' societies because of the assumptions such analyses have made of other societies' lack of time-awareness and the lack of examination of the construction of western time itself.⁴ Yet important insights into the role and meanings of festivity have been made. Historians, especially in the 1960s and 70s, have found the expression and history of carnival to be a tempting topic of research, often drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's elaboration of a Rabelaisian reversal and excess. It has long been recognised that festivals work, in part, because of their distinction from ordinary time; time becomes endowed with the ability to define a safe period set aside for revelry and subversion. If such occasions are known about and can be planned for, then they can also be accommodated by the authorities and even encouraged as a social 'safety-valve'.⁵

⁴ Adam, *Timewatch*, p. 30.

⁵ Mary Ryan, 'The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order' in *New Cultural History*, Hunt, ed., pp. 131-53; M.M. Bakhtin, ed. Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, 1981); Jonathan Z. Smith, 'A Slip in Time Saves Nine: Prestigious Origins Again', in *Chronotypes*, Bender and Wellberg, eds., pp. 67-77. E.R. Leach, 'Two Essays Concerning the Symbolic Representation of Time' reprinted in *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1966), pp. 124-38.

Yet, anthropological comparisons or insights can only be drawn with caution, since Republican festivals were wholly new. The timing of the new system was not as 'organic' as traditional festivals had become, but instead relied on a decimal distribution of sacred and recreational time, which owed more to the happenstance of humans having ten fingers, rather than any basis in any human rhythms of rest.⁶ The number of complaints about the difficulty of working for ten days and criticising the excessive number of festivals which exhausted and bored the population suggest that the 'rational' scheme was flawed. One piece of correspondence from the Year VIII summed up many people's opinion when it argued that the Republican calendar demanded too much by allowing rest only every ten days. Another complained that even beasts of the field do not work ten days without rest.⁷ Such a correlation probably also involved other important factors, such as the continuing influence of local tradition, as well as the suggestion that festivals, or periods of carnival, need a certain temporal periodicity. Nonetheless, the place of seasons and the rhythms of agriculture probably did form a material or structural base for the possibility of a successful scheme for festivity. Common-sense explanations of the success and failure of festivals are not incompatible with such explanations. The planned nature of such events is also important in their study, as often the only source available are their plans published before the event and official reports after the event, rather than much rarer independent accounts.

The evidence which exists therefore points to an official history of festivity, but it seems likely that local expressions and deviations were at least as an important part of their story, as the following incidents recorded in the Besançon anti-Jacobin party journal, *Le 9 Thermidor*, suggest. Following the events in Paris, the local Jacobins, who dominated the department's governance, found themselves under attack. Religious and moderate voices

⁶ Nicole Pellegrin, *Les Bacheleries. Organisations et fêtes de la jeunesse dans le Centre-Ouest XVe-XVIIIe siècles* (Poitiers, 1982).

⁷ A.N. F¹CI 88-89, Letter, Robert, 4 nivôse VIII (25 December 1799).

were raised in opposition to the party that had taken over the cathedral for the *fête de l'Être Supreme*. The edition for 29 germinal III (18 April 1795) commented that twenty-two of the commune's 'anarchists' were not present at the civic parade that had been held that month. It wondered whether an aversion to 'witnessing the joy of the people' explained why such men were not present. Clearly, their political moment had passed and it may have been unwise to attend, even if, as the journal mockingly printed, were they not all French citizens and brothers?⁸ The civic procession was a public and political event that could be charged with meaning. By their absence, the Jacobin leaders were admitting their defeat and their differences with the current ruling party: at least this was the interpretation given by the 'Société Vraiment Populaire' which was responsible for the journal. In many ways, therefore, festivals, which often took the form of, or included, a parade or procession, could be used and manipulated to create meanings other than those which were intended. Festivals provided opportunities for the enunciation of local politics and divisions. As this example shows, political alignments following Robespierre's fall could be demonstrated in this public manner.

Festivals drew from a whole range of imagery and symbolism. Ozouf has described the use to which space was put, in order to express harmony and fraternity, and has provided an inventory of 'spatial metaphors' that are linked to the Republic or Revolutionary France.⁹ Processions through towns conquered the urban space for the Revolution and civic authority, both symbolically and physically and, she suggests, created a sacred space. In contrast to the royal and religious festivals, organisers such as David favoured the horizontal over the 'gothic' vertical stress symbolised by the church towers and the statues that had been attacked by eager

⁸ *Le 9 Thermidor, Journal Du Département du Doubs*, issue 1 (1795), p. 54.

⁹ Ozouf, *La Fête révolutionnaire*, p. 149, pp. 148-187.

Revolutionaries.¹⁰ In the same manner, the new festivals attempted to use time in a novel way.

Since the Republican calendar was an attempt to replace the Gregorian scheme in its entirety, festivals were seen as essential elements even in Romme's first report. The problem of the extra five or six days (depending on leap years) for a calendar which aimed for regularity as well as alignment with the solar year was easily solved by the creation of a set of festivals, an idea borrowed from the classical world. The old calendar was strongly associated with a range of feast, holy and saints' days, which were obviously to be replaced. The Revolutionaries also recognised the educational and regenerative potential of such a system. Festivals, which mixed together the process of commemoration, the expression of fraternity and the symbolisation of public spirit, had also been a feature of the Revolution from its beginnings. Indeed, the public and performative aspects of riot, rebellion and revolution find many parallels with carnival and public action. The Republic was keen to organise such events and place them on a rational, ordered footing. The calendar provided just such an opportunity.

Tensions were implicit in memorialising and celebratory aspect of festivals. The scheme both presented timeless ideals and, as the anonymous quotation at the head of this chapter suggests, memorialised the events of the Revolution. Such a commemorative process was clearly politically charged. The problem of reconciling the intended distribution of festivals with the random timing of the dating of actual events exercised several members of the Convention and *Conseils* over the years. Different regimes continued to alter the slate of festivals for political reasons. Initially, Napoleon kept only the 14 July and the 1 vendémiaire, which celebrated the first day of the year and the inauguration of the Republic.¹¹ Other celebrations were created, such as those for Napoleon's coronation and the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹ Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, p. 138.

victory at Austerlitz. In Besançon this resulted in the ordering of those residents whose houses were visible from the street to 'illuminer leurs fenêtres dès l'entrée de la nuit'. Public buildings were similarly to be lit up with the light of victory.¹² Ozouf suggests that festivals made the Revolution 'eternal' in some way, by annually revivifying its central events and ideas and also attempting to fix its meaning. They certainly were intended by the Revolutionaries to carry the Revolution into the future and towards posterity.¹³

Clearly, a rejection or reappraisal of the Revolution had implications for responses to the calendar and, in particular, the question of the *fêtes décadaires*. Even before the introduction of the new calendar, the Convention had been grappling with the issue of commemoration and festivity. Numerous pamphlets were written on the subject, speeches were made in the Convention, and the Committee of Public Instruction was slowly considering an appropriate national system of festivals. In the process the organisation and style of festivals underwent a great deal of change, from their spontaneous institution at the beginning of the Revolution as towns and villages planted liberty trees, through to the massive choreography of David and the *fête de l'Être Suprême*. The intended tone and meaning of these events was of great importance for the Revolutionaries, since such festivals symbolised the achievements and nature of the Revolution and France. Furthermore, as communal events they engendered fraternity and common life.

As chapter 4 demonstrated, the debates on the detail of the festivals continued for an extended period. The slate of annual festivals shifted along with the political tenor of the government. Nonetheless, by the Year VI a general picture of the scheme of national festivals had emerged. Major events of the Revolution were commemorated on set days, such as the 14th

¹² A.M. Besançon, I 1 3L, *Avis*, 4 December 1806.

¹³ Ozouf, *Festivals*, pp. 195-6.

July, the last two *jours complémentaires* were also regular festivals, while the *décadi* took on the form of Sunday, just as the major festivals of the Republic could be compared to the High Days of the Catholic year. The *décadi* became a sort of civic mass, and fulfilled the same communal and official functions of the Sunday service. A whole gamut of civil procedures were to take place, such as the reading of recent laws, the announcement of local infractions of the law, and announcement of births and deaths. Marriages were also to be performed.

The *fête décadaire* also borrowed many elements from major festivals. It was announced by drum, cannon or musket volley, and began with a procession of the mayor and other officials. They would gather in the designated *salle décadaire*, which could either be in the local church, or, as in Besançon, in the *hôtel de ville*. Some civic and national hymns would be sung and speeches given. In plans for such ceremonies, people were divided into groups by age and gender. A variety of symbolic actions, such as the placing of garlands on a form of liberty tree, would take place. As the Revolution progressed, such gestures moved towards more ambiguous symbolism, rather than an attempt to present a coherent story of the Revolution and its meaning. Instead, festivals attempted to celebrate fraternity.¹⁴ Harmony and social stability were to be encouraged, along with the regeneration of French men, women and, crucially, the children who were often singled out in plans for and reports of festivals. The education of the young, as many contemporary speeches show, was seen as vital. Here the Revolutionaries hoped to secure the future.¹⁵

Once the ceremony was over, including the intoning of recent laws and such official business as was required, the whole commune was then

¹⁴ Ozouf, *Festivals*, pp. 172-196.

¹⁵A.N. A.D. VIII 15, Jault, *Discours philosophique. Des moyens d'éviter le matérialisme par la morale propre à élever l'âme dans les sentimens de sa véritable [sic] grandeur. Prononcé dans le Temple de la Raison, etc.* (Paris, Year II).

intended to spend the rest of the day in a variety of officially sanctioned pursuits. Military exercises might be performed, gymnastic exercises arranged. A debate concerning the nature of such activities was continuing. Ought such time to be spent in the pursuit of pleasure and festivity, or in more solemn contemplation? Such was the concern of several pamphlets in the debates in the Years VI and VII. Joyous celebration could easily overflow into unreasonable unruliness.

Republican virtue required dignity, but could also embrace a spirit of celebration as this report from the Seine-et-Oise maintains in its description of

un repas simple et frugal, digne des anciennes spartiates [...] Les tables furent dressées dans la même enceinte. L'éternel y préside, la décence et la gaieté y régnèrent telles qu'elles conviennent à des enfants assis au banquet de leur père commun. Cette fête enfin fut terminée par des danses vives et animées qui furent prolongées jusque dans la nuit. Qu'il était beau devoir les bras enlacés former des guirlandes mobiles symboles de l'union et de la fraternité et les pas se cadencer au son d'une musique éloquente et guerrière.

[A frugal and simple meal, worthy of the ancient Spartans [...] Tables were set up in the same enclosure. There the Eternal presides, decency and gaiety reigned as is suitable for children sat at the banquet of their common father. This feast finally was ended by lively and animated dances, which continued into the night. It was beautiful to have formed mobile garlands with intertwined arms as symbols of union, and fraternity and stepping in time to an eloquent and warlike music.]¹⁶

Fêtes décadaires were to be celebrated with appropriate solemnity.¹⁷ The *fêtes décadaires* in Dijon, for example, were strictly controlled in order to

¹⁶ A.N. F¹1cI 84, Address of the *société populaire* of Neauphle-la-Montagne, 22 nivôse II (11 January 1794).

¹⁷ A.D. Doubs, Minutes of the municipal administration of Beure, Doubs, 13 frimaire VI (3 December 1797).

preserve their solemn aspect, although it seems that some enthusiasms may have got the better of some of the participants. A local law declared, that 'toute personne qui manqueroit au respect dû à la dignité de la cérémonie, soit en causant, soit en montant sur les chaises, ou en troublant l'ordre de quelque manière' could be placed under arrest for twenty-four hours. The same decree only allowed children to enter in the company of their teachers. Those who were attending in order to marry had to be 'vêtus décemment' and to be present promptly at 9:30 a.m.¹⁸ It was hoped that France would typically see

les administrés d'un canton réunis autour de leurs administrateurs, écoutant dans un respectueux silence la lecture des lois de leur pays, entendant réciter de nouveaux traits de bravoure, de générosité, de bienfaisance; apprenant des découvertes utiles aux arts, ou des procédés nouveaux, moins fatigans & moins dispendieux pour l'agriculture.

[a canton joined together around their administrators, listening in a respectful silence to the reading of the laws of their country, hearing the recitation of new aspects of bravery, generosity, benevolence; learning from the useful discoveries for arts, or new, less tiring & less expensive agricultural methods.]¹⁹

Despite such concerns with order, the regulation of which suggests that such high spirits or indecent dress were a problem, the popularity of festivals was also clearly an important issue. Without popular (in every sense of the word) support, the new forms of commemoration were failing their purpose, although the details of the Dijon ceremony suggest that, in

¹⁸ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 476, *Arrêté de l'administration municipale de la commune de Dijon concernant les mesures à prendre pour maintenir l'ordre & la police dans les lieux destinés à la célébration des fêtes décadaires* (Dijon, Year VI).

¹⁹ B.N. le⁴⁵1119, Jean Guineau, *Opinion sur la résolution relative aux fêtes décadaires* (Paris, Year VI), pp. 1-2.

some areas at least, order and dignity were considered a more important feature than the propagandising or public nature of the ceremonies.

A number of methods of encouraging, if not enthusiasm, then at least attendance, were employed. Some means of reminding the local populace of the special nature of the day was often felt necessary. Drum rolls or volleys of muskets or cannons were proposed by local councils and, presumably, put into action. In Carpeau in the Côte-d'Or, for example, a platoon of the national guard were ordered to fire volleys between 6 and 7 a.m. as an alarm call to remind the citizens that it was the *décadi*.²⁰ Some cantons attempted to use the village bell to summon villagers to the ceremony, but this was frowned upon by the authorities, as the municipal administration of the rural canton of Auxonne discovered when it asked the departmental authority whether it could ring its bell in the same manner as the majority of communes in the nearby canton of Pontarlier. The departmental authority replied firmly that bells were only to be used in case of fire or imminent danger, and that all other uses were in contravention of the law concerning signs of religion.²¹ In Nantes, plans were made for a *fête décadaire* to be held in the cathedral and announced by artillery fire with a grandeur in keeping with the occasion.²² In Chatillon, again in the Côte-d'Or, *affiches* were not enough to announce the new regulations in regard to the observance of the *décadi*. The president, Humbert Bazile, sent the following report to Dijon:

Le 9 de ce mois à 9 heures du matin, l'administration précédée d'une musique [illegible] et accompagnée de la garde nationale et de la 264ème compagnie de vétérans a proclamé dans toutes les rues de Chatillon la loi

²⁰ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 472 Letter, canton of Carpeau to the Department of Côte-d'Or, 27 floréal VI (16 May 1798).

²¹ *Ibid.*, L 476, Letter, Municipal administration of the canton rural d'Auxonne to the Department of the Côte-d'Or, Dijon, 29 prairial VII (17 June 1799).

²² A.M. Nantes, I 2/8/9, Notes on festivals, 15 germinal VII (4 April 1799).

contenant des mesures pour coordonner les jours de repos avec le Calendrier républicain. Les airs de ‘vive la république’ ont suivi cette proclamation.

[On the 9th of this month at 9 am, the administration preceded by [illegible] music and accompanied by the national guard and by the 264th company of veterans, proclaimed in all the streets of Chatillon the law on the measures for co-ordinating days of rest with the Republican calendar. Cries of ‘vive la république’ followed this proclamation.]

The following day, Bazile continued confidently, the law was executed in its entirety and ‘des cérémonies solennelles’ took place in the church ‘comme aux jours cy-devant fériés’.²³

Larger towns could provide more spectacular festivals. Bugge found himself deeply impressed by the celebration held on the fifth *jour complémentaire* of the Year VI.

On the fifth complementary day, about eight o’clock in the evening, there was a general discharge of artillery, and at nine another from the cannon planted before the place of the Directory, and along the banks of the Seine. This discharge was immediately followed by six hundred rockets from the Pont-Neuf, which ascended to a considerable height, and formed a beautiful appearance in the air. The public offices and telegraphs were hung with lamps, lighted up with different colours.²⁴

He walked about the city and observed chariot racing ‘in the manner of the Roman triumph’, swimming competitions and wrestling matches, heard a speech by Chenier and visited the massive display of inventions and products on the Champ de Mars. Balloon ascents also took place. The

²³ A.D. Côte-d’Or, L 476, Letter, canton of Chatillon to the Department of the Côte-d’Or, 11 fructidor VI (28 August 1798).

²⁴ Thomas Bygge [sic], trans. John Jones, *Travels in the French Republic: Containing a Circumstantial View of the Present State of Learning, the Arts, Learned Societies, Manners, &c in that Country* (London, 1801), pp. 398-9. Thomas Bugge, b. 12 October 1740, Copenhagen, d. 15 January 1815, Copenhagen. Danish astronomer, mathematician and surveyor.

weather, he remarked 'was fine, and the novelty of the successive sports drew an immense crowd'. He estimated the number to be some 200,000 and noted that the 'Government seems to know the Parisians well, and how easily they can be managed with spectacles of this kind.'²⁵

Other large towns could also manage a reasonable spectacle. Costumes, music, speeches, military displays, fireworks, illuminations and other theatrical effects could all be employed to entertain and to inform the public. In towns such as Besançon and Nantes, the authorities could make use of night-time illuminations (which were used particularly to celebrate military victories), fireworks, and the organs of the towns' larger churches.²⁶

Smaller towns settled for general enthusiasm, as a report from a canton in the Loire-Inférieure from the Year VII suggests: 'la fête du 14 juillet a été célébrée au chef-lieu de ce canton avec tout l'éclat possible en campagne. Elle s'est terminée par des divertissements champêtres.' The fact that the 14 July fell that year on a Sunday may, of course, have helped. Other small communes seemed content with such little festivals as they could provide.²⁷

After the Year VI, decadal records, that is *comptes décadaires*, of the *fêtes décadaires* had to be drawn up and submitted to the central authority. The majority that survive are fairly terse, and run for only the Years VI and VII, but some are more fulsome and reveal attempts to enliven, or enhance, what were intended to be solemn, and probably rather dull, civic ceremonies, lacking the spontaneous joy and enthusiasm of festivals nearer in time to 1789. Three local violinists in the canton of Seurre in the Côte-d'Or agreed to play airs and dances on *fêtes décadaires* and other national fêtes, as well as

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

²⁶ A.N. F¹cIII Loire-Inférieure, Letter, Department of the Loire-Inférieure to the Ministry of the Interior, 15 prairial 6 (3 June 1798).

²⁷ A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 1225, Minutes, canton of Daston, 26 messidor VII (14 July 1799); *Ibid.*, L 334, Police reports, 9 vendémiaire IX (1 October 1800).

every *quintidi*.²⁸ Students from local schools were encouraged to take part, since children represented the future of the Republic. Chatillon was clearly a canton with an efficient council or a special feeling for civic events, an efficiency reflected by the consistent and full attention that it gave to drawing up the *comptes décadaires*. After the official business, such as the reading of the *bulletin des lois*, had been attended to, several pupils of the local schoolmaster, Jean Baptiste Birouard, presented to the congregation 'des fruits de leur récréation'. One nine-year-old, Alexandre, a native of Chatillon, recited by heart the words of a poem titled *L'amour des lois* up to the 27th quatrain. Other students recited similar pieces and examples of two of the pupils' writing were displayed.²⁹ The festival could also function as an occasion for important communal business as well as demonstrations of local pride. The canton of Val Julieu used the opportunity of the *fêtes décadaires* to warn about and discuss the spread of disease amongst the local cattle, six of which were infected. Strictly speaking, this was on the borderline of what was permissible for the *décadi*, because, although useful, a discussion of livestock strayed into official, municipal business on what was supposed to be a day of rest from most administrative activity. In some areas, the *décadi* was supported by the *cercle constitutionnel*. In 1798 the *cercle* in Le Mans in the Sarthe travelled each *décadi* in procession to neighbouring towns or villages, where a liberty tree was planted and a new branch of the *cercle* inaugurated.³⁰

Marriages were considered by some to be a central means of ensuring the success of the Republican calendar in the countryside. Along with births and deaths, which had to be publicly recorded at the *fêtes décadaires*, marriages could only be made officially at a civic ceremony in accordance with the

²⁸ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 472, Reports on the *fête décadaire*, commune of Seurre, 15 floréal VII (4 May 1799).

²⁹ *Ibid.* *Compte décadaire*, canton of Chatillon-sur-Seine, 10 frimaire VII (30 November 1798).

³⁰ P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 245.

decision of the Council of the Five Hundred in the summer of Year VI: ‘tandis qu’il eût été si facile d’imprimer à toutes les cérémonies relatives à ces principales époques de la vie le caractère tout-à-la-fois auguste & touchant dont elles sont susceptibles’.³¹ Marriages, Lemerrier pointed out, were popular amongst the people, particularly in rural France and ought to be used to support the Republic whenever possible.³² The Republican calendar could be used to mark the most important stages of one’s life, providing occasion for reflection on the past, the present and the future, and supporting the family which ‘est l’image de la République.’³³ There was some debate whether the *décadi* was the correct occasion for what could be seen as undermining the dignity of the ceremony. The happy couple, after all, had to (in Dijon at least) be ‘vêtus décentement, accompagnés seulement de leurs père et mère’.³⁴ This was not taken as an opportunity to enliven the ceremony, or even to involve the community more, but was taken as a solemn and serious occasion. Heurtault-Lamerville considered that ‘Des trois grands événements de la vie de l’homme (la naissance, le mariage & le décès), le mariage est certes celui qui comporte & mérite le plus de solennité.’³⁵ It was believed that the celebration of marriages on the *décadi* helped encourage people to observe it more seriously:

³¹ A.N. A.D. VIII 18 5, *Rapport fait par Bonnaire (du Cher), Au nom des commissions d’instruction publique & des institutions républicaines, réunies sur les fêtes décadaires. Séance du 19 messidor an 6* (Paris, 1798).

³² B.N. le⁴⁵1140, Lemerrier, *Opinion sur la résolution du 6 thermidor, relative aux fêtes décadaires*. (Paris, Year VI).

³³ B.N. le⁴⁵1139, Cornet, *Opinion sur la résolution relative aux fêtes décadaires* (Paris, Year VI), p. 4.

³⁴ B.N. Le⁴³1629, Leclerc, *Rapport sur les institutions relatives à l’état civil des citoyens* (Paris, Year VI); A.D. Côte-d’Or, L 476, ‘célébration des fêtes décadaires’.

³⁵ AN AD VIII 18 15, Heurtault-Lamerville, *Opinion de Heurtault-Lamerville, Député du Cher & membre de la commission d’instruction publique, sur les fêtes décadaires. Séance du 28 messidor an 6* (Paris, 1798).

Comme je crois, vous avez démontré que la célébration des mariages au chef lieu de canton peut, au moins dans certains temps, emporter tout le *décadi* au-delà, je demande maintenant au Conseil comment les cérémonies attachées à ce jour destiné au repos, aux réjouissances et à l'instruction, seront célébrées.

[As I believe you have demonstrated that the celebration of marriages in the *chief-lieu* of the canton can, at least sometimes, spread the *décadi* further, I now inquire of the Council how ceremonies on this day that is dedicated to rest, to festivities and to education will be celebrated.]

The same memorandum contained the slightly puzzling instructions that marriages could not take place before sunrise or after sunset.³⁶

Getting the ceremony right was important: 'c'est elle qui doit vous présenter le moyen de faire de cet acte attendrissant la partie la plus touchante du spectacle que doivent offrir les fêtes décadaires.'³⁷ Weddings had to take place on the *décadi*. Such strictures sometimes caused problems, especially in more inaccessible areas, such as the Ile-de-Groix, off the coast by Lorient. It was difficult, a special committee decided, for citizens to be ferried across the channel to the canton of Port Liberté (the Revolutionary name for Port Louis) on the *décadi*. As a result, the islanders did not tend to celebrate the *décadi*, but this also meant that marriages could not take place, since they were only valid if the ceremony was on that day. It was decided that the *décadi* would be celebrated on the island as well as in the *chef-lieu* of the canton. In this way, the Council of the Five Hundred concluded, neither the sanctity of the marriage nor that of the *décadi* would be

³⁶ B.N. le⁴³2180, Guesdon, *Opinion sur le second projet de résolution présenté par BONNAIRE, le 19 messidor, en ce qui concerne la célébration des mariages au chef-lieu de canton, les seuls jours de décadi* (Paris, Year VI), p. 2.

³⁷ B.N. le⁴³2215, Daubermesnil, *Motion d'ordre sur la nécessité de déterminer promptement les effets de l'adoption* (Paris, Year VI), p. 5.

undermined.³⁸ One senses in the debate on the *décadi* weddings a concern for supporting the tenth day, a desire to keep the ceremony dignified, but also the desire for social calm combined with Republicanism and represented by the family.

The incidence of marriage did not remain constant across the Revolution. A dramatic rise in marriage rates occurred from 1792. This increase perhaps reflects the possibility of marriage as an expedient in the avoidance of military service. The initially high divorce rates, as Roderick Phillips argues in an examination of divorce practices, could well have resulted from a lack of continuity in divorce and legal changes. The same reason may also be true for marriage.³⁹ Nonetheless, the figures do suggest that some changes in practice took place. Between 1780 and 1792, there were many fewer marriages during March and April since they were forbidden during this Lenten time of penitence. This tendency was slightly less marked during the Revolution, and the general spread of nuptials throughout the year is a little more even, suggesting that the ties between religion and marriage were loosened.⁴⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century Sundays were becoming a day of rest, originally for religious reasons, but with non-religious implications. The problem of toil and the need for rest, at least for workers, was recognised in discussions on the use of *décadis*. As one pamphleteer argued in the Year III: 'Il est impossible à l'homme de

³⁸ A.N. C 561, Minutes of the meeting of the Conseil des Cent-cents, 22 ventôse VIII (13 March 1800).

³⁹ Roderick Phillips, *Family Breakdown in Late Eighteenth-Century France: Divorces in Rouen 1792-1803* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 41-2, 45-6.

⁴⁰ Jean-Paul Sardon, 'Nuptialité et Révolution dans une Petite Ville de Vignerons: L'Exemple d'Argenteuil,' in *Voies Nouvelles Pour l'Histoire de la Révolution Française. Colloque Albert Mathiez - George Lefebvre* (Paris, 1978), pp. 95-6.

soutenir un travail continu: tous les législateurs ont senti la nécessité du *délassement*; ils ont donc institué des jours de repos.’⁴¹

A variety of official and popular attempts were made to ensure the success of the *fêtes décadaires*, as these examples illustrate. The result was limited at best: the festival’s location caused numerous problems and in a number of cases, as Desan has shown, the use of churches as the site of civic functions provoked clashes between the authorities and local people, usually women. Evidence of protest and even occupation of requisitioned churches by women opposed to their desecration by Republican ceremonies shows one clear line of conflict.⁴² Less controversial and more prosaic physical problems also exercised the Revolutionaries’ minds regarding the location of the ceremonies. It was generally considered too onerous a requirement for a ceremony to take place in every commune and so it was decided that the *fête décadaire* need only be held in the *chef-lieu* of each canton, rather than in each commune, as was originally the case. This was not the ideal solution, since the commune’s citizens were required to travel a considerable distance in order to reach the festival. Such disparities could cause conflict in the canton. Moreau, a deputy from the Yonne, explained,

en exigeant que les fêtes décadaires soient célébrées dans les chefs-lieux de canton, la résolution est contraire à l’égalité des droits des citoyens: elle porte atteinte à l’égalité politique; tous les avantages sont pour le chef-lieu; tous les dégoûts pour les petites communes, qui se trouvent forcées à des déplacements fatigants & coûteux: cette mesure est propre à accroître la jalousie.

[by demanding that *fêtes décadaires* be celebrated in the *chefs lieux* of each canton, the resolution contradicts the equality of the rights of the citizens: it attacks political equality; all the advantages are for the *chef lieu*; and all the disregard for the small communes, who find themselves forced to make

⁴¹ Barailon, *Organisation et Tableau*, pp. 11-12,20.

⁴² Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred*, p. 174.

tiresome and expensive journeys: this measure is likely to increase jealousy.]⁴³

Fêtes nationales also encountered similar problems, although apathy seems to have been the keynote rather than strident political or religious opposition to displays of Republican sentiment. The *fête de la fondation de la république* for the Year IX in Savenay in the Loire-Inférieure, for example, was not celebrated with great aplomb, but at least it was without unpleasant incident and, in the commissioner's view, represented a gradual improvement in public spirit. He wrote that

La fête de la fondation de la république a été scrupuleusement observée dans ce canton; les colons ont tous suspendu leurs travaux; quelques-uns se sont réunis aux chefs-lieux de leurs communes, et ont témoigné leur contentement par un petit festin où la joie a été parfaitement d'accord avec l'établissement de la république. [...] Cette démonstration générale [...], prouve le progrès de l'esprit public, et doit nous faire espérer que les succès s'accroissent graduellement.

[The *fête de la fondation de la république* has been scrupulously observed in this canton; all the smallholders *halted their work*; some met at the *chefs-lieux* of their communes, and displayed their happiness by a little feast where the joyfulness was completely in accord with the founding of the Republic. [...] This general demonstration [...] shows the progress of public morale, and has to make us hope that success increases gradually.]⁴⁴

Although they were controlled by central government, festivals were also intended to be popular, inclusive, and to encourage public joy and sincere sentiment. Indeed, it was suggested in the Convention, with a reference to Machiavelli, that it was important to keep the people happy and to provide

⁴³ B.N. le⁴⁵1135 Moreau de l'Yonne, *Opinion sur la résolution relative aux Fêtes décadaires* (Paris, 1798), p. 5.

⁴⁴A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 334, *Compte décadaire*, commune of Sanvenay, 9 vendémiaire IX (1 October 1800).

them with the opportunity for rest: *décadis* needed joy and gaiety and were an important occasion for socialising. The day of the *décadi* 'n'est pas seulement un jour de repos pour l'habitant laborieux des campagnes; c'est un jour de réunion, un besoin avide de société.'⁴⁵ The formal proceedings were supposed to end with common feasts and dancing. Games and exercises were encouraged and some officials eagerly reported that dancing and feasting continued well into the night.⁴⁶ Serious contemplation of Republican virtue was perhaps not the main component of the village festival. The day of the festival provided an important alternative to the routine of ordinary days and was a possible occasion for celebration that could lead to excess. Nonetheless, disorder at this symbol of civic society could not be allowed; troops or the national guard were always to be present.

Opposition

Despite the Revolutionaries' plans for joyous, fraternal festivals, local inhabitants often did not look kindly upon the new Republic's festivals. Older, religious, festivities had to be supplanted by the new, Republican festivals. Clashes between communal belief and Republican law became common. Crucially, religious festivals persisted, as in the commune of Saint Agnan in the Loiret, where the patronal feast for the Year VIII took place one Sunday. The report complained that the seeds of Republican thought had only just begun to germinate in the minds of the people and such festivals reminded them of the errors of their youth. The feast was celebrated with an ostentation forbidden by law, with such illumination that all could see the light streaming from the church through the open doors.

⁴⁵ B.N. Le³⁸1129, J. F. Barailon, *Organisation et Tableau des Fêtes Décadaires* (Paris, Year III), pp. 3, 11, 20; B.N. Le³⁸1133, Durand-Maillane, *Opinion sur les Fêtes Décadaires* (Paris, Year III).

⁴⁶ A.N. F¹cI 84, Letter, *chef-lieu* of the Department of the Seine-Inférieure to the Convention Nationale, 22 nivôse II (11 January 1794).

The local officer was chastised for letting such an event take place.⁴⁷ As Ozouf notes, such entanglements are deeply ironic for a new calendar that was presented as a simplification of the existing system: in practical terms, it added to the confusion of the festive year.⁴⁸ These weekly, or decadal, snarls reveal the continued tensions inherent in Revolutionary France.

After noting a disappointing attendance for the canton's Festival of Agriculture in the summer of the Year VI, the *commissaire du directoire exécutif* in the canton of Moisdon began to despair that 'les habitants n'aiment pas beaucoup les fêtes républicaines, plusieurs se permettent d'en rire.' He continued, 'Je viens d'en menasser [sic] de la prison pour cet objet.' The inhabitants were more concerned with attending mass and restoring the church bells; the *commissaire* thought repairs to the canton's *horloge*, which had been damaged by rain to be a more pressing concern.⁴⁹

Such conflicts were only partially about upset to routine or habit by external authority, but were interpreted as counter-revolutionary activity by the authorities although the real motives for such opposition are hard to determine. The language of official reports tended to depict any opposition to Republican institutions as counter-revolutionary. *Commissaires* in the cantons of the Loire-Inférieure reported that *chouans* and other brigands attempted to disrupt *fêtes décadales* and other festivals by holding markets on the same day. More physical threats could also be present and one festival in the canton of Teillé was troubled by a known *chouan* who was 'insultant et maltraitant' to a soldier. He was brought in front of the *tribunal*

⁴⁷ A.N. F¹²1258a, Minutes, Department of the Loiret, 28 brumaire VII (18 November 1798).

⁴⁸ Ozouf, *Festivals*, p. 158. Ozouf comments that the patronal feasts 'attracted every kind of insubordination', but also represented provided an occasion for 'religious, civic, and secular rejoicing', *ibid.*, p. 230.

⁴⁹ A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 315 Letter, canton of Moisdon to the Department of the Loire-Inférieure, 11 messidor VI (29 June 1798).

correctionnel.⁵⁰ Reports of opposition to the new Republican institutions throughout the country blamed émigrés and surreptitious priests. Religious conflicts continued throughout the Revolutionary period. Political ambiguities were present in such behaviour, especially in less clearly counter-revolutionary areas. As Desan makes clear, opposition to the state's intervention in religious activity did not necessarily equate with outright hostility to the Republic.⁵¹ Yet the festivals organised by the Republic were rarely occasions for social harmony, but rather provided the opportunity for anxieties to emerge.

The measures introduced by the Directory therefore confronted a number of important strands of popular culture and French society. The tensions created by this conflict and the evidence they generated offer the possibility of understanding something of eighteenth-century French temporality. Although the extent of the calendar's acceptance, as previous chapters have shown, depended on political and cultural inclinations and decisions, its impact also floundered on more basic, social structures. The older ways in which people created time were not easily to be overturned and temporalities remained remarkably resistant to change. The new festive structure had to integrate with local traditions, the role of the seasons, and the rhythms of agriculture.. Yet change was achieved and can be shown to have developed over the course of the eighteenth century. What can be said of the peasant conception of time?

⁵⁰ A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 335, Letter, canton de Savenay to the Department of the Loire-Inférieure, 27 pluviôse VIII (16 February 1800); L 325, Letter, canton of Teillé to the Department of the Loire-Inférieure, 16 floréal V (5 May 1797).

⁵¹ Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred*, p. 201; F.R.R.C 8 1159, Jean-Baptiste Flavigny, *Instructions Pastorales sur L'Accord de la Religion catholique avec le gouvernement républicain, et sur la conciliation des devoirs essentiels du culte Chrétien avec les lois de l'État en France* (Paris, 1799) argued for the compatibility of Catholicism and the Republic.

Temporal Traditions

A defining feature of French society, and hence its temporality, was its rural nature, a fact not unnoticed by the calendar's creators. From its inception, it was clear that Romme and the Committee of Public Instruction were concerned with the calendar's benevolent impact on the world of the peasant, as well as its utility for astronomers or the designers of Republican festivals. Fabre d'Églantine's poetic names for the months were an attempt to link the months with the seasons and agriculture. The government hoped that the calendar would therefore have relevance to the majority of the French and help inculcate modern, scientific agricultural knowledge. Over eighty percent of the French population were employed on the land and so were dependent on and highly aware of the importance of seasons. Even though urban dwellers were at a remove from rural life, most foodstuffs were highly dependent on the season and the natural world was also brought to the heart of towns and cities by way of gardens, the presence of livestock in yards, and in markets which were usually held in the centre of the town. Oil or other street lighting, if it existed, was limited, ensuring the importance of the diurnal rhythm. The comforts and ills of the changing weather and temperature could be reduced in the city or town, but these meteorological concerns remained central to the experience of daily life, even if the spread of consumer goods and the growth of indoor trades distanced eighteenth-century life from a more rustic lifestyle.⁵²

Traditional Time

For the majority time was a question of the calendar and its relationship with the seasons, the weather and the decisions and planning necessary to survive and plan for the future. In order to decide when to plant crops or to begin the harvest farmers and the peasantry had any number of methods and traditions. Good weather meant that it was perhaps possible to wait a

⁵² Daniel Roche, *Histoire des choses banales. Naissance de la consommation XVII^e-XIX^e siècles* (Paris, 1997), pp. 121-138.

while before bringing in the crops or animals, while other action might be appropriate in the face of the threat of poor weather. The agricultural importance of the seasons and sayings, when linked to the calendar, heightened awareness of the particular qualities of the times of the year. Such knowledge required a certain accuracy in use of the calendar. The science of the Enlightenment also, of course, made inroads, and a more systematic approach to agriculture was taken by some. Agronomic societies were organised and numerous articles published on the most up-to-date methods or fashions.⁵³ Yet the influence of natural science on cultivation was limited and the great majority relied on tradition and experience. Popular sayings give a sense of the ways in which the turning of the year was interpreted: 'Soleil le jour de Saint-Anatole/ Pour la moisson joue un grand rôle' or 'S'il pleut à la Visitation/ Pluie à discrétion'.⁵⁴ Other sayings could be more direct, such as this piece of winter advice: 'Pleine lune le jour de Noël, cherté./ Vendez votre jugement et achetez du blé.' Folklorists collected these phrases in the mid-nineteenth century, but it is demonstrable that they date from a much earlier period. For example, the adage 'Le jour le plus long de l'été/ C'est la jour qu'on fête Barnabé [11 June]', can be shown to have had its origins prior to the 1582 Gregorian calendar reform as the date for midsummer is that of the Julian calendar. It can also be shown that adages evolved: the saying 'Saint-Louis [21 June] est le plus long jour de l'année' dates from after 1582, showing that phrases and popular knowledge could be manipulated or created.⁵⁵ Almanacs reflected this need:

Et Monsieur Jean passoit sa vie

À lire l'almanach, à regarder le temps

⁵³ André J. Bourde, *Agronomie et agronomes en France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1967), vol. 1, p. 70.

⁵⁴ Similar precipitation advice also exists for St Swithian's Day in England.

⁵⁵ L. Dufour, *Météorologie, calendriers et croyances populaires. Les origines magico-religieuses les dictons* (Paris, 1978), pp. 57, 168-9.

Et la girouette et les vents.⁵⁶

Reliance on folklore evidence is not without methodological risk, not least because of the value judgements folklorists placed upon the ‘folk’ or ‘people’, but they do suggest the existence of an oral culture that interpreted the calendar.⁵⁷ Elite views of the peasantry are revealed by the quotation from Garzoini.⁵⁸ The world of the peasantry and the majority of the population is hidden from us, or only revealed through biased accounts. Foremost is the view that typified the peasant world as backward, and the peasantry as incapable of making rational decisions. This question must be kept in mind throughout this chapter. Republican administrators were often keen to attack the superstition and habit that blighted their attempts to change the behaviour of those who lived in the countryside. As the deputy Sherlock declaimed in the Year VI,

Représentants du peuple, il s’agit ici de combattre *une habitude*, pour ainsi dire, *née avec nous*; & il est un si grand nombre d’hommes qui, par faiblesse, par indolence, ou même par obstination, *vivent & meurent* esclaves des préjugés les plus absurdes & des habitudes les plus déraisonnables, que, quand il faut combattre *l’empire de la routine*, le législateur ne saurait déployer assez d’activité.

[Representatives of the people, it is a question here of fighting *a habit*, so to speak, *born with us*; & it is such a great number of men who, through weakness, through indolence, or even through obstinacy, *live & die* slaves to

⁵⁶ J.-P.-C. de Florian, *Fables* (Paris, 1792), p. 50.

⁵⁷ Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual year 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 81-2, 419-21; Charles Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment: Historians and Folklore in Nineteenth Century France* (Bloomington & London, 1974), *passim*.

⁵⁸ See p. 180, above.

the most absurd prejudices & to the most unreasonable habits, that when the legislator has to fight the *empire of routine* he can never be active enough.]⁵⁹

Such assumptions about the behaviour of rural men and women can be seen in the accounts of innumerable local administrators. This despair was combined with a fear of recalcitrant priests and educators who were disseminating, in the words of a report from the canton of Clermont in the Meuse, 'les prétentions du fanatisme.'⁶⁰

Religion, of course, played a vital role in the framing and comprehension of life and continued to attract Republican ire. Catholics and Protestants shared a common conception of the history of the world and a general conception of time on a world-historical or eschatological level. The circularities of life rolled along within the linear framework of Christian history, from the creation to the Second Coming, but there were profound differences between the creeds in the daily temporalities. Yet for the majority, the church provided an important, practical chronic framework in the ritual year. Saints' days and the major feasts of the Christian church remained as markers of the passing of time and were associated with annual events, such as labour markets, rent agreements or loans. The secular year was increasingly important, and had been since at least the sixteenth century, but the association of dates with the Church persisted.⁶¹ The shorter periodicity of the week was intimately linked with religion. Although the seven-day week can be linked to the Romans and the Babylonians, its justification was to be found in the story of the Creation. Sundays recalled Christ's Resurrection. The people, the Interior ministry was informed,

⁵⁹ A.N. AD VIII 15 C27; Sherlock *Opinion... Sur le projet de résolution relatif au calendrier républicain. Séance 12 thermidor, an 6* (Paris, VI), p. 1.

⁶⁰ Aimond, *Histoire religieuse*, p. 439.

⁶¹ Emmanuel Poulle, 'L'horlogerie a-t-il tué les heures inégales?', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes*, 157, (1999), pp. 137-156.

believed strongly that the week had been divinely ordained. Priests continued to catechise this view.⁶²

Finally, the week had its own routine of work, rest and recreation. This was recognised by eighteenth-century manuals on policing, as long as such behaviour was well ordered and dignified:

Le jeu est un remède, un repos que l'on donne à son esprit [...Quand] l'on prenne cette récréation chez soi avec sa famille, ou quelques-uns de ses amis, à la bonne heure, il n'y a rien là qui blesse la pureté des mœurs, ni aucun inconvénient contre l'ordre public.

[Gaming is a remedy, a rest one gives to one's spirit [... When] this recreation takes place at home with one's family, or some friends, at an early hour, there is nothing there which harms the purity of morals, nor anything which inconveniences public order.]⁶³

Sunday afternoons provided the opportunity for a number of social and leisure activities, as well as the routine of washing and social chores. Dancing, drinking or promenading were open to most, irrespective of income. Disruption to such events would run the risk of disorder that was suggested by Mercier, but if the opportunity for time off was reduced then, many believed, industriousness would improve.⁶⁴

Festivity was intimately linked to the annual cycle, which added to the sense of festivals taking place at times imbued with a special quality. Religion, of course, had long linked Christian ritual to a yearly circuit of festivity, with events such as Easter and Lent related to a complex calculation involving the solar and lunar year. The annual rhythm of French festivals was based on such patterns. Nicole Pellegrin, discussing the *bachelleries* of the west of France, writes that 'La fête de bachellerie s'inscrit

⁶² N.Y.P.L. *KVR 5075, Anon, *Lettre de l'Administrateur du Diocèse de *** aux prêtres de ce diocèse* (Anvers, 1799).

⁶³ Delarme, *Traité de la Police*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1729).

⁶⁴ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol.4, p. 161.

donc dans un calendrier à la fois féodal et religieux où les grandes fêtes carillonnées de l'Église catholique et les fêtes des saints patrons coïncident avec la remise des redevances et la reddition des hommages dus au seigneur par ses hommes.⁶⁵ These complex relationships between the agricultural, financial and religious year existed across France. Croix argues for 'la fondamentale complémentarité entre le calendrier liturgique [...] et le calendrier agraire. Cette construction harmonieuse du temps, expression très sophistiquée? [...] est une des – et peut-être *la* – structures les plus fortes de la vie'.⁶⁶ Such a structure existed in the town and countryside thanks to the role of the parish or the guild.⁶⁷ For both peasant and journeyman, the ritual and festive year provided one of the few certainties in a confusing and random world. The Republic attempted to replace this long established system.

Revolution

Sundays and *décadis* provided regular opportunities for clashes between authority and popular habit or inclination, and historians have tended to interpret these activities as demonstrations of religious or political sensibilities and in particular as an expression of local identity. Riots and social protest both before and during the Revolution tended to cluster around a limited set of social contexts and symbols, such as pigeon lofts, the fabric and icons of churches, and, for counter-revolutionaries, liberty trees. Popular protest also tended to cluster around particular days and dates as well as physical spaces. Sundays, during the Ancien Regime, witnessed double the average number of insurrectionary events. Mercier, as ever, was keen to comment on Parisian popular disorder:

⁶⁵ Pellegrin, *Les Bacheleries*, p. 209.

⁶⁶ Alain Croix & Jean Quénart, *Histoire Culturelle de la France*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1997), pp. 40-3.

⁶⁷ Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and community in Paris*, pp. 149 & 157.

Il est singulier que, dans les états catholiques, le dimanche soit presque partout un jour de désordres. On a supprimé enfin à Paris *quatorze jours de fêtes par an*; on s'est arrêté en beau chemin; il en reste encore trop[...]

[It is remarkable that, in the Catholic States, Sunday is nearly always a day of disturbances. We have suppressed at last in Paris fourteen days of fêtes per year, we have given up midway; there still remain too many[...]]⁶⁸

The Revolution altered this tradition of Sunday disorder in quantitative and qualitative terms. John Markoff's, Jean Nicolas', and Guy Lemarchand's diligent sampling and analysis of peasant *émeutes* demonstrate a statistical correlation between Sundays and Mondays and insurrectionary events in the pre-Revolutionary period. Between 1741 and 1789, 32.6% of youth-related riots disturbances took place on a Sunday. Time, as well as space, was an important element in the meanings and causes of popular revolt.⁶⁹ The reasons for this correlation between feast days and disturbance were both symbolic and practical: attacking rabbit warrens, for example, at the same time struck against seigniorial authority and defended the peasants' crops. A sense of carnival and even popular protest occurred on days traditionally associated with inversions of order, but which were also days when many people were expected to gather, drink and dance. From such statistical evidence referred to above, Markoff concludes that 'the French countryside was erupting along lines that broke with the pattern of the past.'⁷⁰ The incidence of protest and rebellion lost its Sunday connection, and was

⁶⁸ Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. 4, p. 161.

