Chapter 6: Revolutionary Radegund (1792-1916)

# Introduction

After twelve centuries of unbroken possession, the thirty nuns and thirteen novices who still lived at the Abbey of Sainte-Croix in 1792 were expelled and the property confiscated by the state,

The abbey buildings were then discovered to possess qualities which were highly prized at the time, as the material of which their walls were composed contained a considerable quantity of saltpeter. Accordingly the premises were invaded by an army of munition-workers, and the process of extracting the saltpeter from the walls went on until the whole abbey, with the exception of the abbess's lodge, had disappeared.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Today, nothing remains except for a scattered grouping of column bases and crumbling wall fragments outside the five-story apartment building that now occupies the site where the old abbey used to stand. Radegund’s foundation survived the ravages of the Huguenots and may have even surpassed its medieval glory days under Abbess Flandrine’s management, but the Revolutionary hostility towards Catholic institutions proved to be insurmountable. Like the Reformation, the French Revolution resulted in the widespread destruction and vandalism of Catholic objects, places, and institutions. However, the Revolutionary movement with its nation-wide suppression of religious orders had a very different character, meaning that the attacks on Radegund’s cult sites during this period took a very different form than their Reformation-era counterparts. The cult’s revival was also markedly distinctive from what we saw in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unlike the Huguenot’s iconoclasm of the sixteenth century, the damages visited upon Radegund’s cult sites during the French Revolution were often too extensive to rebuild, as was the case with the Abbey of Sainte-Croix. Furthermore, the character of Catholic devotion in the nineteenth century was significantly altered by the Revolution, which created opportunities for new forms of veneration and new roles for Radegund to step into.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, French culture seemed irreparably divided on every front. Still reeling from the violence of the 1790s, the country continued to face social and political instability over the next century from the recurring shifts of power as France transitioned between different forms of monarchy and republic. This period of conflict and uncertainty is often characterized as the Culture Wars, where “two Frances—one religious, one republican— coexisted in the same country, under the same law, but subscribed to significantly different values.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The “religious” and the “republican” were further factionalized into numerous interest groups, often irreconcilably divided over what constituted “Frenchness” and what it meant to be French. Radegund’s distinctive ability to embody multiple meanings simultaneously resulted in a surge of popularity in her cult during the nineteenth century as individuals and communities sought out new ways to define and express their worldviews. Radegund’s own multi-faceted nature made it possible for royalist and republican alike to harness her symbolic potential in their scramble to redefine French identity and France’s place in history.

Within this context, we can observe the development of at least five new - and sometimes contradictory - identities for Radegund, which will be the main focus of this chapter. On the one hand, the previous three centuries of new *Lives* that built up Radegund’s identity as a specifically *French* and *royal* saint contributed to her great appeal among conservative monarchists[[3]](#footnote-3) who saw her as an effective symbol to express their opposition to republicanism and secularization. Emphasizing this Frankish saint’s royalty took on a more volatile meaning than ever before during the Third Republic (est. 1870), a time of social and political upheaval after France's demoralizing defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Popular support for a republican government made the restoration of the monarchy unlikely, but royalists were reluctant to give up the fight. The coronation of Radegund’s statue in Poitiers – and the ensuing riot – was the most violently divisive use of Radegund to date.

On the other hand, Radegund was simultaneously appropriated by the French Republican government who sought to recreate her as a symbol of French nationalism. Highlighting Radegund’s Frenchness while minimizing her royalty, she was promoted in monumental art as the epitome of the pure Christianity of a literary and artistic golden age before the Ancien Régime’s corrupt influence. The republican interpretation of Radegund as a desacralized object of French patrimony fractured the Catholic monopoly on her use and made her “safe” for republican France.

We also see a new and unexpected reinvention of Radegund as a mother-figure beginning in the 1820s. Just as we saw Radegund reinterpreted as a model for elite laywomen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we can see an even greater intensification of her femininity during this period when she was publicly styled as “Mère de la Patrie” (“Mother of the Fatherland”) and became the patron of a new confraternity for married French mothers. While Radegund’s new identity as Mother of the Fatherland carried with it important gendered implications, it was also imbued with new nationalist sentiments as her legacy was mobilized to promote the worldviews of those on both sides of the political divide.

Radegund entered a more global context when she became a part of France’s colonial *mission civilisatrice*. As the titular saint of France’s first mission to the Northern Congo, Radegund’s identity as an instrument of French civilization was mutually constructed both at home and abroad. Just as the colonial project forced France to define Frenchness in relation to the rest of the world, it also shaped Radegund’s identity in oppositional terms. She was reimagined by both Catholics and republicans as a quintessentially French hero who helped guide ancient Francia out of pagan degeneracy by dispensing superior education and pure apostolic morality from the intellectual haven of her monastery. The work of Catholic missionaries was crucial to the colonial project, despite the “uncomfortable symbiosis” that existed between missionaries and an adamantly secular republican government.[[4]](#footnote-4) But even for republicans, colonial France had to be Catholic, and Radegund’s new identity as the great civilizer of a barbarian Gaul made her the perfect symbol for the justification of colonial France as the great civilizer of the world.

This fixation on Radegund as a civilizing influence was coupled with the revival of her long-forgotten historical role as a medical caregiver (as opposed to a miraculous healer) to a population of morally dangerous poor. In this capacity, her image was used to sponsor charitable donations for a children’s tuberculosis hospital in Tours and to recruit nurses for service in Algeria. In both of these cases, Radegund’s more secular identity as a healer of the poor and promoter of hygiene was reconceived for the new needs and expectations of the early twentieth century.

This section will explore these five innovative and occasionally conflicting “Radegunds” by comparing a new set of texts, art, and ritual practices including revolutionary miracle accounts, several new hagiographical works, panegyrics, sermons, processions and statue-crowning ceremonies, newspaper articles, letters, local histories, missionary memoirs, sculptures, monumental art, and publicly distributed holy cards.

# The French Revolution and the Cult of the Saints: Revolutionary Iconoclasm & Restoration

In addition to the Abbey of Sainte-Croix, in 1792, the "Vandales révolutionnaires"[[5]](#footnote-5) also destroyed the nearby chapel dedicated to the Pas-de-Dieu, a flagstone from Radegund's cell imprinted by the footsteps of Christ when he appeared to her in a vision shortly before her death. But, struck by the overwhelming power of Radegund's holiness, those same revolutionaries were compelled to save the holy stone and transported it to the Church of Sainte-Radegonde for safety where it is still exhibited for veneration today.[[6]](#footnote-6) Emile Briand, author of the 1898 *Histoire de Sainte-Radegonde* and curate of her church in Poitiers*,* retrospectively saw this miracle as “a testimony to the uncontroversial remnant of popular belief,” that survived the violent revolutionary suppression.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The unique cave-chapel dedicated to Radegund at Chinon, so painstakingly restored after the Huguenot vandalism of 1562 by Canon Louis Breton with his addition of six murals, barely survived the ravages of the Revolution. The revolutionary government sold the chapel property and it was divided into multiple dwellings. The nave was converted into a pig stye and the twelfth-century statue of Radegund, which survived the Reformation, was believed to have been stolen or lost. In 1878, a local wealthy Catholic, Madame Élisabeth Charre, bought the land and employed the architect, Monsieur Daviau, to clear out the debris and fully restore the chapel to its medieval form. Briand recounts the transformation, exclaiming, “We were amazed to see suddenly appear a monument of very great interest, with columns, windows, and arches, there where we only saw filthy stables!”[[8]](#footnote-8) In addition to these expensive restorations which were completed within the year, Mme Charre also engaged the Poitevin sculptors, Messieurs Charron and Beausoleil, to produce a lifelike limestone statue of Jean the Recluse reclining on his tomb. Mme Charre had no need of their services for a new Radegund icon because, during the rebuilding, the twelfth-century statue was miraculously discovered in the nearby vineyard where it had been ignominiously tossed when the chapel was decommissioned in 1792. [[9]](#footnote-9) She did however have a new pedestal erected to display it, to which she added a Latin inscription memorializing her and M. Daviau’s efforts. The restoration was celebrated with a blessing and dedication ceremony on Radegund’s feast day of August 13 in 1879. [[10]](#footnote-10) Mme Charre sought to restore the chapel to its medieval state, invoking a romanticized appreciation for the artistic styles of the Ancien Régime shared by so many French Catholics of the 1870s.

The medieval Chapelle-Sainte-Radegonde in the rural hamlet of Ganties, situated in the Occitan region of southwestern France, was completely destroyed during the French Revolution. Unlike so many of Radegund’s other cult sites, Ganties was one of the few, in addition to Chinon, that was entirely rebuilt. But unlike the more conventional aspirations of Mme Charre which entailed a no-expenses-spared restoration of a site of popular historical and religious value, the motivations for the Ganties restoration took on a uniquely rural character and signaled a revival of Radegund’s medieval associations with the protection of agricultural produce.

In the spring of 1852, the parish of Ganties was hit by a devastating hailstorm. According to local tradition, “it was unheard of that hail had fallen on the neighborhoods [Radegund] was protecting.” The inhabitants believed that they could secure Radegund’s intervention by rebuilding her chapel, which was thought to be the first church of Ganties, and by establishing a community feast day on the anniversary of the hailstorm. In a letter to his local archdeacon, Abbé Figarol, the parish priest of Ganties, presented his congregation’s case and requested permission to go forward with their rebuilding project and to institute an annual mass in Radegund’s honor every May 27, the anniversary of the hailstorm. Figarol writes that, while it’s true that public religious observation ceased during the French Revolution when the chapel was destroyed, “for a long time, *and today more than ever*, the inhabitants have called for reconstruction again.” He continues to explain that his parishioners have

All resolved to suspend their work in the fields on this day so that they may derive more fruit from their devotion, and they earnestly desire that a mass be celebrated and vespers sung at which they can assist. They add that they have such a great confidence in the merits of this one they want to honor, who has been worshiped from time immemorial by themselves and the inhabitants of the neighboring parishes, who came in great veneration to this country chapel dedicated in her honor.

Unlike the restoration of the Chinon chapel, which was a top-down affair spearheaded by a local wealthy elite, the Ganties restoration (at least as it was framed by Abbé Figarol) was driven by the specific needs and concerns of this farming community, who believed rebuilding Radegund’s chapel could mitigate a very real threat to their livelihoods.

The archdeacon granted their request and May 27 became a non-working holiday in the community of Ganties. Figarol’s successor, Abbé Pourrech, recorded the popular religious customs of his parish, noting the enduring devotion to their patroness. He describes in great detail the pastoral celebration that takes place each year on her feast day when the whole parish assembles at the church which, according to his rather romantic description, “rises in the middle of a small valley, surrounded by beautiful oaks and far from any habitation.” Everyone walks in procession, following four young girls dressed in their First Communion clothes, who bear Radegund’s relic on a platform. After mass is celebrated, families scatter to the woods or meadows for a picnic lunch and drink from the nearby Fontaine de Sainte-Radegonde. At two o’clock, the feast day congregation reforms to recite the rosary. Each decade is followed by a short lesson derived from the life of Radegund. After singing Vespers, they recite Radegund’s panegyric, kiss the relics, and go out in procession once again with the relics enclosed in “a simple medallion.” Father Pourrech ponders to himself whether “this saint and queen of France who has been honored from time immemorial in Ganties had ever visited there during her lifetime, or whether the nuns of her order had ever founded a monastery there?” Unfortunately, “we do not know,” he concludes, but Pourrech certainly appreciates the religious zeal of his rural community whose traditions and identity have been shaped by Saint Radegund.

While the curate of the church of Sainte-Radegonde in Poitiers, Emile Briand, was too young to have witnessed the destruction of Radegund’s foundations, he was present for their great revival almost a century later. As Briand reports, Bishop Pie of Poitiers, who will feature more prominently in this study in the following section, officiated at the new Sainte-Croix’s dedication ceremony in 1869. Because the convent was completely destroyed, it was decided that the nuns would reestablish themselves in the already extant buildings at a new site in the nearby village of Saint-Benoit, just six kilometers from the church of Sainte-Radegonde. Local pious donations funded the construction of a new abbey church to “console” the nuns for the “disappearance of their ancient basilica demolished from top to bottom.”[[11]](#footnote-11) In his dedication homily, Pie laments the move, but prefers to emphasize the theme of continuity, noting, “it is still there on this patch of particularly blessed land where all our great saints have lived, saint Hilary, Saint Martin, Saint Radegund, Saint Agnes, Saint Fortunatus, and how many others!” All the holy lives and deaths that transpired there serve to “unite this new monastery to the old monastery.” [[12]](#footnote-12) For Pie, the sacred space that gave the original Sainte-Croix its spiritual authority extends beyond Poitiers’ city walls and across the river.

Furthermore, Radegund’s daughters retained their most precious assets, despite their relocation. As Pie argues, “The rich abbey has lost its luster, but has lost nothing of what makes her true wealth and her finest claim to fame: the spirt of her holy foundress and the treasure of the true cross.”[[13]](#footnote-13) Radegund’s “spirit” was translated to the new Sainte-Croix in the form of a new reliquary made for the fragment of scull and arm bone the courageous little girl was divinely inspired to save during the Huguenot iconoclasm of 1562. Funded by the Poitevin clergy and lay devotees in 1854, it was described as “one of the masterpieces of nineteenth-century goldsmithing” by Abbé Charles Eschoyez. [[14]](#footnote-14) The golden reliquary was designed by the architect J.B. Lassus to resemble a thirteenth-century church, due to the high regard for this period’s “purity of style.”[[15]](#footnote-15) The multi-sided design incorporates eight scenes from Radegund’s life, including the ordination of Radegund as deaconess, the miracle of the oats, Radegund offering bread to the bishop of Poitiers to be used in the Eucharistic sacrament, Radegund’s vision of Christ that resulted in the Pas-Dieu stone, Radegund’s entombment officiated by Gregory of Tours, and Fortunatus composing the Vexilla Regis in honor of the True Cross relic; and two portraits of her saintly companions, Agnes and Disciola. The interior of the reliquary is decorated by the coat of arms of Bishop Pie, as well as those of Alphonse de France (brother of Saint Louis and count of Poitou in the thirteenth century who funded Sainte-Radegonde’s stained glass program). Bishop Pie’s remarkable lifelong devotion to the Holy Cross inspired his decision to commission a new reliquary for Radegund’s relic of the True Cross, as well, which he presented at the church dedication ceremony. Noting his role in the reliquary’s Latin inscription, Pie also uses his homely to praise “this pious monument” (and, indirectly, himself) which has been “awarded to the successors of Fortunatus, as a pledge and a reward for their employment as testamentary executors of Radegonde faithfully and perseveringly accomplished.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Pie’s “proprietary” attitude toward the True Cross relic actually resulted in some minor conflict with the superior of Sainte-Croix, Madame de Marans, who had to insist that the relic remain in her custody.[[17]](#footnote-17) While Pie’s interference here clearly threatened the nun’s authority over their possessions, which they saw as a fundamental part of their institution’s identity thanks to Radegund’s early efforts to secure episcopal independence, his enthusiasm for Radegund’s cult would result in her increased popularity - and politicization - by the 1870s.

The Confraternity of the Tomb of Saint Radegund in Poitiers, originally founded in 1645 and dissolved in 1792, was reinstated in 1883 as an archconfraternity, “with a greater reach and more numerous privileges.”[[18]](#footnote-18) A year later, Pope Leo XIII issued a brief permitting all confraternities dedicated to Radegund to assume the same expanded indulgences. The terms and goals of the mother confraternity in Poitiers give us some insight into the needs and concerns of Radegund’s devotees during the Catholic Revival. The most illustrative are the requirements for a plenary indulgence on Radegund’s feast day of August 13, which devotees may only receive “on condition that they visit the church of the confraternity and pray there for the concord of the Christian princes, the extirpation of heresy, the conversion of sinners, and the exaltation of the Holy Church our mother.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Here, we can see that devotion to Radegund was explicitly synonymous with devotion to the monarchy and the institution of the Catholic Church.

