Cosmopolitan Highlanders: Region and Nation in Anglo-German Encounters in the Himalayas, 1903-1945

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Studies of national and regional identity have long been a staple of British and European historiography. In German historiography, the development of nationalism and national unification is well-charted territory, as is the importance of discourses of *Heimat* and *Volk*. The persistence of strong local and regional allegiances, particularly in the Southern German states, is equally well-known. A similar trajectory can be found in British historiography. While historians such as Linda Colley have explored the creation of a common British identity and a sense of Britishness during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the emergence of particular notions of Englishness has attracted the attention of scholars such as Peter Mandler. All this relates to wider discussions concerning the role of the nation-state in modern history. In many ways, however, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were also periods of globalization with an increase in international and intercontinental travel, as well as a significant degree of mobility of ideas and goods. While this perhaps never came as a surprise to historians of Britain, who have long dealt with Britain's engagement with the rest of the world, historians of Germany have only begun to embrace this new global history more recently. The past two decades have witnessed an increasing proliferation of studies that seek to place German history in its global context. This has left us with a picture where globalization and the 'rise' of the nation-state existed in tandem – a picture that at first sight can often be paradoxical, but which has also endowed us a with a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between regional, national and transnational histories. This chapter will explore this

interplay by examining British and German accounts of travel to Tibet and the Himalayas, showing that allegiances to both nation and region could co-exist quite easily, and could indeed be complemented by a sense of belonging to a common humanity across regional and national boundaries. The example of British and German travellers to Tibet and the Himalayas demonstrates that interwar Europeans could at once be fiercely nationalistic, proud of their local and regional heritage, and aware of what united them with travellers from other parts of Europe and, at times, the entire world. In fact, strong regional allegiances could serve, in some cases, to enhance a feeling of connectedness across national borders.

Tibet and the Himalayas fascinated many Europeans in the first half of the twentieth century due to the unique way in which an alien culture converged there with a wild and relatively unexplored landscape. It was one of the least accessible regions on the planet, bordered by deserts in the North and West and by the world's highest mountains in the South. In 1903/4 a British military expedition, under the leadership of Francis Younghusband, had invaded Tibet and forced it to establish trade marts in order to secure Britain's economic and diplomatic interests in the region. British government interest in the area, however, began to wane soon thereafter, and during the 1910s European concerns and the First World War diverted attention away from Tibet. After the First World War, and after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 had set off a period of disorder and warlord rule across much of China, the British government gradually began to establish diplomatic relations with Tibet, treating it as a *de facto* independent state and setting up a permanent British mission in 1936/7. During this period, mountaineers, scientists and

individual adventurers, above all from Britain and Germany, set out to explore the region, and a number of high-profile fictional accounts – most famously James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* - portrayed it as a mysterious realm of spirituality. At the same time a significant number of mountaineering expeditions attempted to climb several of the world's highest peaks – from George Mallory's and Andrew Irvine's ill-fated Everest attempt in 1924 to a series of expeditions to Nanga Parbat in 1932, 1934, 1937, 1938 and 1939. Anthropologists, biologists and geographers also exhibited great interest in the region, with scholars such as Frank Kingdon Ward exploring the flora of the Himalayas and the course of Asia's major rivers, and an expedition composed of members of the SS setting out in 1938 to carry out anthropological, geological and biological research and advance National Socialist 'racial science'.

A number of scholars have examined how such travel to Tibet and the Himalayas often involved negotiating a complex web of conflicting allegiances. Peter Bayers has drawn attention to the imperialist discourse present within post-war mountaineering expeditions to Everest. Peter Hansen has argued that the first successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 allowed different communities to harness the mountaineers' success for the purposes of nationalist rhetoric. The event could be seen as a triumph for the Commonwealth, Britain, Wales, India and Nepal at the same time. Following a different line of inquiry, Peter Mierau has examined how the efforts of German mountaineers in the 1930s were closely tied to the specifically German goals and rhetoric of National Socialist institutions. While these points are undoubtedly useful and reflect a strong sense of nationalism and patriotism amongst travellers, it is also important to remember that

this did not preclude these travellers from expressing their allegiances to groups and localities other than the nation-state. In fact, it is in exploring accounts of encounters between travellers from different nations that we can see how patriotism, regionalism and cosmopolitanism co-existed and reinforced each other.

I.

