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EDITED BY
Stuart Macintyre,
Juan Maiguashca, and Attila Pók

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PART I

THE RISE, CONSOLIDATION, AND CRISIS OF EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

Chapter 1

The Invention of European National Traditions in European Romanticism

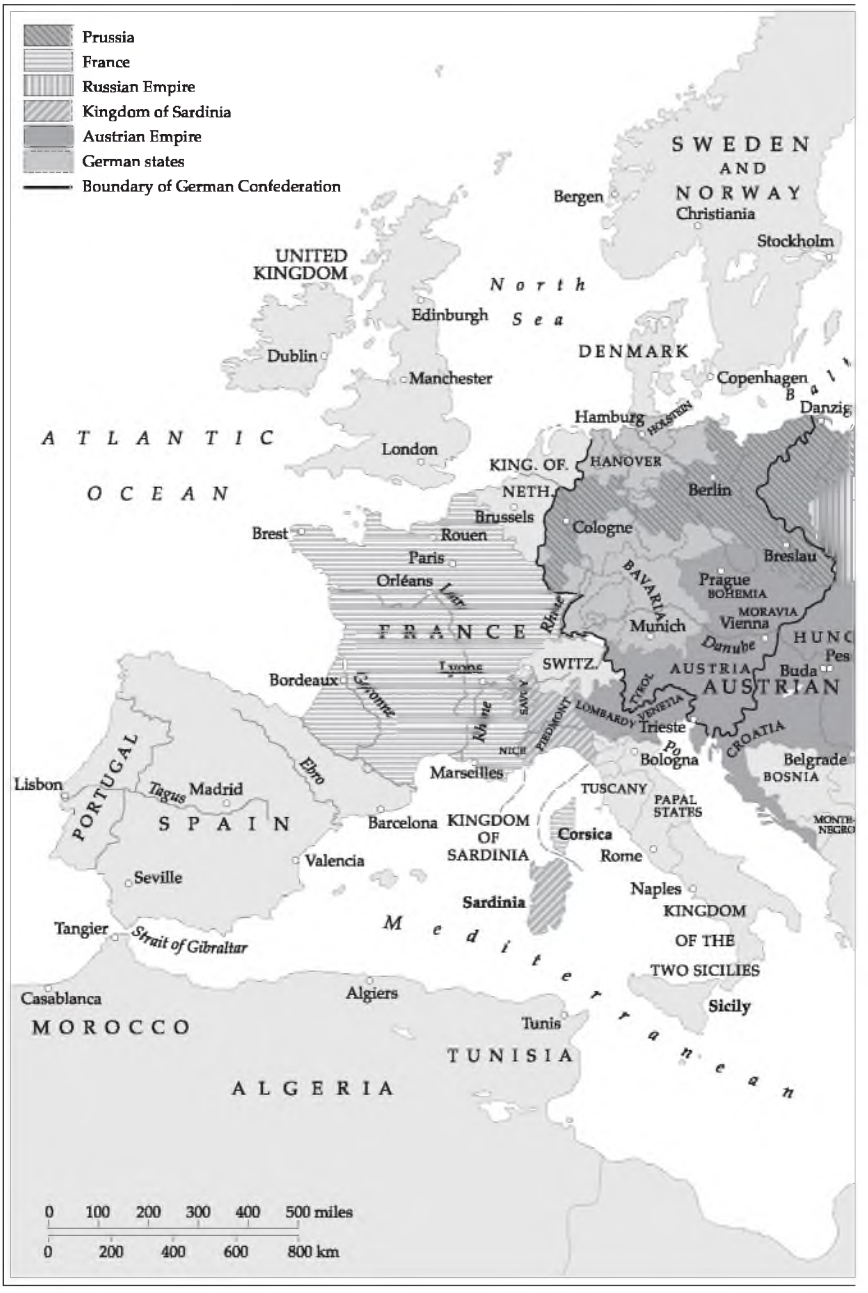
Stefan Berger[1]

In the first volume of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, Wilhelm Giesebrecht emphasized the close connection between the rise of the national idea and the rise of the historical sciences in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century.[2] The professionalization and institutionalization of historical writing as an autonomous university discipline with pretensions to scientificity did indeed start in the German lands and has been traced back to the University of Göttingen and the late eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century it spread throughout Europe, but really took shape only from around the middle of the century onwards. In the first half of the century, by contrast, history-writing was popular, but was not yet carried out within a thoroughly professionalized framework. What made it so popular was its ability to mobilize people by giving them an identity and orientation. The construction of national identity through history and the interpretation of ruptures in national development, such as revolutions, became the main concern of historians during the nineteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the invention of such national traditions was associated with the intellectual movement referred to as Romanticism.

Romanticism is perhaps best described as a literary, philosophical, and artistic movement directed against the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Precisely because it was a reaction to the Enlightenment, most of its representatives would

[1] I would like to express my sincere thanks to the many people who have participated in the five-year European Science Foundation programme entitled 'Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe', which I had the pleasure to chair between 2003 and 2008. Without them this chapter could not have been written. I am also grateful to Peter Lambert and Juan Maiguashca for making a number of useful suggestions which have improved this contribution. Finally, my thanks to Jörn Leonhard and Ulrich Herbert, the directors of the School of History, Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), who, together with the FRIAS fellows, made my stay there in 2008–9 so productive and allowed me, among many other things, to finish this chapter.

[2] Wilhelm Giesebrecht, 'Die Entwicklung der modernen deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1 (1859), 11.