⁶⁹ John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism: Peasants, Lords, and Legislators in the French Revolution* (University Park, 1996), p. 307; Jean Nicolas, 'Une jeunesse montée sur le plus grand ton d'insolence', in Robert Chagny, ed., *Aux origines provinciales de la Révolution* (Grenoble, 1990), p. 147. For a British, or Bristolian, comparison see Mark Harrison, 'The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds, 1790-1835', in *Past and Present*, 110 (1986), pp. 134-68.

⁷⁰ Markoff, *Abolition of Feudalism*, p. 310.

spread more evenly across the week. Protest that did take place on Sundays was, Markoff suggests, especially linked to counter-revolutionary activity. Such a disruption to the periodicity of protest was only partly due to the new calendar, but also resulted from the decline in religious activity. This was, of course, one of the Directory's aims. A desire to undermine Sundays and the church as a 'basis of solidarity' and a nexus of protest, Markoff comments, could well have played a role in their decision to enforce the calendar: the Directory, he suggests, was keen 'to eliminate part of the organisational nexus of popular mobilisation'. Indeed, the language in pamphlets and the records of speeches stressed order and community. Despite this wish, they created another nucleus for counter-revolutionary activity by the creation of *fêtes décadaires*. Other nucleuses of revolt also presented themselves, such as occasions of conscription or *fêtes décadaires*. Revolutionary 'shocks' did not take place on Sundays, but arrived on more random dates; protest may have been more spontaneous, rather than relying on planning and hence the useful meeting point of Sunday.⁷¹

Conclusions

Though politics and religion were clearly crucial to the history of the *décadi*, the tenth day must also be viewed in Sunday's broader social and cultural context, as the attempt to reintroduce the Republican calendar quickly became seen in terms of the *décadi* versus Sunday. Religious observance and abstention from work provided the two points of main contention with the new calendar. Sundays were a day of rest, as well as of religion and framed the weekly routine of work and recreation. Religion, that is, the observance of religious ceremony and the defence of churches from desecration by civil ceremonies, was clearly an important way of expressing local politics and one of the central elements of contemporary debate on the calendar, but the ability to work or to engage in trade was also an important concern.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 310-13, 334-5 n.78.

Festivals therefore were events invested with many meanings and which employed temporality in a number of ways. Firstly, they enunciated the communal nature of time. Although festivals attempt to present a narrative and a reasonably clear meaning, such as the Nativity, or the founding of the Republic, local identities came to the fore. The opportunity that *fêtes décadaires* and other national festivals presented for dissension was an increasingly regular one in France during the late 1790s.

Festivals attempt to relate the mundane to the metaphysical and place the present moment in a vaster temporal, historical, or eschatological context. The setting aside of a whole day helped in this process of sacralisation: Festivals lasted a whole day. Virtually all Republican plans and programmes contain instructions on the procedure for starting the festival, which was usually marked by cannon fire and ringing of bells at either 6 a.m. or 10 a.m. 'prompt'. The day's events, such as parades and displays, were then precisely timed and co-ordinated. The whole day was therefore dedicated to the festival and given a sense of difference from ordinary time, which was important in imbuing a fête or festival with, if not a sacred sense, then at least a sense of difference from the ordinary. Festivals were given a sense that they belonged to a different designation of time, even perhaps sacrality by non-temporal means, such as the presence of national guardsmen, special dress, speeches and events. Hans Gumbrecht has suggested that the rhythm and register of Republican songs served to 'marquer une distance entre la vie quotidienne et la fête.'⁷² This separation from the mundane was also attempted, or achieved, by setting aside a particular day and time as separate from the mundane. Such neat and temporally defined organisation also limited the possibility for festivity spiralling out of control and disrupting the sense of social harmony that the festival was meant to create and illustrate. Similarly, political or power differences were highlighted by working or resting on the *décadi* and by attending the civic ceremony in the

⁷² Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, 'Chants révolutionnaires et maîtrise de l'avenir et niveau du sens collectif', *R.H.M.C.*, 30 (1983), pp. 235-53. The quotation is from p. 240.

face of more general apathy, ridicule, or hostility. Differences within and between communes were highlighted at these times not only because dancing and drinking could lead to unruliness, but because of a tradition of linking festivals with the opportunity for excess and expression excused by the day being set apart as different from dull, ordinary time.⁷³

Such local narratives were placed within larger, national debates and provide an important link between the local and the national. After thermidor, the debate concerning national festivals offered opportunities for the Revolutionaries to attempt further to define the Revolution and the direction in which it was moving, as Ozouf has highlighted.⁷⁴ Any belief or argument that the Revolution had taken France into a new, timeless era was undermined by the continuing troubles facing the Republic.

Yet perhaps official festivals were not the true legacy of this period of French history, but rather the beginnings of popular leisure. The Revolution failed to supplant the older patterns of festivity. The only festival that survived was the 14 July (returning, after the Bourbon Restoration only in 1880); perhaps as much a festival of summer as of the Republic. Perhaps more importantly, the moral and social pressures, which, to some extent, controlled Sundays and limited their use as an occasion for sociability were fatally undermined. Subsequent Republican governments failed to impose a similar pattern for the *décadi*, as the following chapter shows, although these attempts were not without some successes. Both *décadis* and Sundays became occasions for sociability, particularly in Paris. The social excesses of 'les gros' that were associated with the late post-thermidor period and the Directory, required occasion to flaunt their wealth:

⁷³ John Bender and David E. Wellberg, eds., *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time* (Stanford, 1991).

⁷⁴ Mona Ozouf, 'De thermidor à brumaire: le discours de la Révolution sur elle-même', *Revue Historique*, 1970, pp. 31-66.

Sundays and the *décadi* provided just such an opportunity.⁷⁵ Promenading was a popular activity for those with a certain amount of wealth. Dancing, drinking and gaming provided leisure opportunities for many, while all could afford a stroll and a gaze. In Toulouse, in the Year II, it was noted by the *Journal Révolutionnaire* that although the churches had been closed, *boutiques* were ordered to be open and were frequented by women who, the writer complained, were neglecting their work. The streets and promenades were filled. The article did not wish to attack *liberté*, but argued that it was a time of Revolution and self-sacrifice.⁷⁶ Such stoicism was not ubiquitous. Journals and contemporary papers were soon filled with events that could be attended on the *décadi*, from balloon ascents to *bals*. Theatres were open on the *décadi*, although only, as expressed in the Doubs, ‘des pièces dignes d’un peuple républicain’ could be performed, while the Ministry of the Interior was advised that a public guillotining ought not to go ahead because of the great number of people who promenaded on the *décadi*.⁷⁷ Ultimately, as these examples demonstrate, the government found it hard to dictate the use of time to a recalcitrant population.

⁷⁵ Lyons, *Directory*, pp. 52-67.

⁷⁶ *Journal Révolutionnaire de Toulouse*, no. 53, 2 ventôse II (20 February 1794).

⁷⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 380, circular, Besançon, 17 frimaire VI (7 December 1797); A.N. AF III 47.

CHAPTER 6

WORK TIME

‘The most accurate clock in the world is that of the peasants which never goes wrong, because their stomachs tell them admirably the hours of breakfast, lunch and dinner’,

– Tomasso Garzoini, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (1586), p. 65¹

As Ministers responsible for the Interior and Police, Fouché, Neufchâteau and Lambrecht continued to support the calendar via a cascade of circulars.² A number of measures were introduced with the aim of ensuring the strict observance of the Republican calendar, in particular the decree of 17 thermidor VI (4 August 1798). A variety of institutions and practices were affected, such as state schools and postal services. More widespread and sometimes violent consequences resulted from the changing of the dates of fairs and markets. Although often a superficial reorganisation of dates, delays and, in places, rearrangement of fairs and markets, these measures led to many local disturbances, especially in messidor VI (June/July 1798).³ The minutes of the *Justice de paix* and police reports reveal a range of responses to the *décadi*. In the main these record only infractions, but they do also reveal conciliatory measures taken by the administration as well as a real local

¹Quoted in Carlene Stephens, “‘Time: The Greatest Innovator,’” an Exhibition at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., *Technology and Culture* 28 (1987), p. 834.

² Lefebvre, *Directory*, pp. 156-7.

³ Thomas, *Les Temps des foires*; Thomas, ‘Le temps du marché, le temps de dieu’; Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s* (New York & London, 1994), p. 201.

concern for proper behaviour on the *décadi*. The friction that did exist between official desire for a day of rest and popular opposition to restrictions on working was not an invention of the Revolutionary period, but was also the result of long-term processes. New factors were, however, in play. A concern for the new calendar obviously intensified the problem, but the demands of new forms of production can be seen to be challenging the basis of work time. Thompson's important and influential article, 'Time, work and industrial discipline' still dominates the understanding of the period's temporality. Michel Foucault has also contributed to a wider interpretation of this period, forcing historians and other scholars to look at the issue of self-regularisation and control. These ideas have dominated the general interpretations of the period. This chapter examines these concerns. The final section of the chapter discusses some of the ways in which temporality altered yet retained certain constants, and examines the place of clocks, watches, and calendars in the regularisation of everyday life.

Work and Rest

In ventôse VII (February 1798), the *tribunal civil* of Avignon fined Marie Arnoud 4 francs 5 centimes for working on the *décadi*. The same month Madeleine Papolas, Louise Merindol and Marie Ceylan were also fined 30 *sols* by the police for working publicly, in contravention of the law of 17 thermidor VI. The campaign continued. On 20 fructidor (6 September), in Avignon, Elisabeth Jullian's mill – we do not know of what type, but perhaps a silk mill – was found to be working, and even though, as she claimed, her doors and windows were closed she was brought before the section's *juge de paix*. During the same session, Marie Escoffier also admitted that her workers were washing silk, but argued in her defence that her shop was closed to customers. Another defendant, Jean Barracan, denied that he himself had been working, but did go so far as to say his workers had done a little work on the morning of 20 fructidor. Raymand Chabeze was also brought to the *juge* where he pleaded that 'il est vrai que le dit jour vingt fructidor, il prépara des marchandises pour aller le lendemain à la foire', but,

he argued, he only worked in the evening and did not occupy the whole day. He claimed that he was too observant of the laws to have done so.⁴ In vendémiaire, in the nearby canton of Apt, east of Avignon, the *commissaire de police* walked the streets to check that the *décadi* was being correctly observed. He found a number of citizens working openly in their shops and charged them accordingly.⁵ The legislation on the Republican calendar was being enforced.

In Besançon, too, a similar story is to be told. A reasonable body of evidence concerning the activities of Bisontins and Franche-Comtois on Sundays and *décadis* survives. At best the *fêtes décadaires* were approached in a manner comparable to the citizens of the canton of Rougement, who had begun ‘slowly and with a lack of concern to observe the *décadi*.’ The *commissaire* who filed this report put the blame firmly at the doors of the church, or more specifically, on refractory priests who preached that Sundays ought to be the principal day of worship.⁶ Schoolteachers were also failing in their tasks in escorting their charges to the weekly fête. The central administration of the Doubs was reminded that it had the right of surveillance and if matters did not improve, offending teachers would be taken before the Tribunal and faced the possibility of the institution being closed. A number of letters from local agents agreed that infractions against the observance of the *décadi* had taken place and ought to be stopped.⁷ A special watch was arranged for the 30 ventôse, VII (30 March 1799). It was observed that the citizens were in general occupied with the cultivation of their vines and fields. Few paid any attention to the fact that it was the *décadi*, even though the local government agent in Rougemont in the Doubs had informed the administration that the *décadi* had been

⁴ A.D. Vaucluse, 18 L 24, *Justice de paix* of the canton of Avignon,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24 fructidor VII (10 September 1799).

⁶ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Canton of Rougement to the Department of the Doubs, 24 brumaire VII (14 November 1798).

⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Correspondence concerning public festivals.

declared the day of rest, recreation was to be dedicated to the reading of laws and religion.⁸ A number of local reports and letters were generated by the Directory's series of decrees on the strict observance of the *décadi*. All pointed out the difficulty imposed by the tenacious hold of Sundays. Notable exceptions also existed. The *juges de paix* of the Côte-d'Or continued to attract the attentions of the Minister of Justice for failing to convict people charged with working on the *décadi*.⁹

In Nantes, the evidence points to a willingness to work with the law, rather than ignoring it or being unaware of it, as was seemingly the case in Avignon and Besançon. Traders applied for permits to work on *décadis*. Pierre Auguste Deuviez, a Nantais pottery manufacturer, appealed to the administration for exemption from observing official days of rest. It was not possible, Deuviez argued, to halt production on the *décadi* because of the nature of his work.¹⁰ The administration granted permission, but only on the condition that the manufacture did not close on Sundays and the old feast days. In contrast, a mussel seller from outside of Boussay made the same request, but inadvertently revealed a use of the old calendar at the same time as the new. When the *décadi* fell on a Friday or Saturday, the mussels could not be sold until the following week, meaning the loss of all the stock. She asked if produce could be sold on at least the mornings of those *décadis*. The administration was not at all sympathetic to this request

⁸ *Ibid.* Letter, Balland, canton of Rougement to the Department of the Doubs, 1 germinal VII (21 March 1799).

⁹ A.D. Côte-d'Or, Letter, Lambrecht, Minister of Justice to the Department of the Côte-d'Or, 1 messidor VII (19 June 1799).

¹⁰ A.M. Nantes, 12 8 9, Letter, Pierre Auguste Deuviez, Nantes to the canton of Nantes, [Year VI?].

and answered that she had nine days out of ten to sell. She must follow the law.¹¹

Although the law was not applied equally, there is evidence that this resulted from a certain sensitivity to the case in question. Perhaps pottery was more important to the nation than mussels. More critical perhaps was the evidence the mussel vendor provided of the existence of the old hebdomadal and religious practices and lack of sympathy for the new calendar. A number of reasonable conjectures explaining differences in restrictions can be made. Necessary work, such as the need to launch a ship on the high tide, which coincided with the 10 messidor VI (28 June 1798), was granted.¹² Some traders therefore were granted permission to open on the *décadi*. A newsagent was granted permission to open his *cabinet littéraire* on the *décadi* and official festivals so that periodicals and subscriptions could be collected.¹³ Trades considered essential such as *boulangers*, *traiteurs*, *pâtissiers*, *aubergistes*, *rôtisseurs*, *charcutiers*, *limonadiers*, and even *perruquiers*, were excepted from closure on the *décadi*. Vegetable, fruit and milk markets could continue to go ahead on *décadis* if they had been scheduled.¹⁴ Fripperies and activities deemed to pose moral dangers, such as *salles de danse*, met with short shrift. In enforcing this aspect of the law the administration worked to distance itself from the *police ecclésiastique*, who, it was argued, closed dances and condemned gaming in order to protect the superstitious sacredness of

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Letter, Mussel seller, Boussay to the commune of Nantes, 11 prairial VI (30 May 1798)

¹² *Ibid.*, Letter, René Moiret, Nantes, to the commune of Nantes, 8 messidor VI (26 June 1798).

¹³ *Ibid.*, Permission to open *cabinet littéraire*, 6ème jour complémentaire VII (22 September 1799).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *Affiche* of meeting of the administration municipale de canton de Nantes, 14 floréal VI (3 May 1798); Clémendot, *Le Département de la Meurthe à l'époque du Directoire* (Raon-l'Etape, 1966), p. 257.

Sundays. The Republicans, on the other hand, wished to reprimand the entrepreneurs and increase public morality and sobriety.¹⁵

Such dedicated efforts to seek official sanction were not without reason. Police watches that were specifically aimed at ensuring the observance of the new calendar were arranged in Avignon, Besançon, Nantes, and Paris, at least in the Year VI, and given the power to fine or force the establishment's closure.¹⁶ A number of measures were taken in a variety of cantons and departments across France to detect and discourage infractions of the law. In the Meuse, the canton of Clermont forbade 'les marchands de comestibles et les pharmaciens' from opening their shops on the *décadi* and, in the canton of Verdun, in germinal VI (March 1799) the *gardes-champêtres* increased their *procès-verbaux* against a double desecration: those who 'ont travaillé le jour du décadi, en mondant (c'est-à-dire nettoyaient) leurs bestiaux, en conduisant du fumier devant leur porte'. The administration in the canton of Jametz was even more assiduous and attempted to forbid the use of the Gregorian calendar in private acts.¹⁷ In the Sarthe, squads of eight soldiers were placed on every road coming into Sablé to arrest those attempting to work.¹⁸ Paris also provides evidence, at least of police concern to ensure that the Republican calendar was observed. In the Year VI a *ronde spéciale* attempted to arrest those working on the *décadi*. It went about its business on at least seven occasions in the Pantheon section of

¹⁵ A.M. Nantes, I2 8 9, Letter, the Department of the Loire-Inférieure to the canton of Nantes, 3 prairial VI (22 May 1797). Officials were also keen not to inhibit free trade and commercial relations, since this had implications for their discussions on the Bourse.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Report by Gilbert, *commissaire de police*, 'pour maintenir le bon ordre et faire exécuter le nouveau calendrier républicain', 11 thermidor VI (29 July 1798).

¹⁷ Aimond, *Histoire religieuse*, p. 440. n. 6; A.D. Meuse, L 1474, 10 germinal VI (25 March 1799); *Ibid.*, n.2.

¹⁸ Marcel Reinhard, *Le Département de la Sarthe sous le régime directorial* (Saint Brieuc, 1936), p. 350.

Paris.¹⁹ Indeed, much police business concerned itself with temporal regulation, as had been the case during the Ancien Regime. Attempted control of Sundays and *décadis* by those with state power, and the flexibility shown by the people and authorities demonstrate a continuity and help reveal the society in which these negotiations took place.

Fairs, Markets and Temporality

Fairs and markets had long been the occasion for disagreements about timing. They were orchestrated according to the clock and calendar and provided an important element in France's temporal framework. Almanacs listed the dates of fairs and markets, while farmers, peasants, merchants and townspeople alike arranged their weekly routines around them. The introduction of the Republican Calendar, with its ten-day cycle interrupted this long established pattern. Yet interruption was not immediate and was geographically erratic, depending on the willingness of local officials to please their superiors, the regional strength of Revolutionary feeling and the local desire for alteration in the number of markets. The reorganisation led to, in some areas, a 40% rise in the numbers of fairs: towns often seized the opportunity to hold a self-aggrandising fair or market. The legislation for the calendar only stipulated official adherence. The Directory recognised the need to supplant the two main temporal frames for the mass of French men and women in order for the calendar to succeed: those of the church and of commerce. The religious year still held great importance for a large number of the French people, whether as part of strong religious conviction, counter-revolutionary sympathy, or simply the force of habit. The tug of the past also ensured the survival of the religious year which was used for much time reckoning at its most practical level, particularly as agriculture relied on saints' days as chronic markers in the annual cycle of husbandry. The second time-frame, itself linked to the church calendar, was that of markets and fairs. The Revolution not only attempted to control,

¹⁹ A.P.P., AA 202, *Procès-verbaux des commissaires de police*, Years IV-VII.

suppress and then contain the church, but also to administer and reorganise fairs and markets.

Because of the timing of the legislation concerning fairs and markets, the creation of a new scheme led, according to Thomas' study of the Haute-Garonne, to a purgatorial month of messidor VI (July 1798). The old markets were banned and the new *table* of fairs and markets remained to be settled. This created enormous problems for local economies, undermined farmers' and merchants' livelihoods, and again threatened many households with hunger, as grain was unavailable for purchase.²⁰ The beginning of the harvest and the need to sell and buy produce compounded the problem. Demand to hold markets increased, especially if nearby towns held the promise of markets. Impromptu and illegal markets were held. In Montréjeau, for instance, in the Haute-Garonne four thousand turned up to a market which the local gendarmes were unable to halt.²¹ Throughout France, political sentiment and the efficiency of the administration affected the manner of the change to the new system. In the Vendée fairs were held 'dans plusieurs cantons à l'ancienne époque'.²² Like the other legislation on the strict observance of the calendar, the new measures caused disagreements between cantons. In Rocheguyon in the Seine-et-Oise the new measures had been adopted, to the fury of the nearby canton of Vernon, whose merchants complained about the upset to their trade. The canton's administration nonetheless pressed on with their introduction and

²⁰ See Thomas, *Les Temps des foires*, pp. 208-211 for the effects in the south-west of France.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²² A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 152, Letter, Department of the Loire Inférieure to the Department of the Vendée, 22 vendémiaire VII (13 October 1798).

claimed in a letter to the Minister of the Interior that they found it necessary to use harsh measures against 'les mutins'.²³

Officially, France's system of markets was aligned to the new calendar and had severed the link to the patterns of the Gregorian year and the modes of the Ancien Regime. But how far did the dates of markets really change, rather than the dates simply being translated into the new style? Evidence for the timing of markets, when they were really held rather than officially ordained, is scant. Thomas argues that the correlation between the dates of markets and of notaries' business days is significant and provides an effective method of dating markets: people took advantage of market days when they needed to visit the notary. From a study of six towns in the Haute-Garonne he concludes that the new Republican markets had 'un succès certain entre la fin de l'an VI et prairial an X'. The majority of markets in these towns followed the new calendar by being held on, typically, *quartidi* or *nonidi*, rather than Wednesday or Saturday. The shift was, in some places such as Ferran, progressive and gradual, while elsewhere, as in Montréjeau, it could be sudden and violent. In sum, Thomas concludes, 'le changement de calendrier a réellement été assimilé par les populations haute-garonnaises en ce qui concerne les jours de marché.'²⁴ On the whole, the reports contained in the *Archives nationales* testify to a widespread annoyance at the disruption to local affairs.²⁵ Yet

²³ A.N. F¹² 1274, Letter, canton of La Roche-Guyon, Seine-et Oise, to the Minister of the Interior, 27 floréal VI (16 May 1798).

²⁴ Thomas, 'Le temps du marché, le temps de dieu'.

²⁵ For example: 'Si le gouvernement est bon, juste et humain, il est aussi ferme et sagement énergique, et il ne souffrira pas que les mesures prises [et] pour l'adoption du Calendrier républicain, et notamment pour la fixation des jours de marchés et de foires restent sans exécution, ou soient entravées, comme cela est déjà arrivé. Il soutiendra aussi de son autorité paternelle ceux qui, comme moi, sans vues d'ambition ou de fortune, l'ont toujours soutenu, et qui par amour pour la Liberté et la philosophie se sont dévoués sans réserve à la chose publique et à la propagation des principes.'

these altercations proved to be a caesura and regular markets were eventually arranged.

Dohrn-van Rossum has stressed the importance of trading as a motivation for the definition and regulation of time.²⁶ Fairs and markets especially demanded temporal limits and co-ordination. A *sondage* of the Y series in the French *Archives nationales*, the Châtelet records, reveals the importance of time in the social life of pre-Revolutionary France.²⁷ Church and state consciously and consistently intervened in the control and regulation of time with Sundays and feast days meriting special attention.

Les désagrémens et les difficultés que nous éprouvons par rapport au changement des jours de marchés à La Roche-Guyon, viennent de ce que les administrations de Vernon, Mantes et autres ont pris un délai trop éloigné pour l'exécution de l'arrêté du Directoire, ce qui dérange les intérêts commerciaux, fait un tort notable à notre marché et existe des plaintes injustes contre nous qui avons mis de l'empressement à faire exécuter les lois à cet égard.

Il seroit à désirer Citoyen ministre, que toutes les administrations marchassent ensemble, et peut-être vous trouvez sage d'ordonner à celles de Vernon surtout de faire exécuter sans délai l'arrêté qu'elle a pris relativement à la fixation de la tenue de ses marchés. Pourquoi nous dit-on, voulez-vous faire exécuter une loi qui n'est point exécutée aux Andelys, Mantes, Vernon, Gizouses, de là l'opiniâtreté des marchands à vouloir suivre l'ancienne routine, et la nécessité où nous nous trouvons de sévir contre les mutins, ou de favoriser par l'impunité les infractions à la loi du gouvernement, profitent de ces circonstances pour exaspérer encore les esprits mécontents. Mais le gouvernement ne reculera point, et il peut compter sur le zèle et le courage des administrateurs de La Roche-Guyon', A.N., F¹²1274, Letter, canton of La Roche-Guyon, Seine-et-Oise to the Minister of the Interior, 7 floréal VI (26 April 1798). This carton contains several other similar letters of complaint.

²⁶ Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, pp. 245-51.

²⁷ See also Michael Sonenscher, 'Work and wages in Paris in the eighteenth century', in Maxime Berg, Pat Hudson, and Michael Sonenscher, eds., *Manufacture in Town and Country before the Factory* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 166; A.N. Y 9498 & Y 9499.

From the end of the seventeenth century towns and dioceses introduced a number of laws intended to protect Sundays and other holidays from excessive popular festivity or commercialism.²⁸ By the time of the Revolution, Sundays had a contradictory character. On the one hand they were well defended by legislation, but on the other, religious observance was also on the decline. Sundays did have their particular character, but by 1789 one can perhaps talk of a day of leisure, rather than religion. Elite desire for general sobriety, industry and an attack on idleness provided the moral authority for the control of Sundays.

Time and Order

In a similar manner to the regulation of work on the *décadi*, the control of markets followed on from previous administrative reform. Markets and fairs always held the possibility of civil disorder and often worked counter to the church. The reorganisation imposed by the Directory was not new. Throughout the eighteenth century, markets and fairs had undergone a process of alteration and had seen increasing state control and influence. Fairs and markets had taken place on Sundays before the Council of Trent, but during the eighteenth century a concerted campaign by the church eroded this tradition. By 1746 the *curé* of Corroy in the Marne could announce that the observance of Sundays was almost totally to the church's satisfaction.²⁹ The Directory's initiatives can be placed in relation to this long-term process of state control and regulation of citizens' lives, although their motivation, as heirs of the Revolution, was somewhat different to the powers of the Ancien Regime. Their concern was not just for a well-regulated citizenry, but for one that was both profoundly nationalistic and Republican. The discussions on the nature of the *fête décadaire* stressed the need for sombre, serious and dignified celebrations, despite desires from

²⁸ Henri Hauser, *Travailleurs et marchands dans l'ancienne France* (Paris, 1929), pp. 162-163.

²⁹ Bernard Plongeron & Robert Pannet, eds., *Le christianisme populaire: les dossiers de l'histoire* (Paris, 1976), p. 154.

some quarters to provide games to make *fêtes* as attractive as possible: the main motivation was not the regulation of society, but its education.³⁰ Indeed, as part of a process of reform, markets and fairs underwent a brief period of extra unruliness as traders attempted to hold markets on the traditional dates. In the long run, though, control was gradually to become more centralised. Information on fairs and markets not only became better co-ordinated from the centre than before, but local authorities also co-ordinated the calendar of markets in a more rational manner so as to avoid conflict with neighbours.³¹

Temporality and markets share a long combined history. A market can perhaps be defined as the organised gathering together of sellers and buyers at a prescribed time as well as place.³² Dohrn-Van Rossum locates the arrival of hour reckoning to civil society in Cologne in 1374. Labourers' days were to begin on the first toll of Prime and the last bell of the signal for Compline, but an innovative work-statute stipulated that the break during the day was to be 'one hour long and no longer.' By 1385 the selling of Rhine salmon on the city's fish market was regulated. Sale was prohibited in the mornings before six in summer and eight in the winter, and wholesalers could only be served on Fridays after ten.³³ A variety of motives may have lain behind the Burghers' statutes. Tax may have been one, but it is also interesting to note a comparison some five hundred years

³⁰ A.N. F¹cIII Drôme 11, Letter, Department of the Drôme to the Minister of the Interior, 27 floréal VI (16 May 1798), provides a good example of the expression of this belief.

³¹ A.N. F¹²1274, fairs and markets, 1789-1823.

³² See G. William Skinner, 'Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China' in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 24 (1964), pp. 11-16 for a discussion of the complexity of marketing schedules in China: based on 12-day, 6-day and 3-day 'marketing week'.

³³ Dohrn-Van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, p. 234.

later in Cholet, Maine-et-Loire.³⁴ The hours that fruit could be sold were regulated to ensure that small purchasers could buy what they needed before wholesalers bought all the stock: neglect of such regulations led to small-scale riot.³⁵

Markets were always a potential problem for civil order and time control helped contain this problem. Dohrn-van Rossum comments: 'As its wide use in all European countries shows, a temporal ordering of urban markets was the only method that was seen as manageable and promising with regard to the goals pursued by the authorities.'³⁶ Again, as was the case for Sundays when activities were limited between certain hours, time could be used as an important method of regulation. In the city of Vincennes between 1325 and 1344, according to the anonymous author of *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* a contraption listed as 'li orloges' was mounted in the cloth hall to limit the sale of cloth until midday. In Ulm, again in the fourteenth century, a striking clock was installed in the house of the *fermier général* to regulate the hours of the fustian weavers even before the city itself obtained a form of public clock.³⁷ The site of clocks in towns, usually within view of the market, greatly contributed to this regulation, and to a large part explained their existence. In France markets typically took place in the square in front of the church. In this manner the civil and ecclesiastical need for timekeeping could be combined with a single striking clock or the tolling of bells.

Drinking time was meant to be controlled by the clock. Mercier commented on habits in the Provinces:

³⁴ Anne-Laure Hartmann, 'Foire et marchés en Maine-et-Loire 1789-1815,' *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays d'Ouest*, 101 (1994), 61-79, esp. p. 68.

³⁵ A.M. Cholet, extrait du registre des délibérations de la municipalité, 4 August 1809, cited in *ibid.*

³⁶ Dohrn-Van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, pp. 249-250.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

Dans quelques villes de province on sonnoit à dix heures du soir pour avertir les ivrognes de sortir des cabarets. Au bout d'un quart-d'heure tout ami de Bacchus, qui seroit resté dans la taverne, étoit balayé par la patrouille.

[In a few provincial towns the bells ring at ten o'clock in the evening to warn the drunkards to leave the cabarets. After a quarter of an hour all friends of Bacchus that may still be in the tavern are thrown out by the patrol.]³⁸

The Châtelet records suggest that similar measures were in place in Paris. Before the Revolution, drink sellers were supposed to cease by 11 p.m. and this was enforced by police patrols, the members of which occasionally had to argue that the time was measured by the local bell and not by the drinker's watch. Drinking continued to be controlled by the clock as well as the innkeeper, at least in Clermont Ferrand, where sales of drink were supposed to cease by 9 p.m.³⁹

Religion was obviously central to Sundays, whether in practice or perceived to be so, but it was also a day with unique cultural and social character that was at a remove from the church. It had a status as a day of rest, and as a civic and communal day.⁴⁰ Rest days required legislation and a measure of social purpose or acceptance. If the *décadi* was intended to replace the Seventh Day as the day of rest, as was the clear intention of Romme's report in October 1793, then it seems apposite to examine the role of Sundays within the culture of the day. Sundays had undergone a process of change during the eighteenth century and, indeed, before. Legislation and attempted control of dominical behaviour were a fixture of French history. Religious observance was obviously a key element of the Tridentine church. In 1560 François II began the judicial moves to sanctify Sundays, a

³⁸ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, vol. 6, p.190.

³⁹ A.N. Y 12503; Phillipe Bourdon, *Des lieux, des mots, les Révolutionnaires. Le Puy-de-Dome entre 1789 et 1799* (Clermont Ferrand, 1995), p. 14.

⁴⁰ Beck, *Histoire du dimanche* argues that the family became the predominant feature of Sundays during the nineteenth century.

process which reached its peak by around 1700 whether in practice or popular perception. By around 1740, the sanctity of Sundays was challenged and its beginnings as a day of popular leisure can be traced. Although religious and civil legislation remained, in practice, people were not compelled to attend either mass or confession.⁴¹

Sundays were also a civic day, with a communal as well as a pious quality. By 1789 many civic functions were combined with the mass, for example the opening of the Estates general. A Parisian almanac for that year, the *Almanach Nécessaire*, reveals that many government officials held their office hours on Sundays. The same almanac also reveals the many social occasions that were regularly held on Sundays, such as the *redoute chinoise* or theatrical performances, suggesting that Mercier may be trustworthy in his picture of Sunday bustle and leisure in France's capital at least.⁴²

While Republicanism often found itself opposed to religion, both the Catholic Church and the Revolutionaries were concerned with the moral regeneration of the French people. A measure of sobriety was a moral trait that was both approved and encouraged. General trends in Enlightenment thought also supported a control of time. Such an approach to popular temporality was a continuation of views current in the Enlightenment – and indeed before – and through the Revolution; an aspect of both religious and secular thought. Three trends, although sometimes competing, combined to begin a strong definition of the nature of the week and the legal basis of the calendar. The Catholic Church, Enlightened technocracy and Republican zeal all wished to define when people should work and when they should associate. Immoral, or idle, uses of time were consistently attacked. One *curé* writing in 1758, considered that 'the demon of rest is

⁴¹ Beck, *Histoire du dimanche*, chs. 1-3.

⁴² B.N. v 21540, *Almanach Nécessaire, ou Porte-Feuille de tous les jours, utile à toutes personnes* (Paris 1789).

one of the most dangerous.⁴³ Such an approach to popular temporality was a continuation of views current in the Enlightenment, and indeed, earlier; it had its roots in older religious and secular thought. Work, in particular, was a subject of attack. Statutes attempted to avoid the holding of fairs and markets on Holy Days. It was also generally agreed that Sundays and Feast days were too numerous and could lead to general idleness and damage to industry, commerce and agriculture. Festivals were also reliant on regional variations as the *conventionnel* Terral, writing in the Year III, warned:

Rappelez-vous que sous l'ancien régime, des fêtes locales, des jours destinés à des danses, étoient assez communément l'occasion de l'immoralité, & le théâtre de meurtres, surtout dans le midi: les pères de famille en écartoient leurs enfants.

[Remember that under the Ancien Regime, the local fêtes, the days marked by dances, were generally the occasion for immorality, and the place of crime, especially in the Midi: fathers would keep their children away from them.]

The author does not mention that the numbers of Saint's and feast days were reduced through the eighteenth century, from over fifty to around thirty by the outbreak of Revolution.⁴⁴

The Jacobins of Year II and, to a greater extent, the Directory, intervened in a system of exchange that was not simply economic. The

⁴³ Collet, *Devoirs d'un pasteur* (1758), p. 533 quoted in Jean Quénart, *Les hommes, l'église et dieu dans la France du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1978), p. 148.

⁴⁴ Joseph Terral, *Réflexions sur les Fêtes décadaires* (Paris, 1795); L. Febvre, 'Travail: évolution d'un mot et d'une idée', *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique*, 41, no. 1 (January-March 1948), pp. 19-28; D. Roche, 'Le cabaret Parisien et les manières de vivre du peuple', in Maurice Garden and Yves Lequin, eds., *Habiter la ville XVe-XXe siècles. Actes de la Tables ronde organisée avec l'aide de la D.G.R.S.T. et de la Mission de la Recherche Urbaine* (Lyon, 1984), 234-5; Dominique Margairaz, *Foires et marchés dans la France préindustrielle* (Paris, 1988); Michel Vovelle, *Les Métamorphoses de la Fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820* (Paris, 1976).

importance of fairs and markets in many areas of France was not just financial and logistical, but was also cultural and social. Indeed, their importance probably outstripped that of the Church as a social nexus. The anthropologist William Skinner has suggested the idea of a 'market community', one important for the whole village.⁴⁵ Thomas, in his study of fairs and markets in France over the long term, agrees with the appropriateness of the term 'communauté de marché'. Other studies have also stressed the communal as well as economic importance of markets.⁴⁶ Markets were a common feature of French life, with, on average, each market serving people over a distance of up to 5.7 k.m. and serving roughly 6000 people.⁴⁷ Markets were therefore integral to many communities on a very local scale. On one level it is slightly banal to point out that markets, and fairs especially, have social and cultural functions – indeed pleasures and risks (such as petty theft, disease spread by proximity to animals and crowds, and the possible crush of a stampede) – as well as being economic institutions, but it is also important to stress the different ways in which these cultural practices worked and the various levels of meanings and social relations that were unfolded in them.

The reduction in the number of markets per year as a consequence of adopting a ten-day week caused a number of voices to be raised in protest. Liberal economists may have approved of such reform, but on the whole it was thought that provisioning for ten days disrupted trade, rather than improving it, and threatened hunger throughout France. As a compromise, many areas instituted *gros* and *petits marchés* to enable some form of market to be held more often than every ten days. This was still felt to be

⁴⁵ Skinner, 'Marketing and Social Structure'; *ibid.*, pp. 25, 195-199, 363-399

⁴⁶ Hartmann, 'Foire et marchés en Maine-et-Loire'; Jack Thomas, *Les Temps des foires: Foires et marchés dans le Midi toulousain de la fin de l'Ancien Régime à 1914* (Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1993); Pierre Lamaison, 'Des foires et des marchés en Haute-Lozère,' *Études rurales*, 78-79-80 (1980), p. 199.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

unsatisfactory, with five days being too short a period of time.⁴⁸ The result was an increase in the number of markets, a trend disapproved of by most economists and other observers. Enlightened thought before the Revolution considered the existing system to be the inefficient remnant of a medieval past that constricted efficient trade. Economic theory, as expressed by Turgot in the *Encyclopédie*, questioned the need for what were seen as archaic institutions and argued that regulation and the great number of small markets inhibited that circulation of trade. Arthur Young noted, and deplored as a loss to agricultural production, the fondness the French peasant held for attending a market one day each week. The itinerant agronomist considered this to be a waste of time for the small producer, who would squander an entire day selling a dozen eggs or a chicken that in no way compensated a day's labour.⁴⁹ French agronomists also attacked the superfluity of fairs and markets, in the same way as the great number of holidays was put into question. Despite these views, and a persistent concern for their reduction on the part of the Interior Ministry, the frequency and number of markets increased during the Revolutionary period. In the Maine-et-Loire, for example, the number of fairs and markets increased by over 7% during the Revolution and Empire.⁵⁰ This was despite official attempts to restrain the increase in number. In the Doubs, Vernerey announced: 'Vous observerez qu'il ne s'agit point ici d'augmenter le nombre des marchés établis.'⁵¹ In 1806 Villèle, who at this time was concentrating his efforts on agricultural improvements, despaired:

⁴⁸ Reinhard, *Le Département de la Sarthe*, p. 353; Hartmann, 'Foire et marchés en Maine-et-Loire', p.74.

⁴⁹ Young, *Travels*, vol. 2. (Paris, 1976), p. 757.

⁵⁰ Hartmann, 'Foire et marchés en Maine-et-Loire', p. 63.

⁵¹ A.N. Doubs L 313, Vernerey, L'administration centrale du Département du Doubs, to the municipalités des Cantons du ressort, Besançon, 9 ventôse VI (27 February 1798).

Les foires et les marchés trop multipliés nuiront surtout à l'agriculture en distrayant trop fréquemment des travaux de la terre des cultivateurs qui n'ont pas besoin [...] de perdre leur temps.

[Too many fairs and markets will be especially harmful to agriculture by too frequently disrupting the work in the fields of farmers who have no need [...] to lose their time.]⁵²

He suggested that the number of fairs had doubled compared to before the Revolution.⁵³ Other restrictions, such as limitations on the hours during which produce could be sold, also continued. Temporal regimentation for different buyers continued well into the nineteenth century, as did the hours of public markets.⁵⁴

The Republican calendar, it was argued by many, was an answer to this problem as it reduced the number of *jours de repos*. Just as many voices were raised in opposition to this, claiming that the net result was an increase in days off, as both the old and the new rest days were observed, at an annual cost, according to one reckoning, of 160 million *livres* to the nation. Saint-Aubin, a teacher of commerce, mathematics and foreign languages, gave the example of the 'cordonnier dimanchier' who had no trouble persuading 'son compagnon décadaire' to celebrate Saint Monday with him. The situation would be reversed on the *primidi*.⁵⁵ Yet there were also moves to

⁵² A.N. F¹² 1274, Villèle, membre des sociétés d'agriculture de Toulouse 'Vues générales sur les foires et les marchés, dans leur rapport avec l'agriculture, sur la fixation de leur nombre: et le choix des époques de leur tenue', Letter to Minister of the Interior, July, 1806. Jean-Baptiste-Séraphim-Joseph Villèle, b. 14 August 1773, Toulouse, d. 18 March 1834, Toulouse. Politician and minister during the Empire and Restoration.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Dohrn-Van Rossum, *Hour*, p. 251.

⁵⁵ B.N. Lb⁴¹1838, Saint-Aubin, *Réflexions sur le nouveau Calendrier, et sur la nécessité d'élaguer au moins les Décadis de cet avorton du système décimal; avec un mot en passant sur les effets du fanatisme religieux; sur la nouvelle Ère, et sur l'indécence des Sans-Culottides, à quoi on a joint la traduction d'un*

make such rest, or leisure, productive for the citizen and nation alike. For thinkers, idleness was to be decried (unless perhaps one was exercising the arts of conversation and sociability).⁵⁶ Dignified contemplation and civility were to be encouraged. The *décadi* reduced the loss of industry, but also encouraged appropriate use of free time. Well organised festivals would, it was felt by their proponents, encourage good citizenship, rather than the drunkenness and disorder that feast days and Sundays were infamous for; this can be seen as part of the Jacobin ‘war on idleness’.⁵⁷ In this manner, *décadis* were intended to improve the quality of time: hence the numerous plans and schemes for efficacious uses of the day, beginning with public singing, speeches and ending in games or in more gentle relaxation.

As ever, it is hard also to discern practice as opposed to prescription, both before and during the Revolution. Despite continued complaints by central administration, towns and villages continued to cling tenaciously to their markets. In reorganising the distribution of fairs and markets, towns took advantage of the opportunity to hold them more frequently and in more places. Indeed, their number increased by between 10% and 40% according to the area.⁵⁸ Hartmann argues that despite a general belief that there should be fewer markets, their number remained high and even increased by the early years of the nineteenth century. In part, she finds this a testament to the social and cultural importance of markets. These were the great ‘moments de sociabilité.’⁵⁹ Despite the protestations of the Republicans of the Commune of Nantes, continuity in policy can be seen between pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary control of work. In both

passage d'Isocrate, sur les Sans-Culottes et les Muscadins, Dédié au Comité d'Instruction Publique, par le cit. Saint-Aubin, Professeur de Commerce, de Mathématiques et de Langues Etrangères (Saint-Aubin,

Year VI), p. 6.

⁵⁶ Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty*, pp. 129-76

⁵⁷ Albert Mathiez, *La vie chère et le mouvement social sous la Terreur* (Paris, 1927), p. 443.

⁵⁸ Hartmann, ‘Faires et marchés en Maine-et-Loire’, p. 64.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.75

aims and method, there is little to tell the two apart. Legislation about the nature of work that could be continued on Sundays and *décadis*, and the definition of public work were almost identical. As we have seen, small-scale markets selling local produce were allowed to be held on both Sundays and *décadis*, but livestock markets and fairs were legislated for. In Dijon, legislation originating from the late seventeenth century controlled Sunday opening in a manner that was again similar to that which controlled the *décadi*. The majority of trades and merchants were forbidden from working or selling on Sunday. Public drinking and dancing was also controlled. It was forbidden

[...] à tous Hôtes, Cabaretiers & Taverniers, même aux Vendeurs de Café & de Liqueurs, de donner à boire & à manger dans leurs logis, maisons, cabarets & caves pendant les grandes Messes & les Vêpres des Paroisses des Dimanches & Fêtes, à peine de vingt sols d'amende pour autant de personnes qui se trouveront dans leurs dites maisons, cabarets & caves.

[[...] for all Restaurateurs, Innkeepers and Taverners, and also sellers of coffee and liquors, to provide drink and food in their abodes, houses, cabarets and cellars during the parishes' grand masses and vespers on Sundays and holidays, on pain of a 20 *sols* fine for any person found in their said houses, inns and cellars.]⁶⁰

Bakers and pastrycooks were allowed to advertise and sell a certain amount of country bread and cakes:

Boulangers & Pâtissiers d'ôter un aïx [sic] de la fermeture de leurs boutiques, & de mettre en avant, hors les tems des dits services, deux miches de pain & quelques pièces de pâtisserie seulement pour se faire connaître.

⁶⁰ English equivalents for *hôte* (who provided food), *cabaretier* (purveyor of drinks or coffee on a modest scale) and *tavernier* (who ran a café-restaurant 'de genre ancien and rustique' (*Petit Robert*) that also supplied drinks) do not quite give justice to the original distinctions.

[Bakers and pastrycooks must remove the notice of closure from their shops, and put in front, outside the times of the said services, two loaves of bread and several cakes only to make themselves known.]⁶¹

Charges were brought on a number of occasions against those who infringed the drinking regulations, while restrictions were relaxed somewhat in the mid-eighteenth century, when baked goods and bread could be sold from nine a.m. until midday. Certain trades were allowed to operate on Sundays in the town and Parisian *faubourgs*, such as butchers, who were authorised to ‘ouvrir leurs étaux, à vendre chair de boucherie [...] de Dimanche’. They were to close on Saturday instead. Citing a 1712 proclamation forbidding the sale of any merchandise on Sundays and holidays ‘sur les ponts, quays, trottoirs, et sous les portes de cette ville de Paris’, the Police du Châtelet were informed in 1732 that ‘plusieurs continuent à plus de scandale que jamais à vendre et à établir les dits jours sur les dites places différentes sortes de marchandises’.⁶² The police enforcement of the *décadi* during the Revolution can be seen as the continuation of a well-established practice in the control of people’s work-time.⁶³

Things were not as strict in the surrounding countryside. Sunday afforded an opportunity away from work in the fields and the vineyards and the chance to come to the local town, whose stalls and shops would be open. This caused complaint from the clothiers and haberdashers of Dijon, who had to close. It was suggested that the fact of the shops being open

⁶¹ A.M. Dijon, D 29, minutes of *chambre du conseil* of the city of Dijon, 31 March 1700.

⁶² A.N. Y 9498, 30 May 1668, 14 August 1731.

