

Only one essay, "The Origin and Spread of Christian Monasteries" by C. Harold King, is inadequate. The author treats eastern eremitic monasticism--the dominant form for a very long time in a large part of the Christian world--with no sympathy at all. Student prejudices about the superstitions of the past (and perhaps about the excesses of Orientals) will only be reinforced, this in spite of a wealth of material (some of it in the bibliography here) that would help students understand Symeon the Stylite or St. Antony--not simply condemn "the less attractive aspects of the ascetic impulse." The author also credits Benedict of Nursia and his "Roman common sense" for much that existed before his time. This is not an accurate account of the development of monasticism, and there are some excellent, accurate, nuanced, and interesting accounts out there. If the book were to go to a second edition, this essay should be replaced.

Finally, I missed eastern Christianity here. While most of the activity in the early essays of the book takes place in the East, the dominant narrative of the book is about the Roman Church. If its title were *The Rise of Western Christianity*, this would be fine. But the history of western Christianity is not the *whole* story. At least one essay on the eastern churches (and preferably more than one, since there are several eastern churches) would help to complete the picture.

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**Martin P. Johnson.** *The Dreyfus Affair: Honour and Politics in the Belle Époque.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. xi, 171. Cloth, \$55.00; ISBN 0-312-22158-4. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-22159-2.

Ever absorbing, even a century later, the Dreyfus Affair continues to intrigue scholars and students alike. Yet, instructors are hard pressed to find appropriate reading for classes in modern French history or modern European surveys. Certainly there are carefully researched, judiciously balanced, and well-written books, some of which are available in paper editions. But these books are too large to integrate into classroom use, when *L'Affaire* can occupy only a small portion of a term's study. Yet the issues raised--relevant now as then--require delving into the story in greater detail than a textbook summary. *The Dreyfus Affair* admirably meets the need for a relatively short narrative analysis that will familiarize readers with the extraordinary events that stretched on for twelve years from 1894 to 1906.

Martin Johnson's crisp prose enables him to pack ample details into less than two hundred pages. He's adept at telling the story of the tangled web of events that followed initial incompetencies in the intelligence section of the Ministry of War. The narrative also allows the reader to understand the central characters on both sides of the controversy. Johnson's study, however, centers on the Affair, not on

the individuals. Not even on Dreyfus, although we learn a good deal about him and his ordeal: accusation, trial, conviction, imprisonment on Devil's Island, retrial, conviction, pardon, restoration to the Army with promotion and the Legion of Honor. There's enough drama here for any novel, but, of course, these things happened.

The author skillfully integrates these events within the context of a searing experience for French society and politics. In the process of trying to determine Dreyfus's guilt or innocence, the Republic nearly came apart as the French confronted fundamental issues of the *raison d'être* of the state and the nature of institutional authority within an ostensibly democratic society. Definitions of "justice" and "individual rights" took on an urgency that moved these abstractions into the arena of intense political debate. Explosively adding to the debate was deeply rooted anti-Semitism in French society, reflected across the political spectrum.

Further fueling the intense passions was the unresolved clerical issues. Prior to the Affair, Pope Leo XIII had told Catholics they could, after all, be republicans and still be true to their religion. But anti-Clericalism ran deeply as large numbers of the French distrusted the Church and wanted all traces of clerical influence removed from republican institutions. The pro-monarchist, virulently anti-Semitic right-wing fringe in the church caused a lot of noise, and some violence, ultimately helping to discredit both the anti-Dreyfusards and the institutional French church.

The book begins with a helpful two-page chronology. A very useful addition would have been a list of the principals, with the briefest of biographical information. Students will have a bit of difficulty keeping everyone straight. Nonetheless, Johnson has written a book that incorporates the best of Affair scholarship, developing thoughtful analyses of the individuals and the large issues that the Affair pushed into the forefront of French life. Readers will learn a good deal about French society and politics during the *Belle Époque*, and they will be reminded that some of the issues are fundamental ones, relevant for contemporary society as well.

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Kirk D. Werner, ed. *The American Revolution*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. Pp. 224. Paper, \$13.96; ISBN: 0-7377-0238-9.

*The American Revolution* is one of those small, easily accessible supplements that all undergraduates (and some graduates) pine for, yet rarely find. It is part of a series entitled "Turning Points in World History." It is quite apt for the series, for what American has not been imprinted with the importance of the struggle of the