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J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xiv + 330 pp. Notes, Bibliography and Index. \$55.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN-13: 978-0-19-530530-2.

Review by Patricia Lorcin, University of Minnesota.

In his 1843 work on Algeria, Adrien Berbrugger, one of the founders of the Bibliothèque National d'Alger and president of the Société historique algérienne, declared that the French were too civilized to be as religious as the Arabs and therefore were not prone to seeing the hand of God behind their conquest.^[1] Twenty-five years later, Charles Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers and later Primate of Africa, saw the colony as "the door opened by Providence onto the dark continent" and encouraged the members of his newly founded missionary order, the Pères Blancs, to fan out across Africa spreading Christian civilization.^[2] Both men were committed imperialists whose attitudes towards religion exemplify the complex relationship between religious orders and lay personnel in the colonies. Their attitudes also mirror the ways in which conflicts between State and Church in France played themselves out in her overseas territories.

Recent work on religion in the colonies has moved away from the monolithic view of missionary activity as a collaborative extension of the imperial endeavour, highlighting not only the complex relationship between the religious orders and officialdom in the colonies but also the tensions and machinations between the religious orders themselves.^[3] J. P. Daughton's *An Empire Divided* is a fine contribution to this growing literature. Focusing on the formative years of the Third Republic, Daughton demonstrates how disparate religious and secular groups in the colonies used the concept of the *mission civilisatrice* to further their own ambitions and to encourage the often ambivalent metropole French to invest in imperial ventures. Daughton argues that the paradox of the relationship between Republican and Catholic groups in the colonies, particularly in the decades up to World War I, was that the Republican civilizing mission was perpetrated by their "sworn enemies, Catholic religious workers." (p. 6). Civilizing policies, Daughton suggests, were developed as a result of religious resentment and political confrontation. The debates and clashes between missionaries and their colonial critics prompted politicians in the metropole to introduce measures that limited missionary action, particularly in their traditionally strongest domains, education and health. Hence, it was the presence of Catholic missionaries in the empire that encouraged the emergence of a republican secular vision of the civilizing mission. The Third Republic's colonial ideology was not defined by revolutionary republican values but by individual projects that were shaped by conflicts between religious and lay groups both in the metropole and the overseas territories.

The book is divided into five sections, of which three are devoted to case studies of individual colonies: Indochina, Polynesia, and Madagascar. In his introductory first section, Daughton lays out the themes of the work and examines the background to nineteenth-century missionary activity. He argues that by using the empire as the focus for examining the contentious relationship between Church and State, Catholic and republican ideologies emerge as fragmented and pliant rather than cohesive. He goes on to suggest that although discord was a feature of the relationship between these two ideologically separate groups, the colonial experience forced a redefinition of moral goals that alleviated some of the political and cultural divisions present in France since the Revolution. Finally, in line with much recent historiography of empire, he emphasizes the importance of the French colonial enterprise in creating French identity.

Each of the three case studies highlights a different aspect of the relationship between republican personalities and missionary personnel. The thread that ties the three together is republican concern that missionaries undermined French prestige and power. The tensions in Indochina were between missionaries and republican administrators and Freemason colonists over methods of disseminating French ideas. In Polynesia issues of gender and depopulation form the axis around which the discussion turns, whereas in Madagascar competitions between French Catholics and British Protestants forced a re-evaluation of the parameters of French nationality.

French Jesuits, of whom the best known is Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660), had been present in the territory that was to become French Indochina since the early seventeenth century. In spite of the fact that protection of French missionaries, and in particular Vietnamese Catholics, was a way of vindicating French interference and expansion in the area, when French colonizers arrived in force at the end of the nineteenth century tensions developed between the missionaries and the newly arrived republican officials. Daughton's discussion of the antagonism between the missionaries' vision of Catholicism as a core French tradition and the colonial officials' vision of republicanism as France's modern face is informative. He does not eschew the argument that collaboration between missionaries and republican officials existed rather he demonstrates that it was far more complex than previously suggested. By singling out a number of high profile examples, he underlines the fact that the competing traditions and political sensibilities of the missionary and republican groups involved cannot be interpreted as one of straightforward partnership.

The section on Indochina is particular strong in its discussion of the anxieties of Catholic missionaries in the face of the spread of Protestantism and the influence of Freemasons and the ambiguities of criticisms of the missionaries. Paul Doumer, Governor-General from 1897, was a Freemason and his arrival in the colony coincided with the turbulent political developments in France as a result of the Dreyfus Affair. Metropole polemics were reflected in the colony in a number of ways, not least of which was an increase, by Freemasons and other republican commentators, in attacks on clerical intrigue and their disruptive influence in the colony. On the one hand, they declared that missionary attempts to convert non-Christians created tensions between the local population and the French, encouraging hatred by the former of the latter. On the other hand, they saw missionary use of local dialects to the detriment of French language as a sign of their lack of patriotic duty. These two attitudes indicate the ambiguity of the arguments used against the missionaries by their critics, who felt that the role of France in Indochina was to civilize yet respect local traditions.