⁶³ A.M. Dijon, D 29, Names of *cabaretiers* serving drinks during the hours of the high mass, 1 August 1700; *Ibid.*, Petition from pastrycooks demanding permission to open their shops from 9 a.m. until midday, 1 March 1755.

was the cause of the ‘gens de campagne’ coming into town.⁶⁴ Drinking during the hours of mass and vespers continued to cause men to be brought in front of the authorities and fined; such infractions do not appear to exist for shopkeepers and merchants. Either the records have been lost, and the laws were perfectly adhered to or, as the clothiers and haberdashers suggest, commercial pressures meant that some opened, at least for part of the day. This conclusion is also supported by the evidence of foreign visitors, such as the letters of a Yorkshire gentleman, Jonathan Gray, who briefly ventured to France in May 1814. He wrote a letter to his wife in which he detailed his expedition, including the usual traveller’s observations on food. In Boulogne he was offered ‘in *honour of the English* a noxious plant called the *Potatoe* [sic] which the French don’t eat’ and also ‘Champagne, which is a sweet wine resembling what you make; & Burgundy (or vin de Bordeaux) a red wine, like tawny port. This wine one might soon acquire a taste for.’ He also noticed men wearing white *cocardes* in honour of the Restoration. As a religious man, Gray also wished to attend a church service during his travels and ‘inquired on our arrival if there was any service, it being Sunday; they said there had been a mass in the morning. The shops are open the whole of Sunday; there is no difference between it & other days, except mass in the morning.’ He found that although ‘we may learn examples of early piety from these French Catholics’ it was also the case ‘that Sunday was never observed by the shutting of shops, even before the Revolution.’⁶⁵ Sundays therefore present a variety of faces to the historian. Religious legislation ensured that Sundays were seen as a day different to the rest of the week, but there are also hints that such legislation was circumvented in many cases. Furthermore, the extent of Sunday restrictions varied through the day, as

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Clothiers and haberdashers of Dijon to the Viscount Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Dijon, 24 January 1755.

⁶⁵ Jonathan Gray, Calais, to Mary Gray, Paris, 24 May 1814, in Edwin Gray, ed., *Papers and Diaries of a York Family 1764-1839* (London, 1927), pp. 145-52.

the hours between mass and vespers were defined as especially sacred and attracted the strictest sanctions.

Work Time

Nous ne pouvons plus faire de nos enfants des avocats, des conseillers, des prêtres, des moines ou des financiers[...]Il faut leur donner pour héritage un art utile et intéressant; et c'est l'horlogerie[...]

[We can no longer make our children into advocates, counsellors, priests, monks or financiers [...]] It is necessary to give them as an inheritance an interesting and useful art; and this is horology[...]]⁶⁶

Although clocks did become markedly more widespread during the eighteenth century, clock time in Europe was not an invention of the period. A number of facts caution against drawing too neat a distinction between industrial time and pre-industrial time. Account books for the Milanese quarries in Candoglia, Italy record the purchase of two half-hour clocks in 1387, which, Dohrn-van Rossum suggests, were used to supervise break times. Furthermore, records of the day's work were kept in hours rather than by the day. In 1418 a mechanical clock was obtained 'in order to be certain when the masters and workers leave their work on account of rain and when to take a break to eat.' In France guild regulations in Beauvais in 1390 allowed wood fullers to hire themselves by the day, by the weight or by the hour ('ad certum numerum horarum'). A similar statute, allowing fullers to work by the 'heure' as well as 'à terme', operated in Orléans from 1406.⁶⁷ Such statutes did not lead to hourly wages becoming the norm, but were more often used as a means of calculating overtime or missed work. In France, by the end of the eighteenth century, payment by the day rather than the hour remained the predominant method. Yet changes in work practices were occurring. At the beginning of the

⁶⁶ *La Vedette*, 3 prairial II (22 May 1794).

⁶⁷ Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, pp. 312-313.

eighteenth century, the hourly wage was introduced in Paris.⁶⁸ Proto-industrialisation had begun to spread work practices throughout the countryside, forcing the use of the hour into people's lives. This was a process of uneven development, with geographical and chronological variations: even in the nineteenth century, work time was still fairly flexible.⁶⁹ Yet, the spread of work discipline and clock time was not without impact. Contradictory historical factors were at work. The hours of the day were becoming increasingly important and regulated, but such strict control was not ubiquitous and work instead often varied according to historical period, region, occupation, or the business cycle. Neither was such an increase in 'work-discipline' inevitable or unilinear, but had distinct causes. Finally, as Thompson points out, the imposition of the clock had two faces: time control meant the possibility of negotiation between worker and employer and a means of defining limits on labour and appropriate recompense, as well as imposition on personal temporal needs, wants and freedoms.

Such a shift might be considered psychological, as Thompson's elegant phrase 'the internal clocking of the passage of time' suggests.⁷⁰ The growth of industry and the factory system required the creation of a disciplined work force, the members of which could follow the chronic requirements of industrial production. Thompson provides an analysis of this process, suggesting that pre-industrial society was largely 'temporally innocent' and lacked the 'internal clocking' of the modern world. Here, I will examine the usefulness of this analysis and attempt to examine the psychological, or personal role of time keeping and its changes in France between 1789 and the Napoleonic era.

⁶⁸ Baulant, 'Le salaire des ouvriers', p. 465 n. 2.

⁶⁹ Richard Whipp, "A Time to Every Purpose": an Essay in Time and Work', in *The Historical Meanings of Work*, Patrick Joyce, .ed (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 210-36.

⁷⁰ Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', pp. 56-97.

The example of the nascent clock industry in Besançon (and also in Versailles and a number of other scattered locations) illustrates both the contradictions in proto-industrial time and the importance and place of watches. Clock- and watchmaking was new to Besançon, although the town had some wood mills and the region contained a number of potteries, glass manufactures and salt works. By 1794 between two and three thousand Swiss watchmakers had moved to the town, mainly as a result of the schemes of one man, Laurent Mégevand.⁷¹ He was born in Geneva on 11 January 1754. He was the fourth, and last, son of a well to do Genevois, although originally French, clock-making family. Mégevand followed his father into the trade and became a *maître-horloger* by the age of twenty-three and embarked on a rather cavalier career. On two occasions the city's guild of clock-makers found him guilty of attempting to pass off eighteen-carat gold as twenty. On the first occasion he was fined and placed under the supervision of his father. He failed to keep a close enough watch on his son and Mégevand was convicted again in 1778. This time, the court expelled him. Mégevand left Geneva and went north, to Locle on the shores of lake Neuchâtel. Here he married and, with loans from his father-in-law, set up a trading firm with a partner, Alabert. Soon debts forced the closure of the company, but by 1791 Mégevand's new business, now as a watch trader (*négociant*), rather than manufacturer, appears to have been flourishing. According to a report he made to the French Minister of the Interior in 1802, he travelled during this period to Paris and Amsterdam and made contacts in and arranged trade with Bordeaux, Lille, Lyons, Châlons, Saxony and Russia. During this period, he also made contact with the banker Etienne Clavière, who later became Finance Minister, and who had

⁷¹ Florence Arnould, 'Laurent Mégevand et l'introduction de l'horlogerie à Besançon, 1793-1814' *Maîtrise Thesis*, Université de Franche-Comté, 1989; Natalie Petiteau, *L'Horlogerie des Bourgeois Conquérants. Histoire des établissements Bourgeois de Damprichard (Doubs) (1780-1939)* (Besançon:, 1994); Jean-Luc Mayaud, *Besançon horloger 1793-1914* (Besançon, 1994).

experience of investing in the clock industry, in particular in an Irish watchmaking colony.⁷²

By the end of 1792, news of the French Revolution excited many sections of the community of Locle and Chaux-les-Fonds. Indeed the Revolution was welcomed throughout the Swiss region. Liberty trees were planted, popular societies formed and Republican *cocardes* worn. In response, the Prussian authorities expelled around two hundred residents in April 1793, the majority of whom were watchmakers. Mégevand was among those exiled; indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that he already had been by the summer of 1789 for reasons other than his political sympathies. By the time of the mass exile, he had already made contact with the French authorities and was discussing setting up a watch-making establishment, thereby avoiding French import duties (10-15% of the wholesale price). He had already discussed the prospect with Clavière. Pierre-Joseph Briot, the editor of the journal *La Vedette* and a prominent local Jacobin, was also a strong supporter of the project, not least because an influx of political radicals would assist him in his attempts to support the Jacobin party in the city.⁷³ A number of petitions were produced by local Jacobins, extolling the virtues of horological manufacture. Jean-Marie Calès attempted to persuade the citizens of Besançon that this was a positive development, which brought a new and profitable industry to a region of

⁷² B. 1735, Geneva, d. 8 December 1793. Clavière was involved in the revolt of 1782 before making his fortune in banking and speculation in France and overseas. He became Finance Minister in March 1792 as a result of Brissot's patronage, but was eventually imprisoned for his Girondist associations in June 1793, and committed suicide in his cell. The Irish parliament attempted to create a 'new Geneva' with the support of £200,000 for a manufacture, see A.N. F¹²1326, Lemer cier, *Rapport fait par Lemer cier, Député de la Charente-Inférieure au nom d'une commission spéciale, composée des représentants du peuple Bordas, Missonet & Lemer cier, Sur la résolution du premier nivôse an 6, relative aux citoyens Mégevand & Trot, chefs de la manufacture nationale d'horlogerie de Besançon. Séance du 14 messidor an 6* (Paris, Year VI).

⁷³ Mayaud, *Besançon horloger*, p.14.

‘sterile rocks’ and was an art which could be practised by all, ‘including females’ and all ages.⁷⁴ It became a Jacobin project and the Committee of Public Safety decreed the establishment of the *Horlogerie nationale*. In the words of the first clause of the decree, ‘Il est sous la protection de la république; ceux qui tenteraient d'en arrêter le progrès, ou d'en amener la décadence, doivent être poursuivis comme malveillants et émissaires de l'étranger.’⁷⁵ The idea of state intervention and of the social benefits of industry was not new. Speculation in watch production had been indulged in before, and royal monopolies were a feature of the Ancien Regime, as the Gobelins manufacture testifies. Another *Horlogerie nationale* was installed at Versailles in the Year II, although it too did not last long. Others took up the idea. In Nantes, for example, a scheme was proposed whereby a similar institution would be set up to provide employment for the poor of the area. It was suggested that a watch- and clockmaking section of the poor house be established.⁷⁶

Dijon, where Mégevand had previous business connections, was also considered as a base, but, according to Mégevand, the wives of the artisans thought that this would be too far from their homeland.⁷⁷ Besançon did have a number of advantages, in particular its location at the ‘cross roads’ of the Rhine and Saône and as a transit town for merchants between Geneva

⁷⁴ J.-Marie Calès, *Proclamation du représentant du peuple J. Marie Calès, Délégué par la Convention Nationale dans le Département du Doubs, pour y protéger l'Etablissement de la Manufacture d'horlogerie, aux citoyens de la Commune de Besançon* (Besançon, Year III).

⁷⁵ A.D. Doubs, L 369, Decree, 13 Prairial II (1 June 1794).

⁷⁶ A.M. Nantes, F²¹ 36, Joseph Guillois, Project for the establishment of clockwork workshops for the children of charitable establishments [1794/5?]. The same idea was raised again in 1821, when the importance of public clocks was discussed with the Interior Minister, and also in 1883 when Besançon was again used as a point of comparison.

⁷⁷ , A.N. F¹² 2434, Report by Mégevand, 7 September 1807. Mégevand further reflected that Dijon would have proved the better choice, as in Besançon they were subject to ‘fanatisme religieux et politique’.

and Basle and Neuchâtel to Paris; and it was already an important node in the watch trade.⁷⁸ A second, economic emigration then began. Eventually 850 migrants moved to Besançon from Locle (18% of the Locle population). By the Year IV, 1855 people had arrived, the majority from the Principality of Neuchâtel and the rest from Geneva and the Bishopric of Bâle, constituting some 8% of the town's population of 22,000.⁷⁹ After negotiations, and government subsidy (5000 *marcs* or roughly 250,000 francs), the first manufacture opened. This initial immigration was followed by several other groups of watchmakers, in particular Jean-François Auzière, whose manufacture employed fifty artisans and their families, totalling around two hundred people. Mégevand himself was not successful, making only 17,675 watches. After moving to Paris, he returned to Besançon a ruined man, failing to gain a pension from Napoleon, whom he tried to impress with a series of poems. He died during the siege of Besançon by the Austrians under General Schwarzenberg in 1814.⁸⁰ Auzière and his workers produced only 1218 timepieces during this period.⁸¹ Yet despite the initial failure of these enterprises, their work practices have been seen as harbingers of a more industrial and regulated era.

A variety of factors led to the failure of the Besançon enterprises. Poor trading conditions as a result of war and France's internal problems, the decline in value of 5000 silver *marcs* provided by the government, and the difficulty of buying expensive raw materials with *assignats*, combined with the purchase of too much property led to the closure of the original manufactures.⁸² Yet the methods which they employed were those that marked the beginning of modern, industrial processes, particularly in regard to the control of individual workers. The three main employers, Mégevand,

⁷⁸ Arnould, *Laurent Mégevand*, p. 94.

⁷⁹ Mayaud, *Besançon horloger*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ D. 31 January 1814.

⁸¹ A.D. Doubs, L368, Acte de décès d'Auzière, 2 floréal VI (21 April 1798).

⁸² Mayaud, *Besançon horloger* pp. 22-24.

Trot and Auzière, provided accommodation for their workers and thereby controlled many aspects of their workers' lives. Such organisation was very different from traditional watch and clockmaking practice, which was typically an activity for the winter months, undertaken on a small scale. The factories that followed the initial national manufactures, those of Japy, Chaffoy, Girod de Naisay and Beaupré, produced watches on an industrial rather than artisanal scale. By 1810, around 17,000 timepieces were being produced annually in Besançon.⁸³ The manufacture seems to have been a mixture of the two modes of production, that of the artisanal and the industrial.

Charles Dupuis, the government representative to the manufacture, reported to Paris that there was much difficulty with *vols* and *révoltes* in the town. This was of particular importance because local sensitivities had been challenged by the influx of nearly four thousand people: Swiss clock and watchmakers and their families. Local opposition was aroused by their exemption from military service and by the financial assistance they had received. It was also something of a political matter as the newcomers were associated with the Jacobin political faction. Finally, the influx of outsiders caused problems in the Versailles *Horlogerie automatique*, as local people complained of apprentices stealing lead.⁸⁴

Apprentices to the newly created *Horlogerie nationale* factory at Besançon in the Doubs were proving to be a more explicit discipline problem. In an attempt to control the situation, Dupuis drew up a set of regulations that relied on stringency and a sense of temporal order. Article One announced that the clock would sound at 5 a.m. in the summer and at 6 a.m. in winter.

⁸³ Arould, *Laurent Mégevand*, p. 190. True mass production methods were to be found shortly after in the United States, in particular at Eli Terry's factory in Plymouth, Connecticut, Landes, *Revolution in Time*, pp. 310-11.

⁸⁴ A.N. F¹²1326, Report on the horlogerie automatique de Versailles', *Bureau des arts* to Minister of the Interior, 11 fructidor XI (29 August 1803).

If the apprentices were not ready within a quarter of an hour, then they were to be fined 1 *sol* for every fifteen minutes that they were late. Article two set forth meal times. Breakfast was scheduled for a quarter of an hour at 8 a.m., lunch was at 12:30 p.m. and supper was to be eaten between 6:30 and 8 p.m. Apprentices were to be in bed by 9 p.m., when the doors were locked.⁸⁵ Any infractions of these regulations were to be announced publicly at the next *fête décadaire*. Discipline was to be internalised through regulation and public denunciation. Social shaming as well as financial discipline inculcated temporal regulation and routine. The watch factory, in this vision, ought to resemble the controlled ticking of a clock.

School provided another forum for the creation of inward time control and self-discipline. Foucault is, as ever, both suggestive and contentious on this question of timing, power and control:

Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous control of power[...]

The various chronological senses that discipline must combine to form a composite time are also pieces of machinery[and] it was probably in primary education that this adjustment of different chronologies was to be carried out with the most subtlety[:] the school became a machine for learning.⁸⁶

Prescription similar to Dupuis' measures can be seen in proposed school timetables, of which many survive from various departments. Yet, in practice, as R. R. Palmer points out, teachers in each school varied the hours to suit. Foucault himself highlights the difference between prescription and practice.⁸⁷ Complaints about the apprentices' behaviour continued. A variety of factors ensured that temporality had a certain flexibility. Seasonal variations affected the working day and the periods for which people were

⁸⁵ A.N. F¹²2403, Report, Charles Dupuis, Besançon to the Minister of the Interior, 2 Fructidor V (19 August 1797).

⁸⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London:, 1977), pp. 164-5.

⁸⁷ Palmer, *The Improvement of Humanity*, p. 245.

available. Harvest time naturally dictated when people were free for other activities, while winter could cut mountain villagers off because of snow. Proposed timetables built in flexibility by suggesting that students studied subjects in different 'streams' and as they progressed, rather than being forced to follow a strict programme.⁸⁸ Republican schooling was also very limited in its provision; the reality of education lagged far behind Republican educational schemes and religious schools were repressed. The changing hours of sunrise and sunset throughout the year affected the hours of schools, bureaux, and manufactures, with many altering their hours according to summer or wintertime. Time, that is hours and minutes, was still too closely associated in people's minds with the sun's passage for an easy move to more abstract machine and technologically based mean time. Solar, or actual, time predominated. Not that time and its best use were not unimportant, or unconsidered. Sundials were common. Daylight saving was instead achieved by altering timetables, rather than changing the clock. Manufactures and factories also depended on the season for their power, as mills relied on a steady stream of water, which could dry up in summer, or become an unusable torrent at times of storm or flooding. Like educational establishments, such centres of production were also the exception rather than the norm, with agriculture providing the main source of employment.

Many thinkers, businessmen and others saw the importance of time. The Revolutionaries were not just heirs of the Enlightenment, but men who had experience of the world before 1789: they had in Leith's phrase, 'an obsession with uniformity.'⁸⁹ Prescription would therefore tend to be regimented and controlled according to strict principles. Mercier, whilst commenting on the lack of public timepieces in Paris, remarks of the awareness of time, 'c'est une satisfaction, un encouragement même pour un artisan appliqué à un long travail.'⁹⁰ Despite the country's continued

⁸⁸ A.N. F¹⁷1338.

⁸⁹ Leith, *Space and Revolution*, p. 216.

⁹⁰ Mercier, *Tableau*, p. 1307.

dependence on artisan production, the Revolutionaries attempted to introduce more rational, time-conscious methods of production.

War and disruption to traditional work practices ensured a need to reassess means of subsistence and the provision of material goods. During the shortages and wars of the Years II and III such a concentrated effort was especially necessary, and the government attempted to squeeze the most work out of the day as possible. For example, in March 1794, the Paris arms workshops began to work by candlelight, adding two hours to the day without a related rise in wages.⁹¹ The national shipyards similarly enforced strict work patterns. On 15 pluviôse II (3 February 1794), the Committee of Public Safety decided to increase the number of hours worked. Work was to commence at five in the morning and continue until 7 p.m. in summer, or until dusk in winter. Some ports had slightly different hours, such as Saint Malo, whereby work started half an hour earlier and continued later. Half an hour was set aside for lunch, and announced by the ringing of a bell at the start and end of the break. The introduction of the Republican calendar, Norman Hampson suggests, enabled the amount of time off to be reduced because of the ten-day week. A supreme effort was required because of the needs of the Navy following the battle of Brest. Government representatives at Rochefort wrote that ‘Le décadi dernier, on n’a pris aucun repos, et les ouvriers attachés au port de Rochefort reconnaissent aujourd’hui qu’ils ne doivent en prendre que lorsque nous n’aurons plus d’ennemis à exterminer.’⁹² The representative claimed that work continued twenty-nine days consecutively, although the thirtieth day had been used to pay the workers. Overtime was paid at a better rate. The sources do not reveal for how long this practice continued, although as

⁹¹ Ken Alder, *Engineering the Revolution: Arms and Enlightenment in France, 1763-1815* (Princeton, 1997), p. 253.

⁹² A.N. B.B. 3 60 fol 210, quoted in Norman Hampson, ‘Les ouvriers des arsenaux de la marne au cours de la révolution française (1789-1794)’ *Revue d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* 39 (1961), pp. 269-329, 442-73. The quotation is from p. 447.

there are no further mentions of continuous working, it seems likely that a slightly less exhausting routine took its place. However, under Jeanbon Saint-André's code of labour, work was strictly temporally regulated amongst the nation's shipbuilders and repairers. Such codes were typical of the period, with strict punishments for the idle and rigorous control of time.⁹³

Yet such nationally controlled establishments were perhaps the exception. Extreme efforts were required for the war effort, and the managers could call upon government authority (as well as having to be answerable to it). Yet a concern for maximising labour and control of time can also be detected in less vital industries. To some extent, this was a moral question that predated the Revolution. A moral crusade against laziness and idleness was underway in the religious pamphlets of the period, which drew on a long tradition of moral condemnation of work and idleness. At the same time, most schools of eighteenth-century thought placed great importance on work and its relationship to wider society.⁹⁴ Colbert related work to the happiness of society or, to be more exact, the wretchedness of people to lack of work. Poverty and economic well being are clearly central concerns, but the decision to work also created a secure and comfortable society:

La misère des peuples des villes et des provinces ne consiste pas en impositions qu'ils payent au roy, mais seulement dans la différence qu'il y a du travail des peuples d'une province à l'autre, parce qu'ils sont à leur ayse [sic] dès lors qu'ils veulent travailler[...]

[The poverty of the people of the towns and provinces does not lie in the taxation that they pay to the king, but only in the difference that there is

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Annie Jacob, *Le travail, reflet des cultures du sauvage indolent au travailleur productif* (Paris, 1994).

between the work of the people of one province and another, because they are comfortably off from the moment that they want to work [...]]⁹⁵

Work was therefore a social question, a view even more clearly seen by the time of the Revolution, although misery would have been put more squarely at the door of the king. Work in the cause of the *patrie* was clearly a virtue, and one to be celebrated and enforced by Revolutionary festivals (such as the festival of Labour). A simple profit motive was also in force when it came to industries such as the proto-factories in Besançon.

In the Besançon manufactures, production was tightly controlled. *Comptes décadaires*, or ten-daily accounts, had to be completed by the artisans and their overseers. For example, one machine operator informed Beuque, his controller, that he had ‘poinçonné la quantité de quatre cent vingt cinq Boîtes de montres de différentes espèces depuis le 10 brumaire au 20, an III.’⁹⁶ As this example suggests, production was also specialised to a degree, with some artisans concentrating on dial enamelling, others on the fabrication of clockwork components, and others assembling. Children and women were also employed in a number of these stages of production.

Work discipline, or internal clocking, was therefore not an ubiquitous or inevitable development. In Besançon, many other older forms of production and work habits continued. These also had their own temporal meanings. Most obviously, bells informed daily life. This form of aural time suffered during the Revolution: as well as their tolling being proscribed, a number of bells were turned into metal for armaments and other requirements in the early 1790s.⁹⁷ As religious symbols, their sounding was a source of contention, as previous chapters have demonstrated. Prohibition on the ringing of bells was, if anything, heightened in the Year VIII. In frimaire, two residents of Loray, Marie Euphasie and Marie Joseph

⁹⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.31.

⁹⁶ A.D. Doubs, L 377, *états décadaires*, Year IV.

⁹⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 82. Decrees, district of Baume, 1792-Year IV.

of Loray, were brought to the *tribunal de police*, Baume for the persistent ringing of bells between six and seven a.m. at Loray. A peal of bells at this time could have been a call to morning service, but would also have served as a useful alarm call, or call to work if people had already risen.⁹⁸ More clearly religious links between the ringing of bells were also made. The following, from Pirey in the Doubs, is typical:

depuis que le citoyen Petit ci-devant curé du dit Pirey a quitté sa fonction, le citoyen Pillot maire de la dite commune a régulièrement fait sonner la cloche le matin et les jours de dimanche et fête pour rassembler les habitants à l'église où il fait chanter les vêpres.

[since the citizen Petit, the former *curé* of the said Pirey left his position, the citizen Pillot, mayor of the said commune, regularly rang the bell in the morning and on Sundays and feast days to assemble the inhabitants at the church where vespers were sung.]⁹⁹

Throughout the region a battle was fought between local officials and committed Republicans and those accused of being in league with 'seditious priests'. The intensity of these conflicts fluctuated over the period, but continued throughout the duration of the official use of the *calendrier républicain*; the political legacy of these divisions, of course, was of major importance for the subsequent history of France. These were changes made to long-established time signals and elements of the routine and culture of everyday life. In Pirey the mayor continued the bell ringing habits of the old *curé*, illustrating the complexities of the religious question. A *bouleversement* of aural time, no longer signalled by now melted-down or forbidden bells, might be imagined. Yet some authorities were aware of the importance of time signals. In pluviôse of the Year VI, the government representative in the canton of Pont-de-Roide, south of Montbéliard, asked

⁹⁸ A.D. Doubs, L 2373, *Justice du paix*, Baume, 6 frimaire VIII (27 November 1799).

⁹⁹ A.D. Doubs, L 201, Police, Commune de Pirey, 4^{ème} sans-culottide II (20 September 1794).

the central administration for help in interpreting the legislation on the prohibition of the public exercise of religion. He understood that ringing of bells was forbidden, but, he asked, what about the use of bells at midday, at the start of the day and, rather abstrusely, the use of sundials. He received the answer that the law meant that bells were reserved for emergencies, such as fire, flood, approach of the enemy or 'menacing individuals', although a departmental decree (14 nivôse) did allow the ringing of bells in the morning, midday and evening. Finally, the reply invited him to hold strictly to this 'mesure de police'.¹⁰⁰ The authorities recognised that the sounding of bells 'regularised the work in the fields', by being rung at the start and end of the day, and at midday, but that ringing at any other time represented the work of *royalistes* or *prêtres rebelles*.¹⁰¹ In some areas, however, it was claimed that 'tranquillity reigns' undisturbed by refractory priests or émigrés and that the bells were not rung at all.¹⁰² A similar picture seems to be true for areas around Nantes.

Public clocks, which relied on bells or carillons rather than dials, had also long been a feature of Besançon life and a source of civic pride.¹⁰³ Time could be employed in the service of local, as well as national, identity and confidence. Clocks required regular maintenance and repairs. Bells and clocks represented a real financial commitment, as their installation, maintenance, repair, and winding were a continued drain on a parish's purse. In Besançon, the civil utility of public timepieces was recognised by financial assistance. The 1684 additions to the Church of Saint Pierre

¹⁰⁰ A.D. Doubs, L 246, Letter, canton of Pont-de-Roide to the Department of the Doubs, 23 pluviôse VI (11 February 1798).

¹⁰¹ A.D. Doubs, L 246, Letter, canton of Écot to the Department of the Doubs, 22 messidor VI (10 July 1798).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Letter, canton of Bryans to the Department of the Doubs 28 frimaire VII (18 December 1798).

¹⁰³ Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History* (Boston, Toronto & London, 1991), pp. 296, 305.

included a ‘cloche au milliaire’ and carillons that were used to announce the hours of services as well as the civil hours. The *curé* and the magistrates believed that such an instrument was a social good, and they assisted in paying for it.¹⁰⁴ In November 1752 quotations were asked for a new clock in Sainte Madeleine to sound the quarters, hours and show the phases of the moon, to be in place by Easter 1753. The local clockmaker, Gaspar Brilliard, won the contract, proposing that he could do the work for 900 *livres* and the old clock.¹⁰⁵ 10 *écus* were demanded for repair of Saint Jean in the 1780s. Repair of the clock in the Church of Sainte Madeleine at the end of the seventeenth century cost the city 240 *livres*. The annual fee for the inspection and maintenance of the four clocks was, in 1772, 80 *livres*, to be funded by the city. An inspection of the clocks took place in the 1780s. St Pierre possessed ‘une bonne pièce de l’horloge’ which ought to give satisfaction to the magistrates since it served ‘une grande partie de la ville étant l’horloge dans le milieu.’ It was considered advantageous that the clock sounded the hours, quarters and half hours by means of different numbers of tolls (two for the half hour, four for the first quarter, six for the third quarter and eight for the hour).¹⁰⁶ The town also provided for the clock in the Palais de Grandeville, and furnished the church of Saint Maurice with three *timbres*, two for the quarters and one for the hours and, since 1659, had paid for their upkeep.¹⁰⁷ By 1771 the magistrates were responsible for the four public clocks on the churches of Saint Jean, Saint Maurice, Saint Pierre and the new addition, Sainte Madeleine (in 1698, it was liable for three). Such civic responsibility for and control of public time continued. In 1799 the central administration of the Doubs removed the clock in the tower of the Porte Noire (referring to an arch dating from

¹⁰⁴ B.M. Besançon DD 176, Letter, *Curé* of the Parish of St. Pierre, Besançon to the magistrates of Besançon, 7 May 1784.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Report on the state of the town clock. 8 November 1752.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter, Anon [Louis Brilliard?] to the magistrates of Besançon, [1780s].

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter, Pierre Denis, notes on repairs, 21 August 1752.

Roman times and subsequently built upon). The clock was taken and placed in the tower of Saint Jean, and the old clock sold. Through the nineteenth century, the city continued to be responsible for the maintenance of the church clocks. Time was seen as a public issue, both for religious reasons and for the benefit of all.

These clocks and bells helped orchestrate the life of the town and its environs. Bells did not just announce religious services, but controlled work, as in the ports of Saint Malo, Rochefort. The same was true for Besançon. In 1758 police and town officials who wanted to inspect the market, decided to meet at 6 a.m., since people would then begin to gather to set up stall before matins sounded at 7 a.m., suggesting that this was a regular routine for the town.¹⁰⁸ People tended to work in groups in fields, and so started and ended work at the same time, especially where labour was defined as a day's work. The Republican calendar posed a brief challenge to the working week, but despite this aberration, it seems likely that people's general working patterns, for the majority at least, remained little changed, and perhaps had done so for centuries. This is not to argue that time had no meaning, rather that a variety of factors, many of them unrelated to the mechanical clock, controlled time. The changing seasons and the sun ordered rural life, and the sun, or solar time, remained the bedrock for timekeeping throughout France. Yet where the Revolution had social consequences, in particular in the organisation of communal events, this temporality was disrupted and altered, and not just by the new calendar. Army life, for example, brought with it a particular form of time, marked by alternate bouts of long stretches of tedium and boredom, periods of attempted regulation (in drill and the imposed routine of the soldier's day), and occasional moments of drama and horror. These three levels of time, the organisation of the working and civic day, a sense of history and an awareness of the nation in time altered over this period, although not in simple or unidirectional ways. Important structural changes had been put in

¹⁰⁸ B.M. Besançon HH 1, Report on the policing of markets, 1758.

place, in particular the beginning of state and employer influence on the 'internal' life of the individual, but neither were these changes unprecedented, nor achieved without resistance. Most importantly, the rhythms of agriculture remained.¹⁰⁹

Conclusions

This section has shown the parallels that can be drawn between Sundays and *décadis*, and suggested that religion was not the only cause of the conflict related to the Republican calendar and the *annuaire civil*. Work and leisure – to employ two terms which did not have quite the same clear distinction then as now but were still differentiated – were two spheres in which the calendar had important consequences. The Revolutionary authorities attempted to suppress popular activity on the day of rest in much the same manner as the religious and civil powers of the Ancien Regime. As such, the experience of the *décadi* for the majority of the French, was similar to that of Sundays. Squabbles about work, leisure and civic decorum were also replicated, and administrative responses to the problems posed by such disorder were the same as methods of policing under the Ancien Regime. Public drinking and gaming, just like working in public view, fell foul of laws in 1798 as they had done in 1700. But the differences are marked. The scale of the attempted transformation was greater and far more sudden than that of the Counter-Reformation. Sundays had also altered during the eighteenth century. The evidence from the Côte-d'Or suggests that outside of the large towns, Sunday working was common despite attempts by the Church to limit such infractions. Prosecutions for and surveillance of public working on the *décadi* introduced state control or influence, via an improved administrative and policing system, into more people's temporal arrangements than ever before. Although declining religious observance and fervour meant that Sundays were becoming days of leisure and non-

¹⁰⁹ Henri Mendras, trans. Jean Lerner, *The Vanishing Peasant: Innovation and Change in French Agriculture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 47-75.

work, rather than of piety, the clash between Republicanism and religion (if this is not, in the light of Desan's findings on the lay and the sacred, too crude a distinction) reintroduced Sunday's sacred and religious aspects. Indeed, it could be argued that this laid the foundation for especially pious nineteenth-century view of the seventh day.¹¹⁰ The nature of work was also beginning to be challenged by new methods of production, although the corporate and flexible nature of eighteenth-century work proved resilient. A further *bouleversement* resulted from the meddling with another key social institution: fairs and markets. Furthermore, these conflicts reveal the social nature of timing, and the contradictions between the desire for order and economic needs and attempts of a community to define itself.

Although the new calendar's establishment was based on the premise of a fresh beginning it was not introduced into a social vacuum, but into a world of complex temporal arrangements, habits, and traditions. This was especially true after the Year VI, when France was tired of Revolution and especially unwilling to have a still unfamiliar, though supposedly rational, calendar thrust upon it. The laws discussed in the previous chapter led to numerous infractions and, especially, increased political division. As a result, administrators faced irritations from a number of camps. In Besançon in the Year VII, the administration had to warn a local schoolteacher who had not been escorting her charges to the town's *fêtes décadaires*. The officials stressed that they had the right of surveillance and warned that she could be brought to the Tribunal if she did not comply with the law. Similarly, the town police agents made a number of patrols on the *décadi* to observe and charge those who were working in public view. The same seemed to be true for the countryside and most agents had to agree with this assessment by *citoyen agent* Balland on 30 ventôse (20 March): 'nous avons aperçu que la généralité des habitants [...] s'occupaient dès la pointe du jour à la culte des vignes et des champs de leur territoire et qu'ils n'observoient aucune

¹¹⁰ Beck, *Histoire du dimanche*.

décade.¹¹¹ This concern with the fields and the vineyards on the *décadi* was not even at harvest time, but in spring. But the root cause of such unconcern with civic festivals probably did not originate just with the need to dress the vines, since the Republican calendar reduced the demands on restraint from work. Rather, the motives proffered by administrative reports for such behaviour were religious and political. The municipal agents throughout the Doubs, if we are to believe their correspondence, struggled to combat visible signs of religion and people's stubborn desire to attend mass on the *ci-devant dimanche*.¹¹²

The above examples show that the history of the *décadi* and of Sundays is one of contradictions and of local and chronological variety. The days of the week provided the structures for people's lives. Such long established patterns of habit and tradition did not easily lend themselves to change. Yet both church and state authorities continued to meddle with patterns of temporal behaviour as a result of their concern for public order and the moral improvement of the masses. Similarities can be drawn between Sundays and the *décadi*. Church and state attempted to reduce the number of holidays, but also tried to ensure that those that remained were correctly observed. Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary legislation concerning *décadis* and religious fêtes were similar in both style and intent. Public working was outlawed and the day of rest was to be morally improving. Similarly, during the Revolution the desire to work on the day of rest, whether because of economic necessity or capitalist imperative, was interpreted as politically motivated. The twin pressures of work and rest, the need to sell, buy, and also to rest (or even revolt), were a continual factor: rest days, whether *décadis* or Sundays, came under continued economic pressure, a pressure that was most obviously shown in the numerous demands to hold markets. Commerce was not just undermined

¹¹¹ A.D. Doubs L 380, Letter, municipality of Rougement to the Department of the Doubs, 1 germinal VII (21 March 1799).

¹¹² A.D. Doubs, *ibid.* & L 736, Reports on public festivals.

by the new calendar, but, as the following chapter shows, became an excuse for its abolition.

CHAPTER 7

TIME FROM THE REPUBLIC TO THE EMPIRE, 1799-1806

In March 1806 de Champagny produced a report on the state of the Empire in which it was noted that the calendar had been abolished:

Le calendrier a changé. L'inutile régularité de celui que la révolution avait vu naître, et dont le but n'avait pas été atteint, a été sacrifiée aux besoins des relations commerciales et politiques, qui appellent un langage commun; trop de variétés encore séparent les peuples de cette belle Europe, qui ne devraient faire qu'une grande famille.

[The calendar has changed. The useless regularity that was born under the Revolution, and which was not achieved, has been sacrificed to the needs of commercial and political relations, which require a common language; too much variety separates the people of this fine Europe, [a people] who should form one great family.]¹

For the reasons which de Champagny mentioned, the facilitation of political and commercial relations, but also for internal symbolic, religious, political and practical reasons, the Republican calendar was replaced. Three months before, on 1 January 1806, France had officially restored the calendar that it had used before 1793. This chapter examines this abandonment of the Republican calendar. At the end of the Year XIII (September 1805), the Sénat approved a report that suggested a return to the Gregorian system from the beginning of 1806. This decision left three months of Year XIV to run. Jean Tulard suggests that the Republican calendar and the description 'République française', retained until 1808 on the Empire's

¹ CN 9929 'Exposé de la situation de l'Empire', de Champagny, Paris, 5 March 1806.

coins, were the last remnants of the Republic or the Consulate in an 'imperial government' which from 1804 increasingly 'comported itself as a personal dictatorship.'² In this context, the removal of a Jacobin calendar was not be very surprising, although its endurance might be.

The calendar had outlasted the Directory by over five years: it was not overthrown immediately by the *coup d'état* of 18 brumaire, but gave title to that event and continued to be used after the 1801 Concordat with Rome and the creation of the Empire in 1804. The continuing use of the calendar within France and indeed beyond can definitely be established. During this period, officers continued to issue *ordres du jour* dated according to the Republican calendar and used it when discussing the dates of future military plans within the text of the order, revealing in the process both their familiarity with it and a certain ease in manipulating it.³ Official business of the French administration naturally still followed it, as did French representatives overseas.

Chateaubriand dated a letter to Elisa Bonaparte, concerning the dedication of the second edition of *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), 'le 21 Pluviôse an 11 [sic].'⁴ Both printed documents and more personal correspondence therefore continued to use the Republican calendar during the Consulate. Chateaubriand's letter is perhaps an atypical example, especially as he was writing to the mother of a consul, but the continued use of the Republican calendar was not limited to the elite or the erudite. A very different kind of author, a 'layer or two from the bottom' of society,

² Jean Tulard, trans. Teresa Waugh, *Napoleon: the Myth of the Saviour* (London, 1984), pp. 236-7.

³ Fernand Beaucour, 'L'établissement d'un Camp de baraques à l'époque du Camp de Boulogne. Les Ordres du Jour de la fin de l'An XI', *Bulletin historique de la société de sauvegarde du Château Impérial de Pont-de-Briques* (1975), pp. 3-7 provides examples of printed *ordres*.

⁴ A.N. 400 AP 21, Chateaubriand to Elisa Bonaparte, 21 Pluviôse XI (10 February 1803).

Jacques-Louis Ménétra, dated the completion of his Rabelaisian journal to the 'An XI, 25 Vendémiaire'.⁵ The young Henri Beyle, no friend of Chateaubriand, also used the Republican calendar in his private correspondence and his journal, not just to date the entry or moment of composition, but to discuss past events: 'J'ai cru souvent avoir des passions, que réellement je n'avais pas, dans ma vie de l'an X au milieu de l'an XIII, temps *in what* [sic] *I began to love M*'.⁶ Educational texts also made use of the Republican calendar, such as D.F. Donnant's *Éléments de Cosomographie* (Paris, Year XI).⁷

These examples serve to show the continuing use of the calendar in French society, or at least by French administrators and by those who could be termed *sans-culottes*, such as Ménétra. Further questions will also be examined, since the change of century and Napoleon's imperial ambitions altered the way in which the calendar was viewed and affected proposals for its reform. The turn of the century, the creation of a heroic cult, the impact of the successes of the French armies, the dramatic extension of French power, and a reappraisal of the Revolution in the light of these developments all had consequences for the possibilities of measuring time and the sense of the nature of time in which people were living.

A New Century?

In 1800, France was still officially in the first decade of its first century. In contrast, those who followed the Gregorian or Julian calendars, which included many in France, were entering the nineteenth century. This new

⁵ Robert Darnton, 'Foreward' in Jacques-Louis Ménétra, ed. Daniel Roche & trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *Journal of My Life* (New York, 1986), p. viii; Ménétra, *Journal*, p. 240.

⁶ Stendhal, ed. Henry Debrayé, & Louis Roger, *Journal* (Paris, 1932), vol. 2, p. 191. Beyle also tersely noted the end of the calendar: 'dernier jour de 1805 et du calendrier républicain: 10 nivôse an XIV', *ibid.*, p. 199.

⁷ B.N. G 9424, D. F. Donnant, *Éléments de cosmographie ou introduction à la géographie universelle exposés dans une suite de lettres adressées à un jeune élève* (Paris, Year XI).

beginning, some suggested, offered an opportunity for reducing the confusion caused by simultaneous use of the Republican and Gregorian calendars. The move from one century to another, to a far greater extent than was the case in previous transitions between centuries, brought attention and comment. The importance, or novelty, of the date was marked in journals, diaries and almost certainly in many people's imaginations, although the prevalence of the idea of the century was not inevitable. The concept of the decade had little meaning (the ten-year cycle as an important unit of measure arguably only entered popular mentality in the 1920s).⁸ Romme and his committee had provided a number of names for the grouping of series of years. Rather than highlighting a decade of ten years, the *françiadé*, the cycle of four years necessitated by the inexact division into days of the earth's orbit of the sun, was given more weight. The notion of the century, however, had more resonance and import.

As was perhaps not the case during the seventeenth century and before, people were aware that they were living in something called 'the eighteenth century.' The spread of education, popular almanacs, and the diffusion of Enlightenment thought with its concern for a scientific (and decimal) measuring of the world were one factor in the spread of the idea of the century. Perhaps more importantly, calendars of all sorts had become increasingly widespread throughout French society.⁹ All these developments gave the century definition. Numerous voices pointed out their chronological location within a hundred year span. A transition to a new century, therefore, could be expected to garner some comment. Within the pages of the press a debate did begin to emerge on the question of the exact dating of the new century. 1800 was held to be the end of the last year of the eighteenth century by some, and the first of the nineteenth by others. In Britain, a bet on the correct answer was allegedly held between

⁸ J.S. Smith, 'The strange history of the decade: Modernity, nostalgia, and the perils of periodization' *Journal of Social History*, 32 (1998), pp. 263-285.

⁹ Maiello, *Storia del calendario*.

Sheridan and Richardson, who appealed to James Fox to adjudicate. The answer was that the new century began on 1 January 1801 (there being no 'year Zero' of the Gregorian calendar, but just a nought-less progression from 1 BC to 1 AD).¹⁰ The French astronomer Lalande also thought this to be the correct date for the start of the new century. 1799 was still considered by some to mark the end of the century, as the anonymous, satirical publication *La fin du dix-huitième siècle* (Year VIII/1799) illustrates.¹¹ Yet the phenomenon of a new century, in France at least, brought little attention or any related social upheaval of any sort, except for this scholarly and rather pedantic debate. Although it is plausible to argue for a new importance given to the idea of the century, any intimation of *fin-de-siècle* cultural expression or angst seems to belong more to journalism than historical fact.¹²

The start of the nineteenth century did strike some people as an apposite opportunity for either rejecting the Republican calendar, or altering it in some way. Throughout its lifetime, the Republican calendar lacked neither comment nor critics. As Champagny's report reveals, the difficulties caused to exterior relations by the Republican calendar could prove awkward: a not uncommon complaint.¹³ Some wished to abandon it completely and return to the Gregorian calendar which was approved by the Catholic church and in use by most of Europe, while others sought to make adjustments and alterations to the current Republican calendar without rejecting it entirely.

¹⁰ The *Gentleman's Magazine* covered itself by printing editorials on the end of the century and the start of the new in 1800 and 1801.

¹¹ N.Y.P.L. *KVR 4948, *La fin du dix-huitième siècle* (Year VIII/1799).

¹² Hillel Schwartz, *Century's end: a cultural history of the fin de siècle from the 1990s through the 1990s* (New York, 1990), p. 142.

¹³ A.N. F^{1c1} 88-89, *Dans la régénération politique de la France, convient-il de laisser subsister le nouveau Calendrier? Robert, de la cote d--or* (n.p [Paris], VIII [1799]), p.10

Feuillet, an employee of the prefecture of the Oise, believed that the start of the new century and of Napoleon's Consulate constituted a 'new order of things'. In an article published by the *Journal du département de l'Oise* he suggested that the new year ought to begin with the coming spring equinox in germinal/March of 1801. His scheme, he wrote, had the benefit of relating the year (if not the century) used in France to that of other nations. The Year II, for example, would begin on the same date as 1802. This, he suggested, would be a simple way to reduce the many different eras currently being employed into one.¹⁴ Similar schemes and suggestions were received over the years by the government in Paris, who passed them on to the Committee for Public Instruction, where they remained unused in the archives. Such proposals no doubt derived from a number of motives, such as that of financial gain, increase in personal repute, or possible political preferment. Some may have been honest, unselfish suggestions for improving France's calendar, but whichever was the case, these suggestions demonstrate that the calendar was a matter of some debate. Scientists and especially astronomers were unhappy with the Republican calendar, but flaws were also recognised in the Gregorian calendar and its restoration was not always suggested. Other schemes were mooted.

One such was that of a Swedish diplomat, Henri Brandel, who created a new calendar while he was posted to Algiers. Brandel's system was based on a cycle of a thousand years and attempted to be better aligned with the lunar and solar cycles than is the case with the Gregorian calendar. Between 1796 and 1824 he printed a number of copies of his system entitled *Almanach Myriade*, a copy of which reached the astronomer Baron von Zach at

¹⁴ N. Feuillet, 'Réflexions sur le nouvel Ordre de choses qui se prépare en Europe, et sur la nécessité de la réformation du Calendrier, et de l'adoption d'un nouvel Annuaire civil, commun à tous les gouvernemens', *Journal du département de l'Oise*, I, no. XXV (18 ventôse IX), 386-91.

