

A COMPANION TO
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
EUROPE
1789–1914

Edited by

Stefan Berger

A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe

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Map 1 Europe 1740–1789

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Map 2 Europe in 1816



Map 3 Europe in 1878

Introduction

STEFAN BERGER

The nineteenth century started with revolution and ended with the advent of a major war. The year 1789 introduced a new grammar of politics and formulated a new conception of society. The idea of a society of orders, where people were born into a particular class and stayed there, gave way to notions of mobility, where property, ownership, gender, and education defined a meritocracy of deserving citizens. These were bound up with the gradual and uneven emergence of a new grammar of economics, as it was formulated above all in Europe's "first industrial nation," Britain.¹ The spread of market values across Europe meant the commodification of all social relations. The Napoleonic armies spread the new ways of thinking about society and politics across Europe. The inaptly named "restoration period" after 1815 could not turn the historical clocks back to pre-1789 time. The old system had gone for good and Europeans had to learn to accommodate to a new set of social practices. Similarly, when the lights went out in Europe in the autumn of 1914, the curtain fell on the long nineteenth century. The societies that emerged from the experience of the Great War, whether they belonged to the victors or the losers, were qualitatively different from the ones that had entered it.

The aim of this volume is to give students of European history a firm grasp of the many topics and debates which have made "the long nineteenth century" such a rewarding field of

study for generations of historians. The oldest historiography, going back to the nineteenth century itself, is the one which deals with political, diplomatic, and international history. It conceptualized the history of Europe as the history of the European state system and the framing of international politics by "great" statesmen. Equally, there is a distinguished tradition of writing European history as the history of ideas.² Here, Europe tended to equal progress and civilization. It also meant Christianity and the defense of Christianity against Islam in particular became the staple diet of European history writing. Secular concepts based on Enlightenment ideas about a particularly European rationality, European liberty and the classical heritage came to challenge the identification of Europe with Christianity. And later in the century ethnic and racial concepts became a popular means of defining Europe.

The social and economic history of the nineteenth century can also look back on a very well established literature: while its origins go back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it arguably had its heyday in the post-World War II period, when social history seemed, at least for a while, the only show in town.³ Heavily influenced by Weberian and Marxist concepts, it sought to identify patterns of socioeconomic developments and their reverberations in the fields of politics and culture. Eric Hobsbawm's monumental three volume history of the nineteenth century

stands as a lasting monument to this kind of social history.⁴ The pluralization of historiographical discourses from the 1970s onwards brought a wide range of new and interesting perspectives, including gender history, history from below and the methodological challenges of poststructuralism and the linguistic turn. The “new cultural history” is, of course, not so new now and it is possible in the subsequent chapters to provide a synthesis of some of the areas where it has been most productive.

The overall structure of the volume falls into six parts, which form distinct but overlapping interpretive axes of European history. The contributions to each part demonstrate that European history today is written from a bewildering multitude of perspectives. Part One seeks to problematize our understanding of European history by asking how notions of Europeanness were constructed in the nineteenth century. What is regarded as European has been and continues to be a matter for debate and cannot be reduced to some notion of fixed geographical and cultural characteristics. Notions of Europeanness have developed gradually in a long and complex process. As Bo Stråth reminds us, Europe is not a straightforward geographical description. Complicated processes of border-setting included or excluded various geographical areas at different times: Eastern Europe, Russia, the Slavs, Islam, the Ottoman Empire, the Orient, North Africa, Asia, and the United States were all defined as Europe’s “other” at one time or another and by different constituencies. With the onset of European colonialism and imperialism, Europe expanded to become a truly global category. After all, European heritage could now be found in all parts of the globe. White European settler societies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand are hard to imagine without their European heritage. In the name of Europe different nation-states have also been engaged in staking out claims of regional hegemony. Thus, for example, the concept of “Central Europe” was intimately bound up with the aggrandizement of Germany to the detriment of smaller nations in this region. Equally, the idea of “East Central Europe” was widely used as a means of distancing the nascent nation-states in this region

from the empires of Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburgs. Larger historical regions which transcend nation-states have played a major role in forming our understanding of Europe as a continent.⁵

Constructions of Europe’s internal and external borders and the writing of Europe’s history were intimately connected to visual representations of Europe, the topic of Michael Wintle’s contribution to this volume. Europe was consistently portrayed as superior to her fellow continents. In the era of mass nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century visual representations of the nation overlaid those of Europe, often using the same arsenal of images. As the idea of a united Europe was replaced by the idea of rivaling nations, an essential Eurocentrism continued to inform Europe’s visual culture. But Europe also became the symbol of an international arbiter between the quarrelsome nations. Notions of one European family remained strong even during times of intense nationalist rivalry.

