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Martin Evans and Emmanuel Godin, *France 1815-2003: Modern History for Modern Languages*. London: Arnold Publishers, 2004. xi + 219 pp. Maps, figures, bibliography, and index. \$65.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-340-76140-7; \$29.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 0-340-76141-5.

Review by Brett Bowles, Iowa State University.

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In recent years, the boundaries that once separated history from other humanities disciplines have largely disappeared, sometimes causing conflicts, but more often promoting mutual enrichment. Just as historians have come to accept literature, film, painting, and other cultural representations as valid sources, virtually all university French teachers recognize the importance of integrating historical context into their upper-level language, literature, and culture courses. Today, it is difficult to imagine teaching Émile Zola's *Germinal* without some reference to Marxist philosophy, industrialization's impact on socio-economic structures, and the development of trade unionism under the Second Empire. If students read *Voyage au bout de la nuit* in a contextual vacuum, Céline's extended tirade against modern society might seem nothing more than a perverse expression of individual misanthropy, but when linked to the lingering trauma of the First World War, the onset of the Great Depression, and collective fears over national decadence, the novel becomes at once more easily comprehensible and meaningful.

Yet, in practice, balancing history with literature and other cultural artifacts in the classroom is always challenging. Ideally, language teachers want students to do all their reading in French, but most history texts written for native speakers are too sophisticated linguistically and too detailed for typical American undergraduates. Conversely, texts within their reach such as *La civilisation française en évolution* do not provide sufficient chronological coverage or depth of content.[1] Even when one finds a book suitable for an undergrad history course entirely in French—I use Larousse's illustrated *Histoire de France*[2]—coordinating it with literary texts, films, and other material can be overwhelming for both students and teacher. Consequently many of us have students do their historical background readings in English, but keep textual analysis, class discussions, and writing assignments in French.

This is the approach implicit in *France 1815-2003*, which grew out of the authors' combined teaching experience in the School of Languages and Area Studies at the University of Portsmouth. The book offers a chronologically organized narrative of France's political, social, and economic development from the Revolution (one wonders why 1815 rather than 1789 is cited in the title) to the beginning of Jacques Chirac's second term, incorporating references to historiographic debates, collective memory, and dashes of cultural history along the way. The formatting and presentation are designed to maximize visual appeal, clarity, and accessibility. Each chapter begins with a timeline of key dates and events, followed by a short passage in boldface summarizing the main themes to be covered and serving as a transition from the previous chapter. Another useful feature is the inclusion of numerous glossary boxes highlighting and explaining the significance of key events (the 1937 International Exhibition, the Lip Affair), people (Honoré Daumier, *les harkis*), places (*les grands magasins*, Douaumont), and concepts (Utopian Socialism, the Vichy Syndrome). Each chapter concludes with a set of primary source extracts presented in the original French followed by global comprehension questions. Maps and iconography are somewhat limited in number (fifteen total), but are all well chosen and nicely integrated into the text. Finally, a succinct list of suggestions for further reading keyed to the chapter divisions appears at the end of the volume.

For a text aimed at students with no prior knowledge of French history, *France 1815-2003* does a remarkable job of maintaining clarity without oversimplifying or skirting the complexities and contradictions that spark good discussion. Moreover, there is a concerted effort to highlight the relevance of past events for contemporary social and political issues, such as Lionel Jospin's 1998 feud with Chirac over whether the army mutineers of 1917 should be officially rehabilitated, and the October 2001 dedication of a plaque on the Pont St. Michel "à la mémoire des nombreux Algériens tués lors de la répression sanglante de la manifestation pacifique du 17 octobre 1961". This approach justifies the slightly disproportional emphasis placed on the period 1914-2003 (120 of 200 pages), with the last seventy pages devoted to the Fourth and Fifth Republics. The authors' explanation of post-war modernization and analysis of Gaullism as the defining thread of French political culture makes for the best section of the book. Exceptionally thorough and elegantly written, it will be both intellectually satisfying to scholars and easily accessible to students of all levels.

The book contains no glaring gaps in content or coverage, but as with any survey text certain topics receive less attention than they probably deserve. Though the chapter covering 1789-1815 deftly presents the different phases of the Revolution, differing interpretations of causality, and the Revolution's paradoxical legacy, Bonaparte and the Empire appear almost as afterthoughts, occupying less than two pages of text in which the Code Civil is relegated to a short paragraph that does not sufficiently underscore its seminal importance. Similarly, the decision to cover the years 1914-1931 in a single chapter means that the First World War and its consequences are not fully explored (an excellent discussion of how the conflict altered gender relations notwithstanding). Perhaps most significant, in the chapter covering the last ten years there is no focused treatment of the European Union, the euro, or their impact on French politics, economics, and sense of national identity.