We can also see that even after the 1787 Edict of Tolerance, the Revolution, and the Concordat of 1801, Radegund’s association with the fight against heresy is just as relevant for French Catholics in the nineteenth century as it was in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation. In a forum published in *French Historical Studies*, Caroline Ford challenges the assumption that religious violence in France essentially disappeared in the nineteenth century thanks to the displacement of religious violence by the French Revolution’s political and social violence.[[20]](#footnote-20) Ford argues that religious violence never disappeared, rather it was fundamentally transformed. In order to better understand the post-revolutionary situation, she proposes a methodology that “[situates] it in a longer history of religious violence, from the Wars of Religion to the Third Republic, and by assessing that violence not only in terms of its frequency but also in terms of its changing forms of expression.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Of course, major differences existed between the nature of conflict during these two periods: The focus of tension in the nineteenth century was no longer strictly along the confessional lines of Protestant and Catholic, but “assumed the form of resistance to an anticlerical state or a political opponent.”[[22]](#footnote-22) The effusion of support for Radegund’s cult – and traditional Catholic approaches to spirituality in general – in the two centuries following the end of the Wars of Religion did not mean that conflict between Catholics and Protestants had ceased. Religious tension and violence continued throughout France during this time and into the nineteenth century. In the 1680s, Louis XIV initiated the systematic repression of Protestantism by excluding Protestants from political office and actively limiting their ability to practice their religion. His revocation of the 1598 Edict of Nantes in 1685 with the Edict of Fontainebleau launched a new period of religious conflict that persisted until the 1787 Edict of Toleration.[[23]](#footnote-23) For Ford, the political and religious upheaval of the French Revolution and its aftermath cannot be separated from that which occurred during the Wars of Religion because both periods share the common “context of civil war and the rupture of political power embodied in organized institutions.”[[24]](#footnote-24) I would add to Ford’s thesis that any study of post-Revolutionary religion – especially regarding the cult of the saints – ought to be studied in conjunction with the Wars of Religion and its aftermath. Denis Crouzet argues in his study of religious violence, *Guerriers de Dieu*, that even though “violent gestures can be the same in different situations," they may not have "the same motivations and meanings."[[25]](#footnote-25) Of course, Couzet here is analyzing physical acts of violence between people, but his theory can be applied to saints, as well. Violence against the saints – and Radegund in particular – may look the same during the Revolution as it did during the Reformation, but it took on new symbolic meaning because the politico-religious context and discourse were so different. As this section will continue to show, Radegund was reinterpreted within this context and became an important symbol for expressing political and religious views.

# Radegund’s post-Revolution Identities

## Radegund the Mother

One of the most powerful politico-religious identities Radegund assumed in post-Revolutionary France was Mère de la Patrie (*Mother of the Fatherland*). Carrying with it nationalistic and gendered implications, this title can be interpreted as the culmination of Radegund’s now inseparable association with French queenship that began in the fifteenth century with Charles VII’s patronage, was codified in the work of Jean Bouchet in the early sixteenth century, creatively elaborated by our three post-Reformation authors, and catalyzed into popular use thanks to the nationalistic sentiments of the nineteenth-century Catholic Revival.

The Confraternity of the Christian Mothers of Saint Radegund

The first time we see Radegund explicitly associated with motherhood was in the late 1820s when the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde (the Confraternity of the Christian Mothers of Saint Radegund) was re-formed in the parish of Cour-sur-Loire in the diocese of Blois. According to a narrative preserved in the diocesan records of Blois by Père Charles Beaussier, who served as priest at Cour-sur-Loire from 1834-1882, the origins of this women’s confraternity date back to at least the seventeenth century. Beaussier notes that he cannot precisely say when his community began celebrating Radegund’s feast day, but that he knows the chapel of Saint Radegund, located inside the church of Saint Vincent and Saint Radegund, was restored at the end of the seventeenth century.[[26]](#footnote-26) A large oil painting of Radegund located above the chapel’s altar dates to this period and seems to confirm Beaussier’s theory about the confraternity’s origin.[[27]](#footnote-27) As noted earlier, there was a great surge in the establishment of laywomen’s devotional orders and confraternities (sometimes known as “the third course” or “the third status”) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This coincided with a growing preference for charitable service over penitential asceticism as the dominant spiritual mode, which attracted pious married, unmarried, and widowed laywomen who were better able to engage in hands-on charitable activities in their communities than their cloistered counterparts. Our confraternity was indeed devoted to charity, according to article four, “The aim of the association is to develop in the parish the spirit of Faith and Christian Charity through good example and imitation of the virtues of Saint Radegonde.”[[28]](#footnote-28) As Sarah Curtis has shown in her study on laywomen’s charitable groups in nineteenth-century Paris, charity-focused women’s confraternities during this period owed their re-emergence to seventeenth-century religious models. She argues that scholars should cease isolating religious developments on either side of the French Revolution because “after the twin shocks of disestablishment and de-Christianization, the French Catholic church returned self-consciously to Reformation models in evangelization, education, medical care and welfare in order to re-establish their utility in French life.”[[29]](#footnote-29) The nineteenth-century emphasis on personal contact and religious moralization in charity work first began within the context of the Catholic Reformation when Catholic religious workers sought to use their positions to evangelize and bolster Catholic influence in opposition to the Protestant threat.[[30]](#footnote-30) And so, as Curtis argues, we should see the re-establishment of the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde in terms of post-Tridentine/Reformation-era religious ideals. But, at least in the case of this particular confraternity, the guidelines for its members also suggest a distinctive post-Revolutionary character – one shaped by an urgent need to advocate for the return of the Church’s traditionally dominant role in public life.

We can observe a clear association between femininity, motherhood, and monarchism in the updated 1826 rules of the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde, which require members to

"ask the Lord, through the intercession of this great saint, for the preservation of the Holy Catholic Church, the protection of heaven for the royal family, peace in families, the maintenance of good morals, and good order in the parish. They will also say, every Sunday and feast of obligation, about ten rosaries for the same purposes."[[31]](#footnote-31)

It seems highly significant that the confraternity was re-formed and this invocation of Radegund on behalf of the royal family added just one year after the coronation of Charles X. Charles – heir of Louis XVIII who ascended the throne in the Bourbon Restoration of 1814 – sought to return France to its pre-Revolutionary state by enacting exceptionally conservative policies and by expanding the Church’s power. The political connotations of the confraternity requirement are clear and point towards what soon becomes the overwhelming tendency in the mid-to-late nineteenth century to evoke Radegund as a symbol for royalist and counter-revolutionary values.

We can also analyze the development of the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde in terms of two trends in the expectations for women’s gendered behavior. Firstly, we can see these Christian Mothers as an early iteration of the more powerful trend that emerges several decades later in various political, religious, and social spheres of viewing motherhood almost as a form of patriotism during the national population crisis of the nineteenth century. Eileen Jane Yeo suggests that the French first became concerned with the issue of their population growth during the reign of Louis XIV.[[32]](#footnote-32) After the Franco-Prussian defeat and especially by the end of the nineteenth century, this concern became an obsession and drove the issuance of pro-natalist legislation that awarded families for producing more children and offered protections to working women and mothers.[[33]](#footnote-33) Yeo documents the formation of a “new ideal of motherhood” that became popular in both Britain and France during this period.[[34]](#footnote-34) Much like in Britain where Christian middle class family life was defined by the maternal and moral influence of the mother as the “angel in the house,” the French Bourgeois family was similarly romanticized.[[35]](#footnote-35) “The good counter-revolutionary family had a home-based Catholic mother at its centre,” Yeo argues, and “her faith was strengthened by the resurrection of the late-medieval mother saints, in the Society of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, by the Archiconfrérie des Mères Chrétiennes and especially by the Madonna.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

Historically, Radegund was never a biological mother, and so in Cour-sur-Loire, the cult of Radegund was maternalized through a deliberate association of Radegund with the Virgin Mary and through its member selection. To conform the already popular Radegund cult to the national ideal of motherhood as defined by counter-revolutionary Catholic morality, Père Garreau, a priest at Cour-sur-Loire from 1898-1935, took steps to link the confraternity to the larger Archconfrérie des Mères Chrétiennes, which had been established at Notre-Dame-de-Sion in Paris around 1850 and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.[[37]](#footnote-37) As I will show in the following pages, cults devoted to the Virgin, such as Our Lady of Lourdes, were affiliated with royalist politics and in the 1850s a royalist Poitevin bishop used this affiliation to further characterize Radegund as a royalist symbol. Furthermore, Père Beaussier had established a Confrérie de la Sainte Vierge in the early days of his ministry at Cour-sur-Loire and it seems that there always existed some overlap between this confraternity and that dedicated to Radegund, since the feast day of Saint Radegund was always celebrated on August 15, the day of the Assumption. Furthermore, the seventeenth-century Radegund painting at Cour-sur-Loire depicts a sleeping Radegund dreaming of the Virgin Mary and nineteenth-century banners of both Radegund and the Virgin hang in the church and are still used today during a pilgrimage in Radegund’s honor.[[38]](#footnote-38) While it is unclear whether the motherhood component of the confraternity was present in the seventeenth century, the new regulations introduced in 1826 by l’abbé Jolly established marriage as an official requirement for membership. According to article six, “One will admit in the said confraternity only women who have received the nuptial blessing with the ceremonies prescribed by the Holy Church.” [[39]](#footnote-39) This officially excluded any unmarried women from participating in the confraternity’s activities or from receiving its spiritual benefits. The wording of this article, which requires women to have been married according to the Catholic rite, also barred non-Catholic Christian women from joining. This was likely intended to ensure that only Catholic women would dominate charity in Radegund’s name at Cour-sur-Loire and to prevent any Protestant women from using the confraternity as a platform for evangelization.

Secondly, the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde was used – at least in theory – to control the quotidian gendered behavior of its members. According to the 1826 statutes, members “will carefully avoid anything that could be a subject of scandal, such as malicious gossip, quarrels, free speech (*discours libres*), suspicious company, immodesty in adornments, neglect in the education of their children.”[[40]](#footnote-40) This suggests that in the 1820s in Cour-sur-Loire, the ideal upstanding Catholic woman restricted her public speech and the way she associated with other women, that she dressed modestly, and that she had children and was responsible for their education (though perhaps, only their moral or religious education). As restrictive as this seems, the Confrérie des Mères Chrétiennes de Sainte Radegonde nonetheless provided an avenue for women to have meaningful roles outside their homes in the larger community. As Yeo argues, women “subverted or stretched the ideology of private motherhood in order, paradoxically, to authorise their entry into the public sphere.”[[41]](#footnote-41) And this is precisely what we see in the case of this confraternity which embraced the Reformation-era focus on women’s charity in the public sphere, while at the same time regulating women’s behavior by promoting a particular ideal of the married Catholic mother as a moral force.

Mother of the Fatherland

At the start of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, bishop of Poitiers from 1849-1879, was the first to honor Radegund with the title of Mère de la Patrie, which afterwards became a permanent moniker. On Radegund’s feast day, August 13 1870, two weeks after the French army invaded German territory in what would become one of the most debilitating defeats in French history, Pie addressed his congregation with a homily “on the role of the holy queen in times of war.”[[42]](#footnote-42) He began with a poignant account of Radegund’s own encounters with the “appalling fruits of war” when her native Thuringia was devastated by Clothar’s army in 531.[[43]](#footnote-43) Pie recited the most touching excerpts from the poem Radegund wrote about her experiences thirty years after the Frankish-Thuringian war and, alternating between French and Latin, he built up to his thesis: “our holy protectress is neither less benevolent nor less powerful today than she was when she lived in this city… thanks to her mediation, we may *still* obtain the concord of kings, the mitigation of war, and the salvation of France!” Even though Radegund renounced her queenship, “when rumors of war were heard, she resumed the appearance of her original authority, she spoke, she wrote, she dispatched couriers and mediators, she became a negotiator.” If not by letters that Radegund wrote to the warring kings of her time, Pie effuses, then by her powerful intercession with God, Radegund would “show herself to be the Mother of the Fatherland” by protecting both France and Poitiers from the Prussian troops that were at that moment advancing from the east into France towards Paris.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Five months later Paris had fallen to German forces and, by the terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt, the French were obliged to forfeit billions of francs in reparations to the new German Empire, as well as most of Alsace and parts of Lorraine. The Franco-Prussian war forever changed the balance of power in Europe, dislodging France from its position as the dominant power and paving the way for Germany’s ascension in stature and authority. With Emperor Napoleon III captured at the Battle of Sedan, the Second Empire was dissolved and France was declared the Third Republic on September 4, 1870. In the Republic’s early days, the government considered re-establishing the monarchy, but no consensus could be reached regarding either the identity of the monarch or the nature of his office. Originally conceived of as a provisional government, the Third Republic would endure until the Nazi occupation of France in the first years of World War II.[[45]](#footnote-45)

## Radegund the Royalist

The political transition from empire to republic, the demoralizing military defeat, and the uncertainty surrounding the monarchy’s restoration produced a sharply polarized climate in France in the second half of the nineteenth century and created an opportunity for Radegund to become a vehicle for legitimist political views. The Legitimists were a conservative, royalist, ultra-Catholic faction who opposed liberal, republican, and democratic ideas. They vehemently detested the Revolution and any enduring revolutionary sentiment, hoping for a restoration of the Ancien Régime. They considered Charles X (1824-1830) from the senior line of the Bourbon Dynasty as the last legitimate French monarch, according to the traditional Salic laws of succession, and supported Charles X’s direct heir, Henri, Count of Chambord, as the rightful king of France.[[46]](#footnote-46) Bishop Pie was one of the biggest proponents of the legitimists, and used his position and his city’s association with Radegund to promote his ideology.

Pie worked tirelessly to revitalize Radegund’s cult in Poitiers and throughout France, often using her memory, feast day, and relics to channel his support for the restoration of a Catholic Bourbon monarchy. When the Assumptionist and member of the Comité Central des Pélerinages, Father Vincent de Paul Bailly (1832-1912), organized the first national lay pilgrimage to Lourdes, Pie collaborated with him to ensure that a stop at Sainte-Radegonde’s would be added to the itinerary. Bailly’s very modern pilgrimage was facilitated by the recent completion of the Paris-Bordeaux railway line which offered fifty-percent discounts to pilgrims traveling in groups. Thanks to the addition of the Poitiers railway station, which was added onto this line in 1851, Pie was able to collect pilgrims directly from the train station and conduct them personally around Radegund’s shrine. [[47]](#footnote-47) National pilgrimages to Lourdes - and especially to Rome after Napoleon III’s withdrawal of troops from Italy allowed for the Pope’s capture in September 1870 - had significant political overtones and were used by ultramontane royalists to signal their rejection of the anticlerical Third Republic.[[48]](#footnote-48) Pie’s national pilgrimage to Sainte-Radegonde was a particularly well-suited event for expressing legitimist views.