Part Two looks at the economic and social history of Europe. In the nineteenth century Europe underwent a fundamental transformation from a predominantly agricultural society to one based on industrial production and international trade. Gradual and uneven economic change impacted on the make-up and social relations of European societies. First and foremost, historians have increasingly taken leave of the idea of an “industrial revolution.”

European societies remained predominantly rural and agricultural during the entire nineteenth century. Hamish Graham emphasizes the extraordinary diversity of rural life and durability of rural traditions. Peasant-worker families and the impact of proto-industrialization added to this diversity. The land made a significant contribution to overall economic output. Changes in agriculture were a major precondition for industrialization, as the provision of more and better food led to a sustained population growth which provided labor and raw materials needed in the industrialization process. The countryside also provided markets for urban produce. State authorities were above all interested in penetrating and ruling over an often unruly countryside. The nationalization

of peasants, the standardization of rules in the countryside, the imposition of uniformity as far as legal codes, currencies, and maps were concerned, were all attempts at making rural societies less “foreign” to the urban centers and bringing them into national and state communities. Rural society often resisted such encroachments of the central state, as attachments remained heavily local and regional.

Economic historians have equally urged us to view industrialization as a regional phenomenon. As Robert Lee explains, they have gone beyond the notion of technological innovation and drawn attention to the importance of cultural and political factors, especially the role of the state, education systems, and entrepreneurial identities. A much more long-term view of industrialization emerged, as earlier ideas of an allegedly crucial 30 year period looked increasingly unsustainable. Many economic historians have questioned the appropriateness of the very term “industrial revolution,” as it does not capture the far more gradual evolution of market forces and market orientation which came to dominate European social and cultural processes. Yet industrialization did result in significant population growth spawning processes of urbanization. Lee gives us chapter and verse on the massive proportions of population growth in the nineteenth century, yet stresses the diversity of factors producing such an explosion of numbers. Significant attempts to limit families set in only from the 1880s, at about the same time when sanitary reforms and the rise in living standards reduced mortality rates drastically.⁶

Socioeconomic developments were directly related to changes in social relations. As Carl Levy points out, the long decline of serfdom led to the emergence of a whole variety of forms of free labor under different systems of land tenure. Political hegemony in the countryside was highly contested and diverse groups propagated the values of the land in order to pursue very different political strategies. Landed elites were undoubtedly still powerful in 1914, but these elites were not the same as those who dominated the land around 1800. In effect, in most places the traditional landed elites had merged with representatives of the middle classes to modernize the outlook and

strategies of landed society and make it ready for both capitalism and mass politics.

But who were the middle classes? Pamela Pilbeam stresses the diversity of groups all claiming to belong to the “middling sort.” It was, above all, an aspiring class of people whose markers of belonging were education, property, family, and leisure time. They did not, however, share one political orientation and a previous loose identification of the middle classes with liberalism has by now become very unfashionable among historians.

The rise of the middle classes was accompanied by the decline of the artisanate as an autonomous group. As Jim Farr explains, the new industrial order had a deeply corrosive effect on the artisans’ guild system, based on the values of paternalism, hierarchy, and subordination to discipline. As corporate craft traditions were increasingly undermined by new economic strategies, legislation, and commercialized forms of mass culture and consumerism, artisans hung on to the traditional image of independence for as long as they could. They did not want to sink into the mass of proletarians and wholeheartedly embraced the social values of the middle classes. But at the same time their corporate traditions influenced early labor movements across Europe. Ideas of worker collectivism and self-improvement through education, so prominent among the labor movement, had strong roots in the worlds of the nineteenth-century artisan.

The new economic order made an increasing number of people identify themselves as a new social stratum, the working class. Jutta Schwarzkopf delineates its major characteristics. Workplace and home were clearly separated. Working lives were dominated by a new factory discipline symbolized by the clock and the machine. The social distance between those who owned property and those who sold their labor rose immeasurably. The textile mills of Europe were the laboratory in which the new economic order first became apparent. But the new social order also manifested itself outside the factories. Overcrowded housing conditions, poverty, disease, accidents, and the general insecurity of the basic proletarian existence all produced solidarities which were often based on neighborhood networks and kinship ties.