At first glance, the book's ancillary material shows some weaknesses. American and French readers will likely be struck by a British bias in the suggestions for further reading. To cite just a few examples, in the bibliography for the Revolution Robert Darnton, Tim Tackett, and Lynn Hunt (whose excellent textbook and CD-ROM co-authored with Jack Censer certainly merits citation) are conspicuously absent despite implicit textual references to their fields of research. [3] Miranda Pollard, Sarah Fishman, and Dominique Veillon are missing from the Vichy bibliography, despite discussion of gender-related issues in the corresponding chapter. Limitations of space make some such omissions inevitable, but in a book designed to serve as a starting point for further inquiry it does not seem unreasonable to expect more explicit, broadly representative acknowledgement of key scholarship.

Though consistently well chosen, the primary sources presented at the end of each chapter are often excessively truncated (for example, only the first four articles of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* are given) and would be more pedagogically useful if better contextualized. Providing a more extensive pedagogical framework is particularly important since the book is intended for use by teachers whose primary fields of specialization are likely to be language and literature. In the same light, the questions that end each chapter could also be improved to promote interpretation and critical reflection rather than simply the retention of basic facts.

However, these shortcomings are more than outweighed by the superb web site created to supplement the book ([www.port.ac.uk/france1815to2003/](http://www.port.ac.uk/france1815to2003/)). The site is divided into four sections: primary documents in the original French (123 entries), transcriptions of interviews in English with history professors (21), iconography (5), and eyewitness accounts (2). All are easily accessible thanks to index tabs that sort the material according to chapter and the digitization of all documents in .pdf format (Adobe Acrobat Reader).

The on-line primary document archive offers virtually every kind of text one might want to use in an introductory course, including political and social writings by Robespierre, Constant, Saint-Simon, Guizot, Louise Michel, Clemenceau, Jaurès, Thorez, Blum, Mounier, and Doriot; literary excerpts from Balzac, Musset, Valéry, Aragon, and Perec, as well as the text of the state prosecutor's closing argument at the trial of *Les fleurs du mal*; speeches by Jules Ferry, Pétain, De Gaulle, Pompidou, Mitterrand, and Chirac; examples of gender-specific discourse including Olympe de Gouges' *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* and the so-called *Manifeste des 121 salopes* calling for the legalization of abortion in 1971.

As for the interviews with academic experts, they read like class lectures in question-and-answer format and add a welcome measure of depth to the textbook by addressing topics such as the French Foreign Legion (Nikki Cooper, University of Bristol), the 1931 Colonial Exhibition (Michael G. Vann, Santa Clara University), collective memory of the First World War (Bill Kidd, University of Stirling), the French police under Vichy (Simon Kitson, University of Birmingham), the Algerian War (Stephen Tyre, University of St. Andrews), and contemporary *Francophonie* (Margaret Majumdar, University of Portsmouth). With only five entries, the iconography section is rather thin, but one assumes that more items will be added in the future given the wealth of possibilities in this area. It might also be beneficial to beef up the eyewitness accounts file by adding passages from memoirs and diaries such as Jean-Marie Déguignet's *Mémoires d'un paysan bas-breton*, Emilie Carles's *Une soupe aux herbes sauvages*, and Jean Guéhenno's *Journal des années noires*.<sup>[4]</sup>

On balance, *France 1815–2003* ranks among the best introductory textbooks currently available thanks to its comprehensive coverage, cogent synthesis of current scholarship, and easy accessibility. It will be an effective complementary text in a wide range of undergraduate French culture and literature courses. The book could also potentially serve as a core text in a modern history survey, though it does not offer quite as much depth or nuance as Jeremy Popkin's *History of Modern France*.<sup>[5]</sup> In courses requiring a narrower chronological frame and more detail, many of us will still want to use one of the five volumes devoted to France in Longman's "Seminar Studies in History" series.<sup>[6]</sup> Whatever the case, Martin Evans and Emmanuel Godin have done teachers of French and French history a great service and should be commended for their work.

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## NOTES

[1] Ross Steele, Susan St. Onge, and Ronald St. Onge, *La civilisation française en évolution I: institutions et culture avant la Ve République* (New York: Thomson, 1995); *La civilisation française en évolution II: institutions et culture depuis la Ve République* (New York: Thomson, 1996).

[2] Catherine Ritchie et al., *Histoire de France*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Larousse, 2002).

[3] Lynn Hunt and Jack Censer, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

[4] Jean-Marie Déguignet, *Mémoires d'un paysan bas-breton* (Ar-Releg-Kerhuon, Brittany: An Here, 1999); Emilie Carles, *Une soupe aux herbes sauvages* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1981); Jean Guéhenno, *Journal des années noires* (Paris: 1947).

[5] Jeremy Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005).

[6] D. G. Wright, *Revolution and Terror in France 1789-1795* (London: Longman, 1990); D. G. Wright, *Napoleon and Europe* (London: Longman, 1984); Pamela Pilbeam, *The Constitutional Monarchy in France 1814-48* (London: 2000); William Smith, *Second Empire and Commune: France 1848-1871* (London: Longman, 1996); Robert Gildea, *France 1870-1917* (London: Longman, 1996); Nicholas Atkin, *The French at War 1934-1944* (London: Longman, 2001); Tyler Stovall, *France since the Second World War* (London: Longman, 2002).

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