A few days after Radegund’s feast day in 1874, Pie delivered an address to a large group of Parisian pilgrims at the church of Sainte-Radegonde, now a regular stop on the national pilgrimage routes to Lourdes and Rome. Pie used this opportunity to speak about political, social, and religious issues that were important to the legitimist faction: namely, the restoration of France as a Catholic Bourbon monarchy – just as God designed it to be. He began his sermon by lamenting the current state of affairs in France, which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, had become the standard opening for Pie and other like-minded orators: The world is plunged into shadow and chaos, people now disdain the miraculous, and only the publicly demonstrable faith of true believers like his audience of Parisian pilgrims “will cure the ills of society, will restore life and movement to this paralytic nation.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Contrasting France’s current decline into barbarism with the glorious birth of Christian Gaul, Pie praises the efforts of the early bishops, Hilary and Martin, “who made France all ready for the Frankish King, Clovis, to convert the people.” But the work of these “fathers” “was not enough” because “France must have mothers [and] Radegund is one of them.” Pie compares the pains of childbirth to the “painful birth of France by Radegund” who “suffered immensely for France.” This, Pie argues, is what makes Radegund a national saint, and “it is therefore right that we salute her with this title of ‘Mother of the Fatherland,’ and that we call the French people ‘her people.’"[[50]](#footnote-50)

Not only does Pie champion Radegund as a national saint whose maternal piety formed France as an enduring Catholic monarchy, but he also uses details from her historical life to illustrate the qualities of an ideal ruler. This is a strategy we have seen almost all previous Radegund biographers employ. However, Pie’s purpose is quite different from theirs. He begins by posing the question, “Who remembers today so many other queens of France who lived in delights, in riches, in honors, and who died on the throne?” Even Clotilde, Balthilde, Joan of France, and Saint Louis’ mother, Blanche of Castille, have not stood the test of time, whereas “Radegund has remained more popular than all the others” and, especially today, “she is more present than ever to the memory of the nation.” Her commitment to peace through diplomacy is a major theme in all Pie’s public speeches about Radegund after the 1870 military defeat. But he also recounts how as queen she always supported the clergy and put the Church’s interests first, “because she already knew that the prosperity of France is inseparable from the destinies of the Church.” Unlike Hildebert, Jean Bouchet, or the three post-Reformation authors, Pie was not addressing these remarks on good queenship to any living ruler or even to ruling-class women in general. Rather, this politically charged sentiment is a poignant critique of the secularizing state agencies who stripped the privileges, property, and funding that the clergy had enjoyed for centuries under the Bourbon monarchy.[[51]](#footnote-51) Without specifically mentioning Henri de Chambord, the legitimist candidate for king, Pie likely had this hopeful monarch in mind as he expounded on the qualities of good queenship. In fact, Pie symbolically and physically linked Chambord with Radegund when he sent Madame la Comtesse de Chambord a precious piece of Radegund’s relics. As reported by Pie’s biographer, Mgr Louis Baunard, the Bishop included a letter with his gift which concluded with the hopeful sentiments, “May this precious dispatch bear with it graces, consolations and hopes! May the exile of today come soon to pay a visit to her predecessor such as she made to her.”[[52]](#footnote-52) Here, Pie refers to Mme Chambord as the soon-to-be queen and Radegund’s successor, inviting the Chambords to visit the tomb of their holy ancestor at the Church of Sainte-Radegonde. On the surface, Pie’s discourse might seem to follow the centuries-old pattern of rewriting Radegund as a model for contemporary queens. However, we should interpret Pie’s use of Radegund as part of his life-long mission of generating support for a Bourbon restoration. Pie’s orations are the first instances where Radegund’s queenship was discussed outside of the context of living under a monarchy. Here, Radegund has entered the political milieu of nineteenth-century France more as a symbol – for a heroic Christian past, for a better type of society where religion and governance were fully integrated – than as a model to imitate. And as we will continue to see later in this section, it is Radegund’s symbolic value, rather than her exemplarity, that characterizes her appeal in the late nineteenth century.

In his article on the politicization of the national pilgrimage to the shrine of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre in Paris, "Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur," Raymond Jonas explores the symbolic links between Chambord, the legitimist faction, and the promotion of French national pilgrimages in the 1870s. He recounts how a train full of pilgrims pulling out of the Béziers station on their way to Lourdes in 1873 boisterously sang, "Give us a King in the name of the Sacred-Heart," and waved white handkerchiefs – a symbol of the Bourbon dynasty, and specifically, Henri de Chambord – from the open windows. As Jonas argues, “The incident at the train station of Béziers shows how the ancient penitential practice of pilgrimage served to mobilize the faithful and to animate the partisans of popular royalism in the relatively new cult of the Sacré- Coeur, the Sacred Heart.” [[53]](#footnote-53) While we have no specific accounts of white handkerchiefs at Radegund’s shrine, we do know that Bishop Pie was actively involved in the construction of Montmartre as a national shrine dedicated to the Sacred Heart and he presided over national pilgrimages to many other sites in the 1870s which were politically charged.[[54]](#footnote-54) For example, he addressed a crowd of Chartres-bound pilgrims at Montmartre about the desperate need for France, “the eldest daughter of the Church” and “King Jesus’s” chosen-one, to return to the path of salvation, saying, “Such is the cry of France in distress, which awaits a leader, who calls for a master…,” whom Jonas interprets as Chambord.[[55]](#footnote-55) Pie’s address is all the more significant for the fact that it was planned for the anniversary of Marie-Antoinette’s execution.[[56]](#footnote-56) And so we can see Pie’s promotion of pilgrimage to Radegund’s tomb in Poitiers as part of his larger campaign to raise royalist support and to mobilize a following for his legitimist faction.

Brian Brennan, author of a 1985 study on the early development of Radegund’s cult at Poitiers, has also noted Pie’s initiative of promoting Radegund’s cult during the Second Empire and the Third Republic in his 1996 article, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers.” Brennan sees Radegund’s religious and political connotations in Poitiers – her overwhelming associations with French Catholic nationalism and monarchism – as a local reflection of French national sentiment “as royalists contended with Bonapartists and republicans, clericals waged war against secularists and the ultramontanes sought to rouse their fellow countrymen in support of Pius IX.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Brennan explores Pie’s propensity for packing his sermons and liturgies with legitimist sub-text and suggests that he was particularly devoted to promoting the festival of Saint Radegund from August 13-15 because “it provided a convenient distraction for Poitevins from the Bonapartist festival of 15 August, the birthday of Napoleon I.”[[58]](#footnote-58) This seems highly likely, considering Pie’s aptitude for symbolism. Brennan’s analysis of Pie’s role in promoting Radegund’s cult is thorough and insightful, but misses the centuries-long trajectory of Radegund’s transformation into her nineteenth-century version. Without analyzing Radegund’s nineteenth-century characteristics in relation to her medieval and early modern iterations, we risk missing the rich nuances of Radegund’s multi-faceted identity and simplifying the process of how communities “create” saints that reflect their social, political, and religious needs. For example, the significance changes when we recognize that the Parisian pilgrim’s gift of a new ever-burning lamp for Radegund’s tomb in 1874 replaced Anne of Austria’s ever-burning lamp that had been destroyed in the Revolution, which, in turn, replaced the ever-burning lamp donated by Marie of Anjou (wife of King Charles VII) that had been destroyed in the Reformation. Both of these queens’ gifts were in recognition of services rendered to the French nation: the healing of the young king and the recapture of Cherbourg from the English. And both gifts were destroyed in popular uprisings against royal authority and perceived Church corruption. The Parisian pilgrim’s lamp therefore carries nationally significant implications consciously situated in the historical trajectory of Radegund’s cult – both for the fact that the pilgrims themselves were engaged in a national demonstration of faith and because they were continuing a cultic tradition that stretched back to the moment when Radegund’s cult was first patronized by the monarchy in recognition of the kingdom-wide reach of her intercession. Pie’s public speeches both recapitulated the Radegund tradition and interpreted it to support his vision of a France shaped by an idealized history of Catholic monarchs allied harmoniously with the Church.

Possibly no religious event in nineteenth-century France was more politically charged than the crowning ceremony of Radegund’s statue in Poitiers on the 1300th anniversary of her death in August of 1887. While coronation ceremonies for statues of the Virgin Mary had been conducted since at least the seventeenth century, the explicit political significance of crowning the statue of a deceased French queen did not escape republicans.[[59]](#footnote-59) According to Brennan’s “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers,” Pie’s successor, Bishop Henri Bellot des Minieres, was politically opposed to the legitimist faction and distanced himself from the cult of Radegund during his episcopacy.[[60]](#footnote-60) It is worth noting that Bellot’s disavowal of his own city’s patron saint, and especially his refusal to plan or officiate at her 1300th centenary in 1887, confirms the now widespread recognition of the royalist associations with Radegund’s cult. But Bellot nonetheless recognized the importance of this date for Poitevins and deputized his auxiliary bishop, Mgr Charles Gay, and the legitimist bishop of Angers, Mgr Charles Freppel, to organize the celebration.[[61]](#footnote-61) Already off to a rocky start due to Bellot’s estrangement, Gay and Freppel’s centenary celebration would exhibit their legitimist politics so blatantly that the Republican government would intervene and the event would be marked with violence. To make matters worse, the drama surrounding the event was documented and inflamed by newspapers – the chief battlefield on which the culture wars were fought.[[62]](#footnote-62) The republican *L'Avenir de Vienne* covered the developing story closely throughout the month of August as a dangerous event of coup-d’etat-proportions, while the Catholic papers, *L’Univers* and *La Croix* continued to push back against accusations that the ceremony had any political connotations whatsoever.

Mayor Léopold Thézard of Poitiers initially approved the ceremony in June of 1887, permitting the Poitevin clergy to transport the statue of Saint Radegund on August 15 from her church to the cathedral for crowning and back again. But, most likely due to the protests of republicans, such as that persistently appearing in *L’Avenir*, the mayor subsequently issued an interdiction on August 4. *L’Avenir’*s major objection was not actually the religious nature of the display, but the novel coronation program and the invitation to the papal *nuncio,[[63]](#footnote-63)* Mgr Rotelli, to officiate at the crowning, which they saw as “a veritable provocation on the part of the clerical faction.” Inviting the papal *nuncio* to crown even a long-dead queen raised republican suspicions against the clerical faction, whom they believed was working to expand the pope’s temporal power. These reasons were proposed by the Catholic newspaper, *La Croix,* which suggested that the republican “fears” and “extravagances” in pushing for the interdiction “come from the fact that saint Radegund was a queen, and they fear a *coup d'Etat*. It was, in effect, her coronation, in the name of the pope through the *nuncio*; it seemed an enterprise against the government.” Referring to the planned ceremony repeatedly as a “monstrous” and “anti-republican demonstration,” *L’Avenir* suspected the true aims of “the black faction” (i.e. the clerical faction), under whose oversight the feast of Saint Radegund “would naturally become a political demonstration.” *L’Avenir* warned the mayor to “beware of counter-demonstrations!” if the procession was permitted.

Hesitant to ban the celebration entirely but wishing to avoid the threatened counter-demonstrations, the mayor’s interdiction still allowed the statue to be transported by a restricted number of clergy, without pomp, down a prescribed route, whose narrowness required the party to walk two abreast.[[64]](#footnote-64) Thanks to the nationalization of Radegund’s cult, the expected train-loads of pilgrims would be met at the railway station and conducted to their hostels to prevent them from moving freely about the city. The police commissioner was charged with executing the mayor’s decree and preventing any unrest. While *L’Avenir* applauded the interdiction, saying, “*M. le maire* understands the danger of this situation,” and “we expected no less from his clairvoyance and his republican loyalty,” they still objected to the mayor’s apparent leniency and urged him to ban the event altogether, threatening that “it would fall to the republican party itself to ensure, on that day, that the strict execution of your decree is respected according to the law.”[[65]](#footnote-65) *L’Avenir* insists that Mayor Thézard’s interdiction was supported by a revolutionary-era a law from 18 germinal year X that banned all religious demonstrations in the public street (*sur la voie publique*) and they invoked this law as a valid basis for the complete prohibition of the feast day. However, it seems more likely that the diplomatically-inclined mayor[[66]](#footnote-66) based his interdiction on a special clause in the treaty between the Holy See and the French Republic signed 26 Messidor Year IX (July 15, 1801). The treaty protected religious worship inside church buildings, but made it possible for the Republic to issue interdictions against religious ceremonies and processions that were perceived as posing a threat to public order. Threats of counter-demonstrations from *L’Avenir* and other like-minded sources pushed Thézard towards his more diplomatic solution of allowing the transport of the statue and permitting the coronation to take place insidethe cathedral, but restricted the number of religious personnel *sur la voie publique*.

*L’Avenir* insisted that other Catholic newspapers, *L’Ouest* and *Le Courrier*, were writing deriding articles about the mayor, “a veritable protest against your decree of interdiction.” *L’Univers*, considered “the single most important journal of Catholic opinion,”[[67]](#footnote-67) avoided any attacks against the mayor, though they did assert that their “legitimate anger” was justified. *L’Univers*’ strategy for defending the ceremony focused on the “traditional” quality of Radegund’s annual feast day celebrations and the importance of this patron saint to the town’s history and culture, regardless of religious persuasion. They also juxtaposed the interdiction to “the worst days of the Terror,” a strategy *L’Avenir* openly scoffed at for its extremity. *L’Univers* published a letter from M. le comte d’Orfeuille describing the day of the ceremony which included a striking comparison between Radegund, “imprisoned” and escorted by republican guards wearing tricolor uniforms, and the execution of Marie Antoinette,

And, if it were permissible to refer at this moment to secular history, we would have said that at the same hour we were reminded of another queen of France, before whom also posterity will bow, who once was taken from Paris under the shadow of those same colors: Marie Antoinette.

*L’Univers*’ invocation of this period of the Revolution that both sides tended to remember negatively served to support the publication’s more general political aim of restoring Catholic practice to more areas of public life. The Catholic paper, *La Croix,* expressed disappointment at the interdiction, but carefully avoided any kind of inflammatory rhetoric. In fact, they considered the event a success, writing, “we are happy to learn that the decrees did not impede the feast from being splendid.” They scoffed at republican fears, replying, “it's the title of queen that frightens them,” and asserted that “they have distorted [the ceremony’s] meaning by attributing a political character that it never had.” *La Croix* defends Radegund herself from republican accusations, choosing to focus instead on Radegund’s cloistered life and how she “disposed of her crown at Noyon to come seek the poverty of the cloister in Poitiers.” If one crowns her in the name of the Pope, they insist, “it’s for her having made this sacrifice” and to show their censure of decrees made against religious institutions, “and not for the usurpation of the presidential chair or the royal throne.” Mgr Freppel, bishop of Angers and key speaker at the coronation, similarly highlighted Radegund’s special status as a queen who gave up her crown. Crowning her on her centenary was not a contradiction, however, he asserts, because sanctity has its own infinitely superior crown.[[68]](#footnote-68) Much like the Virgin Mary’s impossible identity as both mother and virgin, Radegund’s apparent contradictions made her the perfect symbol for France’s legitimist party and monarchist/clerical factions because her royal associations could be so easily repudiated – or highlighted, as in the discourses of Bishop Pie. This excellent strategy of deflecting focus from Radegund’s royalty was also one of the most significant factors in Radegund’s simultaneous appropriation by the Republican government, which we will explore in the following section. It also ensured that Radegund’s popularity could continue at a high caliber throughout this period, despite the kind of republican suspicion we see in *L’Avenir*.

However much the Catholic papers denied the political significance of the coronation ceremony, there is no doubt that the event was politically charged from its inception. From the novel decision to crown the likeness of this early French queen, to the symbolic garb she was dressed in, to the blatantly political panegyric of Mgr Freppel, to the commemorative texts published and distributed, to the final demonstrative act of protest that resulted in violent confrontations, Radegund’s centenary was deliberately harnessed as a vehicle for members of royalist and clerical factions at a truly national level.

If at this point, Radegund’s role as a national saint could be doubted, the fact that the all-female committee in charge of collecting funds for “a magnificent crown” received contributions from départements all over France, including Paris, demonstrates the country-wide appeal Radegund’s cult had generated.[[69]](#footnote-69) Emile Briand, curate of Sainte-Radegonde, published a collection of texts and images from the ceremony which includes the first photographic interpretation of Radegund. The full-page photo shows a queenly figure with a solemn gaze, extravagantly garbed and crowned, holding a fleur-de-lys scepter in one hand and a book in the other, bedecked with at least 12 golden sacred hearts suspended from a chain running between her hands and down the front of her mantle. The crown of solid gold is adorned with amethysts, pearls, eight diamonds, eight fleur-de-lys around the sides, and topped with “the double fleur-de-lis which is the crest of the kings and queens of France.”[[70]](#footnote-70) Radegund has been depicted with a fleur-de-lys cloak and scepter since Jean de Berry’s fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript. But the decision in 1887 to dress Radegund in a white mantle, as opposed to her traditional French blue or royal purple, was a blatant reference to the legitimist faction in support of the restoration of a Bourbon monarchy. Brennan explains the origins of this symbolism,

In 1871 the count of Chambord had signified his aversion to a modern constitutional monarchy by his rejection of the tricolor in favor of the *drapeau blanc*. Later a legitimist follower such as the Baron de Lamprade could describe himself as ' an uncompromising *blanc'*. Radegund's white mantle, significantly embroidered with prominent fleurs-de-Iys, had woven into it a clear political statement.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Here, the association of Radegund with French royalty carried a very different meaning than it did in the fifteenth century when Radegund’s icons were first decorated with the fleur-de-lys.