In many ways, the nation-state was a crucial point of reference for British and German travellers. On a basic level, this was a result of practical considerations, as most funding came from institutions that were clearly affiliated to one particular nation-state. In Nazi Germany both scientific research and mountaineering were carried out under the aegis of institutions that had been pressed into the service of the state and were expected to demonstrate a commitment to the goals and values of the National Socialist Party. Sport, including mountaineering, had become the responsibility of the Reich Sports Leader, Hans von Tschammer und Osten, who took over the centralization and Nazification (*Gleichschaltung*) of all sporting activity in the Reich. Over the course of the 1930s, a number of new organizations were set up to deal with exploration and mountaineering, many of which were temporarily in competition with each other. The German Himalayan Foundation, for instance, was established in 1936 in order to deal with extra-Alpine mountaineering. It provided a more ideologically committed base for mountaineers than the German and Austrian Alpine Club, with whom it often came into conflict. However when, after the annexation of Austria in 1938, the Alpine Club was brought into line more effectively, those mountaineers who had initially found a home in the new German Himalayan Foundation, lost some of their influence. Academic research in ethnography

and anthropology, in turn, was carried out under the auspices of organizations such as the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* or, in some cases, the SS *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage). While the former provided a means of ensuring universities and research institutes would comply with the demands of the National Socialist state, the latter mainly served as a means of endowing some of the more obscure ideas of certain Nazi officials with pseudo-scientific legitimacy. Different researchers and mountaineers varied in their levels of ideological compliance and, as we shall see later, used National Socialist rhetoric to frame a very diverse range of ideas and concerns, but in terms of the practicalities of organizing and supporting expeditions, engaging with the organizational framework provided by the Third Reich was almost always a necessary pre-requisite.

In Britain, where there was less ideological and political pressure, the state nonetheless could play a crucial role in supporting individual expeditions, and a number of government departments were involved in assisting mountaineers and scientists – from the Ministry of Aviation to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Both in Britain and in Germany, support for expeditions could also come from a number of other sources, such as learned societies, enthusiastic individuals and businesses, both small and large, but this support, too, often involved liaising with state ministries and government-funded organizations. Whatever personal motivations they may have had, therefore, travellers were always required to engage with the political and ideological (and sometimes commercial) agendas of their respective nation-states.

At times, however, loyalty to their respective nation-state went beyond pure practicalities

for British and German travellers. A distinct sense of patriotism was certainly present in a number of documents and publications generated by these expeditions. This often incorporated the desire to prove the physical and mental superiority of Germans and of Britons respectively and could at times lead to a sense of competition and rivalry. This was particularly acute in mountaineering circles, where it became important to draw up clear parameters in order to determine which nation was 'entitled' to scale which mountain. Thus, while Nanga Parbat, over the course of the 1930s and again in the 1950s, became known as the 'German mountain', Mount Everest, as the world's highest peak measured from sea level, seemed to be reserved for British expeditions until the end of the Second World War. Frederick Smythe, whilst on board a vessel to India in June 1930, wrote disparagingly of German attempts to obtain permits from the Maharaja of Nepal to climb Everest, arguing that 'what British mountaineers feel is that Everest has got to be climbed by a British party' and that 'anyone climbing it now would but complete the hard labours of former British climbers.' In Germany, Richard Finsterwalder, who accompanied the German Himalaya Expedition of 1934, praised 'German Alpinist skill, German vigour and German comradeship' and saw the main purpose of the expedition as 'returning glory to the fatherland'. It is somewhat misleading, however, to use these claims as a way of showing mountaineering and scientific travel to have been solely, or even predominantly, motivated by patriotic jingoism. It is doubtful whether such statements betray the full range of motivations underpinning expeditions during this period. Especially in the context of German science and publishing in the 1930s, such comments can equally be regarded as an attempt to show political and ideological commitment to the new regime with the ultimate goal of attracting further support,

funding and publishing opportunities.