The beginnings of social policies were geared towards alleviating the worst aspects of material deprivation experienced by workers, but they also actively propagated middle-class standards of morality aimed at integrating workers into national societies and fending off the specter of social unrest and revolution.

Part Three examines political developments in nineteenth-century Europe. As Sharif Gemie points out, revolution was in fact a common European experience in the nineteenth century. Starting with the foundational moment of the French Revolution of 1789, a whole succession of revolutionary movements sought to overturn the existing social and political order. "The people" became the rallying cry of those who wanted to erect a new political order on the foundations of citizenship. It soon merged and became overlaid with languages of class, which sought to combine political change with ideas of an altogether different socioeconomic order. The European revolutions of 1848 and the Russian Revolution of 1905 were arguably seminal events with grave consequences for the development of European societies. Those actively participating in revolutions found in them an important moment of self-identification and a strong sense of community. Throughout Europe the emergence of a public sphere was the precondition for the emergence of revolutionary movements. For much of the period revolutionary traditions were tightly linked to ideas of liberty and freedom, challenging the traditional social order. But towards the end of the nineteenth century right-wing movements also began to advocate notions of a revolution which rose to prominence during the first half of the twentieth century.

During the nineteenth century states became the most important bulwark against revolution. Jörn Leonhard reminds us that European states acquired their modern meaning through the increasing power of state bureaucracies, the strong alignment of state power to particular social classes, and the firm distinction between state and society. Centralized state power increased in order to deal with a rising number of challenges such as incorporation of diverse territories into the state, the training of a new professional elite of civil ser-

vants, migration, the threat of revolution, handling the communications revolutions, the diverse consequences of industrialization, and, last but not least, the preparation for war. Leonhard turns the spotlight on education and the welfare state as two key examples of the increasing will of the state actively to shape the lives of its citizens. Both areas also provide ample evidence of the considerable resistance such increased intervention produced among many groups of society.

Revolutions challenged the state to democratize and liberalize state structures and to take seriously the agency of its "people" and aspiring citizens. As John Garrard points out, those states which tended towards liberal forms of government in the eighteenth century were far more successful in democratizing in the nineteenth century than those regimes which were run on more authoritarian or absolutist lines. Yet ultimately the emphasis everywhere was on political control. Where European elites were willing to grant manhood suffrage they did so because they believed that they could manipulate the results and manage mass politics. But the impact of mass politics could be felt even in regimes which did not allow for any widespread formal participation in the political process. Mass meetings, demonstrations, petitions, and street politics more generally became widespread as politics turned into a mass spectacle and public entertainment.

Workers and their organizations increasingly played a prominent role in politics. They championed diverse ideas of a more equal and socially just society. Labor movements, as Stefan Berger emphasizes, were ideologically heterogeneous. Liberal, socialist, anarcho-sindicalist, and Catholic associations developed very different notions of what was in the workers' interests. National movements provided a formidable challenge to labor's internationalism. They promised inclusion but practiced exclusion of both "internal" and "external" enemies. They were champions of often contradictory and competing narratives about the nation which came complete with foundational moments, national heroes, and a whole array of national symbols and myths all attempting to ascertain the long and proud pedigree of the nation. National movements

could be participatory movements of people demanding a greater say in the affairs of the state, championing ideas of traditional freedoms and rights of the people which had to be reinstated. But as Berger underlines, they were also highly effective champions of aggressive expansionism, imperialism, and the belief in the superiority of one's own nation.