Gotha.¹⁵ As a result of this connection his system reached the attention of the wider scientific community and, it appears, the attention of the French mathematicians and astronomers Laplace and Legendre.¹⁶ It proposed that the new calendar would begin a new era, one common for all, in the year 1800, solving the problem of the ‘proliferation of eras’.¹⁷ Yet despite the dissatisfaction with the Republican calendar and its continued irrelevance for the majority of French men and women, as well as those under French rule, it continued to be France’s official calendar. The opportunity presented by the start of the new century for a return to the old system or a modification of the current calendar was not taken.

Just as the calendar was introduced for reasons that were not purely scientific, but related to the Jacobins’ desire for regeneration and reform, so too must its abolition be placed in a wider context. The calendar was nothing if not symbolic. Although avowedly scientific, rational and secular, it was never intended to be a purely neutral backdrop to everyday life or simply just the means for the measuring of time. It said, and continued to say, things about the Revolution and France. Napoleon would not have been unaware of this. The Republican calendar was associated with the

¹⁵ Franz Xaver Feiherr von Zach, b. 4 June 1754, Pest or Bratislava, Hungary, d. 2. September 1832, Paris. Noted astronomer and editor of scientific journals, who discovered a number of asteroids.

¹⁶ Adrien-Marie Legendre, b. 8 September 1752, Paris, d. 10 June 1833, Paris, Professor of Mathematics at the École Militaire, 1780-1793, and then at the École Normale. His most important contribution as a mathematician was in the analysis of elliptic integrals, one of the basic tools of mathematical physics. Laplace was heavily indebted to his work.

¹⁷ F. A. Ewerlöf, ed., *La myriade, système chronologique pour une période de dix mille ans par M. Henri Brandel, ancien consul général de Suède à Alger, exposé d'après les manuscrits inédits de l'auteur* (Copenhagen, 1853), pp. i-iii; B.N. v 2348-ja, Anon [Henri Brandel], *Myriade, nouvelle méthode chronologique, par laquelle on rapporte la série des temps à une période composée de dix mille années régulières* (Stockholm, 1800).

time of Jacobin rule in political rhetoric, but it had also been developed and maintained by all subsequent forms of government. After Thermidor, its use declined and the *sans-culottides* were renamed *jours complémentaires*. By the time the calendar was abolished, it was generally referred to as the *calendrier français*, severing its Republican associations. Politicians could choose to emphasise a number of the calendar's aspects, from its didactic possibilities to its claimed scientific superiority. Conversely, it could be attacked as an irrelevance or the excess of a fanatical government.

The Napoleonic regime can be seen as a logical consequence of the Revolution; Napoleon viewed and consciously presented his regime as such. Repressive and militaristic as the regime was, it was also self-consciously 'enlightened' and took considerable pains to promote science, industry and approved forms of art.¹⁸ Yet the history of the period should not be limited to Napoleon. Indeed, the coup that brought Napoleon to power retained the majority of government personnel. Administration, centralisation and bureaucracy were greatly consolidated during the period. As an established part of the bureaucracy's working practice the calendar continued to be used by all levels of the administration. Clerks and officials had been given at least five years to adjust to the new system despite the changes of government. There were other justifications for keeping the calendar as well as pragmatism. As a rational ordering tool the Republican calendar was not necessarily incongruous with the aims and style of the Consulate. In his public correspondence, Napoleon, or at least his secretaries, had used the Republican calendar since the Year II for the dating of letters and continued to do so until around 1804. Yet France was in the hands of bureaucrats for most of this period while Napoleon was concerned with military adventures. It is perhaps telling that once peace was brokered, the calendar was disposed of as Napoleon now began to concentrate more on domestic policy and remained within France's borders for longer periods of time.

¹⁸ Michael Broers, *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815* (London, 1996), p. 59.

Napoleon and Religion

The calendar created division between what was characterised as ‘*Messieurs Dimanche et Décadi*’. This dichotomy, although political in its implication, was also patently religious. Adoption or acceptance of the secular calendar could be a signal of both favouring the Republic and rejecting Christian tradition. When the new calendar was discussed, it tended to be done so in religious, or anti-religious, terms. The abolition of the calendar therefore has to be examined in the light of the religious question, perhaps the most urgent of the problems facing the Consulate. Without some form of religious settlement, France would be riven by continued social strife as white masses and refractory priests troubled local administrators. In European eyes, Napoleon presented a figure little different from the various Revolutionary regimes preceding him. While in France the Concordat may have been seen as something of a rapprochement between Church and State, its conditions were wholly new and disadvantageous to the Church in the satellite states. Church lands, for instance, could become state property. It is clear that Napoleon opened negotiations from a position of strength after Marengo in July 1800. The resulting Concordat reduced the power of the Church in conquered lands enormously, whilst allowing Napoleon to claim resolution to the conflicts unleashed by the Revolution. Within this wider context, that of politics and the security of the Catholic Church, the calendar could hardly have been an important issue either for France or Rome. If Napoleon was to crown himself, then the Pope’s desire for a return to the calendar created by his predecessor would have counted for little. Indeed, in 1804, he refused Pius VII’s demand to revivify the Ancien Regime ordinances for the celebration of fetes and Sundays.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the non-Christian calendar had, as a result of Directorial policy, continued to cause social division, remained linked to the Terror of the Year II in popular and counter-Revolutionary imaginations, and presented a potential embarrassment to the Republic.

¹⁹ Beck, *Histoire du Dimanche*, p. 157.

Despite the possibility that the calendar could have been embraced by the Napoleonic regime, as were metric weights and measures, it was undermined by Napoleon's search for an answer to the religious question. Ending the privileging of the *décadi* clearly had consequences for the ordering of time, particularly when the regime began to restore the place of Sundays. On 7 thermidor VIII (26 July 1800) the *décadi* lost its status as the official day of rest for government workers, although marriages still had to be announced at the civic ceremony and fairs and markets continued to be arranged according to the Republican calendar. Sundays, however, regained their status as a religious day and, in 1804, Napoleon admitted that 1 January counted among 'les fêtes de famille' because of support by the great majority of the French.²⁰ The customs of the Gregorian and Christian year had already begun to reappear. In Besançon in 1799 Christmas Mangers were displayed and on 1 January 1800, confectioners were crowded for New Year sweets.²¹

Crucially for the calendar's history, the Directory's policies of attempting to enforce the strict observance of the *décadi*, which themselves enjoyed limited success, were allowed to lapse. Evidence of police interference in decadal behaviour drops off completely after the Year VIII, although it flowered briefly towards the end of the Directory. In Paris, *décadis* were well observed, at least in that people treated them as a day of leisure rather than another workday.²² While civic temples were deserted on the *décadi* except for wedding parties, the streets of Paris were bustling with people taking promenades, attending spectacles and, according to Police reports, filling public spaces. Between brumaire and nivôse of the Year VIII, far from attempting to abolish the *décadi*, the government attempted 'to perfect it.' Lucien Bonaparte, Mathiez argues, resolutely defended the civic nature of funerals – and by association civil religion – and supported Fouché's

²⁰ CN, 8222, Circular, 18 December 1804; Beck, *Histoire du Dimanche*, p. 155.

²¹ BreLOT, 'Besançon révolutionnaire', p. 201.

²² *Ibid.*

attempts to control infringements of the law regarding behaviour on the *décadi*. Mathiez is perhaps over-keen to emphasise the role of the *culte décadaire*, but he does provide evidence for continued government support for the *décade* and *décadi*. Lucien Bonaparte, for example, wrote to the *commissaire central* of the Yonne concerning some sixty to eighty workers and farm hands who were publicly working on the day of *décadi*. This, according to the circular, contributed to general disorder and undermined the *fêtes décadaires*. He invited the *commissaires* to take appropriate action to prevent this occurring again.²³ In many areas, repression of religious activity continued and the calendar was enforced.²⁴

Despite these initial moves, Sundays were given official sanction within months of Napoleon's coup. Although working was permitted, Sunday worship was restored. Sundays became the official day of rest for government workers on 18 germinal IX (8 April 1802). On 11 nivôse XI (1 January 1803), the *Moniteur* began using the Gregorian calendar again to date its issues. Clearly by this point, the Republican calendar was simply a formality, although there was still a market for concordances in 1805. They were intended for a number of readers, as this example from 1805 suggests:

le rapport des dates de l'ancien et du nouveau style, est particulièrement destiné aux Notaires, Banquiers, Agents-de-Change, Courtiers de Commerce, Négociants et Employés dans les Administrations publiques et particulières.

[the concordance of dates of the former and new style, is particularly designed for Notaries, Bankers, Stockbrokers, Commercial Agents, Merchants, and Employees in public and private Administration.]²⁵

²³ Mathiez, *Théophilanthropie*, pp. 597-600.

²⁴ Sciout, *Eglise*, p. 34.

²⁵ B.N., C21639, Rondonneau. *Concordance des calendriers républicain et grégorien depuis 1793 jusque et compris l'an xiv* (Paris, 1805), p. 1; B.N. V-53368, Pierre Dedessuslamare, *Tableau des dates, jours, mois et années du Calendrier Républicain Français depuis son origine jusqu'à sa suppression, correspondants avec ceux du Calendrier Grégorien* (Marseille, 1805).

Such publications were not limited to Paris, but were published across the country, right until the suppression of the calendar itself. In fructidor XIII (August 1805), Pierre Dedessuslamare in Marseilles printed his *Tableau des dates, jours, mois et années du Calendrier Républicain Français depuis son origine jusqu'à sa suppression, correspondants avec ceux du Calendrier Grégorien*, which he suggested would be useful to officials, lawyers, merchants, and all those who had to deal with other nations since they would be dealing with another calendar.²⁶

Such concordances were clearly useful for those who were required by law to use the Republican calendar. Publishers were able to tap a ready market with a product that could be resold every year, with a minimum effort in resetting the printing plates.

The slow restoration of Sundays by the government was a result of pragmatic politics, rather than a sincere religious belief at a time when the relationship between the new regime and the church was strained at best. Just as it is inaccurate to view the calendar as a tool of dechristianisation, so it is to see its abolition as relating directly to the signing of the Concordat in 1801, accommodation with the Catholic church or the creation of the Empire in 1804. The Gregorian calendar was not reintroduced until after these rejections of Republican ideals. Rather, the calendar was abolished for pragmatic reasons, such as the difficulties caused to trade and foreign relations and the fact that in practice two calendars were being observed.²⁷ The official excuse given for its abolition was found in the difficulty of predicting the exact time of the autumnal equinox that determined the start of the year with the necessary scientific accuracy. Yet the rejection of the calendar also demonstrates the importance of popular belief and intransigence. The twin reforms of the 1793 Convention, those of weights and measures and of the calendar, continued to be pursued by subsequent

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ One has to note that Russia continued to follow a calendar different from the majority of European countries for more than a century, not to mention the Ottoman empire. Whether this hindered trade or foreign relations or not is another matter.

regimes, and where they were not rejected outright, they met with serious opposition in many areas. The introduction of weights and measures was only imposed with difficulty, and was not without compromise. The use of old measures and their names continued into the nineteenth century and beyond. Due to religious belief and popular custom, Sundays and the old calendar with its religious festivals and local traditions often retained real, popular support. If the government persisted in defending and disseminating the new calendar it would face a hard struggle with little reward in sight.

The calendar was also attacked in print. Opposition to the Republican calendar came from all points of the political spectrum, bringing a variety of complaints and suggestions for its reform. The calendar was attacked on rational grounds, and by those not necessarily hostile to the Revolution. Lalande had, in the Year VI, raised the problem the calendar posed to astronomers, both because it required new astrological calculations and because of the difficulty of calculating the autumnal equinox.²⁸ Others complained that the calendar was unnecessary as it provided no real benefit to France, but in fact was a danger as it damaged both trade and foreign relations. For many post-Thermidorians, the calendar was an inappropriate legacy of terrorist Jacobins. Amongst counter-revolutionaries and devout Catholics, it represented the intrinsic godlessness of the Revolution and the Republic. Throughout France, unhappiness with the calendar (either from ignorance of the new calendar, the tug of habit, the inappropriateness of the Republican institutions such as the *décadi*, or a conscious dislike of the Republican programme) was expressed in practical fashion. Popular opposition to the new calendar was marked by ignoring the calendar, or in more physical, direct ways such as adherence to old market days or Sundays. The return of public religious worship was also of vital importance, not just for the religious life of the time, but for the orchestration of the week.

²⁸ A.N. F¹⁷3702, Letter, Lalande to the Minister of the Interior, concerning the impracticality of the Republican calendar, Year VI.

Yet the return was not immediate. The archbishop of Besançon noted that midnight mass had been celebrated in Paris in 1801 and respectfully wrote to the mayor to ask permission to do the same in the Besançon in 1802, since deputations from the parish had asked for the service to be provided.²⁹

The Abolition of the Calendar

From the outset, the Republican calendar was promoted as a scientific innovation, and science was ostensibly the reason for its abolition. On 13 fructidor XIII (31 August 1805) Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely reported to the Sénat with a proposal that from 1 January 1806 the Gregorian calendar be put in use throughout the French Empire.³⁰ Together with Mounier, another *conseiller d'État*, Regnaud had been charged with the preparation of the report by the Sénat and the astronomer Delambre had probably assisted with the preparation of the proposal's text.³¹ Regnaud reminded the Sénat that the idea of decimal division had been attacked as a departure from tradition by the representative of the Academy of Sciences. He argued that, in many ways, the Republican calendar could be found to be superior to the Gregorian calendar, which was marked by 'bizarre' features, such as months that had an irregular number of days and fell between seasons, and a year which began, not on an equinox, but nine or ten days after the winter solstice. 'Errors' and 'superstition' marred the successive reforms of Numa, Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory XIII. For many rational reasons, therefore, the French calendar (as it was now known) ought to be maintained.

²⁹ B.M. Besançon, Letter, Archbishop of Besançon to the Mayor of Besançon, 20 frimaire XI.

³⁰ Michel-Louis-Etienne Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely, b. 3 November 1761, Saint-Fargeau, Puisaye, d. 11 March 1819, Paris. Regnaud later appealed for another abolition: in 1815 he advised Napoleon to abdicate for a second time.

³¹ *Le calendrier républicain de sa création à sa disparition suivi d'une concordance avec le calendrier grégorien* (Paris, 1989), p. 92.

Yet, he proposed that the system had to be altered for a number of reasons. Firstly, the calculation of the *sextiles* (or leap years) was such that in certain circumstances it would be impossible to predict the day on which the year began. A solution had been proposed and welcomed by Romme, but had not been passed because of the Prairial rising. Regnaud argued that beginning the year on an equinox was more sensible than an arbitrary choice of day. He went on to suggest that the autumnal equinox, which marked the end of summer and was associated with the foundation of the French Republic, was less appropriate than the spring equinox, which could be more easily associated with the start of the year and was also applicable to nations who did not commemorate the founding of the Republic. Furthermore, the calendar had not been accepted by all French people, and was never adopted by other countries. Regnaud argued that as a result France had two calendars, which was worse and more inconvenient than the 'Roman calendar, [as] double dating is constantly employed.' Yet the Republican calendar was not without certain qualities. He concluded that

Si pourtant, Messieurs, le calendrier français avait la perfection qui lui manque, si les deux vices essentiels que j'ai relevés plus haut ne s'y trouvaient pas, sa majesté impériale et royale ne serait pas décidée à en proposer l'abrogation. Elle eut attendu du temps, qui fait triompher la raison des préjugés.

[If nevertheless, Gentlemen, the French calendar had the perfection that it lacks, if the two essential vices that I have raised above were not present, His royal and imperial Majesty would not have decided to propose its abrogation.

He would have waited for time to pass, which makes reason triumph over prejudice.]

In the future, when 'Europe was calm [and] retained peace', the more scientific system could be reintroduced. But for the moment, and for commercial reasons, the calendar had to be abrogated.³²

³² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The *Sénat* named a commission to examine the proposal for the reestablishment of the Gregorian calendar. On 23 fructidor XIII the *Sénat* received the report of the committee, which was presented by Laplace. It was accepted at first by 72 votes (out of 110 members of the *Sénat*), although this count did not reach the required two-thirds majority. A check was made and it was found that 74 votes had been placed, enough for the measure to pass. Its conclusions, while incontestable from a scientific point of view, were not reached without some political awareness. Although a scientist, Laplace was also politically involved, perhaps sensing Napoleon's opinion on the calendar and hence sought to distance himself from past political positions. Laplace, although he had made sure he was away from Paris during the height of the Terror, was associated with the Jacobin period; he was an important member of several government committees during the Year II and provided crucial astronomical and mathematical advice for the creation of the new calendar. Scientific opinion, once decidedly in favour of the benefits of the decimalisation of time and agreed on the flaws in the Gregorian calendar, now turned away from the benefits of the new system. By the late 1790s Laplace had petitioned the government for a return to the old calendar, but the Minister of the Interior replied that 'les lois qui établissent un nouveau calendrier, mon cher collègue, ne sont point rapportées [...] Je doute d'ailleurs que le Gouvernement ne consente jamais à rétablir un Calendrier qui présentait bien aussi quelques défets, et qui était celui d'un culte particulier.'³³

The report began with the basic premise that the commission could not trouble itself with all the possible calendars, but had to choose the most natural and the most simple. The French calendar's principal fault was its 'mode of intercalation in fixing the beginning of the year by the midnight that precedes it at the Observatoire de Paris.' Astronomers were aware of

³³ Bibliothèque de l'Observatoire de Paris, B 57, Letter, Minister of the Interior to Lalande, 4 floréal VII (23 April 1799).

the difficulty of calculating the exact time of the start of future years.³⁴

Laplace concluded that the *projet de sénatus-consulte* should be adopted:

On pourrait craindre que le retour à l'ancien calendrier ne fût bientôt suivi du rétablissement des anciennes mesures. Mais l'orateur du gouvernement a pris soin lui-même de dissiper cette crainte.

[One could fear that the return to the former calendar might be soon followed by the reestablishment of the former measures. But the orator of the government has himself taken care to dissipate this fear.]³⁵

That the calendar would be abolished was almost certain. In thermidor XIII (August 1805), the annual astronomical tables of the Bureau des Longitudes contained the news that 'sur l'avis certain quoique non officiel que le calendrier grégorien doit être entièrement rétabli au 1er janvier,' and the Bureau changed the presentation and format of their *annuaire de l'an XIV*. Since the Concordat, the calendar had been used with decreasing frequency. The problems the calendar caused for trade were also regularly cited, both before its abolition was seriously considered and in the regular complaints and petitions directed at the calendar since its inception. The inconvenience caused to mercantile negotiations and the flow of trade should not be underestimated, although solutions such as concordances were easily available in France and the French had experienced dealing with those countries, such as Russia and Britain, that had used the Julian calendar before 1752. Trade and financial position were, as Napoleon's letter above shows, strong considerations, especially since the new outbreak of war in 1803. Napoleon became increasingly interested in economic and financial questions. By 1805 it was clear that France needed to concentrate on European industry and commerce, and in particular on the German and Italian markets.³⁶ The Republican calendar, although the official calendar in

³⁴ Froeschlé, 'À propos du calendrier républicain', pp. 314-16.

³⁵ Quoted in *Le calendrier républicain*, p. 97.

³⁶ Lyons, *Napoleon*, pp. 265-270; Tulard, *Napoleon*, pp. 205-206.

many areas, was barely established in these countries and a return to the Gregorian calendar would assist in making international trade, which relied on 'regular and routine exchanges', proceed more smoothly.³⁷ As one Napoleonic memorialist recalled:

I had three months at Hamburg when I learned that the emperor had at last resolved to abolish the only remaining memorial to the republic, namely, the revolutionary calendar. That calendar was indeed an absurd innovation; for the new denominations of the months were not applicable in all places, even in France: the corn of Provence did not wait to be ripened by the sun of Messidor. On the 9th of September a *senatus consultum* decreed, that on the 1st of January following the months and days should resume their own names. I read, with much interest, Laplace's report to the senate, and must confess I was very glad to see the Gregorian calendar again acknowledged by law as it had already been acknowledged in fact. Frenchmen in foreign countries experienced particular inconvenience from the adoption of a system different from all the rest of the world.³⁸

Reactions to the return of the Gregorian Calendar

The announcement of the abolition of the Republican calendar caused some confusion. In vendémiaire XIV (October 1805) the Prefect of the department of the Aisne asked the Interior Minister for guidance on the implications of the return to the Gregorian calendar for the ordering of fairs and markets. The Minister replied that it would be simplest to find the

³⁷ Geoffrey Ellis, *Napoleon's Continental Blockade: The case of Alsace* (Oxford, 1981), p. 107.

³⁸ De Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte by M. De Bourrienne, his Private Secretary. To which are Now First Added, an Account of the Important Events of the Hundred Days, of Napoleon's Surrender to the English, and of his Residence and Death at St. Helena with Anecdotes and Illustrative Notes from all the Most Authentic sources*, vol. 2 (London, 1836), p. 318.

corresponding Gregorian date.³⁹ This incident supports the weight of Thomas' evidence for the timing of markets: the majority of the cases in his study suggest that the holding of decadal markets continued until after the changing of legislation on markets in germinal X. Some markets, however, had been changed to follow the new calendar. After the Year X the population in Boulogne-sur-Gesse in the Haute-Garonne anticipated 'le changement politique' and the authorities saw no reason to defend the decadal markets.⁴⁰

The Republican calendar was not forgotten, but continued to be used in documents that referred to the years of its existence. While the Republican calendar was abolished, references to it remained. Laws and events continued to refer back to it. A.F. Frizac's *Tableau Historique et Figuratif des changemens politiques survenus en Europe, depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1808* was presented to Napoleon in 1808 and was printed on fine paper and to large size.⁴¹ Frizac's *Tableau* listed the countries of Europe and the principal events in that country in a large grid with France at the centre. As well as the Gregorian dates, the years of the Republican calendar, from the Year I (even though this was designated retrospectively) to the Year XIV, were neatly recorded along the left of the table.

The cultural use of the calendar illustrated the strength of its political and religious connections. To coincide with the new year of 1806, the Théâtre Montansier in Paris staged a play entitled *Janvier et Nivôse* which celebrated the return of the Gregorian calendar. Its review in the *Courrier des Spectacles* presented the change as a triumph of the Catholic, religious calendar over the godless Republican calendar. The Paris theatre is an

³⁹ A.N, F¹²1275, Letter, *Préfet* of the Department of the Aisne to the Minister of the Interior, 18 vendémiaire XIV (10 October 1805).

⁴⁰ Thomas, 'Le temps du marché, le temps de dieu', pp. 99-100.

⁴¹ It is possible that the new, large presses employed for the printing of the Egyptian discoveries were used for the printing of this text.

important source for the history of the period. Popular concerns of the period, such as the behaviour of ministers or contemporary events, were dealt with, whether obliquely or directly, and often in a humorous or ribald manner. Such freedoms were new. Until the Revolution, only the Comédie Française was allowed to perform works by deceased authors and apart from this company, the Comédie Italienne and the Opéra, strict limitations were placed on the use of dialogue on the stage. Smaller theatres and revues relied instead on tableaux, mime, dances, and acrobatic tricks. Following the ending of these restrictions and of royal censorship in 1791, the control of the theatre passed into the hands of the municipal authorities. By 1793, over two hundred plays were performed each year and, despite the theatre remaining a 'precarious industry' with bankruptcy and failure always stalking, the Revolutionary theatre 'enjoyed amazing vitality.'⁴² Performances were widely attended as a form of entertainment and sociability. Jacques-Louis Ménétra records attending 'the plays' on a number of occasions and also mixing with the actors and other players.⁴³

Janvier et Nivôse was a pasquinade, that is a lively, lampooning, and satirical play, and it was, according to a review in the *Courrier des Spectacles*, a successful performance, mainly due to the 'excellent portrayal by Branet of Carême, and couplets agreeably sung by Mlles. Carolie et Bosquier.' The playwrights took care to include mention of the success of the army. The adventures of two young lovers, ciphers for the two calendars, provided the plot for the evening. One, Nivôse, was weak and asthmatic, while the other, Janvier, was 'jeune et gai'. For several years Janvier had been exiled, but has now returned to his country with his friend Carême. On his return he is welcomed with gifts of flowers and almanacs, but still has to fight Nivôse for the hand of the character of Victory. He wins and, later, Nivôse's death is announced to the audience. The *Courrier* praised the play in its celebration of the abolition of one of the Revolution's 'imprudent innovations'. The

⁴² Lyons, *Directory*, p. 133.

⁴³ Ménétra, *Journal*, pp. 317-18.

journal suggested that ‘the public has quickly seized on the timeliness of the subject and applauded all that relates to the superiority of the ancient calendar over the new’.⁴⁴ The end of the Republican calendar was not seen, as the discussions and reports in the Senate suggested, to be the result of rational, scientific deliberation and considerations of pragmatism and commerce, although the play’s review did suggest that the Gregorian calendar’s (presumably scientific) ‘superiority’ had been decided. Rather, it was viewed as a victory of religion over attempts at dechristianisation. Religion was the main issue. The Catholic calendar, the *Courrier* reviewer argued, was the basis for all ‘our customs and traditions’ and ‘joins all the events of our lives; it rules our work and our doings [*engagemens*]’. It was in the pages of the established calendar that ‘we invoke our first protectors’ and in its festivals remember God. The play celebrated the end of a modern aberration and a return to a pious and traditional relationship between time, its record, and life. The journal concluded by asking whether the change in the calendar, now meant a change in general journalistic styles. Would these ‘revolutionary forms’ which had introduced ‘anarchy’ into the ‘sanctuary of arts and letters’ and ‘excited the bile’ of their readers now be replaced by more respectable tropes? The author recognised and gave support to the view that the change of the calendar was important symbolically.

The Times of London also concluded that the change in the calendar was a religious issue. Practical concerns were evinced. Earlier, in a report on events in France, the English paper noted that it had been informed on 30 July ‘that the present French calendar will soon be abolished, it being found productive of endless inconvenience in mercantile transactions, in comparing dates of letters and bills of exchange, and possessing not one advantage in return, as it was not even astronomically just, and separated *us*

⁴⁴ *Courrier des Spectacles, Journal des Théâtres et de Littérature*, 1 January 1806, pp. 2-3. P. 1 reads ‘Le public a vivement saisi l’à-propos du sujet et applaudi tout ce qui se rapporte à la supériorité de l’ancien calendrier sur le nouveau’.

from all the rest of Europe [my italics].'⁴⁵ *The Times* has the benefit of escaping the pen of the French censor and, although not without its own biases, does appear to have relied on genuine reports from France. It succinctly summarises the opinions expressed in France. After the publication of the *sénatus-consulte*, another story in the paper, on 'The French Kalendar [sic]', took the change as an example 'of the unpopularity of those principles which gave birth and support to the system.' It recognised that a calendar could never be politically neutral and that the 'revolutionary kalendar was adopted, as one great means for the overthrow of Christendom and is most dear to its civil, political, and religious interests.' The report then continued to argue that the Republican calendar attempted a severe breach with the Christian order of things, by trying to sever the links between the seventh day and its divine ordination as a day of rest and worship.⁴⁶

In France, periodicals such as the *Moniteur* recorded without much fuss the return of the old dates and the retirement of Romme's calendar. When comments were made, the return of the Gregorian calendar was interpreted mainly in religious terms, with journals marking the return of Sundays and their triumph over the *décadi* as a day of rest and ceremony. The calendar had become a question of *décadis* versus Sundays and was seen as a cipher for either religion or Terror. A belief amongst the popular classes in the sacredness of the seven-day cycle is plain from police reports and was shown in the previous chapter. Numerous reports explain that the calendar was unpopular because it attacked the seven-day cycle of the Creation.⁴⁷ In its final remarks, the *Courrier* suggested that copies of the calendar be

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 8 August 1805.

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 30 September 1805.

⁴⁷ A.N. F⁷3821 Report of the *agent national* in Rieux, Haute-Garonne, 9 messidor II (27 June 1794). Compare with the more radical views shown in A.N. F^{1c}III Haute-Garonne 12, Motastruc, *Accord des Principes des Religions Juive, Chrétienne et Catholique, Avec la loi sur le repos des Décadi, et le travail des jours des Dimanches et Fêtes, etc. En forme d'entretien* (Albi, Year VII).

preserved to demonstrate to posterity ‘an idea of our profound conceptions of almanacs’ and ‘the print of some *assignats* to prove to posterity our grand ideas on finances and in economics.’⁴⁸ The calendar was to be a site of memory, but for reasons far removed from Romme’s and Fabre’s intentions. By the time of its abolition, the calendar was no longer a symbol for reform and birth, but was rhetorically deployed as an example of the mistakes of the Revolutionary period.

The Time of the Empire

Examination of the abolition of the Republican calendar shows that time, in the sense of the calendar, was another way of speaking about the political and cultural questions of the day, in particular the place of religion in society and the way with which the history of the Revolution was to be dealt. Its ending served to raise questions about the nature of the regime, both in France and abroad, and to highlight the importance of religion to French politics and society. Yet time was not limited to the calendar, but was a quality, or dimension, that could be used by the regime in a number of ways. The abolition of the calendar did not mean that time could not, in a small way at least, be put in the service of the Empire.

Varennes, 21 messidor XIII.

Mon, Cousin, je m’arrête ici un moment pour souper; je serai demain jeudi, à dix heures du soir, à Fontainebleau. Faites mettre l’article ci-joint dans *le Moniteur*. Je recevrai vendredi les ministres qui sont à Paris, vers midi. Le conseil d’État et la Ville de Paris, et toutes les personnes qui ont l’habitude de m’être présentées, je les recevrai dimanche, à l’heure de la messe. Je recevrai vendredi le gouverneur de Paris, les grands dignitaires et les princes.

[My Cousin, I have halted here a moment for supper; I will be tomorrow, Thursday, at ten in the evening, at Fontainebleau. Please put the enclosed article in the *Moniteur*. I will receive on Friday the ministers who are in Paris

⁴⁸ *Courrier des Spectacles*, 1 January 1806.

around midday. The Conseil d'État and the Municipality of Paris, and all the persons that are usually presented to me, I will receive on Sunday, at the hour of mass. I will receive on Friday the Governor of Paris, the great dignitaries and the princes.]⁴⁹

Napoleon, as this letter attests, was clearly using the traditional days of the week, although his secretary dated the year in the new style. Other official letters, such as one to the Prince Eugène in July 1805, employed the Gregorian calendar alone.⁵⁰ In the main, until the calendar was abolished, the text of such letters referred to traditional weekdays, but used the new form for the date. The letter also serves as evidence of the regime's, or Napoleon's, use of time at the centre of power. The 'court' at the Tuileries was ruled neither by the clock, nor whim and unrestrained leisure, but by tradition and 'natural' breaks in or divisions of the day provided by meals, mass and the sun. The creation of a court, albeit of a limited form, with Napoleon at its centre concentrated and underlined his power and image.⁵¹

Power and its image are created in a number of ways. Napoleonic propaganda and his manipulation of a personality cult has long been recognised and analysed, particularly in the production of art and control of the media.⁵² A mastery of time and regulation also played a role. In part, Napoleon was seen as an active and decisive military leader and administrator for whom speed and decision were important, yet his reign also harked back to a more leisurely age. A kingly routine was exact, yet regal in its regularity. Napoleon's routine, in comparison, was a public matter and concerned his formal appointments and duties. Rising and sleeping were not orchestrated as in the reign of the Sun King, but the

⁴⁹ CN, 8973, Napoleon, Varennes to Cambacérès, 21 messidor XIII (10 July 1805)].

⁵⁰ CN, 8972, Napoleon, Genoa to Prince Eugène, 5 July 1805.

⁵¹ Tulard, *Napoleon*, p. 249.

⁵² Robert B. Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge, 1950); Lyons, *Napoleon*, pp. 178-198.

dignity of state was suggested by an ignorance of clock time and state meetings were arranged according to set, non-chronometric times. The Emperor, for example, met with dignitaries 'after dinner' rather than at 8 p.m. In comparison, Louis XIV, Richard Glasser suggests, 'precisely determined the course of his day[...] life was seen as something majestic if it was regulated by the calendar and the clock'.⁵³ Napoleon attempted to attract majesty, but also used the clock in a modern manner.

⁵³ Glasser, *Time in French Life*, p. 227.



Figure iv: *Napoleon in His Study*, David, 1812.

Art was placed at the service of the Empire and, as Hugh Honour writes, ‘even David devoted himself to magnifying Napoleon.’ His portrait of the Emperor, *Napoleon in his Study* (1812) [fig. iv] shows Napoleon posing in the midst of a night’s work in his darkened study, with a volume of Plutarch at his feet and the legal code near his hand. The candles behind him, next to an inked quill, have nearly burnt out and the clock, a restrained empire long case, at the back of the room, but placed near the centre of the picture, shows that it is four thirteen in the morning. Napoleon is said to have remarked ‘you are right, my dear David, to show me at work while my subjects sleep.’⁵⁴ In a modern twist on the usual symbolism of the clock and guttering candle as *momento mori*, Napoleon wished to be seen as making use of his time on earth to best advantage. The routine and the night-time labours were perhaps not just propaganda, but had a system that was only altered by the demands of travel or military campaigns. The Emperor was woken at seven o’clock, and had the newspapers and police reports collected by the palace marshal read to him. After examining bills and talking with members of his household, he was in his office, dictating letters and examining police bulletins, by eight o’clock. A ten-minute breakfast was taken at ten o’clock. He then returned to his office before attending the meetings with his Ministers, the Conseil d’État or some other council. Dinner was at five o’clock, but, Jean Tulard writes, he ‘often did not sit down until seven.’ Napoleon’s dinner was followed by time with the Empress, reading and finishing the day’s work. He retired to bed at midnight, but awoke at three o’clock ‘to consider the more delicate affairs of state.’ This in turn was followed by a hot bath, before he retired again at five in the morning.⁵⁵

The arrangement of the day was clearly a matter of social comment. David’s portrait and Napoleon’s remark suggest that the Emperor was keen to present himself as a man of action, rather than leisure, who was always at

⁵⁴ Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism* 1991 edition (London, 1968), pp. 175, 179.

⁵⁵ Tulard, *Napoleon*, p. 233.

work and whose public and private lives had been combined into one. Time could be a form of propaganda: in the Year VIII, the *Journal de Paris* reported that the First Consul at work eighteen hours a day.⁵⁶ As well as showing his command of the hours of the day, Napoleon gave great consideration to his relationship with other levels of time, in particular to the 'course of history' and to his place within its flow. Although selective in his use of history, 'he saw himself foremost as a historical personage.'⁵⁷ Time could be used to political purpose and employed for the presentation of power. This subjective element of time must now be examined.

⁵⁶ Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda*, p. 33.

⁵⁷ Burton, *Napoleon and Clio*, pp. 4, 14, 47.

CHAPTER 8

CHANGING TIME: TEMPORALITIES OF THE SELF
AND THE NATION*Introduction*

‘[...] je jouissais et voyais couler mes jours lorsque la Révolution française vint tout à coup réveiller tous les esprits Et ce mot de liberté si souvent répété fit un effet comme surnaturel et échauffa toutes les têtes’

– Ménétra, Year XI¹

Ménétra neatly encapsulates one of the main concerns of this thesis: How did the Revolution impinge upon individuals’ lives and sense of the course of time? For him, the Revolution was clearly a major event, and shook up his mature years when he was expecting, if not relaxation, then at least security. For millions of others, the same would have been true. The events of the last eleven years of the eighteenth century forced people to reconsider their notions of past, present and future. The French Revolution reordered time on many levels: such as the long-term view that gave the Revolution its meaning and eternal significance; as delayed time between Paris, the provinces and colonies; in the organising of work; as military time for the millions of conscripts and volunteers and their experience of the ‘obligatory rhythm of marching [and] the Homeric *ephemoros* of the journées.’²

Previous chapters of this thesis have concentrated on the history of the Republican calendar and its place within the context of eighteenth-century

¹ Ménétra, *Journal*, p. 259.

² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1979), p. 152.

understandings of time. A history of the Republican calendar and a sociology of time have been examined in parallel, but the title 'Time and the French Revolution' also makes a claim to an understanding of the Revolutionary period's consequences for time understood more generally, without necessarily a specific reference to the calendar. In any case, as the preceding chapters have made clear, although the *calendrier républicain* was not insignificant in its impact or its relevance to an understanding of Revolutionary history, neither was it universally accepted or effective in replacing existing chronic reckoning or conception. The struggle it engendered helps us to understand the Revolutionary period more fully. A more general investigation into the nature of time is also required. I argue that time played a role in the creation of the nation and a sense of personal identity.

Two extremes provide the subjects for this chapter: that of the individual's notion of self-identity and, secondly, that of the nation state. The two are linked in important ways. Since nationalism has become a subject of critical study, the nation has been increasingly seen as a construction, rather than the inevitable summation of a people's history. Whether seen by scholars as a mirage, or as a crucial part of the world system, the nation has been approached not as a natural object, but as a constructed and historically analysable identity. Walter Benjamin suggested that calendars are 'moments of historical consciousness'.³ The French Republican calendar represented one such moment and demonstrated the social and cultural complexities in measuring time. The quality of time can be measured according to rhythm, tempo and duration, but within a historical and social context, time and its measuring also raise questions of identity and can become the source of conflict. Nationality, first and foremost, exists in the minds (or, as nationalists would argue, in the hearts and souls) of men and women and must be cultivated similarly in those of

³ Walter Benjamin, ed. Hannah Arendt, & trans. Harrry Zohn, *Illuminations* (London, 1968), p. 264.

their children. The nation and the self are linked to self-identity, itself a subject of much recent historical and other scholarly work. This issue is addressed in the second part of this chapter.

The French Revolution and Historical Time

The Revolutionaries were not much enamored with Clio. History had little use, except as an illustration of the Republican preference for the future over the past when the French were the unhappy victims of slavery. The past was littered with examples of the tyranny of kings and foreign powers, but also the unavoidable progress of reason, demonstrated by the gains Liberty had made, most dramatically in 1789.⁴ In his study on Condorcet, Baker stressed that the lesson of history to be drawn from history was the law that man could 'transcend history'. The sole purpose of the study of the past was to reveal the inevitable arrival, through reason, of freedom.⁵ Yet even if the past was defined and rejected as the hated Ancien Regime, history could not be totally escaped. The Revolution was curiously anti-historical in asserting its distance from the past, but at the same moment, involved in thoroughly time-focused discourses. Anthropologists such as Alfred Gell have stressed the importance of mental time-maps, or understanding of one's place in time. How was this map charted for the average Revolutionary?⁶ The combination of eighteenth-century interest in time and its belief in its scientific nature and importance led, in part, to the introduction of the Republican calendar, but also to a particular perspective on the Revolution.

⁴ For example, see A.N. F¹⁷1338, *Programmes des Professeurs de l'école centrale du Département de l'Isère pour le Cours de l'An VII* (Grenoble, VII [1798-1799]), pp. 29-30. For an examination of a slightly later period, see June K. Burton, *Napoleon and Clio: Historical Writing, Teaching, and Thinking During the First Empire* (Durham, North Carolina, 1979).

⁵ Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago and London, 1975), p. 349.

⁶ Alfred Gell, *The Anthropology of Time* (Cambridge, 1993).

The Enlightenment brought a new importance and relevance to the role of time in society and thought. The *philosophes* moved towards a new understanding of time as historical.⁷ Not only was a new importance given to time and the place of history in social science, but the period also witnessed the development of what has been termed a ‘political discourse of modernity’. That is, a reflexive society: ‘a space for action within which men feel compelled to foresee history; to plan it’.⁸ This, it is argued, was a result not just of intellectual argument, but also of technological and social change. Secondly, I outline how this affected the perception of the Revolution, or how the Revolution was plotted on a mental time-map. This was also to have crucial implications for the conception of the nation.

New Time: Technology and Discourse

The Revolution brought to fruition a new perspective on time, one that was bound up with a conception of modernity. The work of Reinhart Koselleck, the political philosopher and historian, is particularly suggestive on this issue. Koselleck’s project has been a historicist analysis of historians’ key concepts, such as ‘nation’, or ‘politics’. He introduces the phrase ‘historical time’ to describe the changes in thought that had occurred by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Koselleck suggests that time took on a whole new meaning: time was understood historically, and more particularly as what Koselleck dubs *Neuzie*, or ‘new time’. He suggests that new time coincided with a new, or modern, understanding of history and calls for a study of ‘the determination of epochs and doctrines of specific eras’, involving ‘the hypothesis that in differentiating the past and the future, or (in anthropological terms) experience and expectation, it is possible to grasp something like historical time.’ For Koselleck, this is both a matter of trends in intellectual thought and of private, personal experience. Linked to

⁷ Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment* (London, 1968).

⁸ Reinhart Koselleck, trans. Keith Tribe, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), p. 202.

a concept of progress, or at least to its possibility, a sense of modernity and of separation from the past, the 'horizon of future expectation' had been expanded by 1800. As Norman Hampson phrases it, in his examination of the work of Montesquieu, Vico and Herder, 'a new conception of history became an essential part of man's way of looking at himself.'⁹ Enlightened thinkers tended to agree that the direction of history was one of progress, but even more central was that temporality became the foundation for political concepts. For example, conservative and progressive are both political positions requiring a sense of time.¹⁰ A historical sense had become central to an idea of society. The Revolution was perhaps the climax or, in Hampson's words, the 'climacteric' of this change.

⁹ Hampson, *Enlightenment*, p. 239.

¹⁰ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 259-262.



Figure v: Albrecht Altdorfer's *Alexanderschlacht* (detail), 1528

As a demonstration of the change that had taken place, Koselleck offers the example of a picture painted at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Albrecht Altdorfer's *Alexanderschlacht*, portraying a battle from the classical age. In the painting, the massed protagonists are anachronistically depicted in sixteenth-century battledress.¹¹ Here, Koselleck argues, time had been compressed. The distance between Alexander the Great and 1528 in temporal terms was not great, or rather history was not progressing in a linear fashion, but stayed much the same as far as essentials of society were concerned. But by 1800 this synchronicity of historical time had been replaced by a separation into clear historical eras and the possibilities inherent in the future to distance the present from the past. Art during the Revolution added further complexities to such representations, as can be seen in the use of classical allegory by David and others as an expression of political ideals.¹² Despite the political and social relevance of the classical world, it was also recognized that great periods of time separated 1789 from the ancient eras depicted. Furthermore, the dress of those portrayed was not anachronistic, but instead attempted to portray the events with historical accuracy and detail. The separation of the present from the past was not, however, a creation of the eighteenth century, but began as a literary device during the Renaissance. Antiquity, although an eleventh-century word, came into general use in the 1600s. Similarly, 'Moyen Âge' has been dated from 1640. A concern for historical separation, of periodisation, and of a

¹¹ B. c.1480- d. c.1538. German painter, engraver, and architect, noted for his depiction of historical and biblical subjects and the atmosphere of his backgrounds. He also pioneered copperplate etching.

¹² David's portrayal of classical dress reflected scholarship and attention to historical detail, but also the demands of character, situation, and the influence of theatrical costume, Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750-1820* (New Haven & London, 1995), pp. 139-162. I am grateful to Ludmilla Jordanova for this reference.

definition of historical eras, came to predominate in the eighteenth century.¹³

Chronology was considered an important science during the Enlightenment. Barbeu Dubourg, in his *Chronographie* (Paris, 1753), argued that chronology, that is the consideration of epochs and measurement by years, months and days, arose from the same needs as geography and was even more important.¹⁴ Indeed, some of the criticism of the Republican calendar was based on the opinion that it imperiled the study of chronology:

[...]nous ne devons point porter notre ambition jusqu'à reformer la chronologie des anciens & la soumettre à la nôtre. L'ère française sera assez célèbre par les grandes choses pour être entièrement rassurée sur la place qu'elle occupera dans l'histoire; mais nous devons respecter la diversité des chronologies comme des monuments appropriés aux annales de chaque peuple, & comme des fanaux placés dans la nuit des siècles pour éclairer & fixer les grandes époques historiques.

[[...] we should not carry our ambition so far as to reform the chronology of the ancients & submit it to our own. The French era will be famous enough for its great achievements so as to be entirely assured of the place it will occupy in history; but we must respect the diversity of chronologies which are like monuments appropriate to the annals of each people, & like lanterns placed in the night of centuries to illuminate & to fix the great historical periods.]¹⁵

¹³ Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (Princeton, 1967) deals well with this question, esp. pp. 34ff.

¹⁴ B.N. g 761, Barbeu Dubourg, *Chronographie, ou Description des tems; contenant toute la suite des Souverains[sic] de l'Univers, & des principaux événemens de chaque Siècle, depuis la Création du Monde jusqu'à présent en trente-cinq planches gravées en Taille-douce, & réunies en une Machine d'un usage facile & commode* (Paris, 1753), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ Lenoir-Laroche, *Rapport... sur la résolution du 21 thermidor*, p. 9; Julia M. Wright, 'The Order of Time: Nationalism and Literary Anthologies, 1774-1831,' *Papers on Language and*

In contrast to the medieval and reformation view of the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God and the end of the world, Robespierre assumes that the 'acceleration of time is a task of men leading to an epoch of freedom and happiness, the golden future.' On the 10 May 1793, Robespierre announced that 'The time has come to call upon each to realize his own destiny. The progress of human Reason has laid the basis for this great Revolution, and the particular duty of hastening it has fallen to you.'¹⁶

Eulogies and speeches made at local feasts and festivals often called attention to the escape from past history, and the need to look to the future. The new calendar emerged from the flight from the past, as could other aspects of Republican culture: Hunt comments, 'festivals can be understood, then, as the Revolutionaries' own history in the making.'¹⁷

Technological developments also had their place in this cultural and mental shift. A new time-sense induced by these changes affected perspectives of the Revolution. Changes were not limited to the readers and writers of books or the 'Republic of Letters' or the rich. The clock, arguably the most significant machine of the eighteenth century, had a profound effect on society: clocks and time-keeping metaphors suffused the prose and philosophy of the period. La Mettrie, for example, used the clock as a means of explaining human biology.¹⁸ As Sherman comments, 'one of the distinguishing features of the period [was] its unprecedented passion for chronometric exactitude, in its timepieces and in its prose.'¹⁹ The quest for

Literature, 33 (1997), pp. 334-65, see esp. pp. 343-48 on the periodization of literature from the mid- to late-eighteenth century.