It goes almost without saying that Briand’s little book was intended equally as a commemorative souvenir and as propaganda. The photograph of Radegund’s crowned white-mantled statue was displayed in the frontispiece of his publication, and he takes every opportunity to “remember” the multi-day celebration in exaggerated terms: the sheer ubiquity of faithful support, the continuous problem at each event of the consistently larger-than-ever-seen-before crowds overflowing the too-small space of church or cathedral, the surpassing eloquence of the speakers, the emotional responses of the faithful, and, of course, the well-behaved and orderly pilgrims.

*L’Univers* provided a description of the riot, which was closer to reality, though still quite rose-colored. D’Orfeuille recounted in his letter to the paper that at the moment of Radegund’s coronation, a crowd of twenty thousand faithful spectators spontaneously chanted,

“Long live Saint Radegund! Long live the queen of France! Long live the Church!” In vain did they try to stop the voices in the holy temple, one cannot imprison the heart of the people. You would have to live one thousand years to be able to forget this spectacle; you might say that the vaults of the old church were going to fall in. We heard children, little boys of 12 years, protest with an energy that promised for the future. Honor to them!

D’Orfeuille’s account reimagines the event as anything other than a chaotic defiance of a municipal decree of interdiction. The image of protesting children connotes a sense of purity and innocence that elevates the riot to a righteous and legitimate display of emotion, religious fervor, and patriotism. He then quickly passes over the fact that “a band of thirty or forty had pretended to attack honest people” but they received an “exemplary correction” from faithful Poitevins.

Piecing accounts together from newspapers representing both sides allows us to reconstruct what the riot might have looked like by finding a middle-ground between the two exaggerated perspectives. It appears that police agents and gendarmes on horseback successfully cordoned off the plazas around the church and cathedral the morning of the ceremony, which barriers the crowds mostly respected when the statue was first carried from Sainte-Radegonde to Sainte-Pierre. However, the appearance of the crowned statue exiting the cathedral doors inspired onlookers to break through the cordons and follow the statue back to Sainte-Radegonde, thereby forming the procession M. Thézard’s decree expressly banned. Two policemen and a mounted gendarme attempted to arrest a woman – as *L’Univers* reported, “they are always the first when it comes to showing courage” – who first broke the cordon. But her cry of, "Either kill me or let me pass," astonished the guards to such an extent that they released her, and she was joined in the illegal procession by numerous others. An anonymous “authorized representative of one of the most ancient families of Poitou” who submitted another account of the ceremony to *L’Univers* reveled in his account of the ensuing chaos,

And a crowd of many thousands of people launched themselves after those carrying the statue. Nothing could resist this human torrent. Police agents, gendarmes, horses, all were caught up amidst the acclamations such that I cannot remember ever having heard anything like it. It was thus that saint Radegund triumphally returned to her church and M. Thézard had, without wishing it, worked towards the glory of our saint.

It seems highly unlikely that the police and gendarmes charged with executing the interdiction orders were so moved by religious fervor for Radegund that they joined in the protesting, but the story of unbelievers suddenly displaying religious zeal for what they had just been scoffing at or vandalizing a moment before is a popular *topos* in hagiography and appears several times in the Radegund tradition.

And so, Radegund’s devotees got their procession after all and the opposition of “the enemies of God” seemed to only increase their enjoyment of the ceremony. Harnessing the persecution narrative as a show of Catholic heroism, strength, and continuity was a major strategy used by the newspapers and Radegund’s post-Reformation biographers alike. Considering the centuries of art and texts that emphasized Radegund’s queenship and deliberately associated her with living members of the royal family, it is unsurprising that republicans would see the coronation as a political demonstration. Despite the deflections of the Catholic newspapers and even an explanatory letter to the mayor from Bishop Bellot, the political significance of Radegund’s centenary celebrations for French royalists was indisputable. The republican *L’Avenir* accused Poitiers of being “one of the last fortresses of Clericalism” and devotion to Radegund was an important part of that identity. Bishop Pie’s efforts over the many decades of his episcopacy to establish Radegund as “Mère de la Patrie” and his rhetorical skill in continuing to shape Poitiers’ identity as a Catholic town which benefited from the harmonious alliance of monarchy and church were highly effective: it seemed like Radegund’s symbolic anti-republican potential was solidified. And yet, as we are about to see, republicans were able to use many of the royalists’ strategies to appropriate the Radegund tradition for their side, but with the opposite result.

## Radegund the Great Civilizer

This section focuses on an important theme present in almost every interpretation of the Radegund tradition produced during the nineteenth century: The juxtaposition of France’s apparent present state of barbarism with the contrasting civilization of a past Golden Age. This barbarism versus civilization theme was a widespread *topos* in textual and visual culture throughout the nineteenth century, that was, oddly enough, strategically used by parties on *both sides* of the culture wars. Regardless of political or religious persuasion, a sense of loss and disconnect – a feeling that the present conditions of society did not match their preferred worldview – pervaded post-Revolution France. First, I will show how Bishop Pie and his colleagues adapted the Radegund tradition to fit the barbarism versus civilization narrative in their public speeches, followed by an analysis of a new “legitimist” *vita Radegundis* from 1849. Next, I will explore efforts on the part of the French Republican government to harness Radegund’s exceptional popularity to illustrate their vision of French identity and nationalism in monumental art.

One of the things that made Bishop Pie and his colleagues such compelling orators and writers was their talent for interpreting history to support their agenda. We have already seen several examples of how Pie and Freppel wove elements from France’s early medieval history into their homilies and sermons. Numerous scholars of late nineteenth-century France observe a general fixation on France’s history during this period and a particular interest in what it meant to be French. As Jonas argues, “France's rapid and stunning defeat [in the Franco-Prussian war], and the subsequent encirclement and siege of Paris, led to profound meditations on France and its past.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Much like our three seventeenth-century Radegund biographers from the post-Reformation era, Pie consistently situates Radegund’s exemplary holiness within the broader history of a Catholic France. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Filleau, Dumonteil, and Moquot all centered their *vitae* around Radegund’s role in the Protestant Reformation to highlight the continuity of her power and the Catholic heroism that preserved her cult from the threat of heresy. Pie similarly deploys the Radegund tradition to interrogate what it means to be French within the context of what royalists see as a political, religious, and social crisis. This idea is most provocatively demonstrated in Pie’s repeated lament that the violence of both the Reformation and the French Revolution had resulted in France’s historical decline into barbarism culminating in the recent military defeat by the Prussians in 1871.

For example, in a homily given on Radegund’s feast-day in 1871, about a year after the siege of Paris, Pie invokes Radegund “in this Merovingian tomb which brings us back to our first national origins” because “the present time is perhaps the worst that France has experienced in fourteen centuries. Look, my very dear brethren, and see there's nothing left standing.”[[73]](#footnote-73) Here, Pie highlights Radegund’s special identity as the first queen-saint of Merovingian France, which makes her intercession on the nation’s behalf all the more powerful. By “nothing left standing,” Pie is referring to the present lack of what he sees as the historic and fundamental qualities that made the kingdom of Francia so formidable and bequeathed to France her influential position in Western Europe: the traditional institutions of Church and monarchy together with the dominance of Catholicism in public life. Pie asserts that France’s diminished post-war state is a punishment from God for overturning the rightful order of things, lamenting,

The one who rightly boasted of being the first nation in the world, has walked from disaster to disaster; she has been overthrown from her rank and her preeminence. For behold, Lord, we are lessened, more diminished than all the other nations. As they have grown, we have been humbled, and today we are small and humbled in the eyes of all the earth, because of our sins. We who dictated our wills in all the councils of Europe, we who spoke loud and firm throughout the world, we no longer have the right to raise our voices.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Pie’s solution to this problem is clear: “Now therefore, O Radegonde, we are turning to you, complete what you have started…if you [the people of France] come back to God, you will again become the France of the old days.”[[75]](#footnote-75) Pie’s enduring argument that the past was better than the present and that embracing the values of Merovingian-era Francia – or at least, pre-Revolutionary France – was the only hope for the nation was the rallying cry of royalists throughout the nineteenth century.

But even before Pie’s flourishing years, Marie-Théodore de Bussiére, a legitimist who resigned his diplomatic career in 1830 after the July Revolution[[76]](#footnote-76), was the first post-Revolution writer to associate Radegund with a past Golden Age of civilization. In his new *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, published in 1849, we can see how de Bussiére built his entire Life of Radegund around the central theme of civilization versus barbarism, which interpretation would come to influence depictions of Radegund in visual culture several decades later.

De Bussiére’s central argument is that Catholicism *is* civilization and Radegund was God’s instrument for establishing that civilization in a once-barbaric Francia. He explains his “historical purpose,” in his prologue, stating, “We have chosen the life of Saint Radegonde, because it demonstrates that the Church alone could make modern civilization succeed the decay of the ancient world and the brutality of the barbarians.”[[77]](#footnote-77) He also points out Radegund’s relevancy to his modern audience, asserting,

We also thought that the story of the holy queen might have, in certain respects, the merit of topicality, and that many of the lessons it contains would be applicable to our present social state… The sixth century, which we call barbarian, was on this point more advanced than the nineteenth. We had to adopt this plan of presenting the Christian and barbarian societies against each other, because it was necessary in order to make people appreciate the civilizing action of the Church.[[78]](#footnote-78)

For de Bussiére, even though his contemporaries might think of the sixth century as a barbarous time, it was so obviously more advanced than the nineteenth century because of the prevalence of monasteries, like Radegund’s, which are “the true civilizers of humanity.”[[79]](#footnote-79) Considering de Bussiére’s personal politics, it is unsurprising that he felt the need to produce a new *Life of Radegund* from this perspective at this particular moment in time. He resigned from his diplomatic career in 1830 when the last Bourbon King, Charles X, was overthrown and replaced by his cousin Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, from the cadet branch of Bourbons. The instigation of the July Monarchy factionalized monarchists into legitimists (supporters of a Bourbon restoration) and Orléanists (who supported the new constitutional monarchy). At the death of his father in 1846, he inherited the family estate of Reichshoffen in north-eastern France and then experienced the 1848 Revolution which ended French monarchy entirely with the establishment of the Second Republic.[[80]](#footnote-80) As a staunch legitimist who was part of the land-owning nobility himself, de Bussiére would have seen all of these events as catastrophic threats to his personal ideals and way of life. It is therefore no wonder that one year later, still steeped in a volatile political and social climate, that de Bussiére defines “barbarism” as the prevalence of wars, crimes, massacres, and the persecution of monks and nuns who were “hated, hunted down, [and] slandered.”[[81]](#footnote-81) His *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde* paints a picture of Radegund and other monastic personnel harnessing the weapons of education to combat the barbarism that pervaded every other corner of society. He asserts that, “the pure morality of the Gospel was observed in these venerable asylums [i.e. the monastery of Poitiers and in other retreats where Christianity had established its peaceful boulevards] and virtue, science and letters flourished there.”[[82]](#footnote-82) Twenty-five years later, the artist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes would use de Bussiére’s vision of Radegund’s civilized and idyllic life of learning to paint a literal picture, funded by the republican government, that united Radegund’s pure pre-Ancien Régime brand of Catholicism with post-Franco-Prussian war nationalism.

## Radegund the Republican

When Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was commissioned by the republican government to design a mural for Poitier’s Hôtel de Ville (city hall) in 1874, he was still two decades from achieving renown as “France’s national painter.” Art historians today agree with Puvis’ contemporaries that, “More than the work of any other public painter, Puvis' murals were imagined to embody a vision of France and to impart a sense of Frenchness.”[[83]](#footnote-83) In this capacity, he is most well-known for his later work, the murals *L’Eté* and *L’Hiver* for the Hôtel de Ville in Paris (1891), *Le Bois sacré* (1886) for a staircase at the Museum of Fine Arts in Lyon, and the panoramic *L’Ancienne Sorbonne* for the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne in Paris; and, to a lesser extent, for his Sainte Geneviève cycle at the Panthéon in Paris. His Poitiers murals hardly even receive passing mention in monographs on his oeuvre.[[84]](#footnote-84) This is surprising, considering that most art historians interpret Puvis’ work as the embodiment of the Third Republic’s idealized concept of *la patrie* as a morally pure, democratic, and secular, though still deeply spiritual, nation. The fact that Puvis selected the Radegund tradition – with all of its volatile connotations – to reflect these ideals for Poitier’s civic epicenter in the same year as the great statue-coronation-debacle makes this mural arguably his most interesting design choice. On the surface the mural makes the explicit claim: Radegund is central to Poitiers’ history and civic identity – an undisputed fact that even the most republican of Poitevins would grudgingly admit. Upon closer examination, we can see how Puvis repurposed many of the conservative/legitimist interpretations of Radegund’s life to project a very different definition of Frenchness.

Without making too many assumptions about Puvis’ own intentions, we can nonetheless argue that the mural’s style, composition, and even the title shows a deliberate effort to make Radegund “safe” as a republican symbol. Firstly, the title, "Having Withdrawn to the Convent of Sainte-Croix, Saint Radegonde Shelters Poets and Protects Literature from the Barbarism of the Age, the Seventh Century," conveys the mural’s purposefully secular theme and coincides with the popular nineteenth century *topos* of civilization versus barbarism. Here, Puvis has reimagined Sainte-Croix as an educational haven and depicts Radegund in the same “civilizing” role as de Bussiére did in his 1849 “legitimist” Life of Radegund. But unlike de Bussiére, Puvis has carefully omitted any evocation of Church or even religion in this entirely desacralized interpretation of Poitiers’ first monastery.

Puvis is successfully able to secularize Radegund and Sainte-Croix as objects of French patrimony by employing the transformative powers of classicism. The central figure of the composition is not Radegund, but “the last Roman poet,” Venantius Fortunatus, who stands in an orator’s pose with eyes uplifted, left arm outstretched, and right arm clutching his verses to his heart. A demure Radegund and Abbess Agnes, wrapped from head to toe in white drapery more reminiscent of a Roman stola than a nuns’ veil, sit enraptured as Fortunatus recites his poetry within a setting that channels both the French salon and the ancient Roman villa. A scribe crouched on a low stool industriously copies what he hears, preserving the patrimony for a modern audience. The placement of the figures is reminiscent of Lawrence Alma-Tadema's 1862 painting, "Venantius Fortunatus Reading His Poems to Radegonda," which won the gold medal when it was exhibited in Amsterdam. However, Puvis makes more of an effort to depict the Romanesque architectural elements of the historical buildings of Poitiers and portrays the nuns of Sainte-Croix in the background engaged in the idyllic pursuits of an imagined convent life very different from the rough asceticism described in the *vitae Radegundis*. Puvis inserted portraits of himself and his friend Theophile Gautier, a poet and author who produced writings on Fortunatus, while the figure of Radegund was modeled on Puvis' wife, Marie Cantacuzène, a Romanian princess.[[85]](#footnote-85) The art historian, Jennifer Shaw, suggests that “classicism, modernism, and nationalism” were “central issues to Puvis’ oeuvre.”[[86]](#footnote-86) In particular, his use of classicizing style in all his work to conflate antique and French culture offered an appealing fantasy of France and Frenchness as a Mediterranean Greco-Gallo-Roman amalgamation that was distinct from and superior to the barbaric northern culture of the Prussians.[[87]](#footnote-87) The Giottesque color palette and two-dimensional draped figures he always employs present “an air of historical authenticity that associated his work with the then current idea of the ingenuousness or moral purity” of an idealized past Golden Age. [[88]](#footnote-88) And so for Puvis, the Radegund tradition became a useful tool for projecting a republican notion of France’s Christian origins, quite different from the conservative-royalist-legitimist ideals we saw before. By emphasizing this monastic institution as a haven of “pure” religion, art, and learning instead of an instrument of the Church, this mural was in line with the republican idealized role of religion – or rather, spirituality – in French history and its appropriate role in French public life.