Both labor and national movements were dominated by men and characterized by a good measure of anti-feminism. And yet both movements gave women considerable scope for developing their public roles. Thus, there were 150 female Chartist organizations in Britain, and the 1848 revolutions on the continent witnessed the proliferation of women's clubs and associations. The French Revolution of 1789 was, as Kathleen Canning argues, the crucial event for reconfiguring the "woman question" for the nineteenth century. It mobilized women around the issue of rights, brought partial advances for women through the French constitution of 1791, and inspired women in other parts of Europe. Neither of the attempts of Napoleon or of Metternich to restore the old pre-revolutionary gender order was successful. The genie was out of the bottle and all recurring attempts to push women back into the private realm after periods of intense politicization could not prevent the flowering of a major pan-European debate about the character of both sexes and how they differed. Some of the most radical ideas about reconstructing the existing gender order were formulated by the utopian socialists. Overall, the "woman question" became increasingly tied up with issues of constitutionalism, individual rights, and the social and the national question. For middle-class women in particular, nationalism and charity work for the poor formed two important areas where they could become active within the public sphere. Maternalism and social reform were in turn closely related to the issue of empire building. For working-class women, the ideologies of "social motherhood" and domesticity made it difficult to negotiate the world of work with the world of family responsibilities, as female employment was widely perceived as bringing social instability to working-class families and having a negative impact on national birth rates and the

health of the nation more generally. Nevertheless, it seems difficult to uphold an older notion that women, during the first half of the nineteenth century, retreated into the private sphere of home and family, while men occupied the public spheres of politics, business, and civic affairs.⁷

Part Four concerns itself with the intellectual history of nineteenth-century Europe, which was characterized by intense competition between liberal, conservative, and socialist ideologies. All three, according to Edmund Neill, were reactions to the European Enlightenment. Liberals were champions of progress, private property, national self-determination, and individual liberty, initially defined as freedom from state interference. Conservatives, by contrast, emphasized stability, continuity, religious bonds, and the importance of heritage and history. During the course of the nineteenth century both conservatism and liberalism diversified into a set of movements only loosely connected. Towards the end of the century socialism provided a fundamental challenge to the way both conservatives and liberals imagined society to work.

If the social and economic theories of Karl Marx provided much inspiration for socialists, the ideas of Charles Darwin formed the starting point of another powerful intellectual current – that of Social Darwinism, explored by Mike Hawkins. Social Darwinists came to believe that biological processes determined human behavior and social processes. The diversity, adaptability, and simplicity of Social Darwinist beliefs explains much of their popular appeal in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the age of imperialism Social Darwinists warned against "interracial breeding" and were obsessed with degeneration and the struggle for racial superiority.

Many key intellectuals of the nineteenth century, like Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Freud, were heavily critical of Christianity and the Christian churches. Given the sustained attacks on the intellectual hegemony of the churches, historians tended to view the nineteenth century as a century of secularization. The French Revolution and the long arm of Napoleon's armies had certainly weakened the power of the church by widely redistributing

church property. But more recently historians have discovered the adaptability and resilience of Christian beliefs, and some have even spoken of the nineteenth century as a second confessional age, in which religion played a major role in people's lives. The Catholic church, as Oded Heilbrunner outlines, suffered under an onslaught by the liberal-national movements which tended to be hostile to Catholicism as a transnational, Rome-centered movement. Only in Poland and Ireland, stateless nations before 1914, did the Catholic church enter close alliances with national movements intent on overthrowing what were perceived as foreign oppressors. And in Spain the traditionally close alliance between church and state was also maintained. But everywhere the Catholic church sought very successfully to reenforce the Catholic milieu and turn it into a bulwark against the modern influences of liberalism, rationalism, progress, socialism, Darwinism, nihilism, nationalism, and psychoanalysis. It could rely in particular on the appeal of popular piety and on women activists, who were among the most loyal and fervent supporters of the church and contributed to a growing feminization of the Catholic religion.

Protestants had fewer difficulties with nationalism. In fact Protestantism and nationalism merged in a number of states so as to become virtually indistinguishable. Popular pietism and evangelism were the driving forces of a revival of Protestantism in the nineteenth century, as Protestant beliefs became increasingly heterogeneous even within state churches. While there was, as Anthony Steinhoff concedes, undoubtedly a process of "unchurching," which predominantly affected the urban male working classes, the Protestant missionary societies made Protestantism a global force to be reckoned with.

None of the major Christian churches in Europe rejected the challenges of modernity so thoroughly as the Orthodox church. It was, as Shane O'Rourke points out, shaped to a significant extent by the existence of three empires. The Byzantine Empire produced the doctrine of a symphony between church and state which allowed the church considerable autonomy. In the Ottoman Empire the patriarchs of Constantinople wielded considerable

religious and worldly powers. Their loyalty to the sultan produced manifold conflicts with local Orthodox churches within the Ottoman Empire, which occasionally put them at the helm of local national movements fighting for independence from the empire. In the Russian Empire the Orthodox church was almost totally subservient to the Russian state.