Map 1. Europe, 1815


Dvina
FINLAND
Helsinki
St Petersburg
Volga
Baltic Sea
Riga
Moscow
Smolensk
LITHUANIA
RUSSIA
Warsaw
KING. OF POLAND
Kiev
Dnieper
Don
Volga
UKRAINE
ARY EMPIRE
MOLDAVIA
Kherson
Odessa
Caspian Sea
WALLACHIA
Bucharest
SERBIA
Danube
Black Sea
Baku
Batum
BULGARIA
Sofia
Adrianople
Constantinople
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
GREECE
Athens
Tigris
Euphrates
Crete
Cyprus
Damascus
Sea
Jerusalem
Alexandria
EGYPT
Cairo
Nile

be unthinkable without it, despite their celebration of diverse forms of irrationalism, naturism, and spiritualism. Philosophically, they took their cue from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder. Politically, theirs was an extremely malleable movement and included people from across the political spectrum.

If the French Revolution of 1789 was identified with Enlightenment ideas and if Napoleon's attempt to conquer Europe was similarly dressed up in notions of bringing the fruits of the French Revolution to a despotic and absolutist Europe, then Romanticism was a reaction against those universal claims of the French Revolution and Napoleon. Against such universalism the Romantics pitted the idea of the specificity and uniqueness of national identities, and they defined the task of history as tracing those authentic and special national trajectories through time to a dim and distant past. European history thus became the history of national special paths—an idea which was to have major significance for the framing of national history throughout the modern period and up to this very day. History constructed national traditions which in turn justified existing nation-states and called for the creation of non-existent ones. It also began rapidly to legitimate notions of the superiority of some nations over others, including territorial expansion and discrimination against perceived external and internal enemies.

This chapter traces the symbiotic relationship between history-writing and nationalism from the French Revolution to the European revolutions of 1848. It does so by looking, first, into the way in which the modern university discipline of history developed, before turning to the importance of the French Revolution for the subject of history across Europe. Next, the chapter will systematize the basic elements that went into the construction of national histories across Europe, and it will ask what institutions were important in the shaping of historiographical nationalism. Finally, the chapter will briefly review some of the historiographical traditions evolving at the time and will also challenge the increasingly symbiotic relationship between historical writing and the construction of national identities.

NATIONAL HISTORY-WRITING AS A RESPONSE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

It was the Enlightenment that freed history from its ties to theology and opened up the possibility of secular histories dealing with non-religious themes in a rational manner. Voltaire—as well as David Hume, Edward Gibbon, and William Robertson—laid the foundations of an independent historical science. Enlightenment historians had a keen interest in national history, but only insofar as they were tracing universal norms and values through national history. The development and progress of mankind through the ages could be made visible through accounts of national trajectories. In their attempts to seek an explanation

of human development through history, Enlightenment historians established some of the grand narratives of modern historical writing.

One of the earliest centres of Enlightenment history in Europe, and one that sought to professionalize historical writing, was the University of Göttingen. And yet the beginnings of the professionalization of historical writing in the German lands is often postdated to the more widespread establishment of historical 'seminars' in the 1830s and 1840s. In the historical sciences the ingredients of an emerging professional ethos were promoted above all by Leopold von Ranke, who was appointed as professor of history to the University of Berlin in 1825, and taught there uninterruptedly until the 1870s. Through his teaching and his publications, which included reflections on the methodology and the ground rules of historical writing, he became the European-wide father figure of a movement referred to as *Historismus*, which has sometimes been translated as 'historicism' but will here be identified as 'historism'.[3]

Ranke's influence on European historiography cannot be overestimated. In particular, his belief in different national trajectories rooted in historically specific primeval national types (e.g. Celts, Germans, and Latin and Slavic peoples) became influential throughout Europe. Ranke wrote national histories in order to establish the specificity of those national types. Thus he can be described as a European historian of nation-states who was keenly interested in the interrelationship of European nations. Ranke perceived the national level of historical analysis as intermediate between the analysis of individual historical actors and the analysis of global history. The entire historist movement in nineteenth-century Europe, including Ranke, was deeply influenced by the philosophical thought of Herder. Herder, who had been a pupil of Immanuel Kant at Königsberg University, was steeped in Enlightenment thought and had initially welcomed the French Revolution. Yet he also rejected the Enlightenment's universalism and instead began to search for national authenticity in the values and norms of the common people. Preoccupation with the authenticity of national cultures encouraged the birth of folklore studies and the collection of fairy tales as well as other research into popular cultures all over Europe. Herder criticized the generalizing impulse of the Enlightenment and put the specificity and distinctness of national cultures in its place. He searched for the individuality of a specific nation, culture, or (his preferred term) *Volk*. Like every individual person, so every *Volk* had a unique personality with its own values and principles. This national character (*Volksgeist*) was unchanging and revealed itself through national history. Unique historical collective personalities evolved over time. For Herder, the fundamental unit in world history was the nation. He equated it with the family, making the organic

[3] 'Historism' (*Historismus*), as associated with Leopold von Ranke, is an evolutionary, reformist concept that understands all political order as historically developed and grown, and should not be confused with 'historicism' (*Historizismus*), as defined and rejected by Karl Popper, which is based on the notion that history develops according to predetermined laws towards a particular end.

national community an a priori phenomenon, which preceded the state. He insisted that national languages were key to national spirits, and defined nationality primarily in cultural terms. He assessed the originality of each nation's culture and praised cultural diversity and the plurality of peoples and nations. This also meant that he condemned national pride and feelings of national superiority.[4] He was thus far removed from the bulk of later nineteenth-century nationalists, yet, ironically, he also became the most important intellectual reference point for them. With reference to Herder, legions of national historians across Europe tried to establish the historical roots of their specific nations and reconstruct their national spirits, and some, like the Hungarians, tried hard to disprove the master who had famously predicted that the Magyar language would become extinct among the Slavs, Germans, Wallachians, and other peoples surrounding the Magyars.[5]

