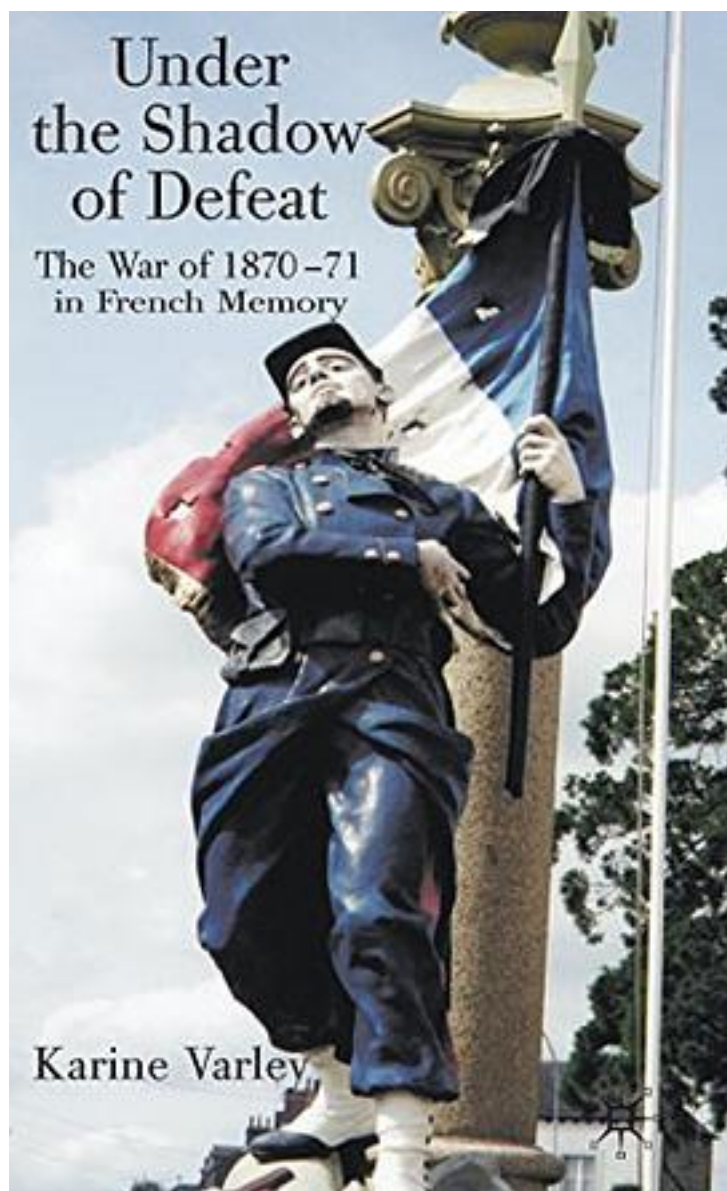


Under the Shadow of Defeat



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The French defeat by Germany of 1870-71 was profoundly humiliating, sparking widespread soul-searching, intense political conflict, and a fundamental reassessment of the character of the nation. Based on extensive new archival research, this book is the first wide-ranging analysis of how memories of the Franco-Prussian War shaped French political culture and identities in the period thereafter. It argues that these memories reawakened deeply-rooted political divisions, distorting them through the prism of the 'terrible year'. Examining the emergence of war remembrance as a mass phenomenon for the first time in Europe, it explores the cult of the dead, the construction of war memorials, 'pilgrimages' to sites of remembrance, art, and literature relating to the war. It sheds new light on how groups and individuals constructed memories not only to define and articulate their ideas, but also to situate themselves within new political concepts of the nation.

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