Both the old Christian Europe and modern intellectual currents were frequently united in their stance against European Jewry. Anti-semitism had been a hallmark of European society for a long time, but the nineteenth century held out the promise of emancipation. For the first time it became imaginable that Jews would leave the religious ghetto that they had occupied for centuries. One part of European Jewry reacted enthusiastically to this prospect and preached assimilation. Another part attempted to strike a balance between their traditional ways of life and assimilation. And yet another part rejected Enlightenment values and relied on traditional definitions of Jewishness. But every Jew had to respond to the advent of modernity. As David Rechter points out, Western European Jews on the whole tended toward the first two options, while Eastern European Jews were most likely to favor the last option.

Part Five deals with aspects of cultural history in nineteenth-century Europe. Increasingly diverse forms of popular culture, including mass spectator sports, music halls, café house culture, early cinema, photography, museums, and lending libraries, catered for the growing leisure time of people. James Winders finds in Romanticism the key influence on both popular and high culture. Romanticism had a complex and ambiguous relationship to the traditions of the Enlightenment, which provided both inspiration to the Romantics and provoked their violent rejection. Romanticism's cult of the individual genius, its championing of nature, its cult of youth, its rejection of industrial society, and its emphasis on conveying emotion all shaped European society in a perplexing variety of ways, which were politically contradictory and multipolar. Romantics could be found in the camps of revolution, reform, and reaction. They became champions of subsequent Realist movements with their

strong concerns with the social question just as much as they turned towards Symbolism, with its concern with the liminality of human experience. And, of course, Romanticism also underpinned much of the new irrationalism, so popular with the turn-of-the-century avant-garde.

The advances of mass culture would have been unthinkable without the growing literacy rates among a wider population. These were directly related to the introduction of compulsory schooling. As Sharif Gemie argues, schooling and the development of a “schooling program” was a genuinely European project which aimed primarily at instilling a sense of order and responsibility into the masses so as to allow modernization of European society to proceed in an orderly fashion. But schools did not necessarily produce the well-ordered individuals which state bureaucracies desired. They could equally produce dissident identities, as they were often genuinely unpopular. Pupils connected them to physical violence and places of ill-health. And many poorer families, who needed the labor power of children in their quest to survive, resented the state’s insistence on sending their offspring to school.

History became a core subject in European schools. A strong sense of the historicity (i.e., of the historical rootedness of all that existed) was, as Matthew Jefferies points out, one of the most distinctive features of the nineteenth century. As knowledge of the past allegedly allowed for the better understanding of the present and the correct prediction of the future, history became instrumentalized for a wide variety of purposes. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did historicism⁸ decline in importance, as it was identified more and more with antiquarianism. In the context of the cultural pessimism of the *fin de siècle*, fewer people were willing to believe in the explanatory powers of history and instead shared Nietzsche’s indictment of history as a burden on life.

If Nietzsche was instrumental in the demise of historicism, he was also scathing about the impact of science on European culture. As Kathryn Olesko argues, conceptions of scientific knowledge changed in a major way during the nineteenth century. Specialist scientific disciplines now emerged, as did the “scientist” as

a new persona. European state examination systems for scientists produced upward social mobility for many members of the middle classes, as new sites for scientific research flourished: the university-based laboratory and institute, the industrial and government-sponsored laboratories, and the private research institutes. Many of these developments first happened in Germany, but they were quickly taken up and adapted in other European countries. Science was to be crucial in furthering a new understanding of both self and society in the nineteenth century. Systems of classification and the construction of hierarchies as well as definitions of “normalcy” and “deviance” all rested heavily on scientific methods, in particular methods of measuring. The new scientific culture helped to define bourgeois values such as toleration, openness, and rationality. Furthermore, many scientific inventions revolutionized the everyday life of the people of Europe. They contributed to new ways of seeing the world. Science was also becoming indispensable to European states attempting to provide good government, which was increasingly understood to be a byword for regulating and policing society. Nations and empires needed statisticians, cartographers, and other scientists to define their borders and provide justification for their being, their expansion, and their superiority over neighboring nations and the colonized parts of the globe.