As we can see from de Bussiére’s comment in his 1849 “legitimist” *Life of Radegund* that “the pure morality of the Gospel was observed in these venerable asylums,” both royalists and republicans shared the same longing for an imagined time of innocence. Aimee Brown-Price notes how Puvis sought to channel this concept with his murals, suggesting that “Puvis' inventions are consonant with a return to simple Christianity, to a faith undissipated by doctrinaire factionalism, a faith such as accompanied the religious revival and anticlericalism at the beginning of the Third Republic.”[[89]](#footnote-89) Bishops Pie and Freppel evoked a similar sentiment in their discourses, though for these conservatives, both Catholicism and monarchy – united by the concept of the divine right of kings as justification for a restoration of the Bourbon monarchy – were equally crucial to their worldview. But to reclaim Radegund as “safe” for the Third Republic, Puvis need to divorce his Radegund from any ecclesiastical or royal associations, just as he employed classicalism – such as the figures’ Roman garb – to disassociate Radegund from Merovingian (i.e. Germanic and barbarian) culture. Her simple classical drapery could not be more different from the photograph of the luxuriously garbed and bejeweled crowned Poitevin statue that evoked the royal splendor of the Ancien Regime. And perhaps most significantly, Puvis’ Radegund is the first visual interpretation since the twelfth-century illuminated manuscript, BMP 250, to depict the sainted queen without a crown.

And so, on the surface, such a potentially contentious and religious subject might seem like an odd choice for a young aspiring artist, eager to rise to prominence as the Republic’s national muralist. This might even explain the reluctance of art-historians to offer the same kind of lengthy interpretations for this mural that they do for Puvis’ other more seemingly straightforward work. However, when we consider the broader context of how Radegund’s identity was being actively shaped during this period, we can see that the mural fulfilled an important need to dissolve the conservative monopoly on Radegund and reclaim her as a national saint for the Third Republic. Furthermore, it seems highly likely that Puvis’ desacralization of Radegund lead to the ascendency of two of her original attributes at the turn of the twentieth century that had been relegated to the background for centuries: her role as a medical caregiver and her skill in converting pagans to Christianity.

## Radegund the Nurse

The final post-Revolution identities for Radegund this chapter will discuss is her mobilization as a medical caregiver and evangelizer. At the turn of the twentieth century, Radegund’s role as a medical caregiver (as opposed to a miraculous healer) was emphasized to a greater extent than ever before when her image was used to promote charitable donations for a children’s tuberculosis hospital dedicated to her in Tours, to recruit nurses for service in French Algeria, and as the face of missionary work in the French Congo. In each of these cases, Radegund’s historical identity as a healer of the poor was reconceived for the new needs and expectations at the turn of the twentieth century.

“La Patronne de Poitrinaires”: Radegund and the Tuberculosis Epidemic

In the 1890s, Radegund became “La Patronne de Poitrinaires” (The Patroness of Consumptives) when a children’s tuberculosis hospital was placed under the auspices of the church of Sainte-Radegonde-près-Tours. Perched on a hill high above the Loire near the site of St. Martin’s Abbey of Marmoutier, the Sanatorium de Sainte-Radegonde provided free treatment to poor children suffering from tuberculosis. In 1894, Dr. Edmond Chaumier established a charitable organization called *l'Oeuvre des Enfants Tuberculeux de Touraine* to oversee the foundation and maintenance of the Sanatorium. As part of its fundraising campaign, *l'Oeuvre* produced and distributed prayer cards featuring an image of Radegund on the front with a request for donations on the reverse. These prayer cards offer an interesting opportunity for studying the repeated, newly conceived, and constantly reconceived iterations of Radegund.

According to the *Livre d'or du sanatorium de Touraine (Sainte-Radegonde, près Tours)* published in 1895, the mission of the *l'Oeuvre des Enfants Tuberculeux de Touraine* was to secure funding for the establishment of a sanitorium where the children of poor families suffering from tuberculosis would receive at least three months of free treatment in the salubrious air of the hilltop asylum. [[90]](#footnote-90) The *Livre d'or* details the rules and organization of *l'Oeuvre* which was composed of a group of men and women who paid yearly dues. There were different levels of membership one could achieve based on the amount of the donation. Revenue came from member dues, individual gifts and donations, as well as profits from events and conferences that benefited the organization.[[91]](#footnote-91) The nuns of Sainte-Radegonde-près-Toursprovided the daily care of the children who were also visited by doctors. While Dr. Chaumier was the president of *L’Oeuvre,* the Sanatorium was directed by M. l’abbé Moussé, the curate of Sainte-Radegonde in Poitiers, and it appears that the Superior of the nuns of Sainte-Croix also shared some of the duties of administration.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Dr. Chaumier first conceived of the Sanitorium when he installed four little girls suffering from tuberculosis with two nuns in la propriété du Petit-Bois at Sainte-Radegonde-près-Tours.[[93]](#footnote-93) However, the space was too limited to house the numbers of children he had hoped to treat. *L’Oeuvre* raised enough money to move the children to a larger site, but still could only accommodate twenty-five children. But thanks to the generosity of their members, they were able to buy new property and build a larger establishment. Soon after, more financial troubles arose that threatened to derail the entire operation. To advertise their fundraising campaign, *l'Oeuvre des Enfants Tuberculeux* printed and distributed prayer cards depicting “Sainte-Radegonde, Queen of France, Patroness of Consumptives” on the front with the following message on the reverse:

To heal the poor little consumptives.

The charity of the “petits poitrinaires” needs you. The Sanatorium de Touraine, which cares for and cures all of France’s poor little consumptives, will be taken away from the nuns in March of 1896, if the charity cannot raise the sum of one hundred thousand francs necessary to purchase it.

Afterwards, it will be necessary to renovate it, because, for want of space, we can currently only accommodate a small number of patients, and throughout all of France there are thousands of children dying from phthisis and tuberculosis that the Sanatorium could be curing.

So give generously, give a large donation for the acquisition of the new property, give an annual donation to help the charity prosper.

Following this were details about the indulgence donors would receive and instructions about sending their contributions to Madame la Supérieure des Religieuses du Sanatorium de Touraine.

Tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in France – and in fact all of Europe – in the nineteenth century. At its high point in France from the 1870s-1890s, it accounted for one-fifth to one-fourth of all deaths, with a marked intensification during the Franco-Prussian War and the siege of Paris in 1871.[[94]](#footnote-94) During this time, the “sanitorium movement” was popular throughout Europe and America where facilities were established to provide fresh air, sunshine, and a hygienic environment for thousands seeking “the cure.” But why did the heavy responsibility of caring for “all of France’s poor little consumptives” depend on the contributions of private donors? There were many charities established in France in the late nineteenth century just like *l'Oeuvre des Enfants Tuberculeux* that funded tuberculosis care. In 1901, the doctor and socialist activist, Octave Tabary, published a critique in the newspaper, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, of the government’s lack of response to the tuberculosis crisis and their encouragement of private sector organizations to assume the financial burden of care and prevention. He derided the “ridiculously impotent and stingy remedies brought about by bourgeois philanthropy,” considering the national scale of the tuberculosis problem.[[95]](#footnote-95)

It is unnecessary to belabor the notion that epidemics can easily become politicized and the tuberculosis epidemic of the nineteenth century was no exception. It is impossible to avoid drawing comparisons between this past global health crisis and the one we are currently experiencing. Much like the situation in the United States, political interests in France undermined an early organized national response, despite recognition that “it [tuberculosis] is truly a national peril.” [[96]](#footnote-96) Pulmonary tuberculosis was the most common manifestation of the disease, but it could also present in an extrapulmonary form called scrofula, which affected the lymph glands of the neck and resulted in abscesses that could become open sores.[[97]](#footnote-97) Both forms of the disease are caused by the Koch bacillus, named for the German bacteriologist who first identified it in 1882, and it is transmitted through the inhalation of aerosolized particles from a carrier’s coughing, sneezing, and spitting.[[98]](#footnote-98) Debates among the medical community regarding its causes, transmission, treatment, and contagiousness permeated political and social discourse. Both Britain and Germany enacted rigorous public health campaigns, while France failed to mobilize any concerted national effort to combat the epidemic.[[99]](#footnote-99) Rather, private physicians and charitable organizations assumed the onus of dealing with tuberculosis patients. This was mainly because the Union of Medical Syndicates (composed of private physicians and established in 1881) saw the creation of a state bureaucracy for overseeing public health issues as a threat to their professional status and they fought both to minimize any existing state control and to prevent its expansion.[[100]](#footnote-100) With the greater democratization of the political sector under the Third Republic, opportunities arose that allowed an increased number of doctors to enter politics and enabled them to actively promote the Union’s goals through their legislative influence.[[101]](#footnote-101) From the 1850s to the 1880s, there were several attempts to create state-mandated local sanitation commissions, but these efforts failed due to the general lack of compliance from départment prefects.[[102]](#footnote-102) The central Bureau of Public Health and Hygiene, established in 1886, was modeled directly after Germany’s very successful Reichsgesundheitsamt implemented a decade before, but failed for similar reasons.[[103]](#footnote-103) In short, many promising plans to address the situation on a national scale were proposed, but their execution suffered from political paralysis.[[104]](#footnote-104) As a result, French cities experienced increasing mortality rates even as numbers were declining in Britain and Germany.[[105]](#footnote-105) Only after cases began to wane at the *fin de siècle* did governmental and philanthropic organizations start to launch “la lutte contre la tuberculose,” translated by David Barnes as “the war against tuberculosis.”[[106]](#footnote-106) Barnes’ comprehensive study on the history of and social responses to tuberculosis in nineteenth-century France recognizes “spitting, alcoholism, and unsanitary housing” as the leading factors which were thought to cause tuberculosis.[[107]](#footnote-107) The moral failings of the poor – and indeed poverty itself – became the primary target of those seeking to apply blame. Many medical professionals who engaged in tuberculosis studies arrived at the unproductive conclusion that the lower classes willfully or ignorantly practiced poor hygiene and engaged in the morally bankrupt practices of patronizing cabarets and prostitutes – “excesses” which they believed were the obvious causes of the disease and were even leading to the “moral and demographic decline of the French nation.” Despite the growing ascendancy of germ theory (the idea that pathogens transmitted disease), which replaced the miasmatic theory (the belief that “bad air” caused disease), they nonetheless overwhelmingly proposed the ineffective solution of greater surveillance and control of the poor in their miasmatic neighborhoods, rather than governmental intervention. [[108]](#footnote-108) As Barnes aptly notes,

All scientific knowledge is—and has always been—conditioned by social factors. Industrialization, urbanization, class conflict, religious piety and charity, bourgeois sexual morality, demographic stagnation, military defeat, and international rivalry all contributed to the peculiar shape of the French understanding of tuberculosis. Ultimately, to write the history of tuberculosis in nineteenth-century France, one must write a history of nineteenth-century French society.

Responses to disease, even among scientists, is also conditioned by these same social factors, much in the same way that saints are created and recreated based on communities’ social needs. The choice of Radegund as an ally in Dr. Chaumier’s charitable efforts was a natural choice due to her role as titular saint of the Touraine tuberculosis sanitorium. But the belief in her success as a propaganda element for the charity’s prayer cards was driven by the deeper meanings Radegund had come to represent in French popular culture. On the one hand, we can see the continuous momentum at work of Radegund’s association with Frenchness, nationalism, and patriotism in the charity’s manual, in the wording of the prayer card’s request for donations, and in the way Radegund is visually represented on the front of the card. But these qualities took on quite a different tone than before as they were mobilized for use during a public health crisis. And on the other hand, popular derision for elements of religious superstition, such as miraculous healing by saints and their relics, made Radegund the perfect choice for a charity that sponsored tuberculosis treatment. Even though Radegund, like any medieval saint, achieved fame thanks to her monastic foundation’s promotion of her relics’ curative powers, her historical role of providing free medical care to a poor population suffering from the most disgusting ailments corresponded well with the nineteenth-century understanding of tuberculosis as a disease of the unhygienic poor.

The text on the sanatorium prayer card’s reverse uses Radegund’s identity as a national saint to evoke a “national” idea of healthcare, despite the fact that it was France’s lack of national response that necessitated *L’Oeuvre’s* establishment. The Sanatorium of Sainte-Radegonde-près-Tours “cares for and cures *all of France’s* poor little consumptives.” Children are dying “*throughout all of France*” that the Sanatorium could be curing if only they had the necessary funding. But whether *L’Oeuvre* had the capacity to actually transport these impoverished children from all over France to their facility in Tours for treatment is unknown. Nevertheless, *L’Oeuvre* conceived of its mission as a national one and they advertised Radegund as their patroness, “Queen of France” and “Patroness of Consumptives,” on a national level. The founding members were all Tourainians and *L’Oeuvre’s* headquarters was based in Tours, but the medical committee was composed of doctors located as far as Paris and Lyon. Associating this national saint with the national scope of their mission made the Sanatorium seem more effective and implied that the donations *L’Oeuvre* received would support *tuberculeux* all over France and not just from Tours.

We can also see the deployment of Radegund’s identity as a national saint to promote the idea that charitable contributions to the Sanatorium de Sainte-Radegonde were an act of patriotism. As Chaumier relates in an address to the members of *L’Oeuvre*, “Until the day when our dream will become a reality, it will be necessary to propagandize more actively; it will be necessary for you to bring everyone together to recruit new members and to collect larger sums, knowing that you are doing your Christian and patriotic duty.”[[109]](#footnote-109) Dr. Chaumier’s association of patriotism and Christian duty with raising funds for tuberculosis care again references the country-wide scope of the charity’s mission. It also seems highly likely that Radegund’s recent notoriety from both the Left and the Right as the great civilizer of the barbarian world also played a significant part in her suitability as Patroness of Consumptives. Scholars of the tuberculosis epidemic concur that French doctors and policy-makers were in constant competition with the Germans, who were perceived as barbarian invaders after the 1871 defeat. The looming reality of Germany’s success in mobilizing resources to combat the disease sat badly with the French, who were reluctant to adopt "a servile imitation" of their enemy’s public health measures, as the leader of the French temperance movement, Emile Cheysson, put it.[[110]](#footnote-110) In a similar vein, Dr. Camille Savoire, who was sent to investigate German sanatoria by the Ministry of Commerce, reported that there was much to admire about Germany’s public health measures, but that their methods were “attainable only through an authoritarian structure that rested on an autocratic government and a military spirit among the people.”[[111]](#footnote-111) In other words, what might work for a barbaric nation such as Germany just wasn’t appropriate for France’s more civilized population. Despite the various controversial uses of Radegund over the recent decades, she was still France’s most famous Merovingian queen and her now firmly established Frenchness and role as preserver of French patrimony made her a desirable choice for a foundation seeking to employ the concepts of both patriotism and Christian charity to garner financial support.

The pervasive belief in France that tuberculosis was a disease of poverty – and of moral deficiency – similarly made Radegund an effective tool for the Sanatorium’s fundraising campaign. While Germany’s public health efforts were shaped by its medical community’s consensus regarding the disease’s transmission via the Koch bacillus, a significant factor in France’s lack of coordinated state response to the tuberculosis epidemic was the misdirection of attention and resources towards surveilling and combatting the social evils of alcoholism, prostitution, and slovenly living conditions.[[112]](#footnote-112) This stigmatization of the lower classes and their dangerously filthy habits coincided with the revival of Radegund’s identity as a medical caregiver and promoter of hygiene, which we will see to an even greater extent in the next section on nursing recruitment. The historical Radegund was a great healer of the poor, and lepers in particular, an aspect of her saintliness particularly emphasized in the sixth-century account of Venantius Fortunatus. As he relates, she established a hospital at Athies,

where beds were elegantly made up for needy women gathered there. She would wash them herself in warm baths, tending to the putrescence of their diseases. She washed the heads of men, acting like a servant. And before she washed them, she would mix a potion with her own hands to revive those who were weak from sweating.