Beyond practical considerations and a sense of competitiveness, travellers also reflected on their national loyalties by pointing to both cultural and ideological differences between science and mountaineering in different nations. In relation to mountaineering as a pastime and leisure activity interwar observers argued that Germans and Britons approached the sport differently. Gerald Bullett, in a book on Germany, informed the reader that Germans regarded climbing as a truly popular sport, whereas Britons saw it as an activity reserved for only the healthiest and fittest of sportsmen. As a consequence, he recalled, he had witnessed German people partaking in the sport 'whose figures in England would be considered to disqualify them from mounting to the top of a bus'. This sense of difference also extended to scientific travellers, who could exhibit a clear sense of pride in their nation and construct a sense of difference to travellers from other countries. A memorandum from 1941 commended SS member Ernst Schäfer's 1938/9 expedition to Tibet for having been 'carried by the spirit of National Socialism' and for relying on 'comradeship, communal effort (...) and a commitment to National Socialist ideology'. Moreover, German travellers sometimes claimed to be carrying out a superior and particularly German brand of science and exploration. Schäfer's expedition, for instance, placed emphasis on the supposed value of 'total' science and rejected what they termed 'liberalist' science. The expedition was supposed to 'view the cosmos as a whole' and do away with the undue specialization and disciplinary differences from which scientists in other countries supposedly suffered. It seems clear from these pronouncements that both mountaineers and scientists were aware of the importance of

specific national agendas and were willing to conform to, or even push them, albeit to varying degrees.

II.

Yet, while the nation-state was an important point of reference for travellers, it was by no means the only one. While a sense of national competitiveness was present in the writing of many travellers, it is important to look beyond such rhetoric and take into account the full range of comments both in publications and in private correspondence and diaries. The landscape of Tibet and the Himalayas often reminded travellers of much more specific, regionally rooted memories. The barren plateau of Tibet and the slopes of the Himalayas reminded many British travellers of the peripheral regions of the United Kingdom – Scotland and Wales in particular. This phenomenon was not confined to the interwar period and went back much further. Constance Gordon Cumming, for instance, in a book published in 1876, mused that the foothills of the Himalayas were 'just like average bits of Scotland, only rather more abrupt'. In a discussion held by the Royal Geographical Society in 1923, the President claimed that the music of the Eastern Himalayas bore a 'curious resemblance (...) to the music of our own mountain peoples in the United Kingdom, the people of Scotland.' Moreover, Tibetans and other Himalayan tribes were explicitly compared to the Highlanders of the British Isles. When, after the Second World War, Lieutenant-Colonel James Guthrie, who had worked in Tibet as a member of the Indian Medical Service during the interwar period, was on duty in the Highland and Island Service, he commented that the primitive lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Shetland Islands bore a striking resemblance to that of the Tibetans he had

encountered. The supposed similarities between the Himalayas and the British periphery could take on a practical dimension, too, for instance when Everest expeditions of the early 1950s used the mountains of Snowdonia as their training ground. Both British and German travellers also drew comparisons between the Himalayas and the hilly or mountainous regions of Southern Germany, particularly Swabia, Bavaria and the Alps. Günther Hepp, who travelled to Nanga Parbat in 1937, commented in his diary that the environment reminded him of time he had spent with friends in Switzerland and mused that 'this place looks like our Alps. The stream is murmuring, the wide white slopes beckon you to ski.' Similarly, Bampfylde Fuller, one-time Lieutant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, remarked that the relationship between India and the Himalayas was similar to that between Italy and the Alps.

Comparing Tibet and the Himalayas to Scotland or the Alps served to make an alien landscape familiar to travellers and to their reading audiences back in Europe. Francis Younghusband, in a book published in 1910, justified the British invasion of Tibet he had led in 1903/4 by transposing the political issue of Tibet closer to his readers' home. Referring to British fears that Tibet had been entertaining friendly relations with Russia and therefore potentially posed a threat to British rule in India, he likened Tibetans to a people living in the Scottish Highlands and asked whether the British government should tolerate it 'if 10,000 of them came down one day and built a fort in the Perth Hills', or 'if they sent an emissary with letters to the German Emperor and his Chancellor'. In a similar vein, some German geography textbooks explicitly asked German children to compare height and extent of the Himalayas to the Alps. This construction of the

environment and people of other parts of the world as familiar yet different at the same time, could effectively serve the purpose of cementing narratives of European superiority and justifying imperial rule, since it demonstrated to reading audiences that these regions both could and needed to be classified, managed and explored by Europeans.

