

This book, connecting the fields of social anthropology and missiology, presents a body of colonial ethnographic writing applied to highland societies in the southern portion of the Mainland Southeast Asian massif. The writers under scrutiny are Catholic priests from the *Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*. Their texts from the Upper-Tonkin vicariate, in today's northern Vietnam, are paid special attention, notably through its major contributor, F.M. Savina. The author locates this ethnographic heritage against its historical, political and intellectual background. A comparison is conducted with French missionaries-cum-ethnographers who worked among the 'natives' in New France (Canada) in the 17th century, yielding the unexpected conclusion that practically nothing from this early period of experimentation was remembered.

'This is an amazing piece of work, a real tour de force. It is an invaluable resource for those of us working on MEP, Catholic missionizing in general, and anyone studying the history of colonial Vietnam & Yunnan.'

Margaret Swain, anthropologist, University of California at Davis.

'Incidental' Ethnographers

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French Catholic Missions on the
Tonkin-Yunnan Frontier, 1880-1930

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ISSN 0924-9389

www.brill.nl

ISBN 978 90 04 13996 1

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