Herder's influence on historism was particularly marked, but one should also note the closeness of historism to theology throughout the nineteenth century. Ranke was only one among many nineteenth-century historians who had studied theology. In Protestant Europe, many came from homes where the father had earned a living as a pastor. Ranke's belief that nations were the thoughts of God, like Thomas Arnold's belief that divine will could be made visible through historical writing, is testimony to this continued influence of theology over historical writing.[6]

The fact that many Protestant historians in the first half of the nineteenth century came from pastors' homes prompts questions about the social origins of historians in this period. Priests were prominent in many places, for instance Catholic priests in the Bohemian lands and Croatia, Orthodox priests in Russia and Romania, and Lutheran pastors in Finland, Sweden, and the German lands. In the more developed civil societies of Western and Central Europe, European intellectuals who lived, often precariously, on the fruits of their intellectual endeavours emerged. Independent writers, publishers, and journalists were at the same time prominent historians. In Hungary and Poland, aristocrats with independent financial means were over-represented among early historians. In Norway, civil servants and business people were more important. In Serbia, the first historians often acted as ethnic tribal leaders. Across Europe, political leaders frequently also wrote history. It was rare to find craftsmen, artisans, and peasants among early national historians, but apart from that there seems to be little unity in terms of the social background of European national historians before 1850.

[4] H. B. Nisbet, 'Herder: The Nation in History', in Michael Branch (ed.), *National History and Identity: Approaches to the Writing of National History in the North-East Baltic Region, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Tampere, 1999), 78–96.

[5] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784; Leipzig, 1841), vol. 2, part 4, book 6, ch. 2.

[6] Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jakob Burckhardt and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge, 2000).

It was not only to theology that history-writing remained close during the first half of the nineteenth century. It also retained its ties to literature. Most work was not yet aimed at a specialist audience, but was written for the educated general public. Historians such as Thomas Babington Macaulay were famous for their literary style rather than for deep archival knowledge. Sir Walter Scott's historical novels served as an inspiration to generations of European national historians who shared Augustin Thierry's assessment of Scott as 'the greatest master of historical divination that has ever existed'.[7] Novelists and poets, such as Jan Frederick Helmers in the Netherlands, Esaias Tegnér in Sweden, Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger in Denmark, Hendrik Conscience in Belgium, Alessandro Manzoni in Italy, and Alexander Pushkin in Russia, all served historians as models of how to craft a gripping narrative. It was no coincidence that the first official 'historiographer of the Russian Empire', Nikolai M. Karamzin, appointed by Tsar Alexander I in 1803, was a novelist. Language and literature were the disciplines most closely associated with Romantic national history. The search for authentic literary canons and for the codification of language was part and parcel of a nationalizing historiography. National literary histories like Georg Gottfried Gervinus's *Geschichte der Poetischen National Literatur der Deutschen* [History of the Poetic National Literature of the Germans] (5 vols., 1835–42) were among the most influential national histories written in this period. History was still predominantly perceived as an art form, but the professionalizing historians also began pointing to history as something in between art and science. Laborious work in archives involving personal sacrifice was held up as a precondition for historical research. Yet even Ranke was adamant that it was the historian's prime task to find aesthetic forms of narration that would be as pleasing to the reader as literary forms.

NATIONAL HISTORY-WRITING AS A RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Few events have had as great an impact on historical thought as the French Revolution and the subsequent export of its values by Napoleon. Much of the European intellectual world found itself first enthused by the ideals of the French Revolution and then appalled by the Terror. The French Revolution was the most outstanding expression of the birth of modern nationalism, especially in its linking of the entire population of a given national territory to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The violent export of French universalism by Napoleon and the hijacking of the Enlightenment's universalism by French nationalism were widely rejected elsewhere in Europe. French revolutionaries and their enemies,

[7] Cited from Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 95.

and Napoleon and his adversaries, shared the perception that theirs was an epoch of fundamental historical change. It brought upheaval on a scale sufficient to bury the old order and create a new one, the exact shape of which remained unclear. It is therefore unsurprising that a sense of fundamental crisis characterized the intellectual climate during the first half of the nineteenth century. One important reaction to this crisis was historism, which sought to provide reassurance in the form of organic historical development and authentic national characters.

In the German lands, the first half of the nineteenth century marked a boom period for national histories, even if many of their authors were not yet university professors.[8] These national histories, written by and large in a historist mode, were characterized also by their moral and epistemological relativism. They argued that the nation developed according to its own logic. Since it was often regarded as impossible to understand fully a 'foreign' national culture, it not only became impossible for outsiders to sit in judgement over 'other' national histories but also narrowed the possibilities for historians, since they could only ever hope to understand their own national culture. An understanding of each national culture as comprising a cosmos of its own at least partly explains the concentration of historians on national history. The Enlightenment notion of a universal civilization was thus replaced by that of the specificity of national trajectories. The concept of (universal) civilization was increasingly replaced by the concept of (national) culture, thereby reflecting the nationalization of historiography, which accompanied its professionalization.

The Romantic idealization of the historian as seer, priest, and martyr in the service of history, who resurrects the past through the 'eye of history', contributed further to the attempt of professionalizing historians to set themselves up as *the* privileged interpreters of national pasts.[9] Marking themselves out as a group of people with privileged access and powers of interpretation over the past was a key aim of those keen to professionalize historical writing. Its methodology, in particular source criticism and the philological-critical method, allegedly gave the historian a better vantage point from which to view the past. In the late eighteenth century, classical and biblical scholars in the German lands like Friedrich August Wolf had pioneered a hermeneutical-philological approach, which spread to history in the nineteenth century. In particular Barthold Georg Niebuhr, professor of ancient history at the University of Berlin between 1810 and 1816, rewrote Roman history through a critical re-examination of textual and material remains, thereby setting standards in how to apply philology to history.