¹⁶ Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Bouloiseau, vol. 9 (Paris, 1958), 495; Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 7.

¹⁷ Lynn Hunt, 'Forward' to Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. xi.

¹⁸ Aram Vartanian ed, *La Mettrie's L'Homme Machine. A Study in the Origins of an Idea* (Princeton, 1960), p. 190.

¹⁹ Stuart Jay Sherman, 'Telling Time: Clocks and Calendars, Secrecy and Self-Recording in English Diurnal Form, 1660-1795' (D.Phil. thesis, Columbia University, 1990), p. 9;

exact longitude, and hence a chance at gaining mastery of the seas, was the scientific ‘philosopher’s stone’ of the time.²⁰ More personally, watches may have been for many, in David Landes’ words, more ‘adornments than instruments’, but they were almost ubiquitous in many levels of society.²¹ The importance of watches and clocks in trade should also not be overlooked.²² At one level, speculations in watch manufactures were common. Voltaire, for example invested in a watch factory in Ferney.²³ At the other extreme, watches were one of the staples of trade for peddlers, smugglers and petty thieves.²⁴ Clocks and timepieces were a common element of material culture. As has been argued, timepieces were also becoming more accurate and, by the time of the Revolution, second hands were common, even on pocket watches. As the introduction detailed, the standard interpretation of time use in the eighteenth century is provided by Thompson’s *Past and Present* article on ‘Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism.’²⁵ Thrift and Glennie take issue with this view of time-consciousness and work-discipline, disputing his presentation of a pre-

Landes, *Revolution in Time*; Samuel L. Macey, *Clocks and the Cosmos: Time in Western Life and Thought* (Hamden, 1980).

²⁰ See Ferdinand Berthoud’s bitter comments on John Harrison’s horological innovation, A.N. F¹²1325a, ‘Observations’ [n.d.].

²¹ Landes, *Revolution in Time*, 224; Gavin Lucas, ‘The Changing Face of Time: English Domestic Clocks from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Design History* 8 (1995), pp. 1-9.

²² Landes, *Revolution in Time*, p. 442 n. 19.

²³ Macey, *Clocks*, p. 45.

²⁴ Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’; T. Endelman, ‘L’activité économique des juifs anglais’, *Dix-huitième siècle* 13 (1981), pp. 113-26, esp. pp. 121-2.

²⁵ Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’. His influence can be seen in Landes, *Revolution in Time*, pp. 229-30 and Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago & London, 1996), 318-321.

industrial ‘temporal innocence’.²⁶ They draw attention to the multiple time controls in pre-modern societies, especially the importance of aural time announced by the ringing of a multitude of bells, a theme that Corbin has also highlighted.²⁷ Both interpretations, however, point to the growth in time control by the end of the eighteenth century and the time awareness of many people, especially the educated elite.²⁸ As was argued earlier, temporality was complex and multileveled, but undoubtedly increasing in importance.

An analysis of clock design, in particular the emphasis given to minute and hour dials, shows that the hour markers were initially prominent, then as minute and second hands became more usual, the minute markers gained equality in size. The entire dial also grew in diameter. In part a response to technical change, in part a matter of fashion and style, this change also served to reflect and increase the importance of the division of time and its place in everyday life. Accuracy in timekeeping even to the second meant that the *now* was important, but it was a present that could be calculated in reference to the past and the future.²⁹ Such changes had broader cultural consequences, as Sherman has demonstrated by relating changes in clock technology to shifts in the structures of English prose. Yet clocks and watches were not ubiquitous. Mercier, in pluviôse IX, lamented the lack of public clocks in Paris and complained that it was often impossible to hear the sounding of the hours over the noise of the traffic. Although he suggests a lack of public clocks, his complaint points towards a definite concern with time and the need to access its telling.³⁰

²⁶ Glennie & Thrift, ‘Reworking’.

²⁷ Corbin, *Village Bells*.

²⁸ Sherman, *Telling Time*.

²⁹ Lucas, ‘The Changing Face of Time’, pp. 1-9.

³⁰ Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, p. 1307.

These two inter-linked trends – that is, the increasing sense of living in historical time and the cultural impact of technological advances – affected contemporaries' perspectives of the Revolution. It was within this context that the Revolution could be interpreted as an historical event. As Mona Ozouf has written, time 'was the stuff on which the revolutionaries obstinately worked'.³¹ The Revolution was conceptualized in a secular, even decimal, fashion and in terms of past, present and future. Technological developments entered the realm of political discourse and general culture in a variety of ways. The clock was a valuable metaphor and was employed as a 'common figure of speech.'³² As a consequence of the 'horological revolution' following Huygen's invention of the pendulum escapement mechanism, the clock metaphor began to be employed in great abundance towards the end of the seventeenth century, although its use declined as its novelty began to wear thin and other metaphors, in particular those of biology, came into fashion. But by the end of the eighteenth century, the metaphor was still in use, especially in France, and it had become an accepted part of the fabric of thought. The clock and timing became integral to everyday life and thinking.³³

Such understandings of time informed contemporary understandings of events and their relationship with the past and the future. An appeal to history constituted an important part of the pre-Revolutionary debate. The calling of the Estates General in 1356 was seen to have relevance for 1789. François Furet, basing his conclusions on a survey of some 204 pamphlets (some 10% of the total of published political pamphlets, although selected as the most important) argued that historical claims were widespread, and were particularly pertinent to the fifty most influential pamphlets. History did not provide one uncontested and certain lesson, but was drawn upon to

³¹ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 158.

³² Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty & Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 1986), p. 77.

³³ Macey, *Clocks and the Cosmos*, p. 62.

support a variety of political positions. Between July 1787 and September 1788 more than a thousand pamphlets, mostly anonymous and cheaply printed, were published. Two main schools of thought can be seen: those who produced 'patriotic' pamphlets and the writers of 'ministerial' pamphlets. Within these factions, numerous other approaches to the question of the day were taken, such as the relative influence of Rousseau or Voltaire, or the question of natural or civic rights, but they remained divided by their use of the Gauls or Franks for historical legitimisation. These ancestral tribes were, respectively, compared to the current aristocracy and the Third Estate.³⁴ Both sides also shared much, such as the belief in the concept of the nation and the use of the language of rights. The majority of the publications were known as 'patriotic pamphlets' by contemporaries and were written by local *avocats*, who supported 'parlementary' constitutionalism, but drew radical conclusions in support of the Estates General as the nation's most legitimate agent. Authority for the Estates General lay in historical precedents, which had only recently been swept aside by despotism. As Dale Van Kley summarises:

Indeed, these partial harbingers of revolutionary ideology are relentlessly historical, reading French history as a crescendo of usurpations of national constitutional rights by the forces of 'ministerial' if not monarchical 'despotism'.³⁵

Other pamphlets supported the 'ministerial' position and attacked the 'patriotic' defence of corporate privilege. The ministerial pamphlet saw France's history as a monarchical, or Frankish, defence of the Third Estate

³⁴ Kenneth Margerison, 'History, Representative Institutions, and Political Rights in the French Pre-Revolution (1787-1789)' *French Historical Studies* 15 (1987), pp. 68-98.

³⁵ Dale Van Kley, 'From the Lessons of French History to Truths for All Times and All People: The Historical Origins of an Anti-Historical Declaration' in *The French Idea of Freedom: The Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789*, ed. Dale Van Kley (Stanford, 1994), p. 81.

in the face of its suppression by the aristocracy. Van Kley suggests a dialectic between the two positions, which was synthesised by a 'national' argument, most importantly expressed by Siéyès' *What is the Third Estate?*. Van Kley argues that 'the causalities of this synthesis were obviously the thesis of monarchical sovereignty and the conception of the nation as made up of privileged and corporate groups.'³⁶ Importantly, the concept of the 'general will' was introduced. Once the events of spring and early summer 1789 began, the Third Estate attempted to place itself equidistant from both despotism and aristocracy. At this time, the suggestion that France had no constitution began to be mooted, together with the claim that appeals to history did not have legitimacy. 'Despotism' and 'Aristocracy' became synonymous and the past became 'unusable' to the delegates of the Third Estate. Yet at this point, atemporal reason was their only source of political legitimacy. 'Timeless Universalism' most clearly embodied in the Declaration of Rights replaced contradictory histories of the nation. The suppression of these contradictions proved impossible for what Mably had termed in his phrase of 1758 a 'managed revolution.'

The past was therefore initially important, but for a variety of reasons, some to do with events, others related to the logic of Revolutionary discourse. The past lost its position and relevance. Soon, the new, the present, and the anti-historical were the dominant factors in public discourse. Contemporary events rather than historical truths were used to create political meaning. Lynn Hunt suggests that the French now 'leaped over the French national past' and returned to the classical world.³⁷

Hunt also concludes that 'the will to break with the national past distinguished the French from all previous revolutionary movements'.³⁸ Within this almost utopian context, it is perhaps no wonder that the

³⁶ Van Key, 'From the Lessons of French History', p. 94.

³⁷ Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p. 28.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Jacobins endeavored to reform the calendar.³⁹ Unlike reforms of weights, measures and administrative geography, which were matters of utility and a reflection of the novelty and rationality of the new regime, time (or the future) would inherit the Revolution. Yet, a Republican utopia of harmony between people and freedom balanced with equality did not materialise. As the months and years progressed, the Revolution, and France, required a new history to be written. Rhetorical use of classical time or the eternal present were two attempts to comprehend the contemporary moment. The development of modern, historical time was to prove more durable, especially as the Revolutionary utopia failed to materialise. The creation of the Empire, which included the dismantling of the Republican calendar, had history firmly in its sights. Military success and territorial expansion ensured that there was a new demand for histories of France. Napoleon himself posed as an historical figure, as a great man who changed the course of nations and history. He was also a new form of dictator, as Koselleck suggests: 'From the previously existent "dictator of limited duration" there developed the "sovereign dictator" who legitimated himself in terms of historical time.'⁴⁰

Thermidor

'Nous après une aussi longue révolution, après d'orages, tâchons d'arriver au port'

– members of the *Tribunal criminel*, Avignon, Year III

'Puisse cette époque terrible, où de nouveaux tyrans, plus dangereux que ceux que le fanatisme et la servitude couronnent, être le dernier orage de la révolution!'

– Barère, *Le Moniteur*, 12 thermidor II.

³⁹ Friguglietti, 'Social and Religious Consequences'; Friguglietti, 'Romme'.

⁴⁰ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 261.

‘Les fêtes sont une institution politique: les législateurs de tous les pays et de tous les siècles les ont établies pour perpétuer le souvenir des événemens mémorables ou des hommes qui avoient été les bienfaiteurs de leur pays’,

—Anon., Nantes, Year III⁴¹

Robespierre's fall demanded that questions about the Revolution's self-representation and understanding be brought to the fore. In doing so, notions of time and history were deployed and questioned, while political rhetoric and public debate attempted to come to grips with the Revolution and its meaning. The Republic was founded on ideas of the present and of the future rather than of the past (although the distant, classical past could be looked to for comparisons). Admittedly, it had to define the previous regime and reject it. The time of servitude or 'slavery' was often recalled, but abstract ideas of the nation and the constitution informed political discourse, rather than a sense of history. It drew its legitimacy and authority from reason and from its agreement with the public will, rather than from tradition and historical precedent. Republican imagery and symbolism, so victorious and predominant in the Year II, concentrated on the present and, by drawing on classical models, suggested that France and the Revolution had escaped the constraints of the 1790s, in particular 'despotism' and 'superstition', which, it was considered, still blighted the lives of the men and women of most of Europe.

In a very obvious, if immoderate way, by declaring a year one and using a distinct nomenclature and system for dating, the Republican calendar announced the desire for separation from the recent course of history, a course that was still being pursued by an intransigent and anti-Republican Europe. Within France the counter-revolution was strong, but such anti-Jacobin and anti-Republican imagery was fiercely repressed by the Jacobins.

⁴¹ A.D. Vaucluse, 7 L 118, *Tribunal Criminel, à leurs justiciables* (Avignon, Year III), p. 3; *Moniteur*, vol. 21, pp. 347; A.D. Loire Atlantique, L 352, minutes of the Department, 12 Thermidor III (30 July 1795).

The events of thermidor II thrust such oppositions and questions about the course of the Revolution into the centre of political discourse. Across the country, such issues were publicly debated in journals, assemblies and during meetings of various societies. Physical consequences soon surfaced in street violence and in the punishments for some *terroristes* that were meted out by the Republic's judicial machinery. Importantly, papers and pamphlets turned to explaining and justifying the events of the 'happy revolution' of the 9 thermidor.⁴² Robespierre's fall and the process of ending the Terror forced the Revolution to be reassessed in the changed circumstance and its history to be rewritten.

Contemporaries and subsequent historians saw Thermidor as a time of reassessment of the nature and meaning of the Revolution. The high politics of the Revolution may not have been driven purely by the logic of rhetoric, or straitjacketed by language, but led rather by a mixture of such ideology and language, personal ambition, fear, and the need to rally support from a number of fluctuating groups such as the 'plain' or the Paris commune. Despite the importance of secret discussions and back-room deals, the importance of Enlightenment ideals, as well as the ever-present influence of propaganda and political 'spin', meant that debate, rhetoric and language could not be ignored and were one of the period's main political battlegrounds. The possibilities opened up by the political vacuum created by Robespierre's end erupted in a fierce debate in the Convention on 24 fructidor II (10 September 1794) on the question of the imprisonment of patriots. The debate, which was highly politically charged, became infused with questions of history and the nation's place in time. Merlin de Thionville, who had played a key role in Robespierre's overthrow, attacked the reign of the guillotine and the rule by *terroristes*. He demanded that the Convention should answer three questions: 'd'où nous venons, où nous sommes, où nous allons'.⁴³ These questions were partially answered in a

⁴² Lefebvre, *French Revolution*, p. 139.

⁴³ *Moniteur*, 28 fructidor II (14 September 1794), vol. 21, p. 741.

speech on the penultimate day of the year by Robert Lindet, who found himself under attack after thermidor (and was later briefly imprisoned as a result of the Prairial uprising). On behalf of the Committee of Public Safety, he reported on the state of the nation because, he claimed, the people ‘se sont empressés de faire connaître les causes qui avaient préparé ou occasionné ces grands événements; c’est un compte que nous rendons à la nation[...] La France nous entend et nous juge.’ He stressed the importance of recent events and argued that the uncovering of the conspiracy marked the end of the phases of Revolution. ‘La journée du 9 thermidor apprendra à la postérité qu’à cette époque la nation française avait parcouru toutes les périodes de sa révolution’. His report, which called for hard work and attempted to end division and to restore unity, was accepted by the Convention.⁴⁴ The desire for unity and harmony continued and featured strongly in the political language of the time, with perhaps more intensity than during the pre-Thermidorian period. The Terror had stressed divisions and their dangers, rather than a desire for harmony. Both Merlin and Lindet attempted to place the Republic in a stable temporal context in order to make a political point.

Bronislaw Baczko, in his scholarly meditations on the ending of the Terror, writes that ‘these questions plainly mark[...] the feeling of being at a turning point, where the past, the present and the future can no longer be clearly distinguished, as if the period of Revolution had lost that magnificent transparency, glorified throughout Year II. At the end of this year, the past had become opaque.’⁴⁵ The present was seen almost geographically, marooned in a particular temporal location, and separated from the past and future. Time could be split up into discrete eras, although it was recognised that the past had consequences and legacies. Baczko suggests that the interpretation of events became clouded, uncertain, and

⁴⁴ *Moniteur*, 4th *sans-culottide* II (20 September 1784), vol. 22, pp. 18-27.

⁴⁵ Bronislaw Baczko, trans. Michel Petheram, *Ending the Terror: The French Revolution after Robespierre* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 33.

fraught with difficulties. 9 thermidor proved to be a thorn in the side of the Revolution's self-representation and a source of political conflict, as the debates in the Convention record. Ozouf notes that the Convention sought to 'whitewash' the removal of Robespierre as 'the last storm of the Revolution.'⁴⁶ Yet this problem was not just a matter of difficulty in interpreting the Revolution in historical, or temporal terms, but it was the moment when the Revolution had to come to terms with history and began to deploy it in the Republic's debate on its nature. The Revolution had not escaped the passage of time. As an escape from the difficulty of Terror, an historical explanation was provided.

Historical accounts of the Revolution were produced before the 9 thermidor. Several publications attempted to come to grips with placing the Revolution in some form of chronological and historically meaningful context.⁴⁷ The *Catéchisme Historique et Révolutionnaire* (Paris, Year II) provided predictions for the coming year, such as a belief that liberty will break out in Europe and that Britain will be forced to respect the French Navy. Such content was typical for publications in the almanac form, which had traditionally contained a whole range of prognostication, such as predictions of storms, or of the effects of bad omens and had, in the years before the Revolution, been used as a genre to be drawn upon for a variety of satirical or political purposes. Some were simply humorous and attempted to mock unreason, or were more satirical and made political points. Publications such as the *Almanach de tous les saints de l'assemblée nationale* (Paris, 1791) which mocked the policies and members of the Convention, continued the form

⁴⁶ Ozouf, 'Revolution', in Furet & Ozouf, *Dictionary*, p. 814.

⁴⁷ B.N. 1c²²48, *Catéchisme Historique et Révolutionnaire, Contenant un recueil exact, authentique, chronologique et impartial des événemens remarquables, ainsi que des actions d'éclat, traits de courage, d'héroïsme et autres qui sont arrivés, jour par jour, dans les Armées, à la Convention nationale, etc., etc.* Second ed. (Paris, Year II).

after 1789.⁴⁸ Yet almanacs, like the *Catéchisme*, also provided some form of historical record which placed major political and military events alongside the more unusual and possibly trivial happenings such as the sighting of strange animals or a fall of large hailstones. Other publications, such as *Le porte-feuille du patriote* (n.p., n.d.) were more historical, in that they attempted to provide some form of explanation and abstraction. *Le porte-feuille* offered an historical justification for the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and advertised itself as

Un ouvrage à la tête duquel se trouve la déclaration des droits de l'Homme & du Citoyen, & dans lequel les principes qui constituent cette déclaration sont développés & confirmés par une foule de faits historiques & d'anecdotes intéressantes.

[A work at the beginning of which is found the Declaration of the Rights of Man & of the Citizen & in which the principles that constitute this declaration are developed and confirmed by a mass of historical events and interesting anecdotes.]⁴⁹

Such publications provided analysis and narrative of the events of the Revolution and indeed defined the events as a 'revolution.' The narrative revolved around a set sequence of events, such as the calling of the Estates General or the night of 4 August. In pro-Revolutionary texts explanation and justification for such events were found in the people's desire to be free

⁴⁸ N.Y.P.L. *KVR 9818, *Almanach de tous les saints de l'assemblée nationale qui doivent se réunir dans la Vallée de Josaphat après la Constitution* (Paris, 1791); B.N. Lc²²20, *Le Nostradamus Moderne, Almanach National et Patriotique, Avec des changemens notables dans le Calendrier, et des Prédications pour chaque mois; ENRICHI D'anecdotes et de traits remarquables, &c.* (Liege, 1790).

⁴⁹ B.N. Le³⁹7610, *Le porte-feuille du patriote, contenant la Déclarations des droits de l'Homme & du Citoyen, un grand nombre d'anecdotes piquantes & peu connues sur la Cour, les Ministres, le Clergé, la Noblesse, les Parlemens & sur divers autres objets qui démontrent combien des droits de l'Homme ont été méconnus & mépris jusqu'à présent, & combien la révolution actuelle étoit indispensable* (n.p. , n.d, [1789/90?]).

and the corruption of the old order. Comparisons with previous moments on the path to liberty were also sometimes drawn. Another technique was to argue that the people were originally free, but had gradually become enslaved by such people and institutions as the Moguls or the Papacy.⁵⁰ These histories presented the events of the period from 1789 to the inauguration of the Republic as a discrete whole and a distinct era, one of almost miraculous significance. One writer claimed that July 1789 witnessed ‘une semaine étonnante que l’histoire doit consacrer à jamais sous la dénomination de la *semaine de miracles*’.⁵¹ The net result of such writings was to add to the belief that the Revolution and the Republic did indeed constitute a new era of the reign of liberty, one distinct from the past.

A foundation myth (which is not to argue that the events were imaginary) dominated ways of conceiving the Revolution in texts and imagery. In this context, time was given a special gloss, suggesting that the era was, if not utopian, then at least unique. The present was continually linked to the recent past, the week of miracles, and the ever-present possibility of popular revolution springing up. The constant memorialisation and commemoration of key Revolutionary events that formed the bulk of the creation of a Republican culture attempted to provide, in Hunt’s words, a ‘mythic present’.⁵²

As the years since the remarkable events of 1789 passed the undermining of the ‘eternal present’ was almost inevitable. The rhetoric of a new start and the possibilities of a utopian world, free from the inequalities of the past, proved impossible to maintain. Food shortages, grain hoarding and the constant threat or reality of war and rebellion undermined a sense of a

⁵⁰ *Le porte-feuille du patriote*, p. 11.

⁵¹ N.Y.P.L. Spencer Collection. French 1794 75-211, Ducray-Duminil, *Principaux événements de la révolution et notamment de la semaine mémorable, représentés par douze figures en taille-douce, très-bien exécutées. Avec un précis historique* (Paris, Year II), p. 2.

⁵² Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p. 32.

‘brave new world.’ For the many who were hostile to the Revolution, such a utopian dawn was swiftly evaporated, indeed many held that it had never existed. For the supporters of the Revolution, the present failed to fulfil its potential, while the corruption of the Revolution, as seen in Robespierre’s supposed conspiracy, led to confusion and disillusionment. A year after thermidor, Boissy d’Anglas was to write in the *Moniteur* that ‘We have gone through six centuries in six years.’ While time was therefore compressed, or speeded up, it was not without vast effort and draining of energy. The Revolution (and Revolutionaries), grew older and began to tire, as Baczko suggests:

Contrary to its symbols and images, the Revolution is not a fountain of eternal youth. It grows old and makes people old. The feeling of living in a time that wears out and devastates people and things provides the refrain of the constitutional debates.⁵³

The importance of history as a lens through which to view the world and its relationship to personal life or *mentalité*, as is revealed through journals and diaries, are questions discussed below.

Unquestionably, the Revolution therefore had implications for historical thinking. As chapter four outlined, the process of historicising and conceiving the Revolution in its entirety was not without problems, but such a move did take place, as Revolutionary festivals (and personal correspondence) demonstrate. This section has argued that a new idea of time, of historical time and of a sense of modernity was created in this period. This process was not without complexities, nor did it operate just on one level. Furthermore, political discourse drew on temporal concepts. At first, the Revolution was depicted, in the realm of political discourse or theory, as ahistorical, then political rhetoric became concerned with Revolutionary history and finally, during the Directory, Consulate and

⁵³ Baczko, *Ending the Terror*, p. 250.

Empire, within the context of European and World history. The calendar reflected each of these new political intentions and showed that time was a political and moral question.

What were the consequences of these three changes: increased time awareness; the perspective on time revealed by the calendar; and the impact of the turmoil of the Revolution? As the first chapter suggested, most attempts towards a social theory of time have resulted in a viewing of time as multi-layered, varying from social time signals or personal life-story to the level of history or cosmology. Koselleck, Norbert Elias and George Gurevitch are no exception. Herder also considered there to be 'at any one time in the Universe innumerable many times.' Yet all these theorists suggest that these layers are interdependent. Ripples in time move at a different rate through town and country, where there existed differing periodicities, such as the needs of trade or the demands of the agricultural year.⁵⁴

The Revolution operated on all these levels of time. That of memory and personal awareness of the passing of time was also affected. An analysis of such subjective experience can be approached via the various temporal scales and expectations people use to chart their life-course. One could expect to live a certain length of time: according to an almanac for the Year VII, if one had made it to twenty, then one could reasonably expect to live for another thirty-four years and three months.⁵⁵ At the other end of

⁵⁴ Norbert Elias, trans. in part, Edmund Jephcott, *Time: an Essay* (Oxford, 1992); George Gurvitch, trans. & ed., Mytle Korenbaum, *The Spectrum of Social Time* (Dordrecht, 1964); J. G. Herder, *Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1799 (East Berlin, 1955), p. 86, cited in Koselleck, *Future's Past*, p. xiii.; John Urry, "Time and Space in Giddens' social theory," in *Giddens' Theory of Structuration: A Critical Appreciation*, Christopher G. A. Bryant and David Jary, eds. (London & New York, 1992), pp. 160-75.

⁵⁵ Lagrange remarked on such calculations: 'In *annuities*, the consideration of interest is combined with that of the probability of life; and as every one is prone to believe that he

the temporal scale, almanacs informed their readers that the earth had been around for 5800 years.⁵⁶ Within these scales, the calendar transmitted a Republican conception of time and the meaning of history. To begin, the new era began with the Republic in 1792. The ritual year marked the events of the Revolution and the key concepts of the Republic: a combination of a celebration of the eternal present and a commemoration of the past. Suggested programs for the *fêtes décadaires* attempted to illustrate the path forward that the nation was taking.⁵⁷ The impact of army life and news of *journées* also structured memories of lives. Yet the Revolution also had its shadows. A fear for the future and a sense of the inability to control time is detectable in art and literature of the period, as well as counter-revolutionary thought. At one end of the spectrum is David's allegory in the *Sabine Women* of the moment when the Revolution has to be reined in. Goya also presents us with dark fears of the future, while de Maistre and Chateaubriand brood over the Revolution in a completely time-bound fashion. Reactionaries sought to put the clock back.

will live very long, and as, on the other hand, one is apt to underestimate the value of property which must be abandoned on death, a peculiar temptation arises, when one is without children, to invest one's fortune, wholly or in part, in annuities', Joseph Louis Lagrange, trans. Thomas J. McCormack, *Lectures on Elementary Mathematics*, Second ed. (Chicago, 1901), p. 14.

⁵⁶ B.N. 1c³⁰203, *Annuaire du Jura, pour l'an VIII de la République française contenant les Foires et Marchés des Départements du Jura, du Doubs, de Saône-et-Loire, de l'Ain, du Léman; les taxes des Barrières, les nouvelles Mesures de la République, la nomenclature des départements, le tableau des principaux fonctionnaires publics, etc. etc* (Lons-le-Saunier, Year VII).

⁵⁷ B.N. 1c³⁸1140, Opoix, *Fête à la pudeur, proposée comme modèle pour les autres fêtes décadaires* (Paris, Year III).

An imagined nation? Centralisation, nation and patrie

‘L’éducation d’un peuple libre doit être jettée [sic] en quelque sorte dans le moule de sa constitution pour imprimer de bonne heure à l’âme des citoyens la forme nationale et leur donner les habitudes de la liberté.’

– Lakanal, Year III.⁵⁸

The Revolution accelerated certain cultural trends and emphasised the position of the nation within time; that is, the way in which the nation was plotted against the backdrop of the passage (or pausing) of time. It seems appropriate, therefore, to relate these changes to the development of nationalism, itself a phenomenon which has been related to conceptions of time, most notably by Benedict Anderson in his important study, *Imagined Nations*. This section attempts to balance the demands of both theory and empirical description.

For Anderson the concept of ‘simultaneity’ is of ‘fundamental importance’ in understanding ‘the obscure genesis of nationalism.’ In the place of what he calls a medieval or ‘messianic temporality’, modern society exists in a secular ‘homogeneous empty time[...] marked not by temporal coincidence, and measured by the clocks and the calendar’.⁵⁹ Anderson focuses on the eighteenth-century novel and newspaper as material and technological innovations, which ‘provided the technical means for “re-presenting” the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation.’ His influence on the understanding of the genesis of nationalism has been important, but his thesis deserves and, indeed requires, testing in relation to the specific histories, in this case that of the Revolutionary period and France. These, then, are the concerns of this section: how does Anderson’s thesis on the invention of nationalism, put into the context of other

⁵⁸ A.N. AB XIX 333, Notes on the Republican calendar by Lakanal, Year III.

⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London, 1991), p. 24.

theories of nationalism, relate to the Revolution? What were the unique circumstances and consequences of this period and location?

The French Revolution and the Birth of Nationalism?

The impact of the French Revolution, and particularly the Revolutionary wars, has traditionally been seen as a key stage in the formation of European nationalism, both for 'popular' nationalism and as a political movement more specifically limited to the middle-classes. Patriotic fervour, it is argued, was aroused by conquest and resistance, while the creation of satellite states, such as the Italian Republics and the Batavian Republic, helped generate a sense of nation and statehood as opposed to regionalism or imperial domination by a foreign power such as the Habsburgs. Such states were, of course, dominated by France, but it was not as dominions or fiefdoms, but using the language of sister republics, with authority, in theory, arising from the will of the nation. The language of nationalism therefore comes into being at the same time as a national identity created by opposition to French expansionism.

The word 'nationalism' was not widely used in France until after the military victories of 1807 or 1808, although it seems to have been coined in 1798.⁶⁰ After the rejection of internationalism in 1792-3, it is clear that nationalism was a potent force in French politics. The word nationalism, ever a nebulous concept, requires some definition if it is to be used in any meaningful sense.⁶¹ A vast body of literature exists on this. Ernest Gellner argues that 'nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.' For Gellner, nationalism has to be political, and understood in the context of a world of nation-states, something that has less bearing on the late-eighteenth century. He does provide a useful definition: at root, nationalism is an ideology that

⁶⁰ 'Nationalism', *Petit Robert*, Higonnet, *Goodness*, p. 307.

⁶¹ David Bell, 'Review Article: Early Modern France', *Journal of Modern History*, 68 (1996), pp. 86- 121

believes 'the national state, identified with a national culture and committed to its protection, is the natural political unit.'⁶² Anthony Giddens agrees with this summation, pithily suggesting that the nation-state is 'a bounded power container'.⁶³ The growth of nationalism was reflected by the importance placed on the geographic and cartographic boundaries of states. The medieval world showed a marked lack of concern by boundaries, compared to the careful cartography employed by modern states. Yet nationalism is more than a political ideology held by the few, but suggests more widespread patriotic sense and sense of identity. Nationalism is therefore a political ideology, but also requires a collective sense of identity. Anderson has fruitfully described this as an 'imagined community' and historians have increasingly studied the ways in which nations, and their cultures, have been constructed. Consequently, the definition of 'natural' borders and, even more contentiously, defining the members of a nation became important.⁶⁴

Understandings of the development of the nation state are similarly contrary. No real consensus exists for dating the birth of nationalism, and again the term proves to be nebulous. Gellner stresses the importance of industrialisation's requirement of standardisation and a common education system. Anderson, in contrast, highlights the role of capitalism, in particular print capitalism, a literate culture, and the replacement of Latin with the vernacular as the officially sanctioned language. Attempts to explain the impact of nationalism in other parts of the world have also led to different theories. The monopolisation of legitimate violence by the state is another aspect. Violence became the prerogative of the state and no longer did the

⁶² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1984), p. 4; Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford 1994), p. 409

⁶³ Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 120.

⁶⁴ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Inventing Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983) illustrates the process of the production of national culture.

kings of France or England go to war, but the nations.⁶⁵ Two issues, at least, range across these differing theories of nationalism. Nationalism is both objective and subjective, existing in the realm of the psychological and of collective mentality, but also displaying traits that can be compared amongst different parts of the world. If nationalism was wholly subjective and situation dependent, then it would be impossible to make the comparisons historians and political scientists attempt. Two facets of the term are also considered: the idea of nation as nation-state, or political unit, and the concept of the nation-as-a-people. In sum, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, but is also related to identity in a personal way.

In many ways, the Revolutionaries gave little concern to these considerations. The concept of the nation was a powerful and readily accepted one in the political context of the events of 1789, particularly to the majority of the political actors, who were steeped in Enlightenment thought. As Furet argues, the strident belief that political authority was derived from the nation created a politics with a fatal tendency towards, if not totalitarianism (as J.L. Talmon contentiously suggests), a politics without compromise or flexibility. One might hesitate before following Furet to an interpretation that appears almost wholly determined by political rhetoric and the logic of philosophy.⁶⁶

Nationalism in France was related to a number of terms, most importantly, the concept of *la patrie*. A duality existed in the concept of *la patrie* which, as Norman Hampson has shown, came most violently into focus at time of war: "The new France, in which citizens were supposed to identify themselves with the community whose legislators, administrators, judges and priests they elected, could only survive if it protected itself

⁶⁵ Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London, 1995), p. 21.

⁶⁶ J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (New York, 1965); Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris, 1978).

against foreign invasion.’⁶⁷ Defence of the *patrie* entailed maintaining France’s borders and neutralising foreign threats by appealing to an ‘old-fashioned’ patriotic feeling, but also for the defence of the Republican virtues embodied by the nation. Nationalism therefore fluctuated and developed at different rates in relation to political and military events.

The Revolutionaries and, as a consequence, the new French Republic explicitly based its claim to authority on popular sovereignty. A concept of the nation informed the drawing up of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the creation of the National Convention. Article 3 of the Declaration announces that ‘The principle of sovereignty lies essentially in the Nation. No body, no individual can exercise authority that does not emanate from it.’ Before the Revolution, many key features of the modern state were to be found within France, such as a reasonably clearly defined territory, increasing centralisation, and a growing collective and popular identity. The idea of the *patrie* and the nation were key words of eighteenth-century political theorising.⁶⁸ But France was not a nation, with a collective sense of itself. The country even lacked a common flag (something the Revolutionaries were swift to alter). By the time Louis XVI was made to accept the title ‘King of the French’, rather than ‘King of France’, a new element which can be identified with the concept of the nation had entered political discourse and formed the basis of claims to power. Political authority came from the people, who constituted the nation, against the arbitrary authority of the monarchy, the aristocracy and the church.⁶⁹ Such an analysis immediately introduces the element of class and posits the

⁶⁷ Norman Hampson, ‘La Patrie’, in *The French Revolution and the creation of a modern political culture: The political culture of the French Revolution*, Colin Lucas, ed. (Oxford, 1988), vol. 2, pp. 125-37.

⁶⁸ Nora, ‘Nation’ in *Critical Dictionary*, pp. 742-3.

⁶⁹ Brian Jenkins argues for the importance of the tension between popular, democratic nationalism and the power of the élite, Jenkins, *Nationalism in France: Class and Nation since 1789* (London & New York, 1990).

existence of members of a country who, somehow, are outside of the nation.

But there were a thousand Frances and the concept of the nation was the product of educated thinkers acting in a specific political and historical context. Problems with attempting to argue for popular nationalism in France during this period are many. As Alan Forrest shows, while stressing the difficulties of relying on such statistics, refusal to fight on behalf of the concept of the nation was commonplace. 175,000 fugitives took advantage of an amnesty from conscription in 1803.⁷⁰ Within France strong regional identities conflicted with possible national identities. The response of the Vendée to the *levée-en-masse* undermines a view which sees the Revolution as the birth of the French nation.

Evidence from the period suggests that a sense of nationhood was limited to small groups of the middle class and the well educated, who saw nationalism as part of a political programme. For most people, the region and local community provided one's sense of identity. Despite increases in peasant mobility and the growth of wider networks of exchange, French village life remained resolutely parochial, an argument supported by marriage statistics which show that the great number of marriages remained local, and rarely involved couplings of beyond a ten kilometre radius.⁷¹

On the other hand, although a sense of an identity beyond the region or locality was present before the Revolution, nationalism in its political form, something more than just patriotism or a growing sense of Gallic identity, can be seen as a consequence of the Revolutionary process. Nonetheless, French nationalism built upon a general trend in the growth in the sense of national identity. Patrice Higonnet summarises, 'the reality (*if not the*

⁷⁰ Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (Oxford, 1989), p. 70.

⁷¹ Jones, *Peasants and Rural Society*, pp. 56-9; Gibson, 'National Consciousness in Modern Europe', pp. 177-181.

politicization) of French nationalism and of militarised patriotism was everywhere present in French culture long before the Revolution.⁷² As a distinct French culture already existed before 1789, then the idea of the nation was able swiftly to take political form. The drawing up of the *cahiers de doléances* was, as Beatrice Hyslop suggests, ‘an important factor in stimulating national consciousness, and spreading the more progressive types of nationalism.’⁷³

As a popular belief – that of a widespread national consciousness – French nationalism needs qualifying. As Donald Sutherland argues, the relationship between Revolution and counter-revolution is the main story of the Revolution. Such a division created two parties with claims to speak for the nation. France, despite the pre-existence of some characteristics of nationalism, clearly needed to be constructed as a nation.

The Republican calendar projected the existence of a single, French nation requiring a new form of marking time. A national system of festivals formed a key part of creation and imagining of a nation:

Dans toute la France il y eut à la même heure des fêtes et des fédérations partielles, et 25 millions d’hommes y assistèrent collectivement: mais la fête à jamais mémorable, la fête par excellence, fut celle de la fédération générale qui eut lieu à Paris où des milliers de Français, expressément délégués par la nation entière, vinrent jurer, en son nom, qu’elle voulait être et demeurer libre.

[In all France there were at the same time fêtes and partial unions, which 25 million men attended together: but the ever-memorable fête, the fête *par excellence*, was that of the general federation which took place in Paris when

⁷² Higonnet, *Goodness*, p. 307.

⁷³ Beatrice F. Hyslop, *French Nationalism in 1789 according to the General Cahiers* (New York, 1968), p. 232.

thousands of the French, expressly delegated by the entire nation, came to swear, in its name, that the nation wanted to be and to remain free]⁷⁴

The Republican calendar was also explicitly aligned with the nation. The starting point for the counting of the years was the same as the inauguration of the Republic: 22 September 1792. Proposals were made to bind the nation together by the use of the Republican calendar. In the Year VII, Neufchâteau approved plans for a scheme of sundials along main roads and in public gardens. A proposal had been received from Mignon, a professor of sciences, who wished to ‘make clear for the People the precision and the advantages of the new calendar by the raising of *horographiques* in the centre of walkways, public places, and on the roads.’ These monuments would mark the signs of the zodiac, the names of the months of the *calendrier républicain*, the seasons and the viewer would then perceive ‘the harmony which reigns between our calendar and the celestial sphere.’ Golden and azure lines set against porphyry and alabaster would mark the start of the year, the months, solstices, equinoxes and the ‘most memorable epochs of the French Revolution.’ The minister agreed to ask the Bureau des Longitudes for advice on the best method of execution and to invite artists to provide plans and proposals for ‘des monumens horaires et des colonnes astronomiques propres à servir de gnomons.’⁷⁵ Lalande, replying on behalf of the Bureau, approved of the idea in theory and agreed that the state ought to be propagating knowledge of astronomy and physics, but considered the plan impossible to implement in current circumstances. Its successes in spreading awareness of the national calendar and in creating a viable system of festivals were limited. There is, however, a case for

⁷⁴ A.N. AD VIII 18, Félix Faulcon, *Discours de Félix Faulcon, Député de la Vienne sur le Quatorze Juillet* (Paris, Year VI), p. 4

⁷⁵ ‘[...]de rendre sensible pour le Peuple l’exactitude et les avantages du nouveau calendrier par l’élévation de monumens horographiques au centre des promenades, des Places publiques, et sur les routes.’ A.N. F^{1c}188-89, Letter, Mignon to the Comité d’Instruction Publique, 20 germinal VII (9 April 1799).

examining the phenomenon of nationalism in relation to the contemporary comprehension of temporality.

Anderson suggestively links the ways in which the nation is imagined and the sense of nationalism created to a shared sense of time. If this connection is examined in the context of France and the Revolution, a number of questions arise. First, if the birth of the nation was partially evolutionary, how do time consciousness and the calendar relate? Second, if the nation was a project of the Republic, was the calendar directly related to this? In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argues that a sense of common time forms a crucial element in the process of ‘imagining the nation.’⁷⁶ He suggests that newspapers, with common dating, led to a sense of all citizens existing at the same time. A public sphere implies community, at least of sorts. Stuart Sherman has developed Anderson’s thought, seeing awareness of ‘simultaneity’ as key to the ‘imagined community’ of the modern nation.⁷⁷ This community, or public sphere, exists in newspapers and amongst their correspondents. Sherman insists that this commonality, cultivated ‘by virtue of their engagement with the printed sheet’, had a temporal dimension. The date on the top of the newspaper, Anderson suggests, is ‘the single most important emblem on it’ because it ‘provides the essential connection, the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time.’⁷⁸ Anderson, however, avoids an examination of the social and communal context of reading.⁷⁹ For both Sherman, focusing on England, and Dena Goodman, examining the French ‘Republic of Letters’, reciprocity and ‘mirroring’ of readers and writer is central for the creation of this community. In England, letter pages and marginalia facilitated exchange of ideas and gossip in coffee houses and along the paths of newspapers and periodicals as they were passed around. In France, the

⁷⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 24.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; Sherman, *Telling Time*, pp. 22–23, 34, 112.

⁷⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 33.

⁷⁹ Sherman, *Telling Time*, pp. 112–13.

salon, public lectures, periodicals and papers fulfilled the same function.⁸⁰ The explosion of newsprint culture following the Revolution and the temporary collapse of press restrictions on the number of newspapers and periodicals made this the case in France to a greater extent than ever before. A new style of public politics had been created by the rapid dissemination of news.⁸¹ Yet, again, this culture was not static but fluctuated through the Revolutionary period; the public could also be limited by gender and class. As governments and regimes relaxed or increased censorship, and political temperatures varied, the 'space' for such a public sphere grew or shrank accordingly. For example, correspondence amongst the Jacobin clubs was profuse and such popular societies provided a public sphere in the most vivid form. As Michael Kennedy has demonstrated, the clubs and their correspondence grew enormously from 1790-93, although they eventually withered. During this period, the public sphere shifted from being international to more specifically French. Other structural developments, such as the growth of a postal system, the creation of a reading public, the spread of education and festive institutions helped create just such a community.

The late eighteenth century was not unfamiliar with temporal conceptions of the nation, as a speech by an Irishman, Edmund Burke, shows:

'A nation is[...] an idea of continuity in time as well as in numbers and in space. It is a constitution made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions,

⁸⁰ Dena Goodman, *The republic of Letters: a cultural history of the French enlightenment* (Ithaca, 1994), p. 18.

⁸¹ Claude Labrosse, 'Le temps immédiat dans la presse parisienne de 1789', in *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: la Révolution Française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures? Actes du colloque organisé à Marseille par la Commission Scientifique régionale pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution Française et le Centre Méridional d'Histoire sociale des mentalités et des cultures (Université de Provence, les 22,23,24 février 1989)* (Aix-en-Provence, 1990), pp. 110-20.

tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil, and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time.⁸²

Burke is directly arguing for a sense of simultaneity. Time and a shared past was a necessary requisite for the creation of the nation. But such a view also posits the nation as *moving* through and being located within time, a conception that both Anderson and Koselleck seem to be arguing for.

Travellers, such as John George Keysler writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, reported national differences of time measurement: 'at first it is a little puzzling to reconcile the *Italian* clocks with the *French* and *German* method of computing time'.⁸³ Nations (or countries to be more exact) were thus associated with a particular form of time. Since the Gregorian reform of the calendar, various countries also employed different calendars, accentuating their differences.

Indeed, the sense of community was also created by the Revolutionaries, a nation in which all clocks would 'Go just alike'.⁸⁴ This was the opposite of the France of backward peasants with their inaccurately aligned and resolutely local sundials, which so annoyed the astronomer and mathematician Lalande, who commented that the villages he visited were isolated from true time.⁸⁵ The idea of a common, public time was intended

⁸² E. Burke, 'Speech on the State of Representation of the Commons in Parliament' (1782), *Works*, vol. III (Oxford, 1925-1930), p. 355.

⁸³ John George Keysler, *Travels* 2nd ed (London, 1756), vol. 1, p. 301. See also pp. 100, 251, 280. Italian clocks struck one an hour after sunset and progressed each hour to twelve, although some only struck as far as six and then began again at one. Some continues until they reached twenty-four.

⁸⁴ 'Tis with our judgement as our watches, none/Go just alike, yet each believes his own.' Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (1711).

⁸⁵ Hélène Monod-Casidy, 'Un astronome-philosophe, Jérôme de Lalande,' in Theodore Besterman, ed., *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 56. Transactions of the Second International congress on the Enlightenment II (Geneve, 1967), pp. 914-915.

to invade private control. Ultimately, time was officially linked to the state and carried not just a message of individuality, of one's own pocket watch, but of propaganda and ideology of a new regime.

Proposed school curricula similarly carried messages about the nation. History text books were to focus on the development of the French nation. Indeed, such a 'whiggish' view of the past informed most history writing.⁸⁶ History explained the development of liberty, but also of France. Indeed, as expressed above, the *patrie* expressed these two concepts. France was seen as a geographical territory and state; not just a 'power-container', but a vessel for liberty and an idea. One ought not to overemphasize the role of education in this period, but all these plans point towards a desire for standardisation throughout France, itself related to a scientific concern witnessed by attempts to regularise weights and measures.

While in general many of the trends Anderson describes can be detected in France during this period, a number of contradictions and complexities also need to be noted. First, Anderson, following Benjamin's reflections, views the end of 'Messianic time' as an important aspect of the development of the nation. He suggests that the 'vacuum' created by a notion of linear, regular time stretching into the future is filled by the idea of the nation.⁸⁷

Secondly, news was not distributed evenly. Time thus appeared to pass more slowly, or more out of kilter in the provinces than in Paris or other important centres. Arthur Young, for example, found it impossible to find a source of news in Besançon during his travels. Perhaps he was looking in the wrong place, as he wanted a text to read, rather than heading to a bar or coffee-shop to overhear or discuss the latest news in a society that was still

⁸⁶ Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London, 1931).

⁸⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

predominantly oral.⁸⁸ Regionalism, or federalism, was a powerful force in French politics. Furthermore, news spread via different cultural agents and took on different forms according to the social context. Educated, elite understanding of the political process, for instance, differed from that of the mass of the peasantry for whom rumour and the tropes of folklore provided the most common lens through which the events of the Revolution were interpreted and disseminated.⁸⁹ 'News' itself is a term which ought to be historicised.