And later at Saix, she continued her ministrations,

Girding herself with a cloth, she washed the heads of the needy, scrubbing away whatever she found there. Not shrinking from scurf scabs, lice or pus, she plucked off the worms and scrubbed away the putrid flesh. Then she herself combed the hair on every head she had washed. As in the gospel, she applied oil to their ulcerous sores that had opened when the skin softened or that scratching had irritated, reducing the spread of infection.

Accounts of her ministrations were distinct from most medieval saints, both because of the lengthy descriptions of the lepers’ truly repulsive infirmities and because of the focus on her use of medicine and basic hygienic efforts.[[113]](#footnote-113)

In many ways, Radegund’s association with leprosy fit well with her new role as Patroness of Consumptives. In the Middle Ages, the idea that leprosy was God’s punishment for the sins of the sufferer was prevalent, leading to the stigmatization of lepers, not just for fear of contagion, but for their dangerously sinful nature.[[114]](#footnote-114) Radegund’s treatment of lepers with healing potions, medicinal oils, and especially cleansing baths coincided with the nineteenth-century attitude that tuberculosis was caused by unhygienic and immoral living, and that its prevention lie in cleanliness and personal virtue. Furthermore, Radegund’s medieval and early modern renown as a healer of skin disorders provides another link to her association with tuberculosis. Tuberculosis occasionally presented as ulcerous lesions, a condition called scrofula, which was known as “the King’s-Evill” in the Middle Ages because it was believed that the king’s touch had the miraculous power of curing this disease.[[115]](#footnote-115) As John Frith relates in his history of tuberculosis, “The belief that disease could be cured by a king’s touch has its origins with Clovis of France (487-511), and later other European monarchs such as Robert the Pious, Edward the Confessor and Philip I of France. The cure of scrofula by the King’s touch was common after the thirteenth century and performed by English and French monarchs such as King Charles II, who during his 25 year reign touched 92,102 subjects.”[[116]](#footnote-116) Thus for “Saint Radegund Queen of France,” as she is labeled on the sanatorium prayer card, to be associated with this disease as the Patroness of Consumptives was the result of several different but complimentary ideas about Radegund and royalty which coalesced in response to these new nineteenth-century needs. This version of Radegund’s queenship doesn’t seem to connote anti-republican sentiments, rather, it invites the audience to associate the sanatorium’s royal patroness with the tradition of curing this form of tuberculosis by royal touch.

To conclude this discussion of Radegund as Patroness of Consumptives, it is worthwhile to analyze the artistic choices for the sanatorium card which reveal much about Radegund’s popular identity in the nineteenth century and reflect the perception of the salubrious effects of the countryside. This image contains no allusions to Radegund’s monastic identity. She appears entirely as the sainted queen with a finely embroidered gown and cloak, jeweled belt, crown, and glowing nimbus. With modestly downcast eyes, she stands in the graceful swaying contrapposto attitude so typical of Gothic figural sculpture and stained glass.[[117]](#footnote-117) In no way is this grace diminished by the fact that she stands upon the tilled soil of an oat field, which signals the subject of the scene as the Miracle of the Oats. This apocryphal story, which developed as early as the fourteenth century, recounts Radegund’s harrowing escape from her husband, King Clothar, on her way to found the monastery of Sainte-Croix in Poitiers. According to this legend, newly sown oats miraculously grew to full height, hiding Radegund from capture by Clothar and his soldiers. Despite the fact that this episode is absent from all medieval Lives of Radegund, the Miracle of the Oats became one of the most popular ways to depict Radegund in visual culture from about the fifteenth century onwards. The use of this Radegundian tradition for the sanatorium card demonstrates how recognizable this version of Radegund was well into the nineteenth century. But more importantly, the scene presents a “safe” Radegund. We see her crowned, but know that she has just rejected her queenship. The absence of her usual attributes – the nun’s habit and fleur-de-lys – serves to disassociate her from any problematic connotations of monasticism or monarchism. [[118]](#footnote-118) And finally, the setting of the agricultural field evokes the cure by fresh air that the Sanatorium de Sainte-Radegonde offered as an antidote to the dangerously overcrowded and unsanitary environment of the city. This sentiment is evoked by the careful positioning of Radegund’s hands: the left softly brushes the tops of the oat stalks, while her right hand is raised to her breast, a symbolic gesture referencing her ability to heal the *poitrines* of the suffering *poitrinaires.*[[119]](#footnote-119)

## Radegund the Missionary: Reexamining Radegund as the Great Civilizer within the Colonial Context

In the spring of 2014, Monseigneur Abagna Mossa, bishop of Owando, and the minister of culture, Jean Claude Gakosso, gathered amidst civil and military authorities in the parish of Notre-Dame-de-l’Assomption in the town of Oyo to celebrate the erection of a new monument. After cutting the symbolic ribbon to inaugurate this statue of “Sainte-Radegond de Tsambitso,” the directeur général of patrimony and archives for the Republic of the Congo, Samuel Kidiba, delivered a speech in which he recognized this statue commemorating the 1899 French Mission de Sainte-Radegonde to Tsambitso as the “crystallization of the past, of history and of the imagination of the past.”[[120]](#footnote-120) Kidiba stated that this monument, like others set up in places of evangelization in the Congo, was a symbolic extension of the Holy Land and represented the place “from which our people entered modern history…demonstrat[ing] to future generations that Tsambitso , Loango, and Louzolo really existed.”[[121]](#footnote-121) But whose “history” is Kidiba referring to here and how has Radegund – with all her complex meanings – shaped, and in turn, been shaped by that history?

Radegund was the titular saint of France’s first evangelical mission to the northern Congo, which was led by Monseigneur Prospère Augouard in 1899.[[122]](#footnote-122) He established at least five mission sites over the thirty-six years he spent as a missionary in Africa.[[123]](#footnote-123) The Mission Sainte-Radegonde de l’Alima was located about 500 km down-river from Brazzaville in a place referred to alternatively as Tsambitso, Mbochin, Oubanghi, and Alima by *Les Missions Catholiques*, the premier periodical documenting the activities of French missionaries around the turn of the twentieth century, and Augouard himself in his biographical works, *Dernier voyage dans l'Oubanghi et l'Alima* (1899) and *36 années au Congo* (1910). Although the mission was completely destroyed by lightening seven years after its foundation in 1906, there are numerous postcards with photographs depicting scenes of daily life around the mission chapel and buildings.[[124]](#footnote-124) But despite its short life, this mission dedicated to Radegund had a lasting impact on the people of the region whose remembrance of this French queen-saint prompted the erection of a statue in her honor over a century later.

As a Poitevin native, Augouard had a number of patron saints to choose from if his intention was to honor his hometown with the name of his mission site. In fact, Saint Hilary, first bishop of Poitiers, is most well-known for his evangelization efforts among the Arian populations of Gaul, Germania, and Britain in the fourth century. Referred to as the "Hammer of the Arians" (*Malleus Arianorum*) and the "Athanasius of the West" for his efforts to wipe out Arianism and promote Orthodox Christianity, Hilary would have been the obvious choice for Augouard who might have identified with Hilary’s conversion mission. Even Saint Martin of Tours, the “apostle of Gaul” and a favorite of Third Republic France would have seemed a more likely titular saint. When Paris was evacuated in advance of the Prussian siege in 1871, France’s government was relocated to Tours, which became the de facto capital of France. As Brian Brennan has shown, it was during this time that “Saint Martin was promoted by the clerical right as the cosmic protector of the nation against the German threat” and his military career became the defining factor in the renewed popularity of his cult. [[125]](#footnote-125) Prospèr Augouard first became interested in joining the priesthood and becoming a missionary in his early twenties when he was serving as a papal zouave – a battalion of volunteer soldiers dedicated to the defense of the papal states – during the 1870 Franco-Prussian war.[[126]](#footnote-126) And so, as a soldier himself from the Loire at the height of Martin’s newfound popularity, it is surprising Augouard chose Radegund over Gaul’s first missionary and “soldier of Christ” for his mission’s titular saint.

Perhaps it was Radegund’s decisive and somewhat violent action of burning down a pagan temple, as described in Baudonivia’s sixth century *Vita Radegundis*, that Augouard admired. As Baudonivia relates, on her way to the matron Ansifrida’s “noble banquet,” Radegund traveled a mile out of her way upon hearing of a pagan *fane* (temple) where certain Franks worshipped. There, “she ordered her servants to burn the *fane* revered by the Franks with fire, for she judged that it was iniquitous to show contempt for God in Heaven and venerate the Devil’s instruments.” The pagan Franks mounted a defense of their shrine “with swords and clubs, shouting and all stirred up by the Devil." But Radegund steadfastly refused to move her horse until the shrine had been consumed by the flames and the pagans were satisfactorily converted.

But perhaps even more compelling than this episode of violent evangelization from Radegund’s early life would have been the association of Radegund with “civilization” which was so popular during Augouard’s youth. In fact, if we re-examine Bishop Pie and Marie-Théodore de Bussiére’s fixation on Radegund as a civilizing influence within a more global context, it is possible that France’s endorsement of *la mission civilisatrice* as justification for their colonial enterprises actually shaped this aspect of Radegund’s nineteenth-century identity.

Since the pioneering work of scholars such as Ann Laura Stoler, Mrinalini Sinha, and Kirsten McKenzie, among others, historians have established more nuanced methods of approaching the complex histories of colonialism. While it is not possible to cover the vast scholarship on French colonialism in this chapter, or even to venture too far into the many excellent studies of the French colonizing project in the northern Congo, it is crucial to our understanding of how Radegund’s cult developed in the nineteenth century to incorporate here just one of the most significant developments within the field of colonialism: The acknowledgement that the relationship between the colonial periphery and the metropolitan center was defined by reciprocity. Understanding this relationship as one defined by multi-directional transfer has become the standard point of departure for historians of colonialism. Scholars now understand the genealogy of concepts, discourses, and policies as products of exchange within a complex web of interactions that transcended borders with global implications. In other words, it is impossible to produce a comprehensive analysis of any development in “French” ideology during the colonial period without acknowledging that the colonial experience had a role in shaping that ideology because the identities of colonizer and colonized were mutually constituted. As J.P. Daughton has shown in his 2006 study, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism 1880-1914*, scholars should see identity formation, in particular, in terms of this multi-directional transfer. As he argues, “French identity was shaped not only by experiences at home but also in a variety of locations where men and women defined their moral and political positions within an international and often contentious context.”[[127]](#footnote-127)The way that the French understood and carried out their colonial policy as a “civilizing mission” went much further than the exertion of power over indigenous populations, “it was also an exercise in defining the values of the *patrie*, how Frenchmen were to think and behave—in short, what it meant to be French.”[[128]](#footnote-128) This then prompts the question: to what degree did *la mission civilisatrice* shape the nineteenth-century articulation – by both the Left and the Right – of Radegund as a bastion of Frenchness and, more specifically, a Frenchness characterized by “civilization”?

The glorification of the Church and her saints as the source of civilization dates back to the origins of Christian theological discourse. While the language appears similar in our nineteenth century Radegund texts, its meaning was influenced and transformed by the many coalescing debates we have observed throughout this chapter: the clashes between Catholics and Protestants, between Legitimists and Republicans, and between religious and secular, whose representatives harnessed powerful symbols and refashioned historical narratives in the great competition to define what it meant to be French. All of these debates were inevitably exported abroad to French possessions like the northern Congo and Algeria where they were played out against the backdrop of furthering France’s colonial interests, forcing policy makers and administrators to continuously redefine the values that constituted Frenchness, French patriotism, and how these were expressed both at home and abroad.[[129]](#footnote-129) The role of French Catholic missionaries, like Augouard, was at the heart of the discord. Daughton describes the “uncomfortable symbiosis” that existed between the missionaries and the republican government, noting that “the new interest in colonial conquest coincided exactly with the climax of republican anticlericalism in France.” Many Catholic missionaries were openly hostile to republicanism and, at the turn of the twentieth century, the French government again enacted legislation designed to eradicate clerical influence.[[130]](#footnote-130) But as the prominent anticlerical Third Republic politician and lawyer, Léon Gambetta, famously stated in 1876, “anticlericalism is not an item for export."[[131]](#footnote-131) Those republicans who tirelessly sought the eradication of all Catholic influence at home found themselves depending on missionary expertise to facilitate—and even justify—their rule abroad.”[[132]](#footnote-132) Paradoxically, republican France needed its army of Catholic religious personnel to carry out the daily operations of *la mission civilisatrice,* which they did almost for free, making their presence necessary by its cost-effectiveness*.[[133]](#footnote-133)*

But however threatening Catholicism was to the republican French ideal, it was always preferrable to Protestantism. As I showed in the first half of this chapter, conflict between Catholics and Protestants continued on long after the Reformation. The upper hand Catholicism gained over Protestantism in France survived the Revolution and despite republicans’ overt distaste, a historically Catholic France became part of their ideal, as we saw with the republican monumental art of Puvis de Chavannes. In 1893, the resident-general of Madagascar, Charles Le Myre de Vilers, famously wrote, “abroad, France is Catholicism, and Protestantism, across the seas, is England.”[[134]](#footnote-134) Another oft-quoted phrase, “qui dit Français dit catholique, qui dit protestant dit Anglais” (to say *French* was to say Catholic; to say *Protestant* was to say English) similarly epitomizes the way that the colonial enterprise forced France to define itself in relation to the rest of the world.[[135]](#footnote-135) Daughton succinctly explains this reluctant allegiance to Catholicism, arguing that, “While the Protestants’ adoration of liberty and justice put them on the side of the republican government in France, the same rhetoric was potentially subversive when taught to the indigenous population of the republican colony.”[[136]](#footnote-136) The values inherent in Catholicism, which were faithfully imparted to colonial subjects by Catholic missionaries, were therefore crucial to the republican government’s goal of spreading “French” civilization, i.e. instilling the kinds of values that would produce colonial subjects that could most effectively further France’s colonial interests. And both missionaries and their advocates took full advantage of this fact in their propaganda campaign from the 1890s onward by building upon that connection between France, civilization, and Catholicism. In fact, suspicion of missionaries’ anti-republican leanings seemed to be a major incentive for these campaigns to promote Catholic missionaries as purveyors of French civilization and even patriotism.[[137]](#footnote-137) Associations of “savagery” with “paganism,” which were increasingly appearing in missionary literature, meant that colonial subjects could be both saved and civilized through conversion.[[138]](#footnote-138)

And so, by the time Augouard founded the mission Sainte-Radegonde de l’Alima in 1899, Radegund had been reclaimed by the republican government as a national saint for the Third Republic via Puvis de Chavanne’s civic mural. Since she was already recognized as an important part of French patrimony, she might have been seen as a “safe” choice for Augouard that demonstrated his commitment to France’s interests abroad – or at the very least exhibited his patriotic intention of exporting something decidedly “French” to the Congo. Desacralized into an object of French patrimony, Puvis’ Radegund “Shelters Poets and Protects Literature from the Barbarism of the Age" just as Augouard served as a civilizing force among “the savage tribe of the Mbochis,” whom he succeeded in “making love our sweet France of which our good queen Radegund was once the most beautiful ornament.”[[139]](#footnote-139) And if we are left with any doubt that Radegund’s nineteenth-century characterization as a civilizing force was influenced by the colonial *mission civilisatrice,* the following quote from Augouard’s 1926 biographer, Georges Goyau, suggests that Augouard’s near-contemporaries did indeed see them as intertwined,

The Poitiers of today sent their apostles to the Congo; and the origins of Congolese Christianity, which was to be definitively founded in 1899, was linked to Merovingian Poitiers, by Radegonde the godmother, and the flower of Latin and Christian civilization suddenly bloomed on the rough trunk of another barbarism.[[140]](#footnote-140)

Goyau then imagines a conversation between Radegund and Fortunatus, such as one that might take place in the seventeenth-century *Dialogue des Morts* written by François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon as a didactic guide for the young duke of Burgundy, Louis, grandson to King Louis XIV,

What a piquant subject for the Dialogue des Morts, would be a meeting of Radegonde with the good poet Fortunatus, congratulating his dear abbess on the good fortune of the savages whom, at the end of thirteen centuries, a priest from Poitou wanted to bring to her as devotees, in a bamboo church, all surrounded by mango, orange and tangerine trees![[141]](#footnote-141)

Goyau’s description of Augouard’s missionary work draws together many of the rhetorical themes that characterized the nineteenth-century interpretations of Radegund: the Christian Merovingian world as the epicenter of intellectual culture, a sense of religious and historical fulfillment in reviving the Catholic faith thirteen centuries after the Merovingian golden age,

the ability of Catholicism to instill civilization amongst the converted, and the power of the Church with Radegund as her instrument to enlighten a barbarian world. But within the colonial context of Augouard’s missionary work, the civilizing narrative becomes more than just an origin story of how France came to be such a great nation. Goyau, conforming to contemporary discourse in support of colonialism, presents the Congo as being in the same state of barbarism that pre-Christian France once was 1300 years before when Radegund helped civilize it. This narrative now justifies France’s intervention in the Congo from a position of evolved superiority – a “godmother” figure supervising the moral education of a child.