[8] For a list of German national histories between 1803 and 1848/9 see Hans Schleier, *Geschichte der deutschen Kulturgeschichtsschreibung*, vol. 1: *Vom Ende des 18. Bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Waltrop, 2003), 298–9.

[9] Jo Tollebeek, 'Seeing the Past with the Mind's Eye: The Consecration of the Romantic Historian', *Clio*, 29:2 (2000), 167–91.

This hermeneutical-philological method was widely seen as the best means of bridging the expanse of time dividing the present from the past. It was above all this method that allowed the new 'scientific' historians to lay claim to objectivity and truth, staked out in meticulously researched monographs which became the most important means of career progression and a hallmark of scientificity. The historians' familiarity with the archives, which mostly meant state archives, many of which were only established during the nineteenth century, and their skills in applying the hermeneutical-philological method to source criticism, ensured such scientificity. Whilst 'scientific' historians could point to the successful debunking of historical myths, they also used their methodological finesse (apart from a good deal of imagination) to legitimate 'their' respective nation. After all, they were the only ones capable of speaking about the past authoritatively. Hence there existed an irresoluble tension between history as threatening national mythology and yet simultaneously as constructing national identity.

Although this critical-philological method worked against the Romanticization of the past and debunked many of the Romantic myths about the past, it served the same purpose as the Romantic stylization of the historian. Whether as Romantics or professionals, the historians' claim to occupy the interpretative high ground of history-writing was put into the service of national identity-formation. Historical knowledge was supposed to provide practical orientation for action in the present. An understanding of the past was necessary in order to be able to forge the future. History's close relationship to identity found expression in the widespread belief that one could not answer the questions of who one was or where one was going without first establishing who one had been in the past.

Romantic national historians took their cue from Herder, but also from Johan Gottlieb Fichte, who sacralized the nation as the moral collective connecting the generations through the ages. Writing against the Napoleonic claims of French universalism, he followed Herder in emphasizing the ethnic and cultural particularity of nations, but went further than Herder in arguing that those who had maintained those particularities most purely were the best nations. Thus the problematic idea of a hierarchy of nations was born. Fichte specifically demanded a national history of the Germans as the best defence against French universalism: 'Amongst the means to strengthen the German spirit it would be a powerful one to have an enthusiastic history of the Germans, which would be a national as well as a people's book, just like the Bible or the Gesangbuch.'[10] Fichte's idea of history as bulwark against the French Revolution had its parallels elsewhere, such as in the thought of Joseph de Maistre in France itself and of Edmund Burke in Britain. For all of them, the study of national history allowed access to a vision of a nation fundamentally at odds with the one created in the French Revolution. With their emphasis on the continuity of historical evolution, Friedrich Schlegel's Vienna lectures on modern history of 1811 summarized some of the key characteristics

[10] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (Leipzig, 1944), 104.

of Romantic history-writing. Invariably, each state and nation had its own individuality and each *Volk* its peculiar authenticity. The totality of Christian Europe was made up of such national individualities. Overall, authenticity, longevity, unity, and homogeneity became the hallmarks of Romantic national history-writing. 'Growth' and 'evolution' were its key metaphors, stressing the endurance of national characteristics and the permanence of the *Volk*. Tradition, as represented by history, was juxtaposed to sovereignty as formulated by the French revolutionaries.

The power of history was also emphasized by those philosophers not necessarily connected to European Romanticism. G. W. F. Hegel's 'world spirit' (*Weltgeist*) operated in and through history. It evolved through various historical stages to perfection. Hegel famously identified the spirit with the development of reason and the idea of freedom. His notion of the development of more rational political organizations in history owed more to the Enlightenment than to Romanticism. For Hegel the most rational political organization was the state governed by laws and epitomized in the Prussian example. Hegel's intellectual influence helps explain the concern of German historians with the state as an ethical end in itself. And given the model function of German historiography in Europe, this German statism came to pervade many other historiographies in Europe, making the state and the law guiding concepts of European national history-writing. In Sweden, for example, Erik Gustaf Geijer could not conceive of the Swedish nation without the state and without state power embodied by the kings. The primacy of state interest, which could also be represented by state bureaucracies and the rule of law, were to remain a guiding light of Swedish national history until challenged by a focus on society in the twentieth century. That this had some effect on the general historical consciousness can be gauged from a poll among schoolchildren aged seven to twelve in 1912. When asked about their heroes, the top three were Swedish kings: Gustavus Adolphus, Gustaf Vasa, and Charles XII.[11]

PATTERNING NATIONAL HISTORIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

National history-writing in Europe grew at a spectacular rate between 1800 and 1850. It was a period in which a first wave of national history syntheses were produced. From Willem Bilderdijk's *Geschiedenis des Vaderlands* [History of the Fatherland], published posthumously between 1833 and 1853 and providing the Dutch with a grand panorama of their national history, to František Palacký's *Dějiny*

[11] Ragnar Björk, 'The Swedish Baltic Empire in Modern Swedish Historiography', in Frank Hadler and Mathias Mesenhöller (eds.), *Lost Greatness and Past Oppression in East Central Europe: Representations of the Imperial Experience in Historiography since 1918* (Leipzig, 2007), 35–62.

národu českého v Čechách a v Morave [The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia] (5 vols., 1836–67), which demarcated Czech national history from German, most existing and aspiring European nation-states of the first half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of national historical master narratives in this period.

