

Making Algeria French relates the history of the *pieds noirs* and Algerians in colonial Bône, renamed Annaba in 1962. Located in eastern Algeria, this Mediterranean port city staked an early claim to world historical fame as the site of St. Augustine's Hippo. Long after the Romans, as well as the Arabs and Turks, the French tried their hand at settling Algeria. Not content with mere occupation, they constructed colonial cities along the Mediterranean littoral – Algiers, Oran, Bône – and populated them with twice as many European settlers – French, Spanish, Italians, and Maltese – as native Algerians.

Using the history of Bône as a lens, David Prochaska looks at the nature of French colonialism in Algeria. His study is based on research in the former Bône municipal archives, generally barred to researchers since 1962. Prochaska concentrates on the formative decades of settler society and culture between 1870 and 1920. After an overview of Bône in 1830, and a survey of French rule from 1830 to 1870, he describes in turn the economic, social, political, and cultural history of Bône through the First World War. He argues that, in making Bône a European city in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the settlers effectively blocked social evolution, attempted to contain history, and thereby precluded any genuine rapprochement with the Algerians in the twentieth century.

At the same time that he reinterprets French colonialism in Algeria, Prochaska reconsiders the history of Bône. Adopting the methods and techniques developed by practitioners of the "new urban history," he recounts Bône's history as one of colonial Algeria's major port cities. The study's statistical backbone consists of a computerized census sample, the largest such dataset for any colonial North African city. Yet, as a colonial city, part European and part Muslim, Bône differs in fundamental ways from cities in North America and Europe. By showing how French colonialism was inscribed on the built environment, Prochaska links the construction of Bône to the larger French colonial project in Algeria.

The book's title refers to more than one kind of "making." On one level, the study demonstrates how settlers created a colonial society and, in the process, contributed to making Algeria French before the rise of Algerian nationalism. On another level, it constitutes an essay in colonial discourse concerned with the deconstruction of the colonialist conception of Algerian history epitomized in the term "Algérie française," and the construction of the revisionist interpretation regarding settler colonialism. Prochaska compares earlier French and Muslim histories of Bône and shows that when Orientalism emerged in the nineteenth century, Bône acted as a hotel for more than one tourist: Alexandre Dumas, Gustave Flaubert, Pierre Loti, Isabelle Eberhardt. In so doing, the author argues his case regarding settler colonialism and colonial urbanism in Algeria, and, at the same time, situates his study within a specific postcolonial discourse.

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