And so, looking back at how the Radegund-as-civilizer narrative was used by Pie, de Bussiere, and Puvis, it is impossible not to see the influence of the colonial *mission civilisatrice* in their rhetoric. If we examine Radegund’s use in a different colonial context about a decade later, we can again see the coalescence of all of these themes, though this time with an emphasis on Radegund’s role as a medical caregiver that carries particular gendered implications. In the November 5, 1916 issue of *Le Semeur Algerien*, a Catholic newspaper for French citizens of colonial Algeria, Radegund (and several other historical medieval women) were evoked to recruit nurses for service during WWI.

The article, titled “Les Infirmières de France” (“The Nurses of France”), begins with the triumphal statement that the “women of the world have inaugurated the twentieth century in their new role as nurses.”[[142]](#footnote-142) In the same sentence, Radegund is introduced as the first nurse to “bend over the beds of combatants at the dawn of our history.” Her role as “hospital head” (*major d’hôpital*) at her castle in Athies required her to care for her patients “down to the most disgusting details.” The accounts of the “old authors” describe how Radegund entered sick rooms where doctors “hesitated at the threshold.” Radegund “healed wounds and experienced horrible visions and frightful odors without paling.” In this way, the article argues, “Saint Radegund showed the path for her modern sisters: she could be the patroness « des Sociétes de secours aux blessés militaires, »” an organization first established in 1864 which eventually merged with *L'Association des dames françaises* and *l'Union des femmes* to form the *Croix-Rouge française* in 1940.[[143]](#footnote-143) Much like the case of the Sanatorium de Sainte-Radegonde in Tours which drew on Radegund’s hitherto overlooked historical identity as a medical caregiver as opposed to miraculous healer, this article reimagines the saint’s ministrations to the poor and lepers as the work of a combat nurse bending over the beds of the soldiers of Merovingian France.

In declaring Radegund as the SSBM’s patroness, this article was responding to the heated debate in France over the role of women in the nursing profession and the laicization of nursing under the republican social order. As Katrin Schultheiss and Margaret H. Darrow have shown, nursing was reconceived as a “distinctly feminine” profession in France beginning in the 1880s and crystalized into the new norm during the First World War.[[144]](#footnote-144) On the one hand, the republican mission that began in the 1880s of replacing all religious nursing orders with trained laywomen led proponents to claim that the essential qualities of womanhood – the maternal instinct, tenderness, sympathy, and the innate ability to offer comfort – made them naturally qualified.[[145]](#footnote-145) But these efforts were met with resistance by some republicans, including physicians, whose conservative views about the appropriate role for women in society overruled their anticlerical position. They opposed the idea of laywomen entering the workforce en masse, shirking their familial obligations, encountering sexual danger, and achieving inappropriate levels of independence.[[146]](#footnote-146) And much like their opposition to a nationalized response to the Tuberculosis epidemic, physicians also saw the prospect of highly educated nurses as a threat to their recently established professionalism.[[147]](#footnote-147) On the other hand, the “deeply rooted connection between women religious and the healing arts” meant that policy makers needed to promote lay nursing more as a vocation than a profession where the ideal “republican nurse” still retained the most admired characteristics of nursing sisters: dedication, humility, deference, and self-abnegation (consequently the same characteristics most appreciated in wife and mother).[[148]](#footnote-148) This desire to have it both ways – to enjoy the benefits of the nearly free workforce of non-threatening, unambitious, self-abnegating nuns without the menace of anti-republican Catholic influence – caused France to fall behind England and Germany where the women’s nursing profession was robust and well-established by the turn of the twentieth century.[[149]](#footnote-149)

Radegund’s special ability to embody multiple and contradictory meanings simultaneously, which has been at the heart of every stage of this study, made her uniquely suited to “preside over the glorious group of nurses of the great war,” as the newspaper article concludes. Nowhere in “Les Infirmières de France” is Radegund’s monastic identity referenced. Rather, we see the image of “Radegund the queen…daughter of Bertaire, king of Thuringia, spouse of Clothar I” selflessly running a hospital out of her castle, just like the elite laywomen who converted their country estates into temporary wartime hospitals and convalescent homes. As the demand for qualified nurses rose in the first years of WWI, the nursing profession was “promoted as women's wartime service” and “was envisioned as feminine devotion nationalized.”[[150]](#footnote-150) The patriotic flavor that the Great War injected into the women’s nursing profession made Radegund the perfect patroness and model for French nurses. In this way, Radegund conformed perfectly to the impossible ideal of the “republican nurse” as someone who selflessly provided medical care without pay and saw it as part of her religious vocation, but was not (yet) part of any religious order. And she served this purpose while also obviously retaining her traditional Catholic meanings as a saint.

Lastly, it is important to consider the colonial context of this article and how it might have shaped this articulation of Radegund. *Le Semeur Algerien* was a radically Catholic and nationalistic newspaper that circulated in colonial Algeria, but mainly published news items from the metropole. The paper’s self-stated goal, which it published in its first edition in May of 1911, was to “fight against sectarian politics with vigor, but always with loyalty and the Catholic flag always unfurled,” “to unmask the pitfalls of the enemy” whose “unjust laws we find irreconcilable; we will spare nothing to paralyze them with weapons and by the legal ways that are still left to us.” The “unjust laws” referred to here were most likely the 1901 Law on Associations that closed religious organizations, the 1904 law that officially prohibited members of religious orders from teaching in France, and the famous law of 1905 that essentially “separated Church and state” (and probably also the anticlerical laws of 1880s that inaugurated the secularization of education, the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, and, of course, the laicization of nursing).[[151]](#footnote-151) The colonial context shaped the rhetoric of *Le Semeur Algerien’s* mission statement, which asserts the necessity that,

Christian France, if it doesn't want to perish, must fight in a new crusade the souls of its children… It must, in a word, defend religious society and human society against the barbarism which advances upon it, against the tide of mud that is always rising, against the insane claims and assaults of anarchy.

Once again, we see the theme of Christian civilization triumphing over irreligious barbarism deployed in the service of French nationalism, though this time with the added connotations of the crusades. The newspaper article, “Les Infirmières de France,” similarly evokes crusading imagery, relating how the woman, “Hersandes,” followed Saint Louis to the Holy Land as a healer and played an important role in saving Christian soldiers when,

the Turks sought out the wounded to chop off their heads, the sultan paying a coin of gold for each Christian head: it was therefore necessary to pull them out of Saracen hands as quickly as possible.

Even though the work of a medieval crusade-nurse was exhausting and “the organization of sanitary service was little more than rudimentary” outside of France, medieval women nonetheless proved their worth as *ambulancières* (paramedics) and even “wore a costume for the occasion,” which likely references the nursing uniform that served as a symbol of the profession in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. “Les Infirmières de France” uses these descriptions of Radegund and of other medieval women serving in the unhygienic backwaters of the East during the crusades both to establish women’s historical role as nurses for France and because of the power that crusading imagery could evoke as a rhetorical device justifying the European colonial project.

# Conclusion

As the French early medieval historian, Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges, observed in the devastating year 1871,

Each person fashions his own imaginary Middle Ages. Errors are many, because there are so many ways of deceiving oneself, and each person establishes his faith and his political credo following the errors which he has chosen, or to which his earlier education has bound him. There are as many ways of envisioning the Middle Ages in France as there are political parties. It is our historical theories that divide us the most; they are the point of departure for all our factions; they are the lands on which our hatreds have been nurtured.[[152]](#footnote-152)

Indeed, by the time of de Coulanges’ musings, Radegund had ceased to be little more than a divisive historical theory – her legacy mythologized again and again into something far removed from the saintly exemplar of the medieval and early modern eras. “Imaginary” is an apt term for this hero of early medieval France whose tradition lent itself so well to the process of reimagining. To return to the oft-cited quote by the Belgian sociologist, Pierre Delooz, with which this study first began, “All saints are more or less constructed in that, being necessarily saints for other people, they are remodeled in the collective representation which is made of them.”[[153]](#footnote-153) Constructing and reimagining saints is an ongoing process that owes just as much to historians, devotees and their adversaries, as it does to early hagiographers. The medievalist, Edward James, suggests that during the Third Republic in France, “One’s political stance could even be gauged, to some extent, by the attitude that one took towards Clovis and the Merovingians.”[[154]](#footnote-154) This deployment of historical origin-narratives for political purposes was certainly not new to 1870s France. But as this chapter has demonstrated, in the case of Radegund, the new aggressive politicization of her historical and spiritual legacy by both sides of the Culture Wars in response to the identity crisis of post-Revolution France serves as a powerful tool for understanding how individuals and communities rely on history to define their place in the world.

As we have seen, regardless of religious persuasion, the French acknowledged Radegund as an important part of their shared national history. Her tradition was so appealing to people on all sides of the Culture Wars because of their collective longing for the imagined ideal past that Radegund represented within a climate of social and political upheaval. This instability and uncertainty prompted the reexamination of France’s history in the

desire to explain the nation’s apparent downfall and to generate hopeful visions of the future.

But exactly what Radegund meant – and for whom – took on new and drastically different meanings. As the Sainte-Geneviève scholar, Moshe Sluhovsky, argues, “The cult of the patron saint was the people who practiced it, and was as diverse as these people were.”[[155]](#footnote-155)

Catholics rebuilt Radegund shrines that were destroyed or vandalized during the Revolution, often looking backwards for artistic inspiration as they sought to recreate the medieval aesthetic. We saw this in Mme Charre’s restoration of the Chapelle-Sainte-Radegonde at Chinon with its monolithic columns, atrium, and Romanesque archivolt that were intended to return the site to its *physionomie première.[[156]](#footnote-156)* Bishop Pie’s golden Radegund reliquary was designed to resemble a thirteenth-century church in the “purity” of the gothic style.[[157]](#footnote-157) In the farming community of Ganties, the local people urged their clergy to restore their chapel to Radegund, whom they believed had protected their crops “since time immemorial.”[[158]](#footnote-158) Their feeling that the chapel’s absence revoked Radegund’s ability to prevent hailstorms shows how their communal identity and livelihoods were fundamentally linked to the memory of this medieval saint.

In the aftermath of the Revolution, conservative monarchists of the legitimist faction like Bishop Pie of Poitiers and the aristocratic diplomat Marie-Théodore de Bussiére saw Radegund as a symbol for articulating their vision of France as a historically Catholic monarchy where the role of Catholicism and traditional Catholic rituals was central to public life.

Thanks to the expanding national railway system that made travel easier and more cost-effective, pilgrimage to Radegund’s tomb – and the *loci* of other new cults like the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes – were undertaken with a new kind of fervor that was just as political as it was religious.

The trauma of the Franco-Prussian War prompted Republicans to reexamine France’s history and French identity to the same degree as Catholics. Republican France’s famed national muralist, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, selected the Radegund tradition to represent Poitiers’ place in France’s national history. However, his entirely desacralized and de-royalized interpretation of Radegund was very different from the way her identity was reimagined by monarchists, though just as romanticized. Puvis’ “safe” version of Radegund bypassed the perceived corruption of the Ancien Régime with a return to the pure religious and intellectual origins that set France on its path to greatness.

If Puvis’ Radegund was “safe,” the Radegund of Poitier’s statue coronation ceremony was decidedly “dangerous.” Despite vocal republican censure, Mayor Léopold Thézard went against his own party to allow the ceremony, likely in recognition of Radegund’s fundamental importance to Poitevin identity. Republican and Catholic news outlets took aim at each other in published censures, threats, accusations, and speculations. The battleground shifted from the newspapers to the streets when local devotees and visiting pilgrims broke through the gendarmes’ restrictive cordons to defiantly follow the crowned statue in procession. The ensuing riot gave Catholics the opportunity to recast the event as a moment of Catholic triumph and heroism. Was this just a traditional display of religious fervor or a conscious political statement?

The grueling medieval spiritual trends Radegund had engaged in became more difficult for people to relate to within the context of post-Revolutionary approaches to Catholicism. This shift towards a less self-abnegating and more personal approach to devotion coincided with a turning point in how Radegund was textually and artistically interpreted. There was less emphasis on how one could aspire to be like Radegund – as in the traditional hagiographic approach of her sixth- through sixteenth-century biographers – and more effort to

stretch her identity so that it more closely resonated with her modern audience. Beginning to some extent with the seventeenth-century *Lives of Radegund* that placed so much new emphasis on her opposition to heresy to make her more relevant to post-Protestant Reformation Catholics, this trend was scaled up in the orations of Bishop Pie. Despite Radegund’s historical opposition to clerical intervention, Pie chose to emphasize Radegund’s cooperation with the Church and her support of its clergy to promote his vision of a restored Bourbon monarchy harmoniously allied with the Church. This move away from presenting Radegund strictly as a saintly exemplar reached a crescendo in the civilization versus barbarism narrative. De Bussiére first recast her as the Church’s instrument of civilization to justify the return to a traditional Catholic-dominated society and to demonstrate the superiority of the Catholic way of life over republican secularism. Puvis similarly chose to isolate Radegund’s commitment to education from her more problematic religious and royal qualities. His mural depicted her as the great protector of France’s cultural arts from an (implicitly non-French) barbarism in a clear reference to the recent Prussian invasion of France. As the titular saint of Augouard’s Congo mission, Radegund came to symbolize the colonial *mission civilisatrice* and to justify France’s project of civilizing barbarian lands. When Bishop Pie first referred to Radegund as “mother of the fatherland,” he also reshaped her into a more modern “negotiator” who helped her country avoid the ravages of war that France had just suffered at the hands of the Prussians. Similarly, Radegund’s somewhat forgotten role as a medical caregiver was dusted off and deployed to recruit nurses during WWI in *Le Semeur Algerien.* Her self-abnegating care of the poor and lepers, which characterized Radegund’s expression of Christian piety, was reimagined as the patriotically motivated duties of a combat nurse. And finally, this historically childless queen who abandoned her still-living husband for the convent became patron of the lay Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Cour-sur-Loire. Only by associating her with the Virgin Mary could they make her better reflect their own identities as mothers. In this way, they were able to successfully conform Radegund to the new national ideal of motherhood as defined by counter-revolutionary Catholic morality.