Although the section on Polynesia picks up some of the themes raised earlier, Daughton develops the importance of gender in missionary work and highlights the struggle between British Protestants and French Catholics. The gendering of missionary activity conformed to conventional ideas in so far as male missionaries were seen as soldiers of Christ, whereas female missionaries were deemed to be better caregivers, teachers and nurses. The populations of most of the islands had converted to Christianity by the time the French arrived, so the mission was not to convert but rather to instil morality in a population deemed to be riddled with venereal disease and prone to sexual "debauchery." What better agent to complete this task than female missionaries? Colonial officials preoccupied with questions of morality supported the missionary sisters' work, especially among indigenous children. This encouragement, Daughton argues, was indicative of the extent to which gender influenced republican attitudes to civilizing the peoples of Polynesia.

In the early stages of colonization, criticism of the missionaries never reached the intensity it did in Indochina and Daughton demonstrates that although there were differences of opinion between the naval and civilian officials about the methods and successes of the missionaries, on the whole they endorsed missionary activity rather than undermining it. Schooling was an important element in missionary work but for Church leaders in Polynesia schooling was as much about combating Protestantism as it was about academics. Indeed, as Daughton rightly points out, the struggle between

French Catholics and British Protestants, which took place in the Polynesian islands was emblematic of the imperial competition between France and Britain.

By the early years of the twentieth century, however, republican rhetoric in Polynesia acquired a marked anti-clerical tone, mirroring political events in France as the laws separating Church and State were implemented. Missionary schools were shut down and missions were criticized for their theocratic impulses. The acute anti-clericalism of the period, Daughton suggests, led to republicans shooting themselves in the foot as they started to condemn “their own programs [implemented by the missionaries] to save and civilize the local population.” (p.163) In the Polynesian case, Daughton concludes, the civilizing mission cannot be understood solely in terms of colonial control and racial delineation. Religious factors were just as important in shaping what the civilizing mission meant at different times.

Madagascar presents a third facet of the evolving relationship between Church and State in the pre-war Third Republic. Here the focus is on the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, French and British, highlighting the paradoxes of religious politics. Christianity was a key factor in Merina politics after the 1860s when the royal family converted to Christianity and created a Palace Church, based on Protestantism. Although Protestant missionaries did not control the Palace Church, a close association existed between the two making Catholic evangelization difficult. The chapters on Madagascar underscore the way in which religion shaped tensions and had an impact on the island’s politics. In spite of the important presence of Protestants on the island, Catholic missionaries eventually benefited from French colonization as, over time, their influence increased. The presence on the island of the London Missionary Society, a Protestant organization, was indirectly instrumental in the development of Catholic influence as they were seen by officials as “a danger to French authority” that had to be controlled. In the closing pages of the section, Daughton traces the responses in the colony to the religious laws of 1901-05 stressing the fact that whatever the reaction to the 1905 law among Catholics in France, across the Empire the impact was less severe as colonial administrations had already curtailed many of the activities of religious workers, which the law was restricting in France. The law, he argues, legitimized missions by recognizing them and outlining their relationship to the colonial state. In Madagascar in particular, the colonial administration established guidelines for missionary ownership of property and officially recognized them as members of the colonial fold.

The final section takes the story back to France where debates raged as to the place of missionaries in the republican empire. The pre-war Third Republic saw missionary organizations take an active role in these debates. Daughton argues that this involvement had a new dimension as the Church sought to convince a popular audience of the value of missionary work. It did so by means of didactic entertainment expressed in a wide range of innovative publications, inspirational songs and educational cartoons. Church journals, magazines and other publications that emerged at this time stressed the benefits of French missionary work to the empire and its impact on the world at large. Missionary activity, patriotism and colonialism thus became entwined.

Daughton has produced an elegant study of the intersection of religion and empire. It underlines what other scholars have developed in different contexts, namely that colonial policies were not made by metropole bureaucrats but by individuals on the spot whose decisions were often constrained by limited budgets, lack of personnel and anxieties about triggering unrest among the local populations. More important though, it demonstrates how under the umbrella of the French empire, regional particularities were not just shaped by responses to local conditions and peoples, they were often formed by differences and conflicts among the French themselves.

NOTES

[1] Adrien Berbrugger, *Algérie. Historique, pittoresque, et monumentale* (Paris: Delahaye, 1843), p. 4.

[2] Quoted phrase cited in Xavier de Montclos, *Le Cardinal Lavignerie. La Mission universelle de l'Eglise* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1968).

[3] See for example, Sarah A. Curtis, "Emile de Vialar and the Religious Reconquest of Algeria" *French Historical Studies* Vol. 29, No. 2 (2006): 261-292; Kenneth J. Orosz, *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

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