If we analyse these national histories, we can establish shared narrative patterns that make up the basic structure of the vast majority of national histories in this period. Some of the most important ones include (a) the attempts to delineate a fixed national territory, (b) the close interrelationship between national and regional narratives, (c) the closeness or distance of historical narratives to the history of the state, (d) issues of periodization, (e) the proximity of master narratives of nationality to master narratives of ethnicity, class, and religion, and (f) the gendering of national master narratives. There are other notable characteristics of national histories, such as the construction of canons of national heroes and enemies, but these can only be treated cursorily here. First, they commonly attached importance to defining the territory of the nation. In line with Rousseau's idealization of nature, Romantic national historians attributed particular characteristics reflecting natural surroundings to peoples. Thus, for example, Johannes von Müller's Swiss national history, which appeared between 1786 and 1808 and was immensely influential for historical writing in the German-speaking lands during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, idealized the Swiss as a hearty mountain people. Innumerable German national histories made the German forests a hallmark of German national character.

In the larger nations of Europe, territorial definitions of the nation incorporated the idea of the nation being made up of diverse regions. Regions were considered the foundation-stones of nations, in that regional identities were often older and more thoroughly established (if by no means less constructed) than national ones. Hence it became important not to construct regions as a competitor to the nation but to position the nation as holding together and incorporating the diverse but united regions.[12] It was also often the case that a particular region took on a particular significance for national history, as was the case with Prussia for German, Piedmont for Italian, and Flanders for Belgian national history. Whereas the unification of Germany was Prussia's vocation, the Flemish medieval communities were widely depicted as the cradle of the Belgian nation-state. The integration of regional into national history was paralleled in various nation-states' construction of European missions. Among them, the mission of being Europe's shield against invading non-European forces, especially those of Muslims, was a particularly strong feature of several national histories, from Spain to Poland and Hungary to Russia.

[12] Ann-Marie Thiesse, *La Creation des Identites Nationales: Europe XVIII–XIX Siecle* (Paris, 1999); and S. Brakensiek and A. Flügel (eds.), *Regionalgeschichte in Europa* (Paderborn, 2000).

In the state nations of Europe, the territory of the nation was identified with the territory of the (evolving and modernizing) state, and the orientation towards the state necessitated the prioritization of politics, foreign policy, and affairs of the state more generally. Statehood was the most important criterion for the early differentiation between 'historical' nations and nations without history. Especially as history was often equated with political history or history of states, states became vital agents for the creation of national movements, national narratives, and national histories.[13] The resultant state-centredness of national history helps explain the importance of military history, dynastic history, and constitutional history in many national histories.

The most famous case of national history as constitutional history is the English whig historiography associated with Macaulay and his intellectual successors. Macaulay's *History of England* (5 vols., 1848–61) was focused on the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and set out to show how this Revolution prevented violence and bloodshed, which was to be the fate of the more unfortunate French. Although a revolution, 1688 brought about reconciliation rather than division, and its collective hero was the nation that rallied to the maintenance of liberty and the rule of law. His *History* was published shortly before the 1848 revolutions, and Macaulay was convinced that it was 1688 that saved England from the same fate that befell many parts of the Continent. Macaulay's successors within the whig tradition wrote English history as the progressive growth of civil and religious liberty and the parliamentary constitution. English freedoms, as the constitutional historian William Stubbs repeatedly emphasized, originated in the Middle Ages and had Teutonic roots. The seventeenth century was the most important for the consolidation of those freedoms.

Battles, wars, and civil wars were particular concerns of national historians. Arminius's victory over the Roman legions in the Teutoburg forest was often placed at the beginning of German national history. The battles of Morgarten and Sempach in 1315 and 1386 respectively were key foundational moments for Swiss national history. The Reconquista, and especially the taking of Granada in 1492, were defining moments for Spanish national history. The Polish victory over the German Order at Tannenberg in 1410 and the battle of Czenstouchau in 1665 defined much of the Polish national spirit. Tragic defeats were just as much anchor points of national history as glorious victories. The Ottoman defeats of the Serbs in 1389 and of the Hungarians in 1526 were constructed as moments of lasting significance for national history, as was the battle of Courtrain in 1302 for Flemish national identity. Indeed, Belgian national histories frequently went so far as to describe Belgium as the 'battlefield of Europe'. Resistance, including military resistance, against foreign oppressors was a crucial concern of national histories in both Greece (against the Ottomans) and Ireland (against the English).

[13] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (2nd edn, Manchester, 1993); and id., *Myth-Making or Myth-Breaking? Nationalism and History* (Birmingham, 1997).

Many national histories, however, could not link their territorial claims to present or even past statehood. In such cases we often find a national history which was de-coupled or at least semi-detached from the state and which concentrated instead on the history and culture of the people living in a given territory and aspiring towards statehood. The foundation of the Finnish Literature Society in 1831, and the publication of the *Kalevala* in 1835, for example, marked the moment when the Finnish nation found its national master narrative in poetry and folk culture. After that the Fennomen, young radical nationalists, wrote national history tied to these notions of folk culture and literary traditions. But ethno-cultural definitions of the nation almost immediately encountered problems with ethno-national dualisms. In Finland, for example, the question as to how to deal with the Finnish–Swedish division of society arose. In the Bohemian lands, the problem was how to delineate the histories of Czechs and Germans.

Where it underwent ethnicization, national history tended to celebrate ethnicity as culture. In the early nineteenth century, ethnicity was semantically very close to culture and civilization. At the same time, however, ethnic national histories also already carried racial connotations. So, for example, Augustin Thierry in his *Histoire de las conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands* [*History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*] (1825) portrayed English history as a racial struggle between Anglo-Saxons and Normans. This interpretative model was also applied to Belgium by Kervyn de Lettenhove, whose history of Flanders was structured around a struggle between the Flemish of Saxon blood and those in the middle and south of Belgium whose roots were Frankish.