Despite the skepticism and critique of science put forward towards the end of the nineteenth century by Nietzsche and Max Weber, among others, science enthralled the European public, as it seemed to promise solutions to a variety of problems relating to the organization of social life. Chris Williams reminds us that policing methods were transformed through the emergence of criminalistics as a science. The police contributed to the increasing bureaucratic regulation of life and it aimed at stabilizing the existing political and social order by adopting scientific methods. Dan Vyleta stresses both the diversity of scientific constructions of criminality and its change over time. The discourse about criminality became increasingly medicalized, with issues of degeneration and national decline taking center stage.

Medical knowledge more generally had made major advances throughout the nineteenth century, although, as John Waller argues, very little was actually put into practice. Eighteenth-century treatment regimes, geared towards individuals and their physical constitutions and lifestyles, remained the norm. They were based on highly individualized views of illness which failed to take into account considerations of the health of wider populations. Sanitary reform was a major debating point in the nineteenth century, and advances in the field of bacteriology increased the understanding of the origins of major epidemics, but progress was checked time and again by the cost of major public health reform. Overall, medical discourses had a strong moral undertone, as illness was widely perceived as the result of sin, while health was seen as reward for the virtuous.

When Freud, the founding father of the science of the psyche, discovered the unconscious of the individual self he postulated it as the most important driving force of a person's individual development and of the entire historical process. In particular it was sex and death which, he argued, were central to the explanation of human behavior. Sexuality, Ivan Crozier tells us, thus moved from being largely a moral concern dominated by religious teaching to a scientific issue to be explored systematically by a new science with close links to medicine, which called itself sexology. Sexuality and especially sexual deviance became a topic of scientific enquiry resulting in the formulation of specific treatment regimes.

Part Six assesses the development of the international system of great powers in the long nineteenth century. The European state system underwent a period of profound destabilization with the period of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. At the end of it, the Congress of Vienna attempted to stabilize an entirely different map of Europe than had existed before 1789. With the exception of the Crimean war in the middle of the century, the post-1815 Concert of Europe was very successful in managing crisis and averting the threat of war. Conflict resolution was achieved through diplomacy, alliance systems, and the ideal of the balance of power. As William Mulligan demon-

strates, the five great powers (Pentarchy) were essentially the same during the entire nineteenth century, but their relative importance changed, as Prussia/Germany rose to prominence, while Austria-Hungary declined and the Ottoman Empire turned into the "sick man of Europe." Britain remained the major European sea power intent on preventing, first France, and later Prussia/Germany, from dominating continental Europe. After 1848, notions of national prestige came to dominate foreign policies and contributed to aggressive forms of power politics, increasing the risk of military conflict.

Warfare itself had become, as Ute Frevert points out, a very different thing under the impact of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. As wars were from now on fought in the name of the nation and the people, warfare became more total and absolute than ever before. Advances in technology ensured that it also became more violent. Conscript armies faced each other, as wars became the affairs of citizens. It was this reference to citizenship which excluded women from military service. Not perceived as being fit to serve, they were in turn regarded as unable to participate in other civic affairs, especially politics.

Yet nineteenth-century Europe by and large fought its wars outside of Europe. Colonial conflicts increased tensions between the European powers, but they also acted as a safety valve, deflecting conflict away from the European continent. Colonialism was in effect, as Trutz von Trotha argues, the central ingredient of globalization in the nineteenth century. Different forms of colonial expansion produced a variety of power relationships between conquerors and conquered. Diverse strategies of providing legitimacy for colonial rule met with strategies of defiance on the part of the colonized.

Colonialism exported Europe to the wider world and, at the same time, it brought the wider world to Europe. It is therefore impossible to write the history of Europe without constantly reflecting the ways in which colonial empires shaped different nation-states in Europe and thus became part and parcel of the self-understanding of Europe.⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century the internationalization