In the concluding chapter that follows, we will see the broader implications of Radegund’s fourteenth-hundred-year story. After briefly retracing the highlights from the long trajectory of her ever-changing cult, I will explore how this early medieval saint’s popularity has endured into the twenty-first century. Radegund is still enthusiastically venerated today with feast day celebrations and pilgrimages at her cult cites all over France. But her predominant characterization is now as an object of tourism. We can see this as a continuation of the republican interest in secularizing Radegund into an object of French patrimony, detracting from her traditional medieval role as a saintly exemplar whom devotees sought to imitate. But even in this form, we can see that Radegund continues to exist as an important part of communal identity, both in Poitiers and in the many small communities all over France who still remember her.

1. Brittain, *Saint Radegund: Patroness of Jesus College, Cambridge*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. J. P. Daughton, An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Terms also include royalists and legitimists. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Term used in Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 448. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 448. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. J.X. Carré de Busserolle, « Dictionnaire Géographique, Historique, et Biographique d’Indre-et-Loire et de l’Ancienne Province de Touraine, » *Mémoires de la Société archéologique de Touraine*, Série in-80, Volume 31, (Société archéologique de Touraine: Touraine, 1883), 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 502. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 493. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 493. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. L’Abbé Charles Eschoyez, *Origines de I'abbaye royale de Sainte-Croix* (Poitiers : 1865), xiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. L’Abbé Charles Eschoyez, *Origines de I'abbaye royale de Sainte-Croix* (Poitiers : 1865), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 503. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 47, No. 1, January 1996, 68; Josephine de Marans, Superior of Sainte Croix to M. Oudin Devouloir of L'Univers, Jan. 1854, AEP, 570 Ste Radegonde; Josephine de Marans to Mgr Pie, 6 Aug. 1854, ibid.; Labande, *Histoire de I'abbaye*, 450-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 258. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 258. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Caroline Ford, “Violence and the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies* Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1998), 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ford, “Violence and the Sacred,” 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ford, “Violence and the Sacred,” 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Caroline Ford, “Violence and the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1998), 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ford, “Violence and the Sacred,” 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Denis Crouzet, *Guerriers de Dieu*: *la violence au temps des troubles de religion vers 1525-vers 1610* (Seyssel, 1990), 1: 297. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Loisel, "Sainte Radegonde entre Loire et Cher,” 63; Dioc 41, N 74 (Archives diocésaines de Blois). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. « Autel latéral et son retable avec tableau : Sainte Radegonde, » *Website of the Ministère de la Culture*, https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/palissy/PM41001068. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Transcribed in Loisel, "Sainte Radegonde entre Loire et Cher,” 64; Dioc 41, N 74 (Archives diocésaines de Blois). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Sarah A. Curtis, "Charitable Ladies: Gender, Class and Religion in Mid Nineteenth-Century Paris," *Past & Present*, no. 177 (2002): 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Sarah A. Curtis, "Charitable Ladies: Gender, Class and Religion in Mid Nineteenth-Century Paris," *Past & Present*, no. 177 (2002): 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Loisel, "Sainte Radegonde entre Loire et Cher,” 63; Dioc 41, N 74 (Archives diocésaines de Blois). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Eileen Janes Yeo, “The creation of ‘motherhood’ and Women's responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914,” *Women's History Review*, 8:2 (1999), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Eileen Janes Yeo, “The creation of ‘motherhood’ and Women's responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914,” *Women's History Review*, 8:2 (1999), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Eileen Janes Yeo, “The creation of ‘motherhood’ and Women's responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914,” *Women's History Review*, 8:2 (1999), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. For the development of British ideals of motherhood, see Carroll Smith Rosenberg, “The female world of love and ritual: relations between women in nineteenth century America,” *Signs*, 1 (1975) pp. 8-9, 22-23; Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middleclass, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Eileen Janes Yeo, “The creation of ‘motherhood’ and Women's responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914,” *Women's History Review*, 8:2 (1999), 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Petit formulaire de l'archiconfrérie des mères chrétiennes: contenant les réglements et statuts de l'archiconfrérie, l'ordinaire de la messe, des méditations et les messes propres pour les douze fêtes de l'archiconfrérie, la messe pour les défunts, etc.* Nouvelle Edition. (Orléans : Blanchard, Libraire-Éditeur, 1868), 5. See BNF record for date: https://data.bnf.fr/fr/11688912/archiconfrerie\_des\_meres\_chretiennes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. « Ensemble de trois bannières de procession : Vierge à l'Enfant, Vierge de l'Assomption et sainte Radegonde » *Website of the Ministère de la Culture*, https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/palissy/PM41001071 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Jean-Jacques Loisel, "Sainte Radegonde entre Loire et Cher." (Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire du Vendômois, 2012), 63. 63; Dioc 41, N 74 (Archives diocésaines de Blois). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Article 9, as transcribed in Jean-Jacques Loisel, "Sainte Radegonde entre Loire et Cher." (Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire du Vendômois, 2012), 63. 63; Dioc 41, N 74 (Archives diocésaines de Blois). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Eileen Janes Yeo, “The creation of ‘motherhood’ and Women's responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914,” *Women's History Review*, 8:2 (1999), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 598. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 600. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée à l’office de la solennité de Sainte Radegonde, patronne de la ville, sur la rôle de la sainte reine dans le temps de guerre, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Volume 6 (Oudin : 1887), 602. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Needs citation [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Needs citation [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Bailly to Pie, 9 Aug. 1877, AEP 570 Ste Radegonde; Brian Brennan, “Visiting ‘Peter in Chains’: French

    Pilgrimage to Rome, 1873-93,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 51, No. 4, (October 2000), 743. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Brian Brennan, “Visiting ‘Peter in Chains’: French

    Pilgrimage to Rome, 1873-93,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 51, No. 4, (October 2000), 741;743. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Discours adressé dans Église de Sainte-Radegonde de Poitiers aux Pèlerins de Paris Le 17 Aout 1873, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 8 (Oudin : 1878), 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Discours adressé dans Église de Sainte-Radegonde de Poitiers aux Pèlerins de Paris Le 17 Aout 1873, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 8 (Oudin : 1878), 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Christopher Clark, “The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars,” in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Mgr Louis Baunard, *Histoire du Cardinal Pie*, vol 1 (Poitiers : H. Oudin, 1886), 273. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Raymond A. Jonas, “Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 20, no. 1 (1994), 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Raymond A. Jonas, “Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 20, no. 1 (1994), 99; 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Discours adressé dans Église de Sainte-Radegonde de Poitiers aux Pèlerins de Paris Le 17 Aout 1873, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 7 (Oudin : 1887), 545; Raymond A. Jonas, “Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 20, no. 1 (1994), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Raymond A. Jonas, “Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 20, no. 1 (1994), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 1 (1996), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 1 (1996), 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “There is evidence of sixty-six such crownings in France between 1853 and 1890 and the crowning of Radegund's statue would hence have served to reinforce latent Marian parallels.” (Brennan 76) [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 1 (1996), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 1 (1996), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See Christopher Clark, “The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars,” in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003) for more on the significance of newspapers in “fanning the flames of the culture wars.” The culture wars “were primarily fought through the cultural media: the spoken and printed word, the image, the symbol.” (6) [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. A papal *nuncio*, officially called an Apostolic *nuncio*, holds the rank of archbishop and is the permanent diplomatic representative who heads the diplomatic mission of the Holy See. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. La Croix [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. - It is by virtue of this same law that we now demand M. the mayor to compose his decree forbidding formally even the transport of the Radegund statue to the cathedral. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Cite info on the general trend of “forgetting” the Revolution and anything that came out of the Revolution, due to the bad feelings on all sides. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Christopher Clark, “The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars,” in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Charles-Émile Freppel, « Discours prononcé dans la Cathédrale de Poitiers à l’occasion du centenaire de Sainte Radegonde et du couronnement de sa statue au nom du Pape, le 14 Aout 1887, » in *Œuvres Pastorales et Oratoires de Monseigneur Freppel*, Tome X (Paris : Maison A. Jouby et Roger, 1888), 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Emile Briand, *Les fêtes du treizieme centenaire el du couronnement de Ste Radegonde à Poitiers: documents*

    *relatifs à ces fêtes* (Poitiers : 1887), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Emile Briand, *Les fêtes du treizieme centenaire el du couronnement de Ste Radegonde à Poitiers: documents*

    *relatifs à ces fêtes* (Poitiers : 1887), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Brian Brennan, “Piety and Politics in Nineteenth Century Poitiers: The Cult of St Radegund,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 1 (1996), 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Raymond A. Jonas, “Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 20, no. 1 (1994), 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée en la fête de Sainte Radegonde, Patronne de la ville de Poitiers, sur les alliances de Dieu avec les peuples, Le 13 Aout 1871, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 7 (Oudin : 1887), 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée en la fête de Sainte Radegonde, Patronne de la ville de Poitiers, sur les alliances de Dieu avec les peuples, Le 13 Aout 1871, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 7 (Oudin : 1887), 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Louis-Édouard-François-Desiré Pie, « Homélie prononcée en la fête de Sainte Radegonde, Patronne de la ville de Poitiers, sur les alliances de Dieu avec les peuples, Le 13 Aout 1871, » in *Oeuvres de Mgr Louis-François-Désiré-Ed. Pie, Evêque de Poitiers*, Deuxième Édition, Volume 7 (Oudin : 1887), 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The July Monarchy lasted from 1830 to the Revolution of 1848 and is considered as marking the end of the Bourbon Restoration. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Marie-Théodore de Bussierre, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, reine et de la cour de Neustrie sous les rois Clotaire 1er et Chilperic* (Paris and Lyon : J.-B. Pelagaud, 1849), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Marie-Théodore de Bussierre, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, reine et de la cour de Neustrie sous les rois Clotaire 1er et Chilperic* (Paris and Lyon : J.-B. Pelagaud, 1849), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Marie-Théodore de Bussierre, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, reine et de la cour de Neustrie sous les rois Clotaire 1er et Chilperic* (Paris and Lyon : J.-B. Pelagaud, 1849), 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Needs citation [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Marie-Théodore de Bussierre, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, reine et de la cour de Neustrie sous les rois Clotaire 1er et Chilperic* (Paris and Lyon : J.-B. Pelagaud, 1849), 7 ; 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Marie-Théodore de Bussierre, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, reine et de la cour de Neustrie sous les rois Clotaire 1er et Chilperic* (Paris and Lyon : J.-B. Pelagaud, 1849), 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Jennifer Shaw, *Dream States: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 2002), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Jennifer Shaw, *Dream States: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 2002); Aimee Brown-Price, *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Aimee Brown-Price, *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Jennifer Shaw, “Imagining the Motherland: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France," *Art Bulletin* (December 1997) vol. 79 no. 4, 587. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Aimee Brown-Price, *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 1994), 14; 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Aimee Brown-Price, *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 1994), 16; 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Aimee Brown-Price, *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 1994), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Livre d'or,* 7; *Lancette* *française*: *Gazette des hopitaux civils et militaires*, Volume 67, Issue 2 (1894), 826. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. *Livre d'or,* 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. René Ledoux-Lebard, La Lutte antituberculeuse en France, par le Dr H. Dehau, R. Ledoux-Lebard (Paris, 1906), [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. *Livre d'or,* 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Octave Tabary, “Le Parti socialiste et la lutte contre la tuberculose,” *Le Mouvement socialiste*, October 15, 1901, 486–487 ; David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Lionel Amodru, deputy, “Rapport fait au nom de la commission d’hygiène publique sur les mesures à prendre pour arrêter les progrès de la tuberculose,” *Journal officiel: Annexes de la Chambre des députés*, session of June 21, 1901, 782. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Needs citation [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. The bacteria that causes Tuberculosis is also known as the tubercle bacillus, and Mycobacterium tuberculosis.

    David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Martha L. Hildreth, “Medical Rivalries and Medical Politics in France: The Physicians' Union Movement and the Medical Assistance Law of 1893,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 1987), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Martha L. Hildreth, *Doctors, Bureaucrats & Public Health in France, 1888–1902* (New York : Garland, 1987), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 253-254. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley : University of California Press: 1995), need page number, ch 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. *Livre d'or,* 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Allan Mitchell, *The Divided Path : The German Influence on Social Reform in France After 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 261-262. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Fortunatus’ sixth-century Vita Radegundis is also full of descriptions of Radegund cleaning: church floors, monastery pavement, clothing, and latrines. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Saul Nathaniel Brody, *The Disease of the Soul ; Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1974) 132; Pickard, Charlotte. “The Noble Leper: Responses to Leprosy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” in *Anglo-Norman Studies XLI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2018*, edited by Elisabeth van Houts, NED-New edition (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 119; Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: 1991), 150; Christina Welch and Rohan Brown, “From Villainous Letch and Sinful Outcast, to ‘Especially Beloved of God’: Complicating the Medieval Leper through Gender and Social Status.” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 42, no. 1 (2016), 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Elizabeth Lomax, “Hereditary or Acquired Disease? Early Nineteenth Century Debates on the Cause of Infantile Scrofula and Tuberculosis,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 32, no. 4 (1977), 356. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. John Frith, “History of Tuberculosis: Part 1 – Phthisis, consumption and the White Plague,” *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 22, no. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. See Detail of a medieval window at the cathedral of Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul de Troyes, France (14th century) and the Ivory Triptych from the church of Saint-Sulpice (13th century) [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. See plates in Michel Laverret, « L‘iconographie de sainte Radegonde dans les manuscrits, » *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de L’Ouest et des Mudées de Poitiers*, 5e série, tome II, 2e trimestre de 1988. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. This particular image seems to be based on a stained glass window at the church of Sainte-Radegonde in Chacé, completed in 1862, which is located only 8 miles from Saix. However, in this version, Radegund is turned towards her female companion (either Agnes or Disciola) and does not have her hand raised to her breast. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Bruno Okokana, “Patrimoine historique national : le ministre de la Culture et des Arts, Jean Claude Gakosso, inaugure le monument Sainte Radegonde d’Oyo,” *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville* (June 2, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Bruno Okokana, “Patrimoine historique national : le ministre de la Culture et des Arts, Jean Claude Gakosso, inaugure le monument Sainte Radegonde d’Oyo,” *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville* (June 2, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Bruno Okokana, “Patrimoine historique national : le ministre de la Culture et des Arts, Jean Claude Gakosso, inaugure le monument Sainte Radegonde d’Oyo,” *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville* (June 2, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. "Ubanghi," *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, Vol. 15, ed. Charles George Herbermann et al. (Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Prospère Augouard , *36 années au Congo*, entry no. 304, Brazzaville 15 octobre 1906, “Incendie de la Mission Sainte-Radegonde,” (Paris, 1910), 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Brian Brennan, "The Revival of the Cult of Martin of Tours in the Third Republic," *Church History* Vol. 66, No. 3 (1997): 489–501. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Georges Goyau, *Monseigneur Augouard* (Paris : Librairie Plon, Les Petits-Fils de Plon et Nourrit, 1926), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6; 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Pierre Guillen, *L’Expansion, 1881–1898* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1985), 35–36. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 167. Translation by Daughton. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided : Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Prospère Augouard , *36 années au Congo*, Letter dated 7 javier 1900, (Paris, 1910), 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Georges Goyau, *Monseigneur Augouard* (Paris : Librairie Plon, Les Petits-Fils de Plon et Nourrit, 1926), 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Georges Goyau, *Monseigneur Augouard* (Paris : Librairie Plon, Les Petits-Fils de Plon et Nourrit, 1926), 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. While the article continues with many examples of pre-twentieth-century women acting as nurses, the “new role” here clearly refers to the greater standardization and organization of the nursing profession during the war years. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Bibliothèque nationale de France catalogue entry for « des Sociétes de secours aux blessés militaires, » <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb122322086>. For the date, see Margaret H. Darrow, "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I," American Historical Review (February 1996), 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Margaret H. Darrow, "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I," American Historical Review (February 1996), 86-87; Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and souls : politics and the professionalization of nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and souls : politics and the professionalization of nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
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147. Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and souls : politics and the professionalization of nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 5, [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Katrin Schultheiss, *Bodies and souls : politics and the professionalization of nursing in France, 1880-1922* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 9; 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
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156. Briand, *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde*, 448. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
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