Whether state-driven or underpinned by narratives of ethnicity, national histories can also be divided into those that explicitly legitimated an existing political order and those that challenged such an order. In the states of Western Europe, much state-sponsored national history-writing had the explicit task of legitimating existing or nascent nation-state formations. In Russia after 1803 and in Prussia after 1841, the state appointed official historians to idealize the existing state and its ruling dynasty. But one also encounters oppositional histories, which sought to develop alternative frameworks for existing or non-existing nation-states. So, for example, Palacký was appointed 'Historiographer of Bohemia' by the Bohemian Diets in 1831 in order to establish Czechness as an alternative identity concept to that of Germanness.

Issues of territoriality were at the heart of national histories, but periodization was also a major concern for national historians keen to trace the nation as far back in time as possible. The search for origins took historians to a dim and distant past, where reliable evidence merged with myth. The problem with the beginnings of national histories lay precisely in the tension between the historians' objectivity claims and their difficulty in making use of their methodological arsenal to establish certainty. In many European national histories, we find the association of early primitive societies with national resistance against foreign oppressors. The ancient forebears of the nation were connected to manly, warrior-like

behaviour, which, in a liberal age and among liberal historians, carried democratic overtones. Whether we take the Goths in Spain and Sweden, the Belgae in Belgium, the various Germanic tribes in Germany, the Batavi in Holland, the Anglo-Saxons in England, the Huns in Hungary, or the Gauls in France, tribal ancestry myths were conspicuous in early nineteenth-century European national histories, even if little could be said about them with any certainty.

The *longue durée* was important for national history, and hence historians could not avoid the problem of beginnings. However, they concentrated far more intensely on the Middle Ages as an important foundational moment for national histories.[14] Here, they generally found themselves on more certain grounds, given the much greater availability of sources. Romantic historians like Johann Friedrich Böhmer, secretary to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* after 1824,[15] glorified the Middle Ages as one of the proudest periods of national history. Source editions of medieval texts were published across Europe to underpin claims to national greatness. Medievalism was one of the most enduring characteristics of Romantic national history-writing—especially, of course, in those European nations which had 'big' Middle Ages.

Alongside their strong emphasis on origins and on the Middle Ages, many historians followed a periodization that portrayed national history as a succession of phases of rise and decline—a model established by Gibbon in *The Rise and Decline of the Roman Empire* (6 vols., 1776–88). Periods of growth and development culminated in golden ages of the nation, only to be followed by decadence and weakness which led to decline, dark ages, and sometimes even extinction of the independent nation-state. Eventually, the nation would rise again and aspire to a new golden age. The narrativization of national history along lines suggested by the 'rise and decline' model meant that historians dealt with the relation between narrative and historical time very differently for different epochs. In periods where dramatic developments were held to explain important turning points in national history, narrative time slowed down and many pages were filled with detailed accounts of a few years or even weeks, whereas for other times, a few sentences sufficed to summarize whole centuries.

Many of the nineteenth-century national narratives celebrating the extension of the idea of liberty contained ferocious critiques of despotism and the corruption of aristocratic elites. They also often singled out religion and the church as key villains in the national story, guilty of attempting to halt 'progress'. This was very much in line with an earlier Enlightenment tradition of portraying the

[14] Robert Evans and Guy Marchal (eds.), *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins* (Basingstoke, 2011).

[15] Ernst Schulin, 'Der Einfluss der Romantik auf die deutsche Geschichtsforschung', in id., *Traditionskritik und Rekonstruktionsversuch: Studien zur Entwicklung von Geschichtswissenschaft und historischem Denken* (Göttingen, 1979), 24–43.

struggle between 'civilization' and 'barbarity'. However, religion was by no means always portrayed as 'other' in European national histories. On the contrary: religious master narratives abounded and forged a symbiotic relationship with national master narratives in many European national histories. The Christian religion, whether of the Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant variety, became one of the most defining characteristics of the nation's spirit. In nations with more than one faith, confessional national histories telling the story of the nation from different denominational vantage points made an appearance.

Religious master narratives were older than national ones, and the nascent national histories of the first half of the nineteenth century had to position themselves vis-à-vis religion and the church. Class master narratives, by contrast, rose at the same time as modern national master narratives. Social concerns, associated with narratives of class, were voiced in the context of the French Revolution, and the major French historians, above all Jules Michelet, but also the utopian socialists subsequently constructed class narratives which positioned themselves vis-à-vis national histories. As we will see below, some of the latter were written against the grain of a unifying national history, but here it is important to note that most class histories were written within national historical frameworks. Those interested in the history of the 'third estate' in Europe often wrote its history as a narrative of missing or unfinished inclusion into the nation-state, as a task yet to be fulfilled by the nation-state of the present or future.

Finally, national histories were heavily gendered affairs. First, this simply reflected the fact that they were largely written by men. As history professionalized, women were increasingly marginalized, and it needs painstaking work from today's historians to recover the role of women in the production of historical knowledge.[16] While many women excelled in genres other than national history (e.g. biography), some became famous national historians. Catharine Macaulay, for example, wrote a much-noted republican account of the century of revolution in England. Giustina Renier Michel, a Venetian aristocrat, and Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso were examples of Italian women promoting Risorgimento studies and historical patriotism through their writings.[17] Women also played an important role in the French *sociétés savantes* during the early nineteenth century. But, second, national histories were also gendered in the way they were narrated. A 'healthy' nation was most frequently described in terms of a 'healthy' family—with divided spheres (public vs. private; active vs. passive; heroic vs. suffering) for men and women and a distinctive view that the happiness of the nation was built on men and women each fulfilling their designated gender roles. As the public

[16] Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Angelika Epple, *Empfindsame Geschichtsschreibung: Eine Geschlechtergeschichte der Historiographie zwischen Aufklärung und Historismus* (Cologne, 2003); and Mary O'Dowd and Ilaria Porciani (eds.), 'History Women', special issue of *Storia della Storiografia*, 46 (2004).