of trade and economic life had produced a single world market. Globalization brought a wave of processes of cultural transfer which has caught the attention of historians more recently. It has contributed to undermining an older picture of autonomous and internally stable national cultures and instead underlined the extent to which such national cultures depended on the continuous selective appropriation of “foreign” elements. Proper attention to the importance of processes of cultural transfer will make it more difficult in future to write European history as the history of its nation-states and instead invites historians to consider a framework of cultural appropriation and mediation.¹⁰ Thus, for example, the strategies of Irish tenant farmers in their struggles against landlords were copied by Italian peasants. The French gendarmerie system, put into place under Napoleon Bonaparte, was exported to most of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. Subsequently, considerable cross-border and transnational cooperation between different national police forces ensured the European-wide surveillance of political revolutionary and dissident movements. The German socialist and Catholic milieus were models for other socialist and Catholic associations across Europe, which attempted to adapt what they perceived as organizational and ideological models. Daniel O’Connell’s campaign for Catholic emancipation between 1824 and 1828 employed all the weapons of a developed civil society. It mobilized the press and voluntary associations and used the public meeting to great effect. Once again, many emancipatory movements across Europe looked to Ireland for inspiration. In 1848 issues of communication, assembly, and organization came to the fore across Europe and the revolutions were of major importance in developing civil societies across a wide range of European states.¹¹ They in turn fostered the breakthrough to constitutional forms of government – a trend which had received a major push in 1848 and which, despite initial defeats, was irreversible. The first half of the nineteenth century had in fact witnessed the proliferation of both public and secret clubs and societies: the Hampden Club in Britain, campaigning for franchise reform, and the Italian Carbonari or

the French Charbonnerie, with their concerns of social and political reform. The largest and best-known group of the 1830s was Giuseppe Mazzini’s Young Italy, which was feted throughout Europe. In the world of ideas, there were figures of true European standing, such as Herder, Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Mill, and Freud, whose writings were translated and whose ideas were received in very different social contexts, where they informed a wide variety of social practices. Experiences of migration and diaspora further increased the receptivity of European societies to “foreign” ideas and made for the adaptation of social and cultural practices in different societal contexts.

Histories of cultural transfer, entangled histories, comparative histories, and transnational histories have sharpened our awareness of European-wide processes and practices.¹² At the beginning of the twenty-first century, historians across Europe are moving away from a concern with national processes and taking into view transnational developments. Future European histories will no longer resemble an assembly of parallel national histories and instead become histories of cultural encounters within the geographical space constructed as Europe. Notions of national peculiarities and exceptionalisms will fade, as historians of Europe strive to answer questions about the European historical experience. Will such histories service the project of the European Union and project its aims back into history, just as their nineteenth-century predecessors serviced the nation-state? From the early 1990s onwards the political project of the EU has actively sought to enlist historians (and other producers of narratives about the past) in an endeavor to construct European cultural identities.¹³ The danger here lies in transporting notions of homogeneity and peculiarity from the level of the nation to a transnational entity defined as Europe. Comparative histories of Europe, which pay proper attention to the manifold processes of cultural transfer, will have to insist on the variety and interrelatedness of social, economic, cultural, and political developments across Europe.¹⁴ Furthermore, they will have to take into account the many points of contact and exchange with the non-European world. This Companion to

nineteenth-century European history is meant to be one small step on the road to such a future European history.

A good deal of comparative, transnational, and entangled history writing involves Britain. Indeed, in many of the chapters in this volume Britain emerges as a model emulated, misunderstood, and adapted by a whole string of European countries. Yet, equally, Britain makes an appearance as an exceptional case, a country set apart from developments elsewhere in Europe. This peculiar tension between model and exception is worth exploring at somewhat greater depth. Britain was clearly an early developer and experimented with ideas and practices later adapted on the European continent. Thus, visual constructions of national identity appeared in Britain already during the eighteenth century, while most continental countries only developed them during the nineteenth. The British parliamentary system was upheld by liberals throughout continental Europe as a model to follow, and even those who wanted to reject or modify it, still had to deal with it. British civil society was the most developed of its kind in the first half of the nineteenth century, and again served as inspiration for many continental Europeans. The London Metropolitan Police served as a European-wide model for civil police forces, especially as it was widely perceived as having played a crucial role in the defeat of Chartism in 1848. The European-wide prison reform movement also looked to Britain for explanations about the meaning of prisons and ways of imprisonment. In particular the famous Pentonville prison became a model for continental European prison reformers.