Beyond making unfamiliar terrain 'manageable', however, the comparisons travellers made between Tibet and the Himalayas and certain European environments should also alert us to the way in which these travellers negotiated regional loyalties and conceptions of 'home' during the course of their expeditions. Comparing the Himalayas to those regions of Germany with which they felt a strong affiliation gave travellers an opportunity to integrate the region they were exploring into their mental *Heimat*, providing a way of finding a home away from home. In the case of German travellers such comparisons did not just derive from obvious similarities in the landscape but came from a desire to use travel to Tibet and the Himalayas as a way of commenting on anxieties and concerns related to the regional environments they considered their 'home'. This was particularly clear when they used publications on the Himalayas to criticize the supposed despoliation of their home landscapes. The Alps, for instance, Günther Hepp felt, had been ruined by modern tourists – 'the tarted-up mob' – who did not possess a sufficient appreciation for the sacredness of mountain environments. The Himalayas, in this context, seemed unspoilt and pristine, reminding travellers of a mythical and 'pure' *Heimat*, which existed as a landscape in their minds, but which no European traveller had actually experienced in reality.

On the whole, it appears as if regional loyalties possessed a different status for British and for German travellers. Regional and federal structures were much stronger in Germany, which had only been unified into a single state relatively recently. Many British travellers, in contrast, came from a comfortably well-off background and were likely to have been removed from the local environment of their early years quite quickly and sent off to a more or less prestigious boarding school, often followed by a university education at either Oxford or Cambridge; the botanist Frank Kingdon Ward, for example, one of the most prolific explorers of the region, had attended Christ's College, Cambridge. Equally, many of the members of the permanent British diplomatic mission established in Lhasa in 1936/7 had been educated at Oxford or Cambridge. German travellers did not encounter the same kind of supra-regional education British travellers had in boarding schools, Oxford or Cambridge, but were often drawn into a regional network of like-minded individuals and therefore retained strong loyalties to the region they had grown up in. The majority of German travellers – particularly of mountaineers – had grown up in close proximity to the Alps or had spent most of their lives in these regions, having been educated in schools where regional history and geography occupied centre-stage. While a few high-profile explorers hailed from parts of Northern Germany – such as Ernst Schäfer, the leader of the 1938-9 expedition – much of the exploration activity was centred on Munich and the mountaineering institutions located there. Paul Bauer, the initiator of many of the German expeditions to the Himalayas, had moved to Neuburg on the Danube at the age of sixteen and later studied law in Munich. During his time at university in Munich, he met a number of fellow students and young academics interested in mountaineering. These initially organized themselves through the AAVM

(the Academic Alpine Club of Munich), but at the same time also joined local sections of the German Alpine Club in an effort to promote elite mountaineering. This local heritage, with its Swabian, Bavarian and Austrian customs and traditions, continued to exert its influence over the mountaineers when travelling to Asia – whether they were composing songs and poems in Bavarian dialect, or whether they were having their *Schmarrn* [a type of shredded pancake popular in Austria and Bavaria] for breakfast. Thus, while the National Socialist government attempted to foster a specifically German patriotism by the 1930s, these efforts were, as the example of the Himalayan mountaineers shows, only partially successful. In fact, federalism and regionalism remained an important force within the institutions of the Third Reich. Folkish traditions – promoted by many National Socialist officials – often remained rooted in (invented) local, rather than German traditions. It becomes clear, therefore, that allegiance to their nation and ties to a specific regional heritage were by no means mutually exclusive for travellers to Tibet and the Himalayas.

III.

Having surveyed the formation and significance of national and regional loyalties for both British and German travellers, it would seem natural to assume that this led to regional particularism and put obstacles in the way of encounters between individuals from different nations or regions. This, however, was not the case, as these loyalties often enabled travellers from different nations to find common ground. In fact, expeditions were frequently launched with the express aim of fostering friendly relations between different countries and different cultures, both within Europe and beyond. The new

National Socialist regime in Germany, for instance, saw them as an opportunity to showcase Germany's progress and supposedly peaceful aims to the rest of the world. In January 1937, at a time when Hitler was pursuing accommodation with Britain over some of his foreign policy aims, the German Himalayan Foundation reminded the Ministry of the Interior of the benefits of their expeditions, drawing attention to their scientific merits but also to the fact that they were 'an important factor in the configuration of relations with other countries, particularly with circles in England, where they have found unusually unconditional support'. Beyond Europe, expeditions could also cement friendly relations between Europe and Asia. Drawing on the fact that the swastika was a very common symbol in Tibet, Schäfer's 1938/9 expedition was advertised to the public as a meeting between 'Eastern' and 'Western' swastika. When the expedition film reached German cinemas in 1943, the endeavour was partially cast within the context of German-Japanese relations and used to reinforce the wartime alliance between the two states. The propaganda surrounding the film drew attention to the fact that there were similarities between German and Asian mentalities, suggesting that