A number of problems with Anderson's approach can be raised. He argues for a form of cultural nationalism, rooted in material circumstances. One can therefore quarrel with his overall thesis, but nationalism, as a feeling or emotion, cannot be dismissed, even if it is premature to describe a political flowering (or outbreak) of nationalism. Secondly, Anderson limits himself to newsprint and the novel. Both are vitally important cultural and social innovations or developments, but they were still limited to certain sections of society. The role of these media before and during the Revolution needs to be assessed. Other texts were of importance: almanacs (before and during the events of the Revolution), popular chapbooks and, during the Revolution, the vast numbers of cultural artefacts and events organised by the Republic. Localism and regionalism, sometimes competing, sometimes aligned with a sense of the nation, were often reinforced by local events and publications. Thirdly, is it correct to suggest that time during this period was secular? It is perhaps more correct to suggest that it had been replaced by a utopian, or Republican vision, which was in competition with a revitalised religion.

⁸⁸ Claude BreLOT, 'Besançon révolutionnaire,' *Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon*, 77 (1966), pp. 68-69.

⁸⁹ Lefebvre, *La Grande Peur de 1789* (Paris, 1932). See also Phillipe Bourdon, *Des lieux, des mots, les Révolutionnaires. Le Puy-de-Dôme entre 1789 et 1799* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1995).

Conclusions

This section has attempted to draw out some of the relationships between the experience of the Revolution, the role of time in society and culture and the beginnings and nature of nationalism in France. Nationalism is in part a political expression of an ideology relating a people conceived as a nation to power, authority and a defined state, but it is also a movement that requires a certain level of popular support, or mass adherence. The Revolution undoubtedly witnessed the creation of a political language that relied on the concept of the nation, rather than just the state, or the people. Popular nationalism also drew upon longer-term trends that were underway prior to 1789, such as increasing travel within France and the spread of newsprint. As Hampson concludes, 'the generation before 1789 certainly saw the decline of cosmopolitanism and a new insistence on the uniqueness of nations, based on a new awareness of them as entities evolving in time.'⁹⁰ The Revolution intensified this process, but at the same time generated opposing forms of nationalism, which were related to the politics of counter-revolution or Republicanism. Schemes, plans and projects for the creation of the nation, many of which, such as ideas of mass education, fall outside of the scope of this thesis, met with little success. Furthermore, considerable forces worked in opposition to the process of 'nationalisation', such as the strengthening of local identity.

Moving away from more traditional approaches to the study of the rise of nationalism, it is possible to see the beginnings and the strengthening of the many ways in which nationalism becomes a forgotten part of everyday life. National symbols, rhetoric and assumptions entered most elements of public life, from the profusion of flags and the informal adoption of a national anthem, to the forms of government that affected everyone's life. The principle of simultaneity was also strongly increased. In almost every aspect of life, people were made aware of what was occurring throughout the whole of France. The explosion of newsprint, the spread of the public

⁹⁰ Hampson, *Enlightenment*, p. 250

sphere, the creation of national institutions and concurrent fetes constantly reminded the French that life continued elsewhere. The nation did not exist equally, but was based in Paris. Restif de la Bretonne agreed: 'J'ai résolu de me fixer à Paris: depuis que j'ai goûté de ce délicieux séjour de la liberté, la province me paraît insupportable.'⁹¹ The language and idiom of the Paris basin came to be authorised as the correct form of the national language.

Despite attempts to 'shrink' the country by technological innovations such as the telegraph, travel speeds were the same as when France was Gaul and benefited from Roman roads. It would be fifty years or more until the railways introduced standardised time throughout France and reduced the problem of local time differences, as Corbin has examined.⁹² Another, perhaps undervalued, development was that of the electric telegraph which enabled clocks throughout France to be co-ordinated with Paris. Yet the importance of solar time remained. Gnomons were still painted on walls and church towers, and the railways still used an advanced form of the sundial during the First World War.⁹³

A number of different factors and processes informed this moment in France's history. Longer-term trends, such as the growth of French national consciousness, played their part in creating the conditions for the nationalistic rhetoric of the Revolution. The Revolutionaries' cultural programme also attempted to create national institutions and identities. In this they were partially successful, but at the same time, opposing ideas of national (non-Republican) or regional identity were strengthened. Its implications for the future history of France, were to be a developing tradition of competing nationalisms, one Republican, the other monarchical

⁹¹ Restif de la Bretonne, H. Bachelin, ed., *L'Œuvre de Restif de la Bretonne*, vol. VI (Paris, 1931), p. 173.

⁹² Corbin, *Le temps, le désir et l'horreur*, pp. 9-22.

⁹³ René R. J. Rohr, trans. Gabriel Godin, *Sundials: History, Theory and Practice* (Toronto, 1970), p. 92.

or traditionalist: Pierre Nora writes that 'France comprises not two halves of one nation but two complete nations, each of which could lay claim to absolute uniqueness'. Nationalism in France was a problem of 'dual national definition'.⁹⁴ The spread of a sense of synchronous time, as Anderson understands it, was begun before the Revolution. Compared to many other parts of Europe, France was advanced in the diffusion of clocks and other timepieces, and in print culture. A sense of 'simultaneity' was already in place. The Revolution advanced these trends, but the problems in the watch industry and the destruction of bells may have worked against them. The calendar, in so far as it spread, could have been an important factor in the creation of national identity, operating at the level of the everyday.

Finally, if one looks at public discourse, a sense of a nation 'progressing' through time is clearly present. *La Grande Joie du Père Duchesne*, Jacques-René Hébert's series of pamphlets and *affiches*, reveals the importance of the concept of the nation to the radical sections of the Republicans and also some of the ways in which ideas of time (its direction and a temporal understanding of society) were employed as a backdrop, or unnoticed part, of other rhetorical strategies. The importance of the nation, or the *patrie* is an established historical fact. It was a key concept of Republican discourse, as was the concept of the French. The rest of Europe, indeed the world, was seen in this fashion. Hébert wrote in 1793-94, as part of a sequence of clichéd Republican rhetoric, that 'toutes les nations imitent l'exemple des Français'.⁹⁵ 'Père Duchesne' also highlighted the divisions within the nation, or rather between the enemies of the Republic (*aristocrates*) and its brave defenders (*sans-culottes*). The past was characterised as one of tyranny, while

⁹⁴ Pierre Nora, 'Nation' in Furet & Ozouf, *Dictionary*, p. 749.

⁹⁵ *La Grande Joie du Père Duchesne*, no. 338, p. 7.

today the struggle is for liberty. ('Il combattoit pour la tyrannie, et aujourd'hui il défend la liberté').⁹⁶

This view can be compared with local orations, such as this longer piece from a professor of grammar in Besançon in the Year VI.

Citoyens, de toutes les fêtes nationales décrétées par le Gouvernement, il n'en est pas de plus grande, de plus sublime, de plus chère à nos cœurs que celle de la fondation de la République, que nous célébrons en ce jour; il n'en est pas qui rappelle des souvenirs plus glorieux, qui promette un avenir plus flatteur à des hommes libres. Que les haines particulières, les ressentiments étrangers à la cause du peuple, se taisent. Le langage des passions ne doit pas se faire entendre où l'on parle de République. Que ma voix prenne un accent digne d'un si vaste sujet! Que cet accent porte le trouble dans l'âme du méchant et la joie dans le cœur des vrais patriotes! En parcourant les principaux événements de la révolution française, ne perdons pas de vue les beaux siècles de Sparte, de Rome et d'Athènes.

[Citizens, of all the national fêtes decreed by the government, there is not one more grand, more sublime, more dear to our hearts than that of the Foundation of the Republic, which we celebrate on this day; no other brings to mind such glorious memories which promise a prouder future to free men. May all private hatreds, and resentments foreign to the cause of the people, fall silent. The language of passions must not be heard when one speaks of the Republic. May my voice assume a dignified tone worthy of such a vast subject! May this tone strike trouble into the very soul of the malicious and bring joy to the heart of true patriots! By considering the principal events of the French Revolution, we must not lose sight of the beautiful epochs of Sparta, of Rome and of Athens.]⁹⁷

⁹⁶ *Père Duchesne*, no. 339, p. 6.

⁹⁷ A.D. Doubs, L 380, Vernerey, *Fête de la Fondation de la république française célébrée à Besançon, le 1^{er} vendémiaire de l'an 6 de la République française, une et indivisible* (Besançon, Year VI).

Already, the rhetorical use of concepts of time has moved on from 1789 when, as Dale Van Kley has argued, the Revolutionaries sought to escape the historical moment. The propaganda is more sophisticated, such as arguing that all fears in fact contribute to the defence of the constitution. The Revolution is placed in historical time and compared to past republics, although time is also compressed and focused on the present. Time becomes both historical and ahistorical at the same moment. History and commemoration reveal the course that the nation and the French are taking, but it is also an 'eternal present' in which everything, from future triumph to past eras such as Roman rule, can be discussed because of their relation to the present. This was not a stale textbook history, but was seen to be of great importance to each and every Frenchman (and to a lesser extent woman). Events were linked to individual lives and to the history of the nation at a variety of points.

'Time itself,' writes Baker, 'is experienced as a succession of moments in which life and death hang in the balance. Each day offers a new combat between the Revolution and its enemies[...] Projected indefinitely into the future, revolution ceases to be a moment of crisis and becomes an extended present, at once immediate and universal, a "mythic present" in which eternity and contingency meet.'⁹⁸ Such a drastic dialogue was not limited to politicians, but was the stuff of political culture and, especially, newsprint. 'L'observation des périodiques montre ainsi que l'événement révolutionnaire change les rythmes de la durée', Claude Labrosse notes. He also cites Gorsas, a journalist, in August 1789: 'les événements se succèdent avec une rapidité qui permet à peine de reprendre haleine'. Such breathtaking rapidity of events constructed a new apprehension of time that was immediate, changing, but also a link, because of the connections newsprint generated, between locality and a sense of nation. Gorsas suggested a need for a metaphorical 'horloge nouvelle' to measure all that had passed, which

⁹⁸ Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 223.

divided time into short, but accelerating intervals.⁹⁹ The periodicity of the press was an eighteenth-century phenomenon, but one that was intensified by the experience of the Revolution.¹⁰⁰

The idea of time and history was never far away from the rhetoric of the period. In a pamphlet written in the Year II, Collot d'Herbois argued that festivals are 'cette ligne de correspondance qui fait participer tous les citoyens aux grands événements'.¹⁰¹ Another pamphleteer, writing in the Dordogne a year later after the fall of Robespierre, considered that 'ce sont ces jours qui ramènent ces époques heureuses où les Français, rappelés à l'égalité, furent rétablis dans leurs droits primitifs'.¹⁰² The problem of the

⁹⁹ Claude Labrosse, 'l'apport de l'étude des journaux de 1789 à la réflexion sur l'événement', in Robert Chagny, ed., *Aux origines provinciales de la Révolution* (Grenoble, 1990), pp. 255-66. The quotations are from pp. 258-59. See also Labrosse, 'Le temps immédiat'.

¹⁰⁰ J. Suagnieux, 'Le Temps, L'Espace et la Presse au siècle des Lumières', *Cahiers d'Histoire*, 23 (1978), pp. 313-34; Wauters, *Une presse de province*, pp. 183, 271, 355.

¹⁰¹ N.Y.P.L. *KVR 9286, J.M. Collot, *Quelques Idées sur les Fêtes Décadaires, Qui peuvent être appliquées à tous projets imprimés jusqu'à ce jour 30 nivôse* (Paris, Year II).

¹⁰² N.Y.P.L. *KVR 6016, *Extrait des registres des délibérations du directoire du département de la Dordogne, séance du 16 Thermidor, l'an 3 de l'Ère républicaine* (Périgueux, Year III), p. 5.

future was even more clearly approached during discussion in the Assembly, Convention and the Council of the Five Hundred. As legislators, proposals had to be assessed in the light of their future consequences. Similarly, past precedent had to be considered. Nor were concepts of the nation far away from the debate, given that the basis for the authority invested in the deputies was based upon it. The problem of divisions between the French people, and of attempts to separate true patriots from counter-Revolutionaries runs through these texts. During the Revolution, defining the nation was an activity fraught with difficulty.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has had a number of goals, the most important of which has been to offer an assessment of the importance and consequences of the Republican calendar. It has also sought to argue that its effects can only be properly understood in their cultural, political, and social context. The archival and documentary record supports the view that the calendar remained an important element of Republican social policy and political culture and, at times, was enforced with some vigour and even menace. Yet these reactions and repercussions – whether popular religious disturbances, Republican statements of support, or evidence of a more widespread lack of concern – are perhaps of more interest for what they reveal about the culture and society of Revolutionary France than for what they tell us about the calendar itself. Indeed, both the calendar and the control of the use of time illustrate the extent to which the Revolution involved itself in the everyday and the personal. Religious belief and habit, together with local identity and tradition and the practice of trade and labour grated against official policy. If the *représentant-en-mission* or the local *commissaire du pouvoir exécutif* heeded the directions of the Committee of Public Instruction, Lambrecht or François de Neufchâteau (who had supported the idea of a civic calendar before October 1793), then such elements of popular culture could become points of conflict, which were then interpreted as hostility to the general aims and programme of the regime.

Historians and contemporaries have tended to see the calendar as an element of Republican culture rather than as an important feature of the social history of the time. The calendar followed the movements of the tide of Revolutionary politics to a striking degree. Although Romme claimed that the new system was scientific and rational, it was obviously neither politically nor culturally neutral. While its creation and introduction

depended on a number of contingent events and personal decisions, its derivation and context made for a Republican and radical calendar. Nonetheless, its meaning did not remain static and altered during the course of the Revolution. This thesis has argued that the cultural and symbolic nature of the calendar was of great, even primary, importance, but also that its practical consequences were not negligible. The value of these calendrical transformations is debatable, but changes in official and private habit resulted from the Republican calendar reform that reflect the massive social and cultural changes instigated by the events of 1789. The private correspondence or journals of Henri Beyle, Rose Dobrée, Michel Célarié and Jacques-Louis Ménétra illustrate attempts to follow the new calendar. Importantly, they demonstrate that the new measures were used alongside the old system. Such textual practices perhaps reveals the ways in which the idea of Revolution was considered in such daily events as writing and recording. The decision to use the calendar was in some way a personal political commentary in which the use of the new calendar could be ironic, novel, or even perhaps playful. The same choice illustrates how the Revolution permeated all aspects of life, yet the point of contact was not unquestioned or inevitable, but the result of individual contemplation.

Calendars are, first and foremost, tools of the state, and the evidence from administrative literature is correspondingly voluminous. Since its use was generally obligatory, the calendar's most significant and obvious impact can be seen in the bureaucratic revolution. The development and massive consolidation of 'bureau culture' together with the expansion of French administration provided almost inexhaustible opportunity for the new calendar to be deployed. This process has also provided the main point of contact for most historians, who have no doubt often been infuriated by the need to refer to modern concordances to calculate the Gregorian date. Yet the bureaucratic history of the calendar can be revealing of other trends, as well as the source of an irritation in the pursuit of chronology. The use of the calendar by various official institutions can signify the strength of connections between the local officers and central authority. A series of

correspondence between the Ministry of Justice and those responsible for the *Justice de paix* in the Côte-d'Or reveals the divergence that could occur between official policy and local implementation. The *juges de paix* as a body were criticised for not meeting according to the times as set out in the legislation for the strict observance of the calendar.¹ Pascal Frand has shown how the presentation and accuracy of the new system in official almanacs evolved according to the Revolution's political chronology.² The arrangement of the meetings of the *juge de paix*, according to my research, suggests that the calendar made more significant and deeper inroads in the orchestration of local institutions and, particularly after the Year VI, that the ten-day week formed the basis of their organisation. The Republic was at least successful in this aspect of calendar reform. Furthermore, the fact that from the Year VI some courts were willing to convict those who worked on the *décadi*, and that special police watches to enforce the *décadi* were undertaken, stresses the importance that the Directory placed on the calendar.

The consequences of calendar reform were not limited to the decimalisation of diaries or the eradication of Sundays. The more profound and lasting legacy of the calendar is to found in the spread of standardisation and the relationship between time and officialdom. Along with the growth of 'red tape' and an increasingly professional administrative cadre, the calendar contributed to the growing importance of the secular, rather than religious or traditional, year and method of organising time. Instead of relying on traditional temporal associations, bureaucracy became more closely tied to a civil reckoning of the year and the demands of regular meetings. The history of the calendar is a history of the Revolution and the process of the growth of administration and the spread of centralisation. The narrative that this thesis has sought to tell, and which the archives

¹ A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 1110, Minister of Justice to the *Justice de paix* 5 fructidor 6 (22 August 1798).

² Frand, 'Le calendrier républicain'.

reveal, is one of considerable complexity. The interaction of modernity and tradition, the impact of Revolutionary culture, and the march of bureaucracy and standardisation do not form a single narrative, but rather they depend on specifics of chronology and location. Resistance and acquiescence to these trends in state building are found in equal measure. In those places where local identity, tradition or alternative power structures seem strong or united, then opposition to the new calendar was possible.

This was the case in Dijon, while in towns where there was a strong Jacobin element, as in Nantes, the *décadi* was enforced by the administration. Massive changes to the constitution of France, such as administrative reform and the militarisation of society, in contrast, did strengthen and define the sense of nationhood and build the lineaments of the state (although local identity and regionalism also found expression in these institutions). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it was in towns that punctilious official use of the calendar was to be found, if not always with popular support. Meinzer has suggested that the calendar's most important legacy was the rational and state-controlled system of festivals as seen in the placing of national holidays, such as the commemoration of Austerlitz on 'rational' days, rather than the date itself. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the calendar combined with other processes of state formation also contributed to the relationship between time and the nation.

By creating a debate about the division of time and its role in society – a debate that took place in the Convention, in journals, between priests and, I suggest, in the choice of personal routine – the Republican calendar contributed to and reflected the importance of time and timing in the administration of the state. Such involvement was reflected in a number of texts and proposals. Educational plans, such as for the École Polytechnique, contained detailed instructions for division of student's time as an integral part of the plans for the educational programme. Days designated for the study of mathematics, for example, began at 8 a.m. and the first lesson ended at 9 a.m. Students were then split into classes of twenty and followed

their chosen graphic art until 2 p.m., when they broke for dinner. They returned at five and then studied until eight. The days of the Republican week were devoted to the study of different subjects, such as chemistry or physics. Such plans, as chapter six showed, were typical of Republican educational schemes.³ Likewise, plans for Republican festivals were meticulously timed. Wherever the Republic involved itself in the cultural or social life of the nation, its plans tended to involve a new exactitude in timing. While the Revolution was in many ways a time of chaos and disorder, violence and upset, it also marked the point when reason and a search for order rather than tradition were the main principles of government policy.

Within the mass of practical consequences of the Republican calendar, a political message was imparted. The Revolution was pertinent to all areas of life and adherence to the Republic could be expressed in personal behaviour. Dress, social activity and even speech became politically charged. In this context, what may have been routine behaviour, such as the practice of wearing one's Sunday best or washing on Sunday could be interpreted as a political action. The historian is left with the difficulty of deciding whether such actions were intended to be provocative and an insult to the Revolutionary regime, or simply the expression of continuity of social custom which caught the eye of a punctilious local official or surveillance committee. Perhaps such distinction is ultimately impossible, since subtle motivations are not well preserved in official documentation. Yet what can be learnt is the extent to which such actions became political. The social and cultural activities associated with the two calendars, the Republican and the Gregorian, become a space in which the real values and interpretation of the Republic and the Revolution could be discussed obliquely.

³ Conseil de l'école polytechnique, *Organisation de l'école polytechnique* (Paris, Year IV); Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*, pp. 251-260.

The questions that the introduction of the calendar raised were those of authority and legitimacy, the rule of law and the relevance of local tradition. Application of the Republican calendar throughout France implied temporal uniformity and, in parallel with the attempt at linguistic uniformity, a vision of a united France. Local variations, calendar traditions and patronal saints were to be swept away by a reasoned, uniform system. Religion quickly became the lens through which the calendar was viewed and the conflict between *décadis* and Sundays was the main consequence of the Directory's concentration on the new form of time. Yet these clashes also reveal the profound resistance to attempts to create a united France on the basis of reason or a scientific understanding of time. Little practical advantage could be seen in the reforms, and use of the calendar was not compulsory until the Year VI and then only in certain areas of life. The *décadi* and the afternoon of the *quintidi* could provide an opportunity for extra time away from work, if the luxury of leisure could be afforded during a time when piecework was the main mode of employment for the majority. In the main, however, there remained little reason except political conviction to make the transition between the two calendars. Instead, it seems that most French people operated a system of dual calendar use, one for private and one for public and official use.

Finally, although the calendar was abolished by Napoleon, its influence did not evaporate entirely. Indeed, its influence continued for revolutionaries down to the present era. Devotion to the calendar of the Republic or of the Ancien Regime was a clear cipher for political association. The association continued beyond the Republic and Empire. Vigny's Romantic alter-ego, Stello, stumbled across a 'bon canonnier' and the sight of the various tattoos on his arm caused him to exclaim: 'ton bras est un almanach de la cour et un calendrier républicain.'⁴ The Commune, of course, employed the Republican calendar in a show of their connection to

⁴ Vigny, *Les Consultations du Docteur Noir. Stello ou les diables bleus. Première consultation* (Paris, 1832), ch. 23.

the struggles and ideals of the First Republic. Within France, as Baczko has shown, the calendar took on the mantle of a 'site of memory'.⁵ The calendar represented a distinct parcel of time that separated the Revolution from the rest of French history.

Nineteenth-century Republicans continued to deploy the calendar as a symbol of Republicanism and the Revolution. Republican journals used the Republican calendar to date their issues, while the Communards counted the days of their resistance to the German and French forces in the same fashion as the idealised men and women of the early 1790s. On the 2 May 1871 the council of the Commune restored both the Committee of Public Safety and the Republican calendar.⁶ The scientific aspects of the calendar tended to be neglected in comparison with the political and emotional associations, in particular the poetry of the months; *thermidor* and *germinal* were given a number of meanings and appear in a variety of contexts, such as Zola's novels or the search for a thermidor amongst the dialectic of the Russian Revolution. Nonetheless, the decimal reforms of the calendar were not forgotten. In 1908, a member of the *Société de Géographie de Toulouse* was pleased to report that a Paris marine clock-maker had, thanks to the society's influence, produced a number of decimal clocks that were sold in France and in Russia, Portugal and Romania. As a result of its industrial design, the piece – 'une belle montre décimale à trois aiguilles centrales' – could be sold for fifty francs. The author of the piece, who praised the recent success of decimal weights and measures, considered that the decimal reform of time 'est aussi en bonne voie de réalisation'. Such reform was one of the society's aims, but the society was also committed to the Republican cause. Political and physical order were to be derived from reason, not tradition.⁷

⁵ Baczko, 'Le Calendrier Républicain'.

⁶ Rupert Christiansen, *Tales of the New Babylon: Paris 1869-1875* (London, 1994), p. 333.

⁷ de Rey-Pailhade, 'Étude historique', pp. 429-57.

Like the Revolution, the calendar had meaning beyond France. One of the earliest actions by the Bolsheviks was the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, which they, unlike the Jacobins, considered to be modern. Stalin, in the interests of increased industrial efficiency, experimented with a number of new calendar systems, mostly based around a five-day week and resulting, most reports agree, in nothing but confusion.⁸ These, however, remain unusual divergences from the general trend towards universal Western acceptance of the Gregorian calendar. Yet the history of the success of the Gregorian calendar has perhaps much in common with the Republican calendar. As a result of Western imperial and commercial dominance its calendar has been accepted as the standard for world time. The full history of the interaction between European time and that of the rest of the world remains to be written.⁹

In wider historical terms, the Republican calendar reform relates to a longer-term process of the spread of the rule of the clock and the calendar within a less time-conscious society than today's. This thesis has, however, also been careful to stress the complexities of eighteenth-century time and write against a view of a 'temporally innocent' age. In the conflict between regulation and the desire to follow other, more personal patterns, temperament plays an important role. Resistance to the rule of the clock was not new and hatred of the rule of externally measured time is an ancient complaint:

The gods confound the man who first found out

How to distinguish hours – confound him, too,

Who in this place set up a sun-dial,

⁸ Robert C. Williams, 'The Russian Revolution and the End of Time: 1900-1940', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, New Series, 43 (1995), pp. 364-401.

⁹ Graeme Davison, *The Unforgiving Minute: How Australia Learned to Tell the Time* (Melbourne, 1993) is suggestive on the relationship between time, modernisation and cultural encounters.

To cut and hack my days so wretchedly
 Into small pieces! When I was a boy,
 My belly was my sun-dial – one more sure,
 Truer, and more exact than any of them.

– Attributed to Plautus (c. 254- 184 BC)¹⁰

Were the reactions to the calendar no more than the eighteenth-century equivalent of a Roman stomach rumble? The political connotation of the Republican calendar was one important difference. Yet something more profound was beginning to take place during the late eighteenth century. Technological developments and the beginnings of industrial clock- and watchmaking processes, combined with the regulatory and standardising consequences of massive state action, whether in bureaucracy, the army or the school, began the increasingly controlled and strict temporality that is a feature of life in the West today. Other massive changes in temporality have taken place to enforce the ‘internal ticking’ of the clock. Revolutions in work practices, the conquest of night-time by oil, gas and, eventually, electric lights, the ubiquity of travel and the invention of commuting introduced far greater changes than the introduction of a ten-day week. The reactions of men and women to attempts by others to impose and control their time tell their own unique story, one which remains germane to our own experience as we enter the twenty-first century.

¹⁰ Quoted in H. F. K. Gatty & Eleanor Lloyd, eds., *The Book of Sun-Dials. Collected by Mrs. Alfred Gatty, Author of 'Parables from Nature,' etc. New and Enlarged Edition, with an Appendix on the Construction of Dials by W. Richardson* (London, 1889), p. 12.

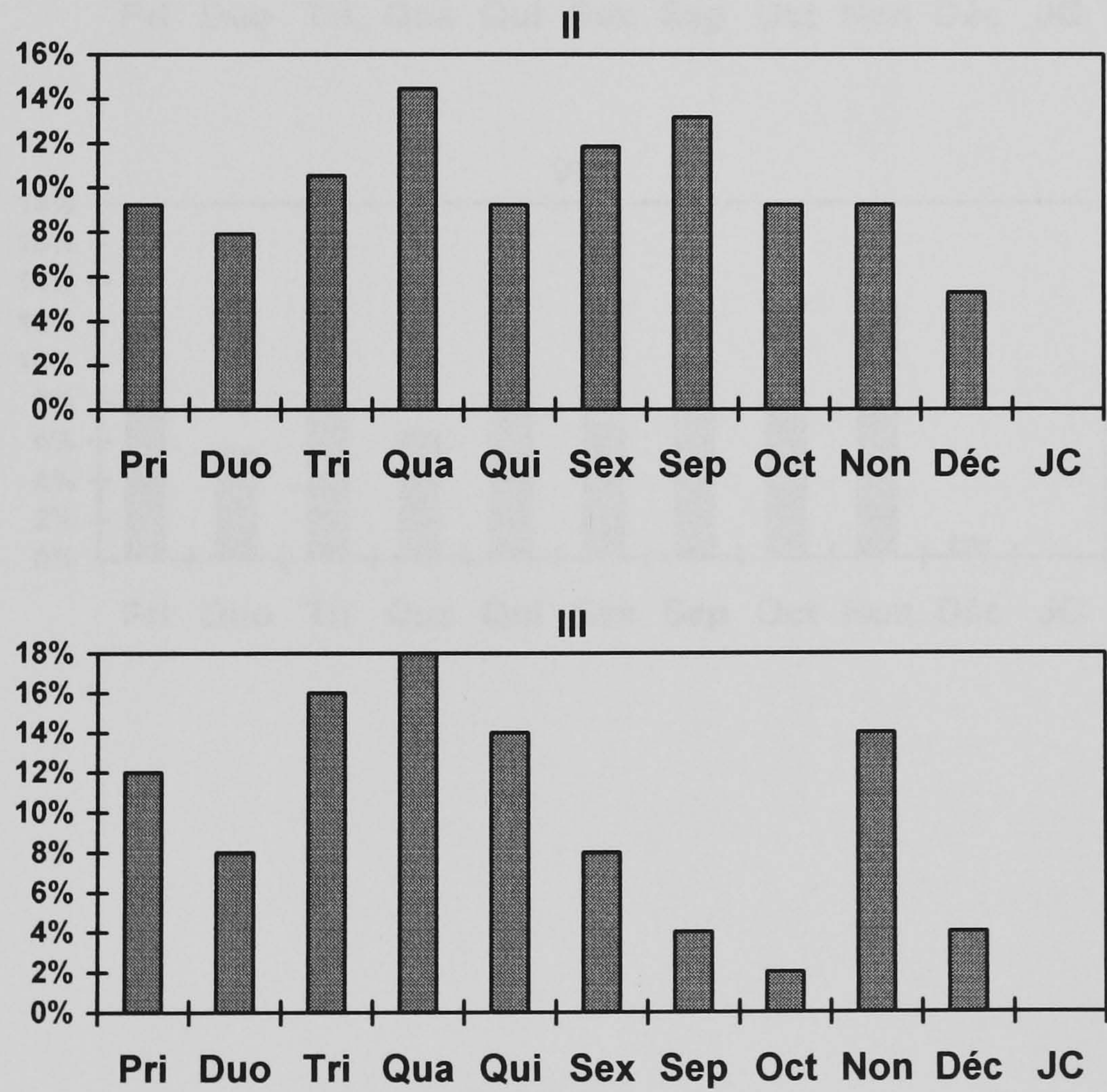
APPENDIX:

CHARTS SHOWING PERCENTAGES OF DAYS OF
MEETINGS OF THE *JUSTICE DE PAIX*

The charts reveal a general observance of the *décadi* (by showing a low percentage of meetings) from the end of the Year II, which declines markedly in the Year IV and V, but is re-established in the Year VI. Some, such as Avignon, suggest that meetings took place more frequently on two decadal days, revealing that the *décade* was being used.

Figure vi: *Justice de paix*, Apt

Source: A.D. Vaucluse, 18 L 2



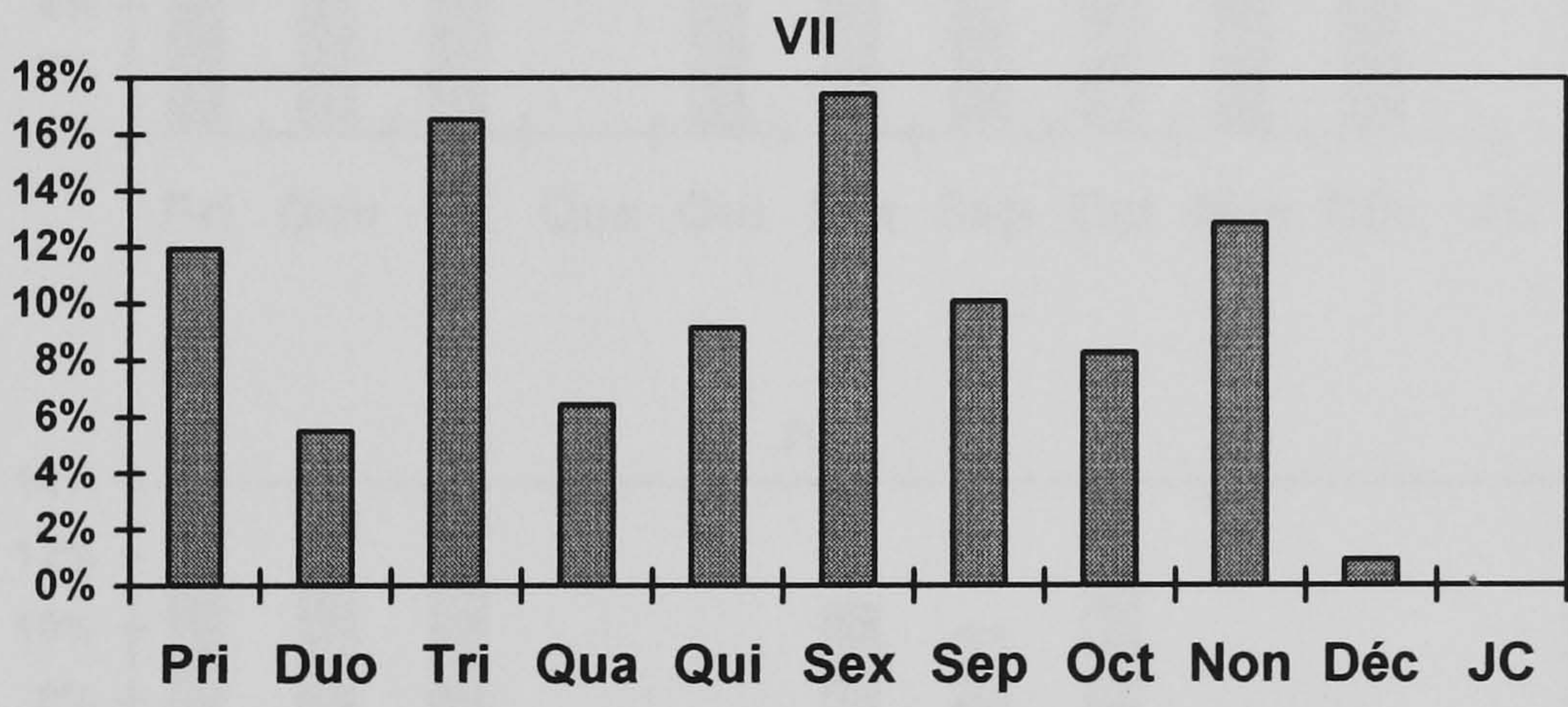
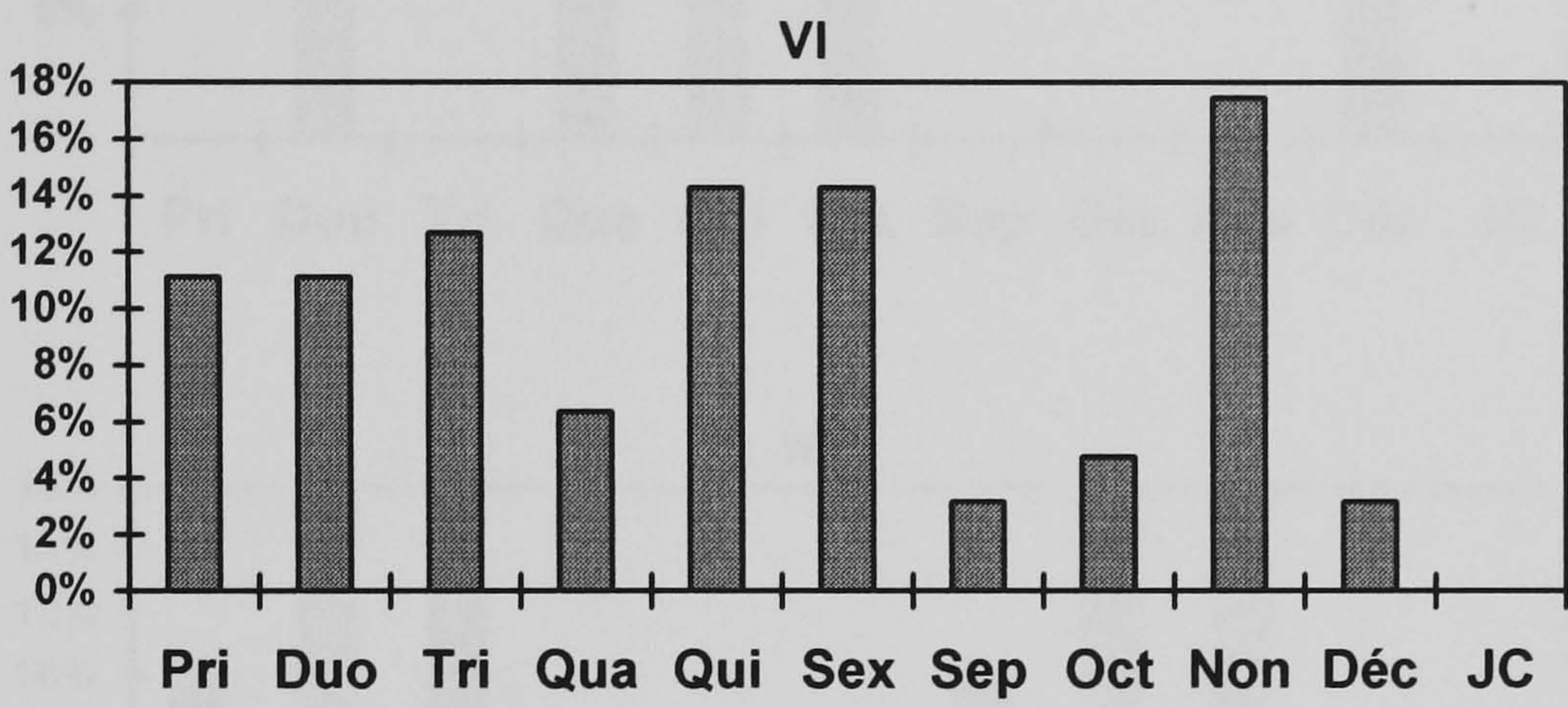
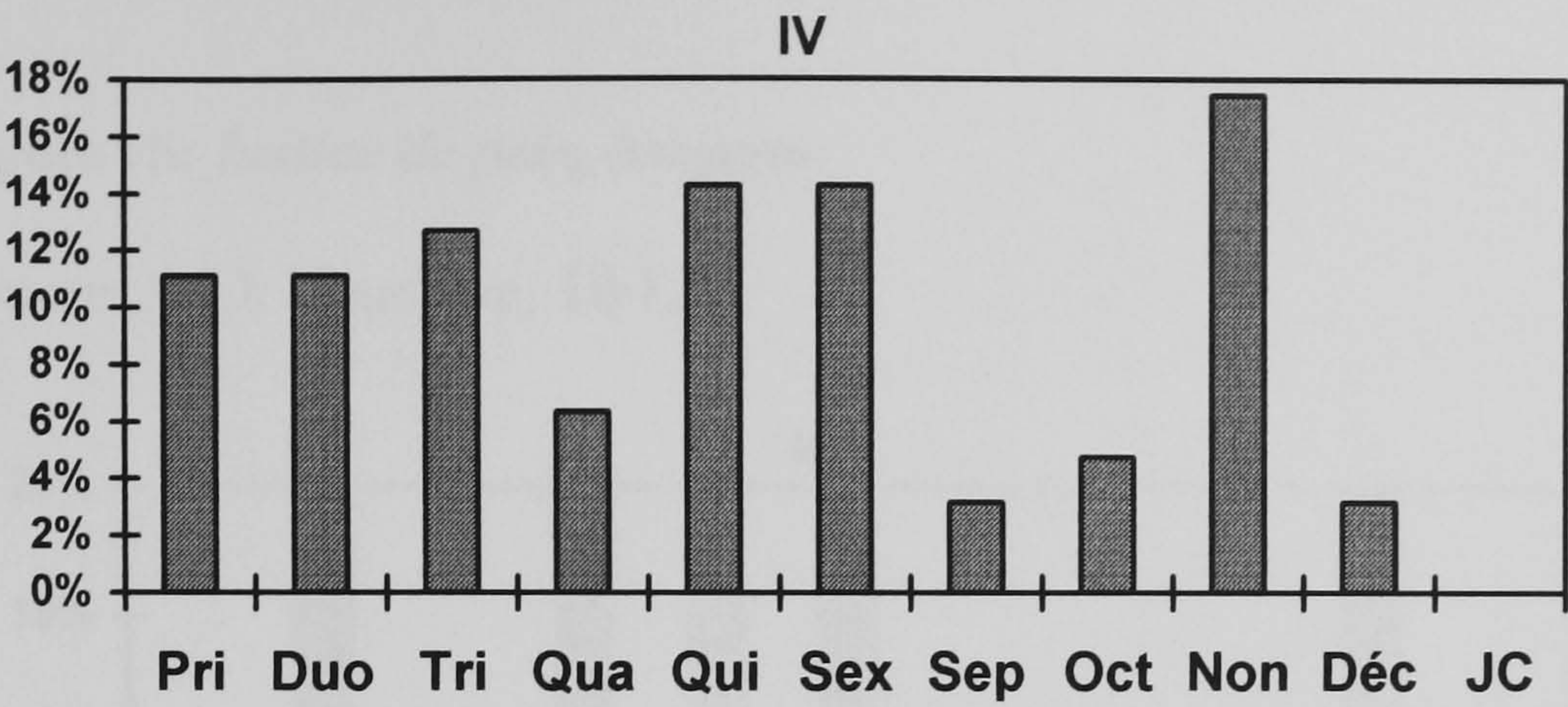
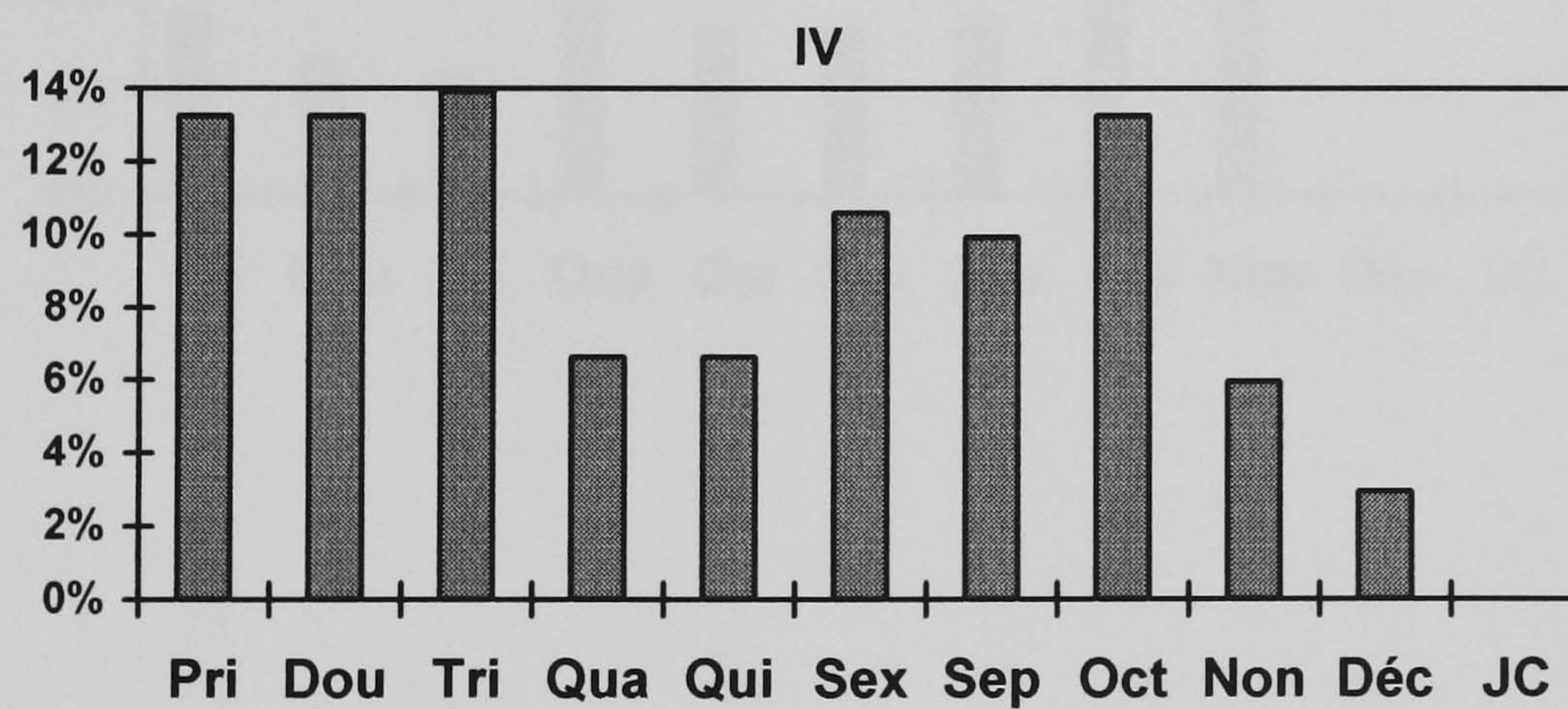
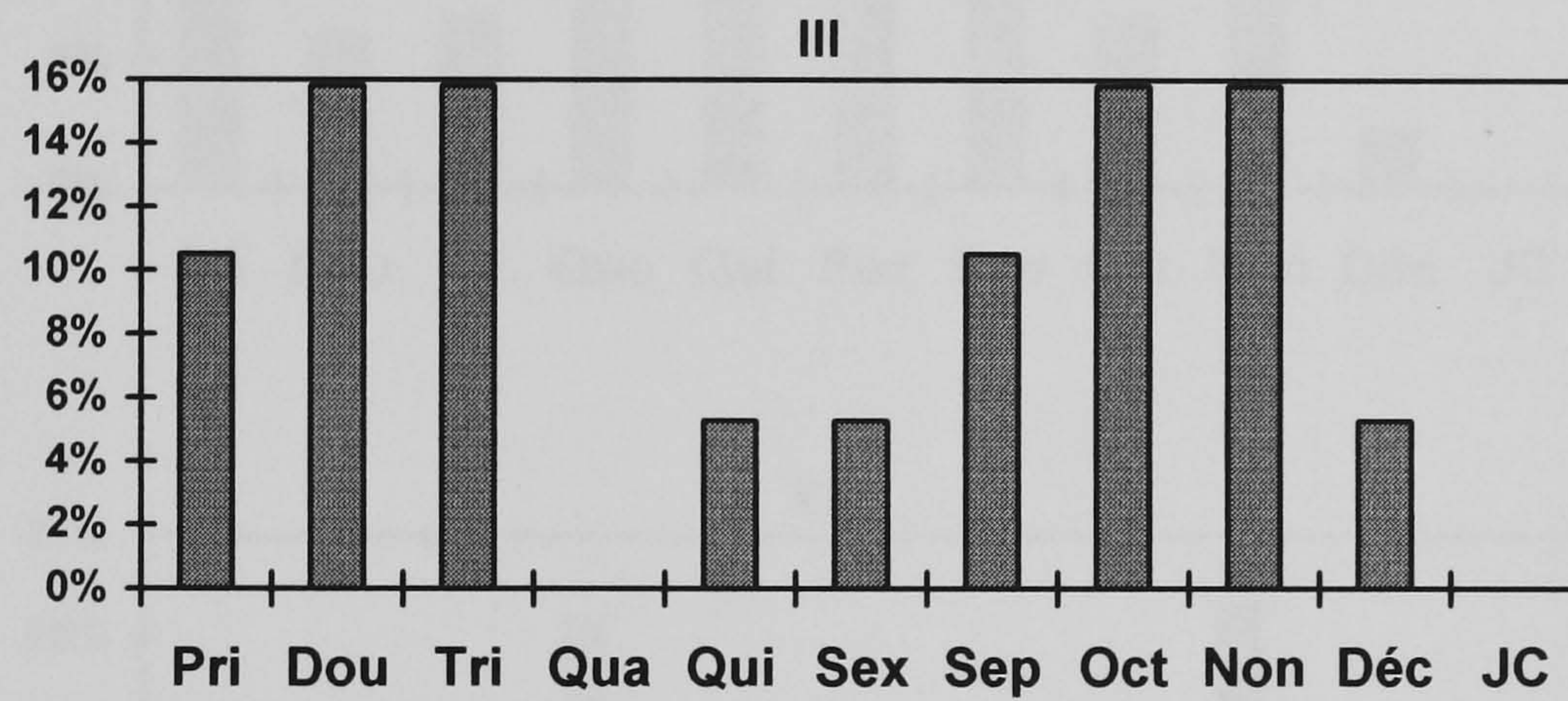
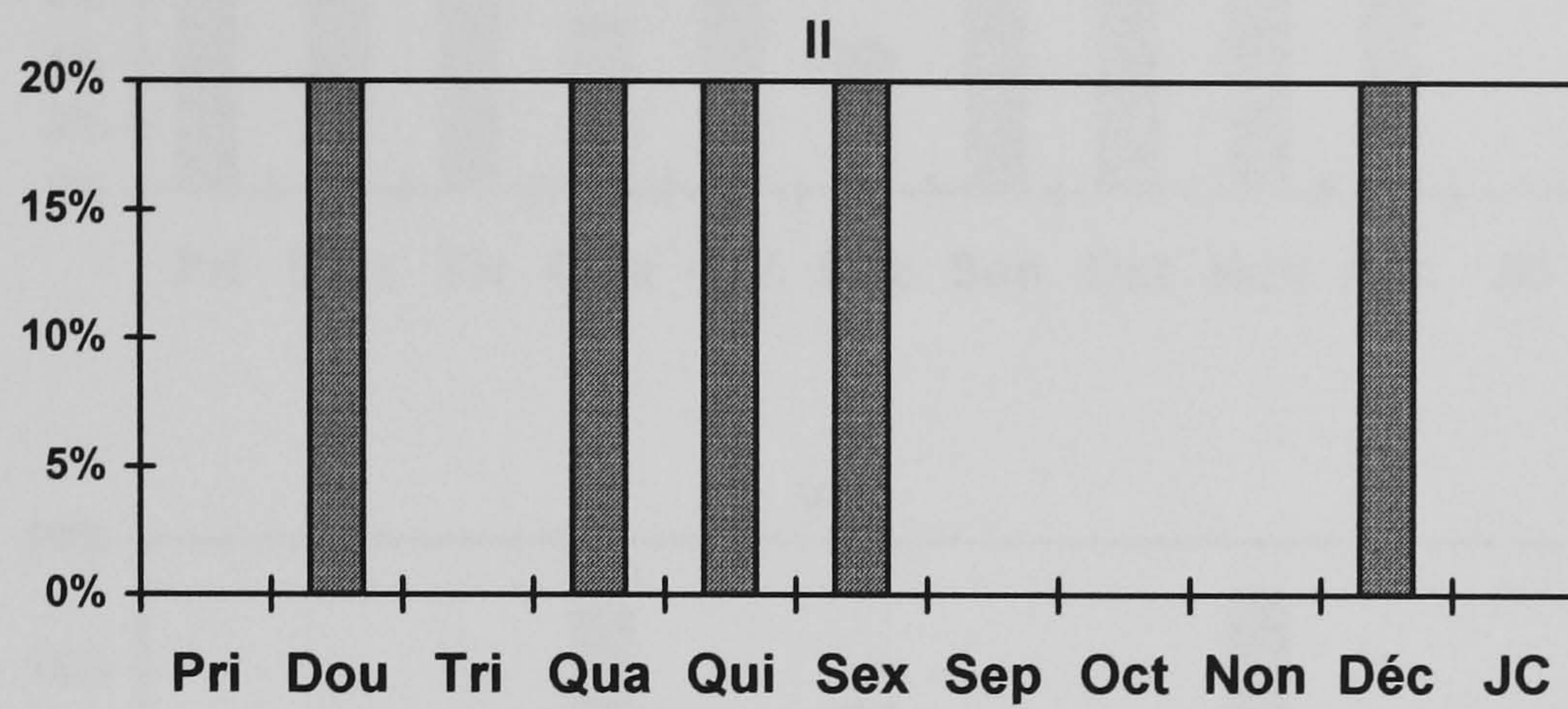


Figure vii: *Justice de paix*, Avignon

Source: A.D. Vaucluse, 18 L 2.



