

only means of access to it, providing an exemplary introduction to the difficulties faced by historians who wish to take the people of the past on their own terms, not ours. Perhaps because his subject is too large for full consideration in a brief paper, James Amelang's study of neighbourhood identity in Barcelona is less satisfying. Although he briefly mentions change over time, this reader was left with the sense that an essentially atemporal description did not do justice to the complexity of his information. Andrew Barnes's clear statement of the argument that the chief consequence of the Counter-Reformation was the deracination of rural Christianity provides a sensible overview of others' archival research. Less connected to the themes and subjects central to this book, both chronologically and culturally, is Peter Sahlin's examination of traditional elements in the revolt in Ariège against the 1827 Forest Code. His peasants lived in a very different world from nearly all the other groups discussed here and, as he himself admits, the revolt occurred in a modern political context: the Revolution of 1830.

Elizabeth Cohen's racy micro-historical study of a Roman "love" letter and her intelligent consideration of the problems of written communication in an era of semi-literacy is the first of four studies of "cultural identities". The effects of literacy are approached from a very different angle by Alison Klairmont Lingo, who shows the diverse and contradictory consequences of the publication of books on female health. Despite its focus on the aristocracy, probably the most "Davis-like" piece in this collection is Jonathan Dewald's innovative consideration of the ways in which Corneille and Racine altered the classical stories on which many of their plays were based; placed against family life among the seventeenth-century French elite, they illuminate some intriguing tensions and anxieties. As an example of how perceptive historians can make old and familiar texts reveal much about the world in which and for which they were composed, this essay can hardly be surpassed. Carla Hesse's interesting discussion of Louise de Kéralio is the work which is most out of place in this book; its connections to the central themes of Davis's work and to early modern socio-cultural history are tenuous, and its subject seems to demand a different venue.

With this final exception, the book seems remarkably unified, a worthy tribute to a risk-taking scholar and engaging mentor who, more than anyone else, has stood at the centre of early modern French studies in America during the past 30 years.

Alan G. Arthur
Brock University

Colin Jones — *The Cambridge Illustrated History of France*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. 352.

This volume is a beautifully illustrated history of France from Roman times to the contemporary age at a reasonable price (\$39.95). About half the book is devoted to the period since the Revolution. Because much of it is composed of illustrations, charts, and maps, it reads considerably shorter than its 352 pages. The text is well-

written, well-conceived narrative history, appropriate for a table book, but the specialist will find little new here. Despite Jones's own important work on rural history, social-economic history receives little attention. Discussion of these issues appears mainly in sidebars accompanying charts so as not to interrupt the narrative flow.

The main attraction of the volume lies with its fine illustrations — from drawings in the Cosquer Cave (16,000 BC), through illuminated medieval manuscripts, to David's famous painting of Napoleon crossing the Alps, to photographs of modern architectural triumphs like La Défense and the new Louvre. Charts and maps reveal trends in Renaissance printing, the expansion of France, literacy, and industrialization. Postcards, cartoons, stamps, and contemporary photographs bring alive French popular culture of the last two centuries. The excellent selection comes from a wide variety of archival and library collections, and many have never appeared in print before. Undergraduate students could profit from a day spent merely examining the pictorial representations.

The central text is history from above, however, concentrating on major figures and events. It gives attention to the "cultural grandeur" of France. In contrast to *National Geographic* and many television treatments of the Revolutionary years during the bicentennial, the author is unabashedly sympathetic to the Revolution. This republican viewpoint leads to some questionable interpretations. The precondition for the rebellion of the Chouans and the Vendée, for example, had been laid because "the west was hyper-Catholic and resented religious reforms" (p. 189). This interpretation might surprise those acquainted with Donald Sutherland's *The Chouans* (1982) or even Charles Tilly's older *The Vendée* (1964). I doubt that "The Terror saved the republic" (p. 191). It would be more accurate to observe that the Terror probably discredited French republicanism for a century.

A combination of republican sympathy and emphasis on *histoire événementielle* leads to the strange statement that the "free primary schooling was introduced for children between six and thirteen years old" by the Ferry Laws and "that the children of Marianne had to be rescued from the divisive and vengeful clutches of a backward-looking, anti-republican church" (p. 222). The Frères des écoles chrétiennes "introduced" free primary schooling, and a majority of children in French primary schools paid no fees long before the Ferry Laws.

François Mitterand is a hero. No mention is made of questionable associations during his youth or of his unsavoury friends during his presidency. Recent government cutbacks that produced the largest protests in France since 1968 have left unresolved Jones's query about the Avroux laws of 1981 — "Who was to pay for this unparalleled largesse?" (p. 312).

Despite some reservations about particular interpretations, this reader found the volume an impressive one. It is a notch above most table books. Packed with information, it tells a lucid, accurate story. The general reader will find this an incisive survey of a country with a rich history.

Patrick J. Harrigan
University of Waterloo