[17] Ilaria Porciani, 'Italy', in Mary Spongberg, Barbara Caine, and Ann Curthoys (eds.), *Companion to Women's Historical Writing* (Basingstoke, 2005), 275–88.

and active roles in society were largely reserved for men, women tended to be marginalized not only as the subjects, but also as the authors of history-writing.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL NATIONALISM

Where did the production of national history narratives take place in the first half of the nineteenth century? The university was just one site among many. Arguably, it was not even the most prominent, given the fact that history as an autonomous subject was only at the very beginning of its institutionalization and professionalization. Historical associations, museums, journals, and major source editions, as well as individuals working as civil servants, politicians, or just scholars of independent means, were all more important than universities and university-based historians in establishing national histories across Europe. Antiquarians such as Ludovico Muratori, the ducal librarian at Modena, became models for those intent on collecting and editing historical sources. Along with these inspiring 'father figures' of national historiographies, historical societies—dominated by 'amateurs'—played an influential role in promoting a sense of national history.

Across Europe, these historical societies tended to be small. They counted their members in the tens or at best hundreds. Many were geared more towards the history of regions or provinces than to national histories (although, as mentioned above, provinces or regions often become the foundation for national histories). In Switzerland, most historical societies remained focused on the history of the canton, although some also showed nationalizing ambitions. A national historical association, the Schweizerische Geschichtsforschende Gesellschaft, was short-lived, lasting only from 1811 to 1833. The Society of History and Russian Antiquity at the University of Moscow was founded in 1804 as a state-sponsored institution attempting to use history to support the tsar. It had a professional as well as a social function, and was the most important means of communication between Russian historians in the early nineteenth century. Under the Habsburgs, provincial history societies preceded university-based historical research in establishing historical narratives. The Habsburg case also demonstrates how confusing semantics could be in the context of the first half of the nineteenth century. When historians talked about their task of national education in the Habsburg lands, they did not have nineteenth-century nationalism in mind, but aimed rather at fostering loyalty to the dynastic state. Hence their 'national education' served a supranational ideal.

The collection and publication of sources became a prominent feature of historical activities across Europe. Sometimes it was state-sponsored; always it was in line with historism's belief in the continuities of national histories over the *longue durée*. The model for these source collections originated once again in the German lands. The *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* was launched in 1819 under

the direction of an archivist, Georg Heinrich Pertz. Its seal immediately gave away its patriotic intentions: an oak wreath with the words 'Sanctus amor patriae dat animum' (The Sacred Love of the Fatherland Inspires) inscribed on it.

If the source editions of the first half of the nineteenth century were particularly important for establishing national master narratives, the same can be said for the historical journals. Characteristically, in Russia, virtually all the important historians were journal editors who sought to disseminate historical knowledge primarily through their journals. In Belgium, the privately organized *Messager des sciences historiques*, first published in Ghent in 1832, remained the most important historical journal for the rest of the century. During the 1840s, the Romanian Archive, published in Iaşi by Mihail Kogălniceanu, published medieval sources as well as historical articles dedicated to patriotic history. Most historical journals were not yet professional in the sense of being dominated by university historians. Among the earliest professional historical journals were the Danish *Historisk Tidskrift*, founded in 1840, and the *Historische Zeitschrift*, founded in 1859. In the first half of the nineteenth century, influential general journals such as the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Revue des deux mondes* published articles on history, but they were, by and large, written by amateurs, and historical articles stood next to articles on other matters of intellectual and political interest.[18]

National museums appeared in major European cities before a professional history established itself at the universities. The British Museum was one of the earliest, founded in 1753. In France the Musée des monuments français opened its doors in Paris in 1801. One year later the Hungarian national museum followed suit in Budapest, and in 1818 it was the turn of the Bohemian Museum in Prague. After 1815 many German states and statelets were also keen to open history museums. In what is now Latvia, the Museum of the Province of Couronia opened its gates in Jelgava (then Mitau) in 1818. Some of these launched important editorial projects. For instance, the titles published by the Bohemian Museum included its own 'Review', and the first source edition of the Bohemian state entitled *Scriptores rerum bohemicarum*.

CHALLENGES TO THE NATIONAL TRADITION IN HISTORICAL WRITING

The nationalization of historical writing during the first half of the nineteenth century marked a deep crisis for the Enlightenment interest in non-European civilizations. In the German lands, Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren, who was silenced by his national critics savaging his work in the early 1830s, has been

[18] Claus Möller Jorgensen, 'The Historical Journals', in Ilaria Porciani and Jo Tollebeek (eds.), *Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography: Comparative Approaches* (Basingstoke, forthcoming).

described as the last proponent of world history.[19] Yet national history was not the only show in town. One of the most widely read German historians of the Vormärz was Friedrich Christoph Schlosser, whose work is not characterized by any narrowing to national and state fields of vision. His interest in universal and cultural history remained undiminished. And the curricula of most German-speaking universities demonstrated a continuing commitment to regional history (*Landesgeschichte*) on the one hand, and empire (*Reichsgeschichte*), European, and world history on the other.

Given the fact that much of Europe was still organized in empires rather than nation-states, national histories often struggled to emerge institutionally, as empires had little interest in encouraging national narratives. The British imperial state in Ireland, for example, regarded history as a problem. When it set up new universities in Belfast, Cork, and Galway in 1849, no separate chairs of history were founded. History was regarded as too contentious a subject from a religious and political point of view.[20]

The continuing popularity of transnational forms of history-writing also extended to the history of the pan-movements, such as pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism, pan-Celticism, or Scandinavianism. Historical interpretations of the pan-movements, which rose to prominence from the 1840s onwards, were geared either to a cultural or racial understanding of ethnicity, and started from the assumption that all Germanic or Slavic peoples shared particular transnational characteristics. They aimed at the self-emancipation and liberation of those peoples and encouraged transnational solidarities between them.