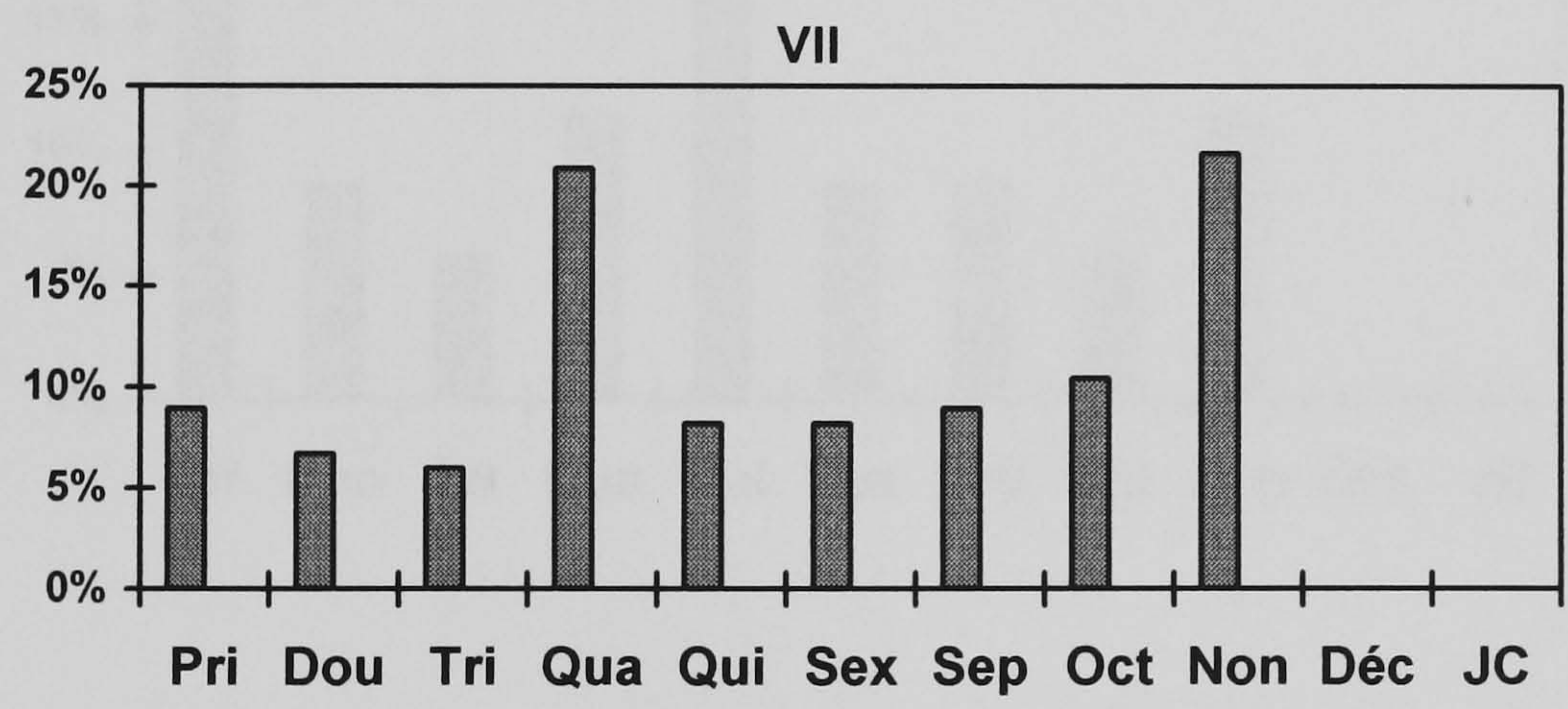
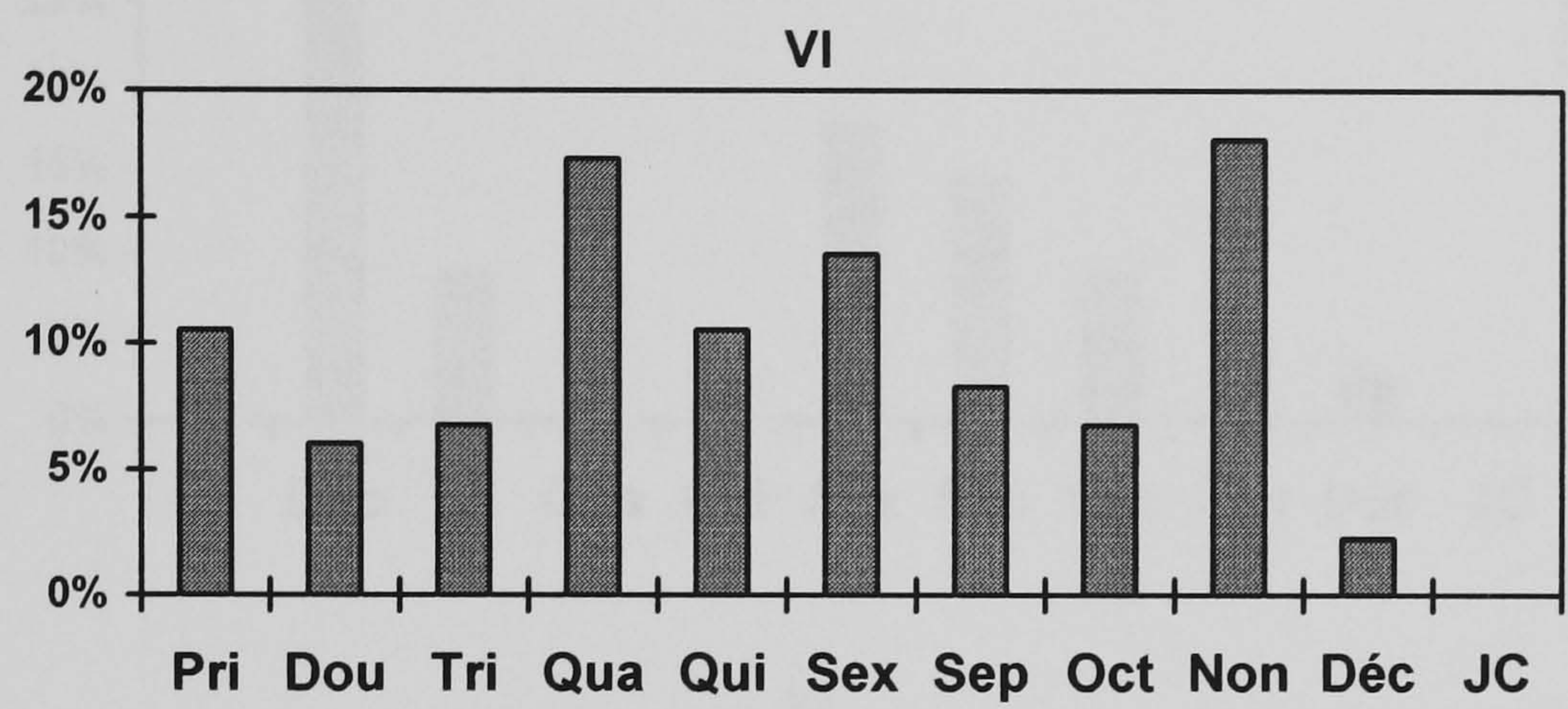
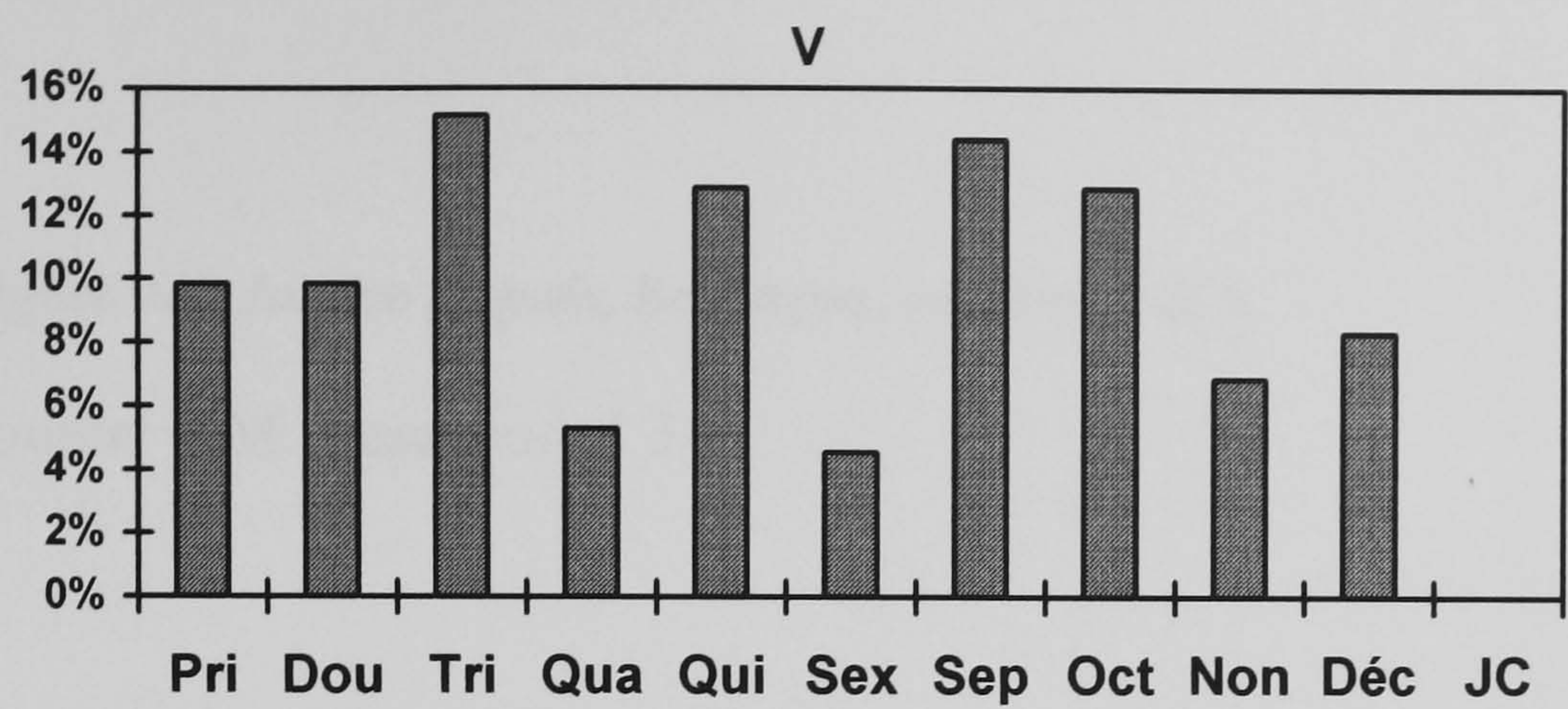
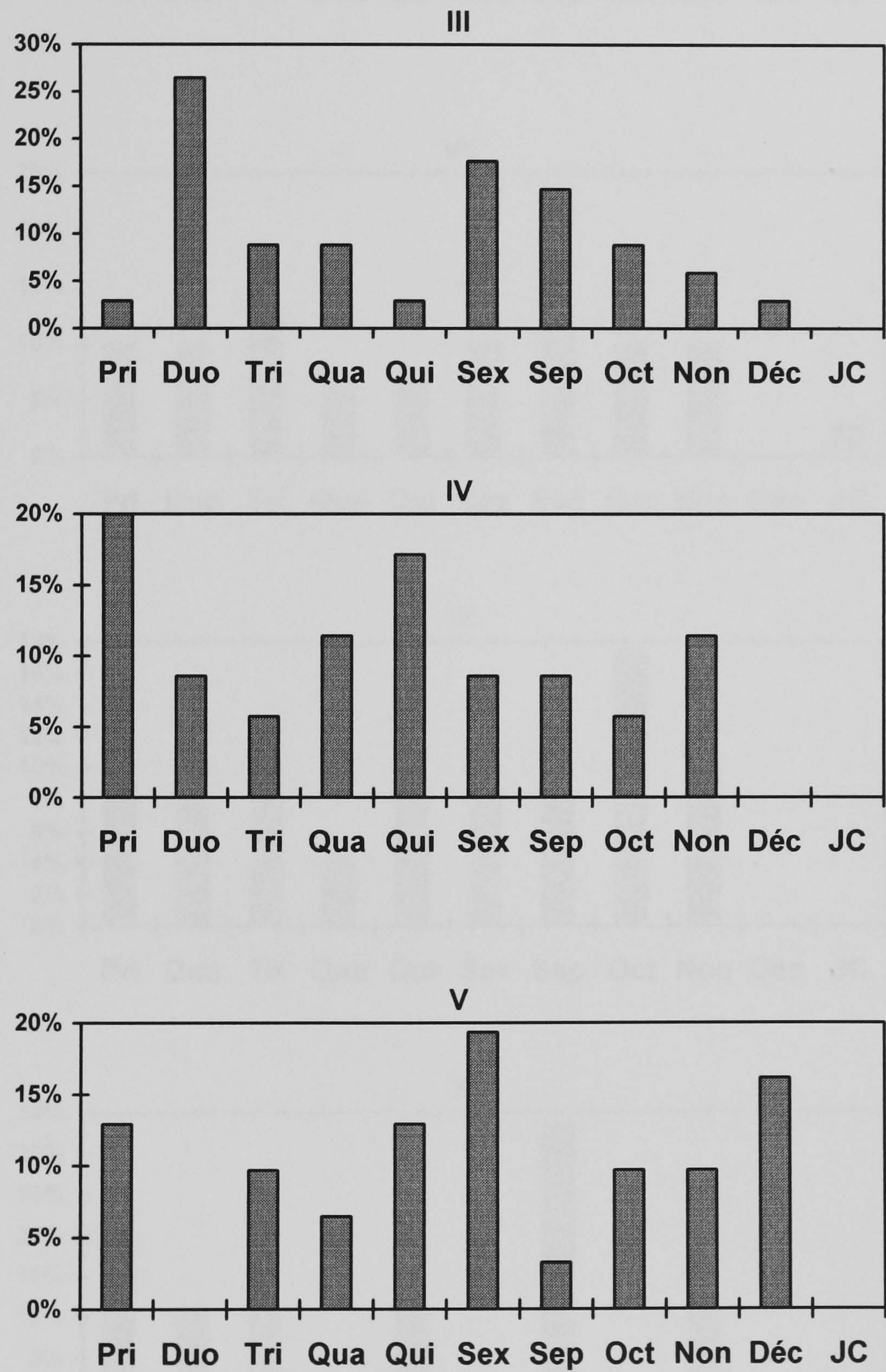
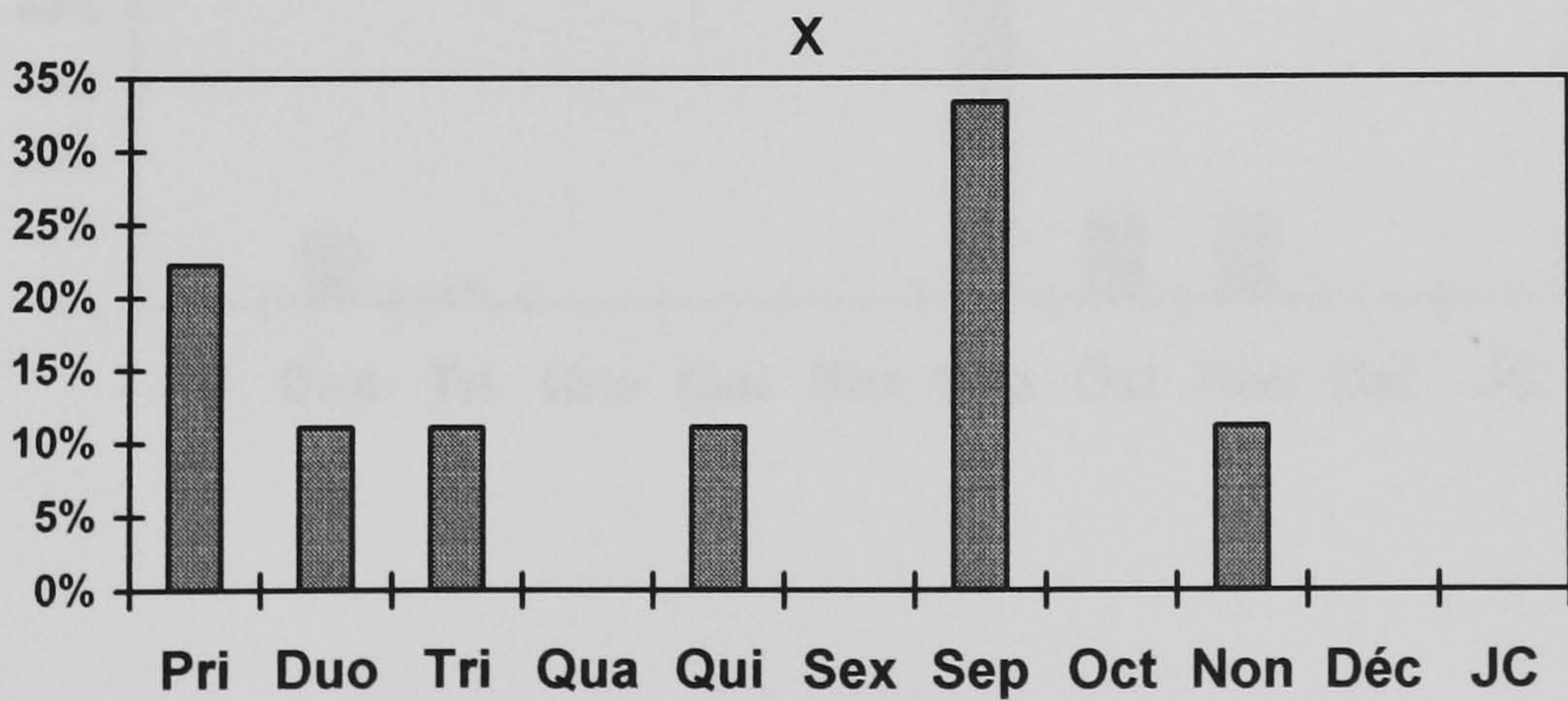
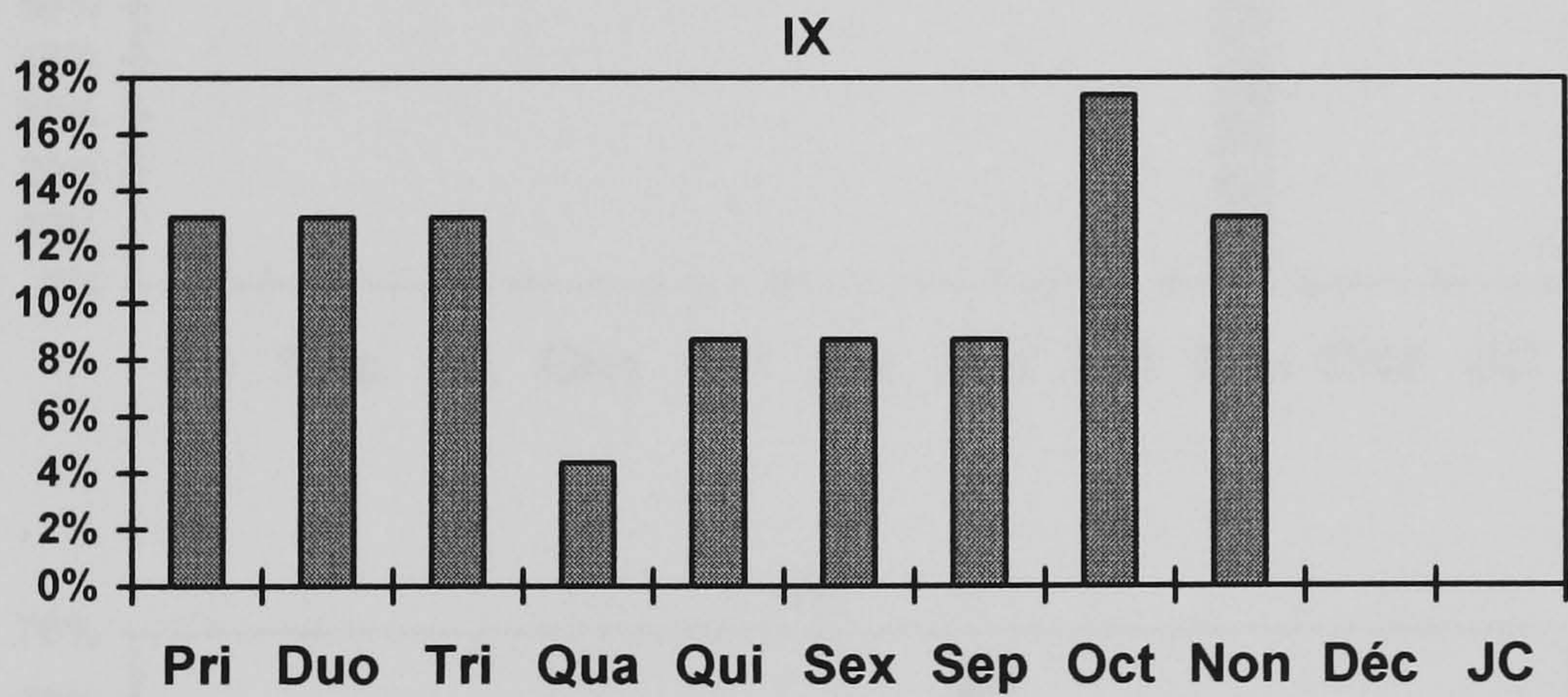
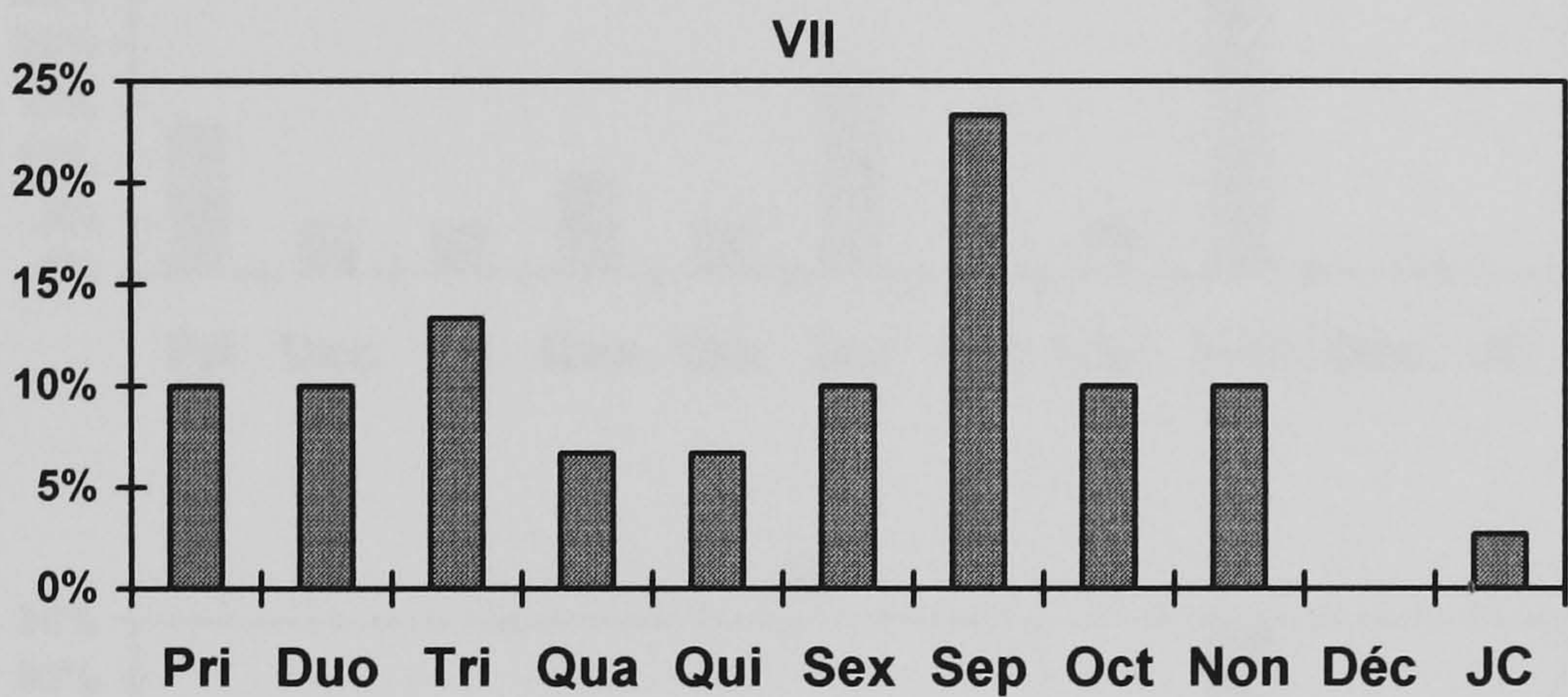
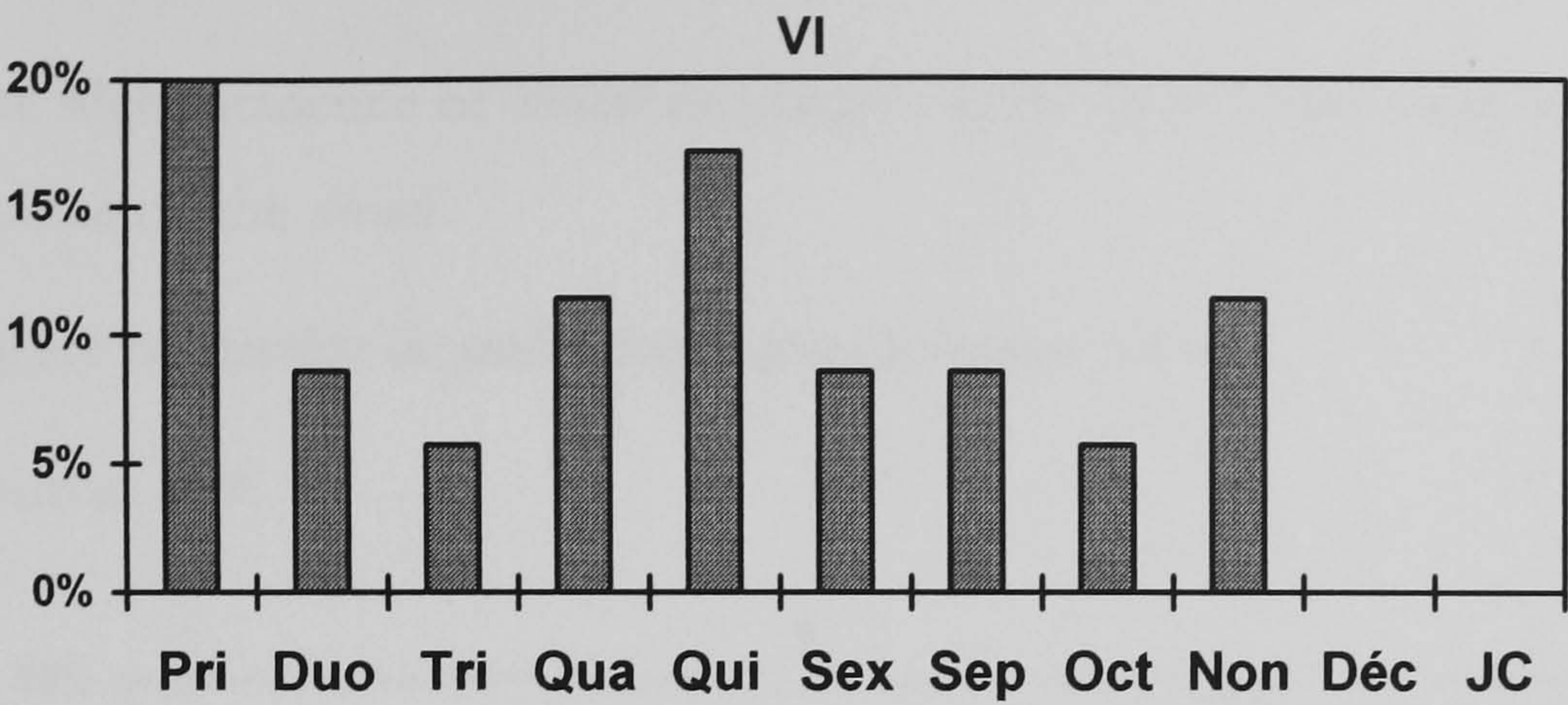


Figure viii: *Justice de paix*, Besançon, sections 5 & 6

Source: B.M. Besançon, I 3 L.

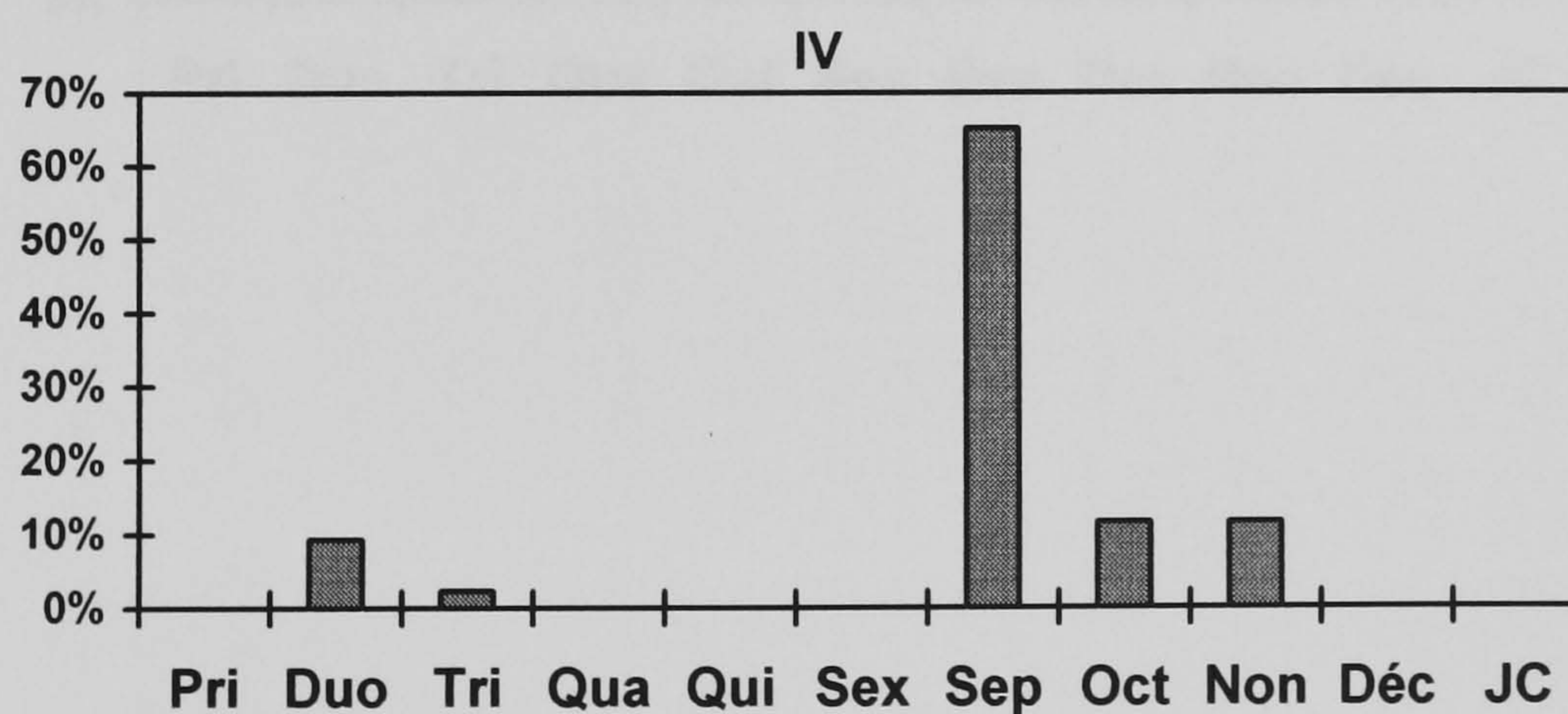
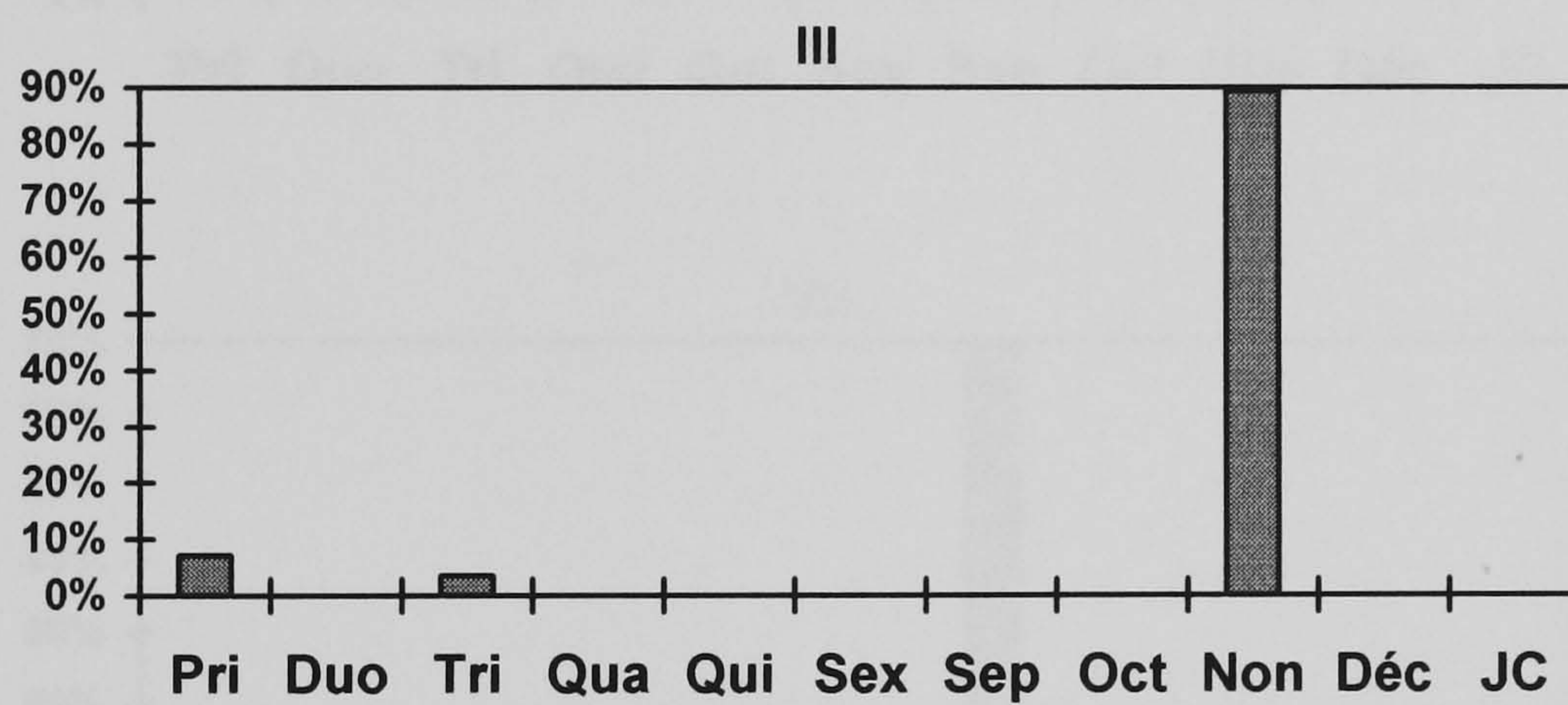
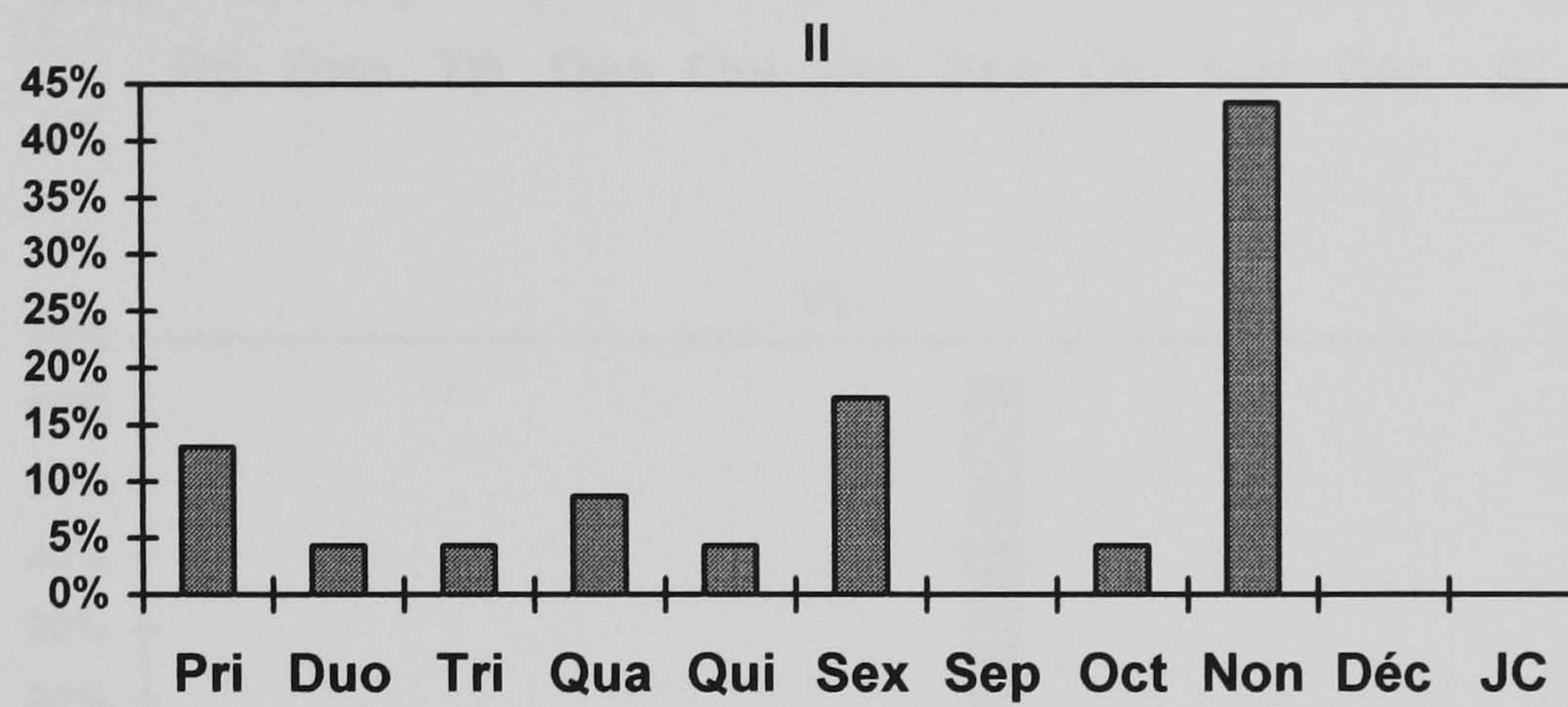




The high incidence of *nonidi* meetings compared to other days shows a strong acceptance of the *décadi*