The “Norfolk system” of crop rotation had an important impact on continental versions of the agricultural revolution, even if historians more recently have dismissed ideas of a unilinear British model in the economic development of nineteenth-century Europe.¹⁵ There were many diverse paths to industrialization. Thus it has been observed that the organization of financial markets and industry in Britain and Germany provided diametrically opposed models in Europe. In terms of state building the British experience was characterized by the strength of aristocratic self-government, which

delayed state interventionism. If there was a European model of the state, it was the French, or more precisely, the Napoleonic state, which became an export model with its centralized administration and separate educational facilities for technocratic state elites. State bureaucracies in Britain were only significant in one area: that of empire and British overseas expansion. But even allowing for diversity and dismissing ideas of a universal British model, it still remains the case that nineteenth-century Europe was looking towards Britain. It seems therefore all the more incomprehensible that many European histories, up to this very day, should exclude the history of Britain from the history of Europe. Jonathan Sperber’s argument about Britain inhabiting the same cultural world but on a “divergent track” from the rest of Europe is intriguing,¹⁶ but ultimately does not do justice to the fact that, first of all, Europe was characterized by a multitude of different tracks, but all of them, including Britain, were part of the same railway system or the same cultural world. Britain needs to be treated at long last as an integral part of the European experience. Any continued exclusion of the British Isles from continental Europe will only prolong the mistaken assumption of an alleged “splendid isolation” of Britain within European history. The continued widespread division of university courses in Britain into British and European history is a most unfortunate one and needs to be challenged. The history of the continent can neither be taught nor written without proper reference to the British Isles. The chapters in this volume therefore all concern themselves with Britain as an integral part of European history.

The impact of the Cold War on historiography meant that much European history after 1945 was concerned essentially with Western Europe. Eastern European history became the preserve of a specialized sub-branch of history with its own distinguished traditions. It remains one of the most important tasks of the post-Cold War Europe to reintegrate the histories of Western and Eastern Europe, and contributions in this volume are meant as a first step in this direction. Where the history of Eastern Europe has not been the poor cousin in the past, it was because the author had

special expertise in Eastern Europe. Thus, for example, anyone reading Norman Davies' splendid European history could be forgiven for thinking that Europe's most important power had been Poland.¹⁷ In the circumstances this is in fact a welcome correction to the West European bias that characterized many other European histories, where Eastern Europe featured as the backward "other" of the West. Even a first class European history such as Robert Gildea's can include statements such as: "At the end of the century there was a polarization between the industrial core and backward southern and eastern Europe, which was relegated to the function of providing food and raw materials for the industrial areas."¹⁸ There is a long tradition of orientalizing Eastern Europe and portraying its only mission as being that of constantly trying to catch up with the West but never quite managing it. A civilized and progressive West is basically juxtaposed to a backward East. Although this is, on balance, not the case with Gildea's history, even with a sophisticated contemporary historian like him, notions of such Orientalism can easily creep in. It will need major efforts to portray the more ambivalent and contradictory experiences of both Western and Eastern European countries. Once again, the thematic chapters of this volume have set themselves the task at least to begin addressing this ambition. Nineteenth-century European history, as it is presented in this Companion, moves beyond the perspective of national histories in that it seeks to identify themes which were all-European and impacted on several or most European societies, albeit in different and always interdependent ways.

NOTES

- 1 Mathias (1969).
- 2 Woolf (1992).
- 3 Welskopp (2003).
- 4 Hobsbawm (1962, 1975a, 1987).
- 5 On the concept of these transnational European regions, see Troebst (2003).
- 6 Historians have been quarreling for a long time over the question of whether standards of living increased or decreased in the early phases of industrialization. For a succinct summary of the debate, which has focused on Britain, see Dauntton (1995).
- 7 On the idea of separate gender spheres and its critique, see Downs (2004), especially chapters 5 and 9.
- 8 The use of the term "historism" rather than the more common "historicism" is deliberate. Whereas historism, as represented by Leopold von Ranke, can be seen as an evolutionary, reformist concept which understands all political order as historically developed and grown, historicism, as defined and rejected by Karl Popper, is based on the notion that history develops according to predetermined laws towards a particular end. The English language, by using only one term (historicism) for those two very different concepts, tends to conflate the two. Hence, we suggest using two separate terms.
- 9 On the importance of the relationship between core and periphery in the British Empire, see Hall (2002).
- 10 See, for example, Henk te Velde's introduction to the special issue of the *European Review of History* 12: 2 (2006), which deals with the transfer of political ideas and practices.
- 11 The connectivity of the European revolutions of 1848 is explored by Körner (2000).
- 12 Conrad (2004).
- 13 Shore (2000).
- 14 Woolf (2003).
- 15 Pollard (1981).
- 16 Sperber (2000: 43–6).
- 17 Davies (1996).
- 18 Gildea (1996: 275).