Local and regional history also still served as a counterpoint to national history in the first half of the nineteenth century. Justus Möser's 1768 history of Osnabrück is a good example of a species of local history that seeks to explain local characteristics in terms of the historical peculiarity of the locality without reference to its role and significance in a wider national context. Such localism and regionalism was widespread within Europe throughout the Romantic period. Historians of major cities that were not national capitals, such as Turin, Barcelona, or Hamburg, also frequently developed their own local historiography, consciously distancing it from the nationalizing narratives of national historians.

Quite apart from the spatial alternatives to national history-writing, there were also some attempts to write history along other, non-spatial axes. Class was one of these axes, and in the liberal national histories of the nineteenth century from

[19] Horst Walter Blanke, '"Verfassungen, die nicht rechtlich, aber wirklich sind": A. H. L. Heeren und das Ende der Aufklärungshistorie', *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 6 (1983), 156–7. Jürgen Osterhammel has stressed how much early modern history was interested in histories outside Europe, an interest that was almost absent from European historiography between the 1830s and the 1920s. See Osterhammel, *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats: Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich* (Göttingen, 2001), 91–102.

[20] Mary O'Dowd, 'Ireland', in Ilaria Porciani and Lutz Raphael (eds.), *Atlas of the Institutions of European Historiographies 1800 to the Present* (Basingstoke, 2011).

Macaulay to Michelet and Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann we also encounter a rising bourgeoisie trying to assert its authority over the state. Some early socialists wrote history along an interpretative axis which highlighted the division between the classes within the nation and aimed to foster the historical consciousness of the proletariat. Louis Blanc was a prominent exponent of this approach. For him and some subsequent historians of class, the French Revolution and the Republic were the preconditions for the emergence of socialism, but the emancipation of the working class through the class struggle remained the central theme of their history-writing. However, as was pointed out above, that struggle was frequently represented as taking place within the national framework.

CONCLUSION

The rise of historism in the German lands during the first half of the nineteenth century, and the missionary zeal it developed over the course of the century, meant that it influenced national history-writing virtually throughout Europe. But the rise of historiographic nationalism in the period under discussion was not just the result of developments internal to the historical profession. It was also in large measure a reaction to the universalism of the French Revolution, French revolutionary nationalism, and the Napoleonic armies. Ranging over a wide variety of European national historiographies, this chapter has identified some of the basic elements of the construction of national histories as they can be found in virtually all national master narratives: the importance of territorial definitions of the nation and the attention paid to borders and borderlands in particular; the state orientation of national histories with their emphasis on military, dynastic, and constitutional history; the alternative strategy of an ethnicized national history, where the national storyline could not be hung on a state; the establishment of a *longue durée* view on national history, losing its beginnings in the mist of time and emphasizing the Middle Ages as a crucial period for nation formation; the rise and decline model of national history-writing; the construction of liberal national histories as the extension of the idea of liberty; the creation of a canon of national heroes and national enemies (both internal and external to the nation); and the strong interrelationship of national narratives with narratives of religion and class and the prominent gendering of national histories.

It has to be stressed that the commitment of historians across Europe to the production of historically informed national master narratives was Janus-faced. On the one hand, many of those national histories had emancipatory concerns. The strong link between liberalism and national history-writing indicates to what extent national history was functionalized in order to provide arguments for a more liberal political order and for more participation of greater numbers of people in the affairs of the state. Equally, the link between non-dominant ethnic groups and national history-writing underlines the emancipatory potential

of national history for collectivities that felt themselves to be oppressed by empires, multi-national states, or ethno-national groups. However, whilst it is important to recognize this emancipatory potential of national history-writing, it is equally vital to highlight what could be termed the 'dark side' of national history. It was noted above how, at least from Fichte onwards, national history-writing was associated with creating national hierarchies, where some nations were more worthy than others whilst yet others were denied historicity and hence the right to exist. We have also seen how many national histories developed racial connotations and how they marginalized particular social groups, regions, ethnicities, religious denominations, and women. Furthermore, the focus on national histories led to a Eurocentric vision of world history, in which all non-European peoples were destined to spend their time in the 'waiting room of history', in which their only hope was eventually to reach the stage of development of the European benchmark nations—a never-never land for many of them.[21] National histories written to underpin national identities have been responsible for contributing towards intolerance, discrimination, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and war.

From establishing the narrative patterning of national historical narratives and drawing up the balance sheet of the close link between history-writing and nationalization, this chapter went on to examine the institutions in which historiographical nationalism took shape. With some exceptions, the universities were not yet the places where such traditions were prominent, and university historians were not necessarily in the vanguard of establishing national historical master narratives. In many parts of Europe, it was civil servants, members of the clergy and the aristocracy, middle-class writers, and intellectuals as well as politicians who were the authors of key historical national narratives. These 'amateur' historians formed historical associations and museums and edited journals as well as major source editions, and it was these institutions far more than the early nineteenth-century universities that provided the institutional framework for the rise of national historical master narratives.

Whilst the rise of national history-writing was one of its prominent features, it would be entirely misleading to present all the historical endeavours of this period as having been guided by the national paradigm since many historians remained committed to alternative traditions of historical writing. And yet, around 1850, as Giesebrecht's observation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter underlined, an increasing number of historians looked back to the first half of the nineteenth century as the period in which the key national historical master narratives of 'their' respective nations had been established. It would fall to them, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to make them more 'scientific', if by no means less national(istic).

[21] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000).

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