Figure ix: *Justice de paix*, Besançon, Sections 7 & 8

Source: *ibid.*



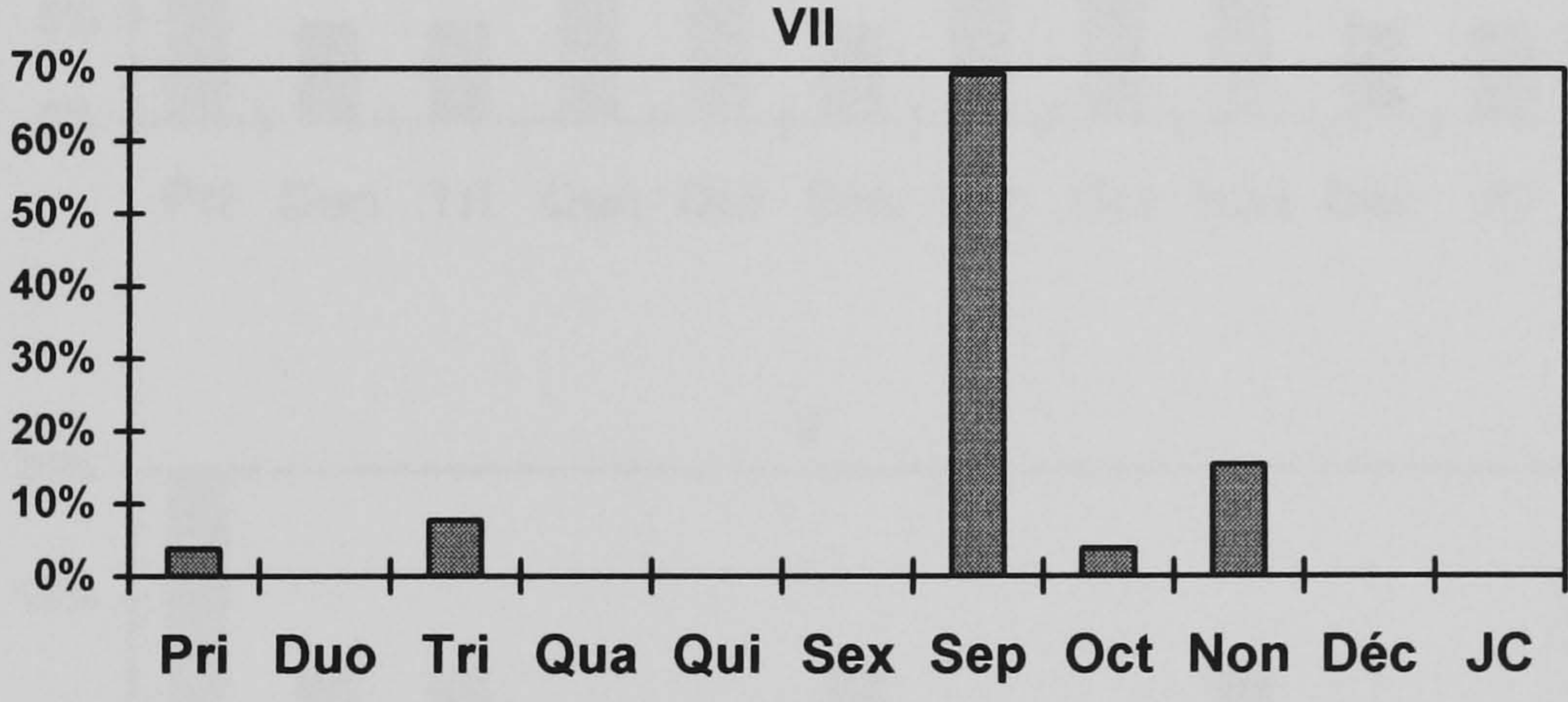
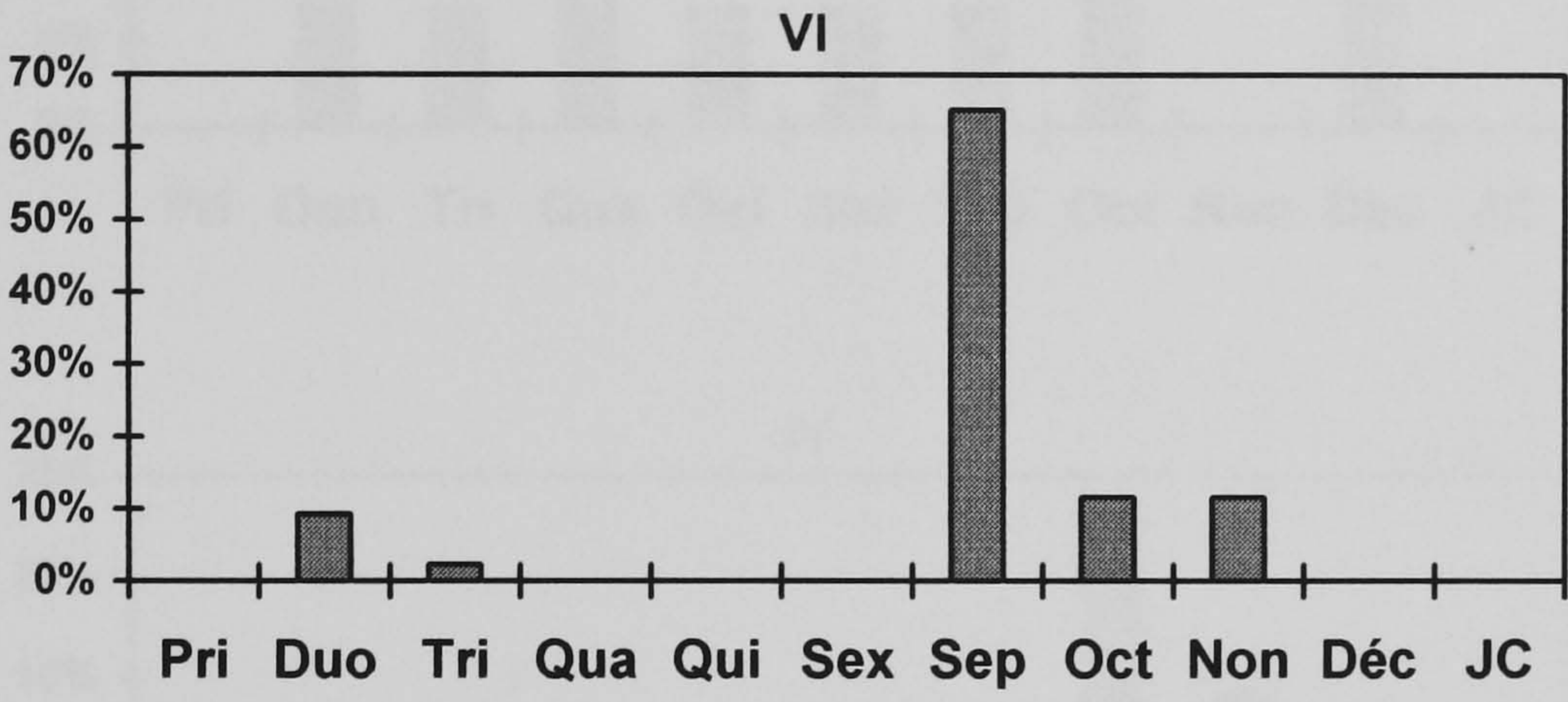
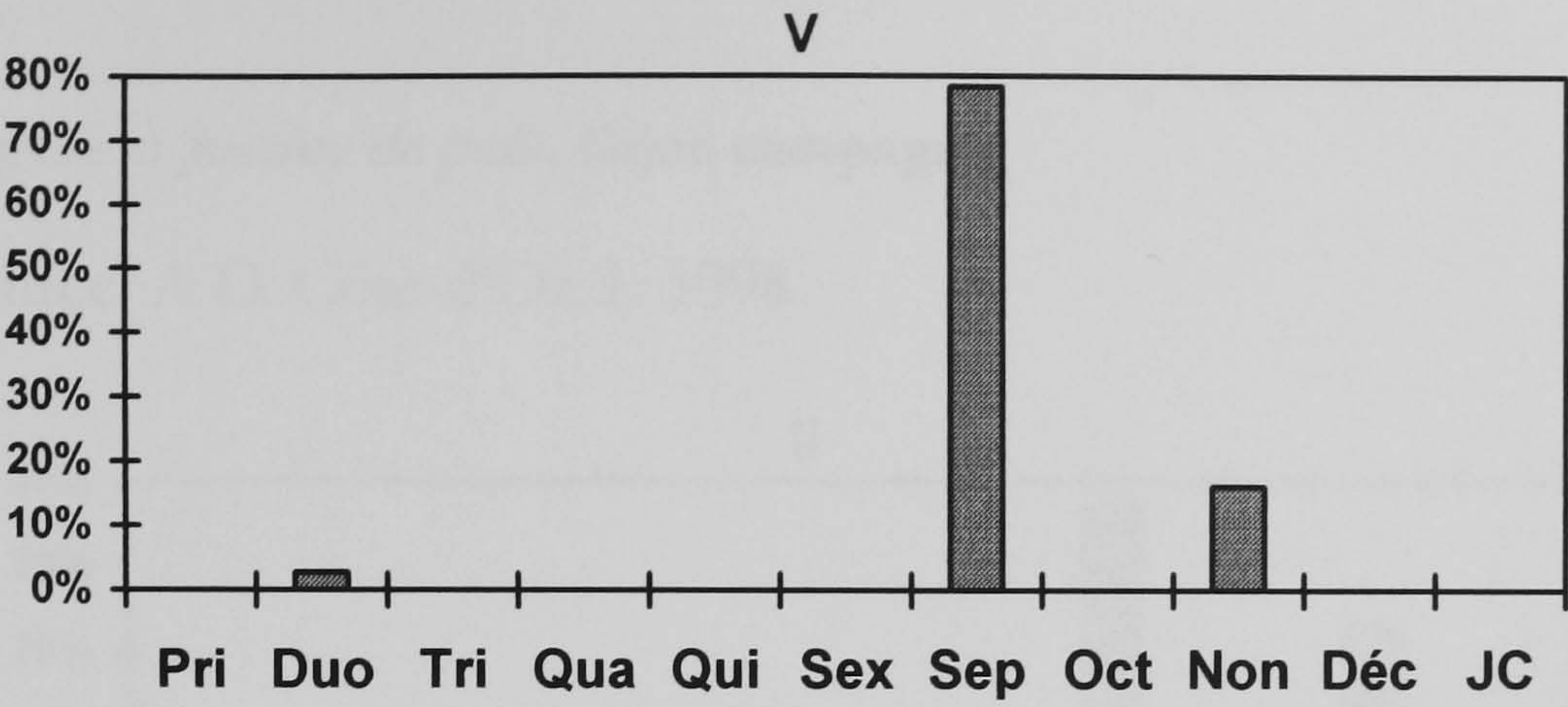
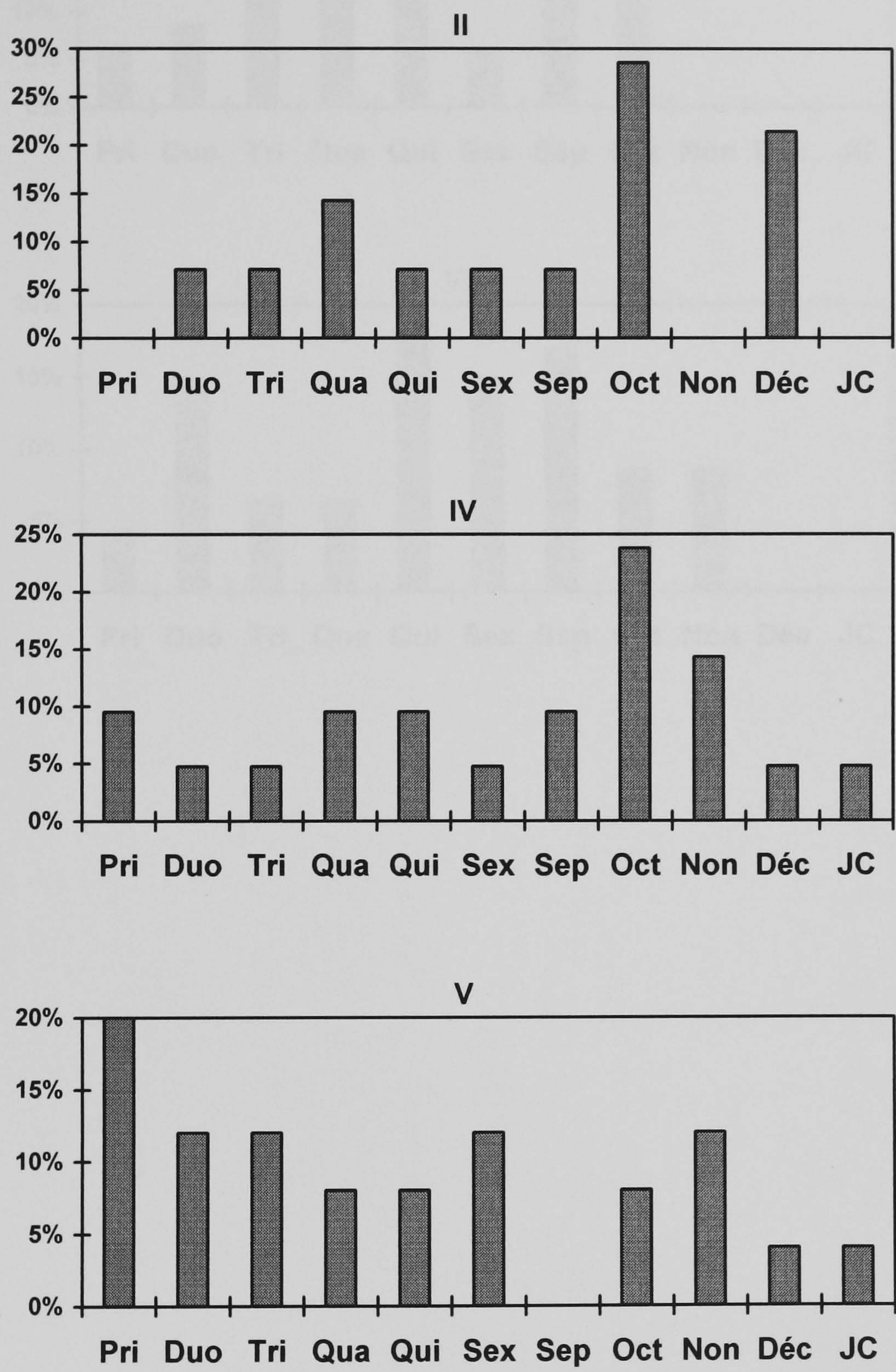


Figure x: *Justice de paix*, Dijon campagne

source: A.D. Côte-d'Or, L 3598.



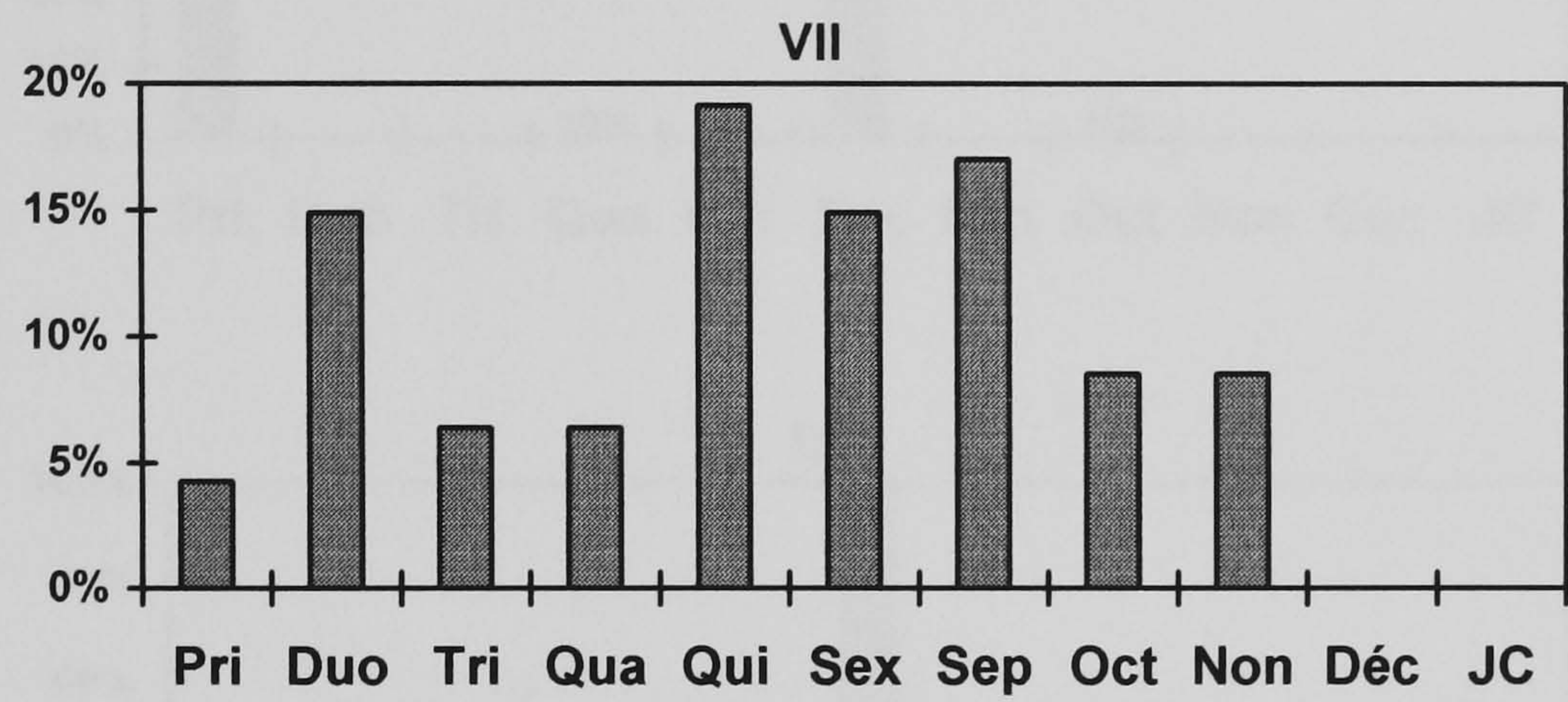
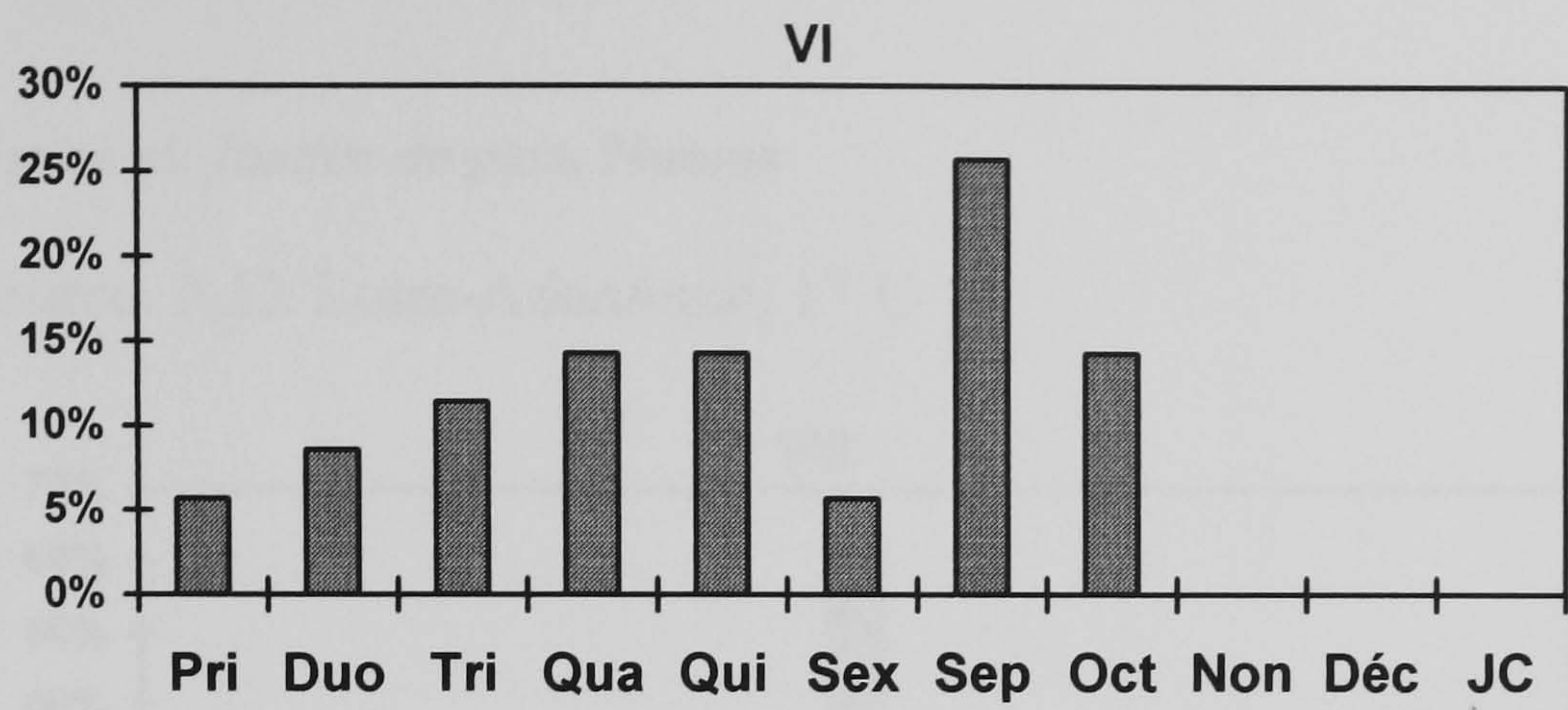
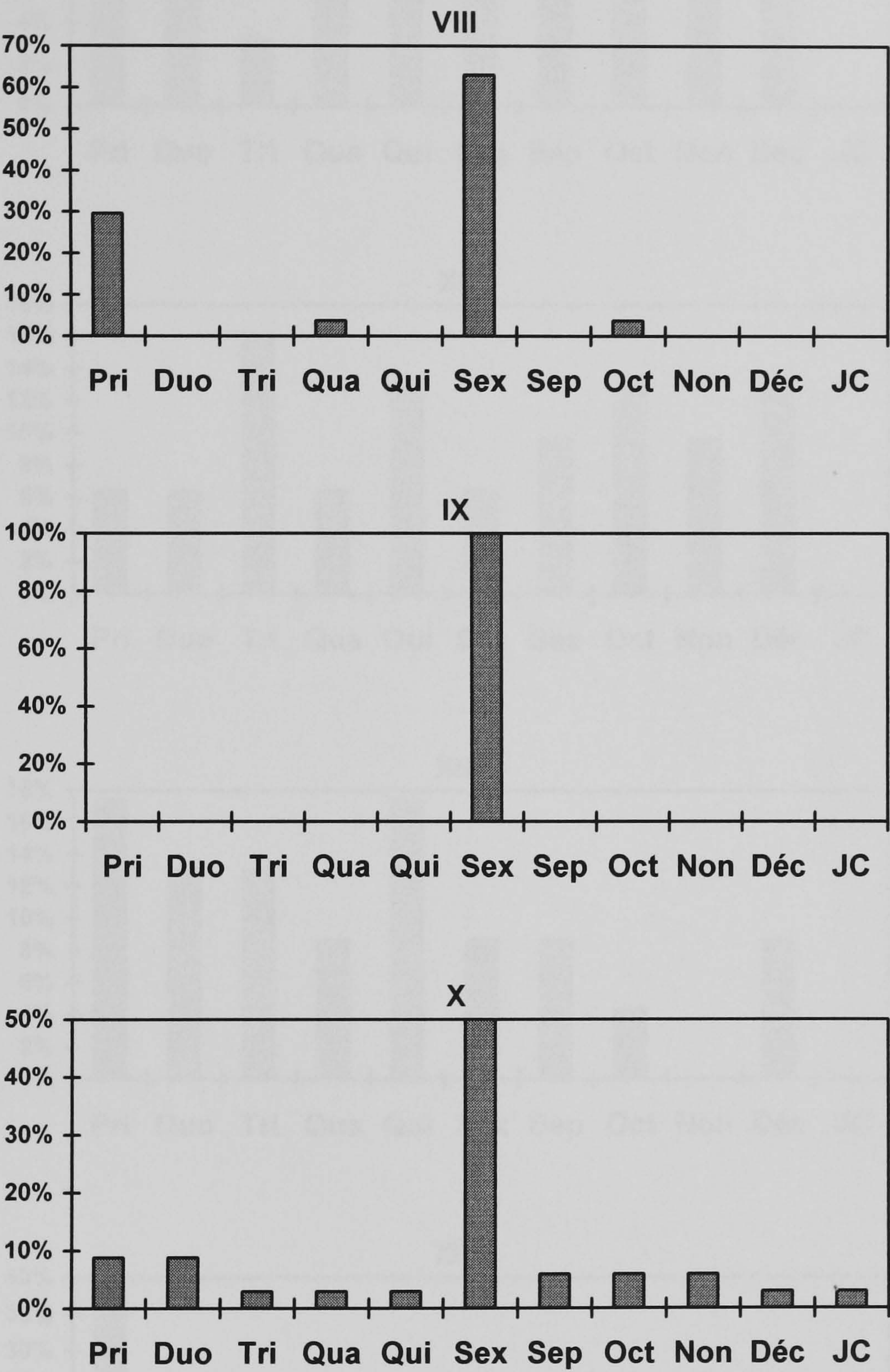


Figure xi: *Justice de paix*, Nantes

Source: A.D. Loire-Atlantique, 17 U 14.



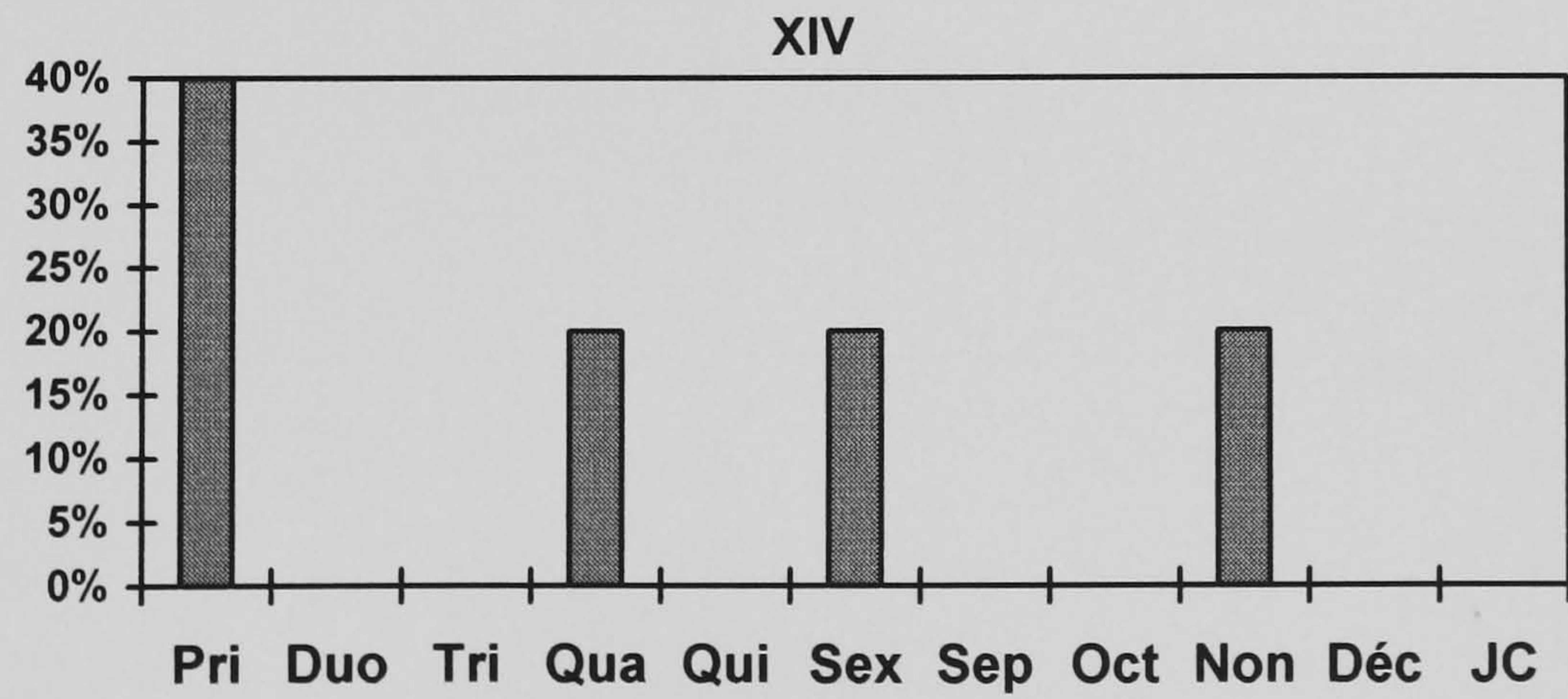
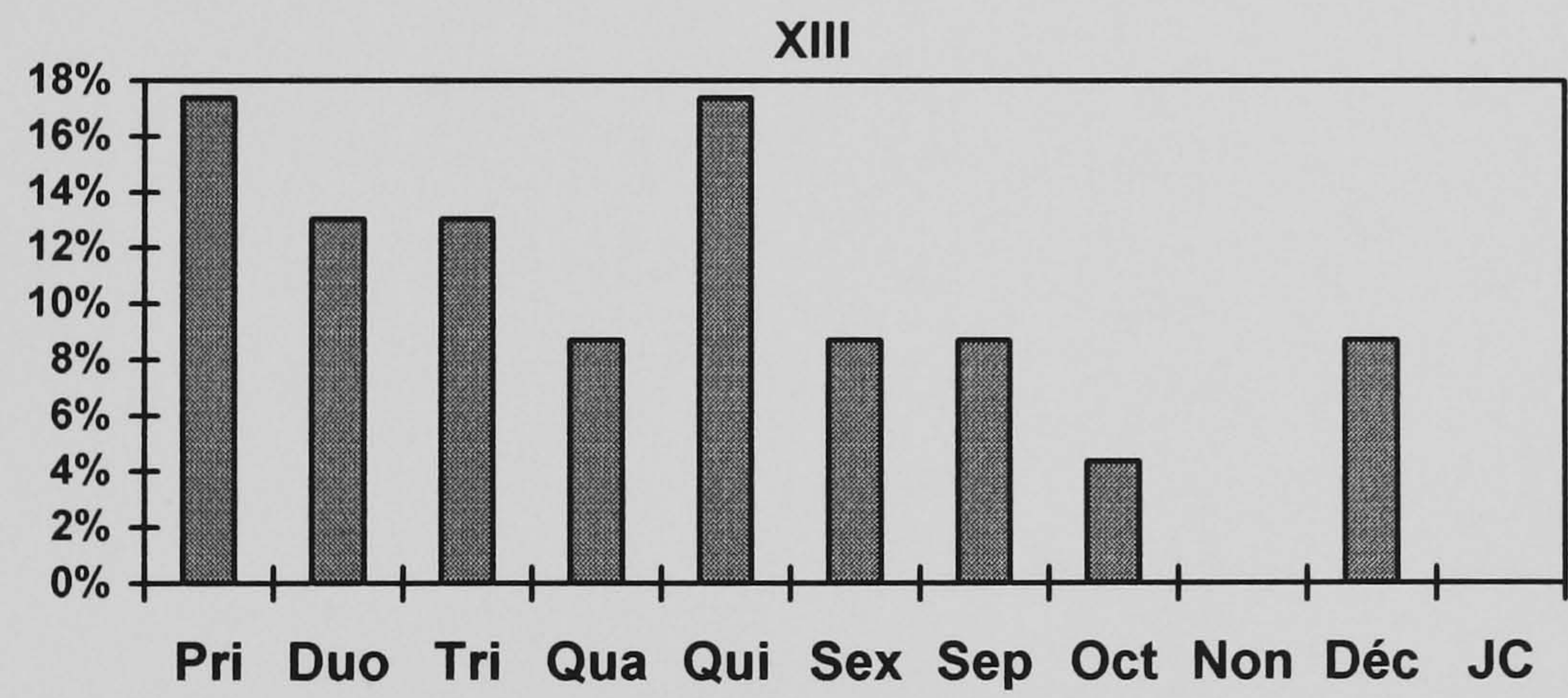
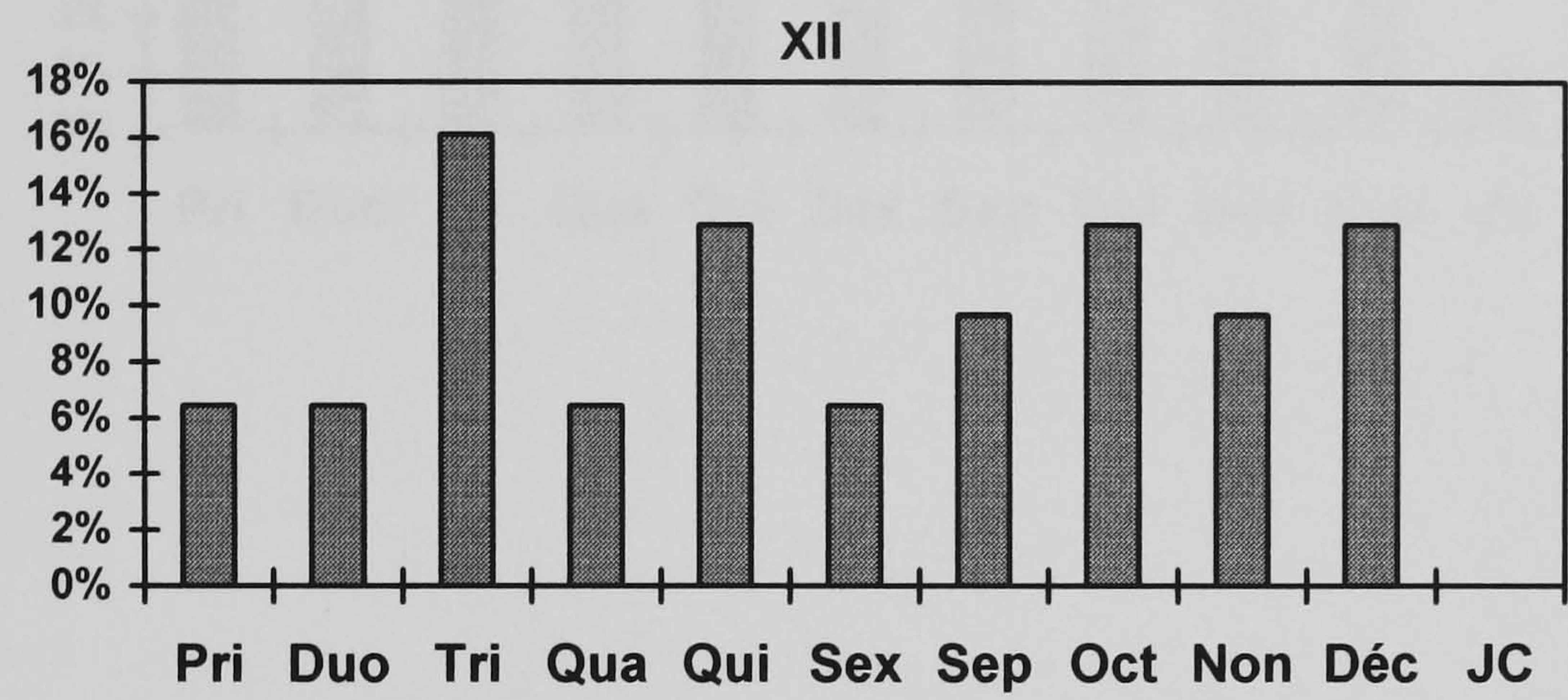
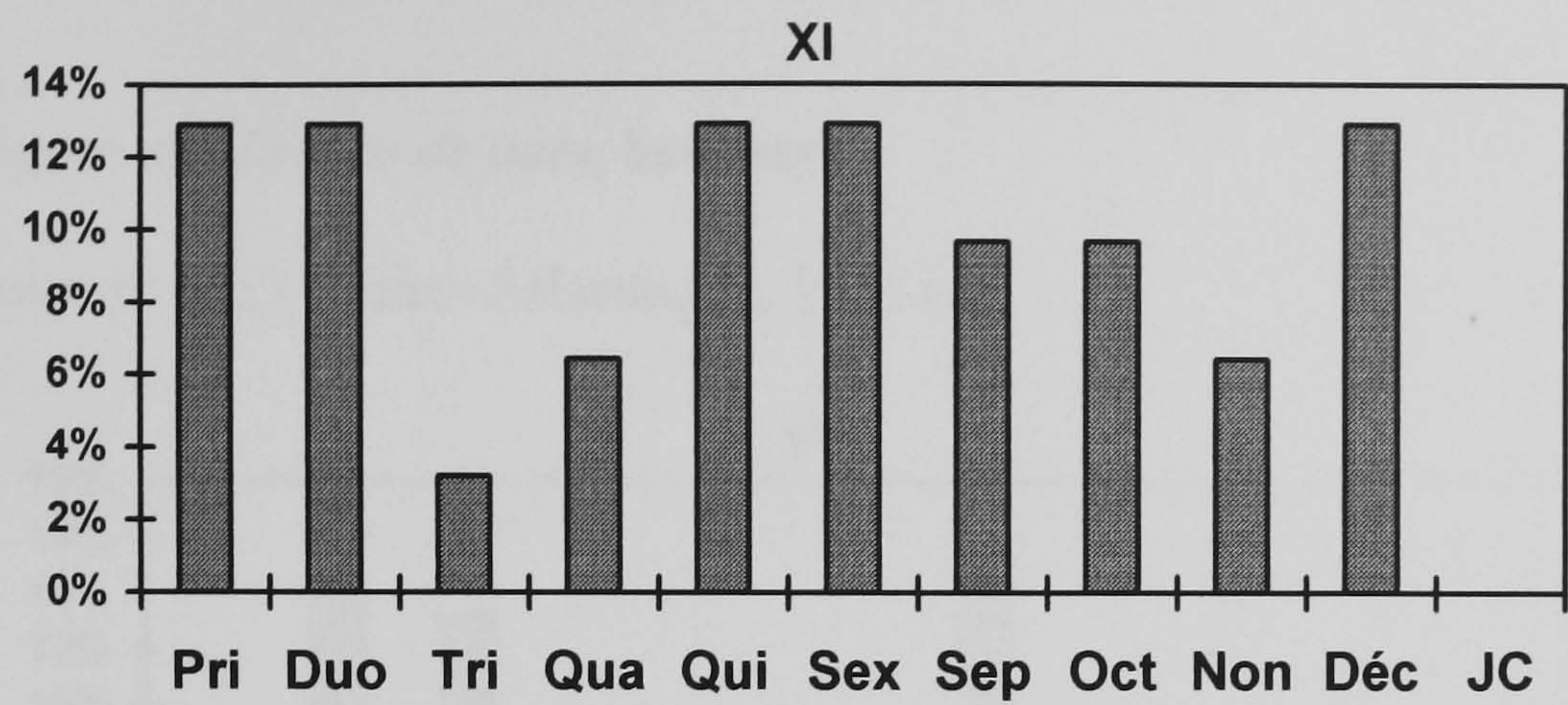
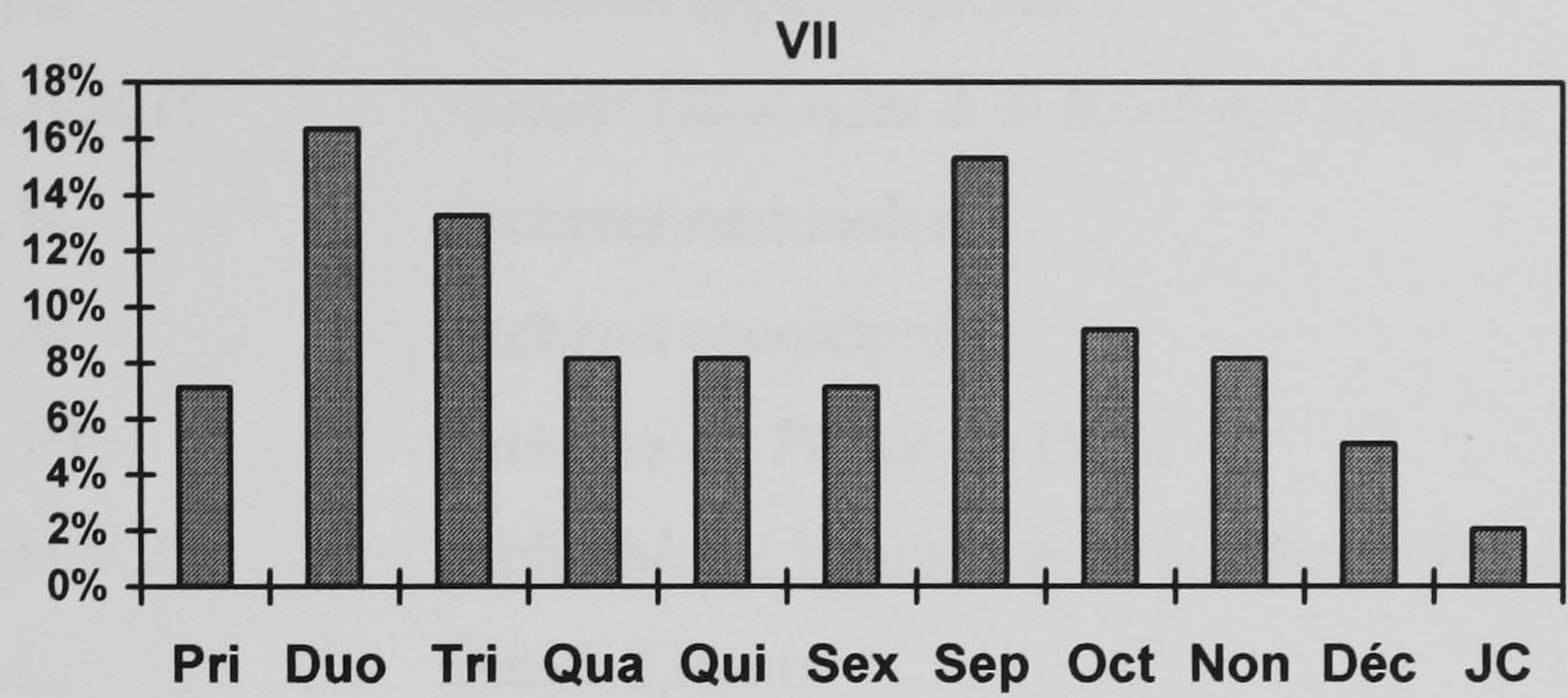


Figure xii: *Justice de paix*, Savenay

Source: A.D. Loire-Atlantique, L 2318.



ABBREVIATIONS, QUOTATIONS AND USE OF FRENCH

A.D.	Archives départementales
<i>A.H.R.F.</i>	<i>Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française</i>
A.N.	Archives nationales
A.M.	Archives municipales
A.P.P.	Archives du Police de Paris
B.H.V.P.	Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris
B.L.	British Library
B.M.	Bibliothèque municipale
B.N.	Bibliothèque nationale
F.R.R.C.	French Revolution Research Collection
<i>R.H.M.C.</i>	<i>Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine</i>

Longer passages of French have been indented and followed by an English translation in square brackets. Eighteenth-century word endings (*oient, oit, ens, ems*) have been preserved.

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AB XIX 333	Lakanal, Minutes et rapports
AB XIX 3372	Révolution et Empire, 1790-1802
AB XIX 701	Jurat, Lettre au Comité d’Instruction Publique, 10 vendémiaire IV
AD VIII 15	Loix calendrier grégorien et républicain, 1798-1800
AD VIII 17	Conseil des Cinq-Cents, Fêtes, 1793-an VII
AD VIII 18	Merlin, Fête du 9 Thermidor, an VI
AD VIII 18	Directoire, Conseil des Cinq-Cents, an VII

Pouvoir exécutif (Directoire exécutif, ans IV-VIII)

AF III 11	Procès-verbaux des séances du Directoire, ans IV-VIII
AF III 45	Cubières, au Directoire Exécutif, 18 vendémiaire VII, département de la Seine, canton de Paris
AF III 46	Administration Municipale, Rapports Ministériels, ans IV-VIII

Assemblées du Directoire

C 400 Conseil des Cinq-Cents, Messages adressés par le Directoire exécutif, an IV

C 455 Conseil des Cinq Cents, commis Administrative ans, V-VII

C 536 Conseil des Anciens, Minutes de procès-verbal, an VI

C 561 Conseil des Anciens, Minutes, an VI

C 561 Conseil des Anciens, Minutes des procès-verbaux, an VII

C 578 Conseil des Anciens, an VII

Comité de Législation

D III 37 Correspondance du comité avec les autorités judiciaires, administratives et les particuliers relative à l'application des lois sur l'organisation, ans II-III.

D III 37 Calvados, an III.

Missions des représentants du peuple

D\$1 17 Représentants-en-mission, Dupont, Seine-Inférieure, an III.

Enregistrement de la correspondance du Ministre de l'Intérieur

F 1331 Comité d'Instruction publique.

F 1331A Comité d'Instruction publique.

F 1355 Comité d'Instruction publique.

Ministre de l'Intérieur. Administration Générale.

F ¹ cI 84	Esprit public et élections. Fêtes publiques. Science et Arts, an II-1815.
F ¹ cI 85	Esprit Public et élections. Fêtes publiques (en général). Objets généraux, ans IV-VI
F ¹ cI 88-89	Esprit Public et élections. Fêtes Publiques. Objets généraux, an IX-1815
F ¹ cIII Doubs 1	Esprit Public et élections. Correspondance et divers, 1790- an XIV
F ¹ cIII Doubs 11	Fêtes nationales, 1791-1852
F ¹ cIII Loire-Inférieure 9	Fêtes nationales, 1790-1815
F ¹ cIII Loire-Inférieure 10	Esprit Public. Correspondance et divers, 1790-1812,
F ¹ cIII Vaucluse 8	Prestation de serment. Fêtes nationales, an IV-1852
F ¹ cIII Vaucluse 7	Adresses et adhésions, an II-1824
F ¹ cIII Vaucluse 9	Correspondance et divers, 1791-1813
F ¹ cIII Drome 11	Esprit Public, Correspondance et divers, 1789-1809, Drôme
F ¹ cIII Drome 11	Commissaire du Directoire exécutif près l'administration central du département de la Drôme; Curnier, Lettre, au Ministre de l'Interieur, 27 floreal VI
F ¹ cIII Eure 12	Esprit Public, Correspondance et divers, 1791-1830

- F¹cIII Haute-Garonne 12 Département de la Haute-Garonne, Serment, Fêtes nationales, an II-1953
- F¹cIII Gironde 8 Rapport, dans l'objet de vous tenir informé à la situation de ce département, an VIII
- F¹cIII Gironde 8 Esprit Public, an II
- F¹cIII Gironde 8 Esprit Public, Correspondance et divers, 1790-an VIII
- F¹cIII Gironde 9 Esprit Public, Correspondance, an VI
- F¹cIII Isere 9 Esprit Public, Correspondance et divers, 1790-1853
- F¹cIII Puy-de-Dôme 9 Esprit Public, Correspondance et divers, 1792-1854

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- F⁷4777 Comité de sûreté générale, Procès-verbaux du comité révolutionnaire de la section des Champs Elysées, 1793-an II,

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F¹⁰236 Correspondance du Ministre de l'Intérieur de la Commission d'agriculture et des arts et du Comité de salut public, 1792-an III.

Commerce et Industrie

F¹²769 b Corporations de Lyon, XVIIe Siècle

F¹²1242-1243 Foires et Marchés, XVIIIe Siècle

F¹²1258a Foires et Marchés. (Loiret), an III

F¹²1273 Foires et Marchés. (Vaucluse et Vendée), an VII-1820

F¹²1274 Commerce, Foires et marchés, Objet généraux, an VIII-1829

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