> [the film] reaches the public at a time when the events of the war have led to closer ties between the young Europe and the New Greater East Asia. The New Greater East Asia, too, despite storming onwards, is not willing to abandon its ancient folkish ties and cultural traditions. Perhaps Tibet, where these cultural traditions were able to remain with particular intensity, is especially suited to sharpening our gaze into the fundamental depths [*Urgründe*] of the East Asian being [*Wesen*].

Publications and propaganda material generated by and for travellers, therefore, exploited

national ideological and political agendas not just to emphasise competition between nations, but also to foster an ideologically motivated cooperation between different parts of the world.

Moreover, travellers did not simply compare the Himalayas and Tibet to their 'own', domestic environments in order to make them familiar. The process of comparison was much more varied and transnational than that and involved comparisons across European borders. It was not uncommon for British travellers to draw comparisons with continental European environments, as did John Hanbury-Tracy when he claimed that the border between Burma and Tibet reminded him of a 'savage Switzerland', where 'gaunt peaks of incredible steepness stand capped in mist'. At certain times their sense of regionalism also led travellers to think about the natural environment they encountered in ways that drew attention to similarities between different nationalities and cultures. In some cases, the environment they were faced with enabled travellers from different countries to find common ground for discussion, often displaying a distinct note of regionalism. Günther Hepp, for one, recorded how he had found himself talking about home with the British Liaison Officer accompanying the German expedition, reminiscing about the 'old cathedrals of England', about 'sacred Swabia' and about 'the beauty of Upper Bavaria'. This conversation, Hepp recalled, had shown him 'that the English spirit is the closest relative of the German spirit, both limitless and proud, both complementing and enriching each other'. About six weeks later, another conversation between the two became more political but no less amicable. In his diary entry for 13 July 1937, Hepp wrote '[Smart] recognizes Bolshevism as a danger to European culture, and we are in agreement that

England and Germany must remain friends – "England at sea and Germany on the continent"'. Drawing comparisons between the Himalayas and Europe, thus, served to alert travellers to the positive aspects of countries they were in competition with. It made it possible to reflect on similarities between British and German culture without making comments that might be regarded as politically undesirable at home.

These comments often produced a peculiar blend of Orientalism-cum-cosmopolitanism, in which travellers oscillated between seeing themselves as part of 'Western' or 'European' civilization (in the face of the Inner Asian 'other') and conceiving of themselves as part of a common humanity (in the face of what they thought were the most pressing global problems). Comparing the environment of the Himalayas and Tibet to what they defined as their 'home', or '*Heimat*', allowed travellers to appreciate that similarities (however superficial) existed between different parts of the world. This, in turn, made it easier for them to think of themselves as part of a much wider group of people faced by the same problems. Comments about the Himalayas often constituted a means of expressing concerns, worries and anxieties over the state of human nature and matters thought to be most central to human existence. The Himalayas provided, according to Hanbury-Tracy, 'an image of immortality'. While he acknowledged that mountains, too, did rise and fall, he contrasted the 'appearance of eternal, indestructible mass' which they conveyed with 'the fluid world of building up and pulling down, of ceaseless change and birth and life and death' which he believed to be all around him. The Himalayan peaks therefore provided for him a counter-weight to what he perceived as the chaos, confusions and impermanence of interwar modernity. British and German

travellers were remarkably similar in the comments they made in this context. Frederick Smythe, notwithstanding his views on the necessity of reserving Everest for a British expedition, seemed to be motivated by much the same thoughts as Paul Bauer, one of the most vociferously patriotic of Germany's mountaineers. Smythe, in a published account of one of his expeditions, claimed that his love for travel and exploration came from a desire to see uncharted territories, to 'seek escape from the plains of commerce' and to reach what he called 'barren regions incapable of commercial development.' Bauer similarly seems to have been driven by a sense of disenchantment with urban, commercial Western development. Referring to the Weimar Republic as a 'time of desolation', he claimed that mountains 'had the power to restore that which town environment had threatened to steal.' British and German travellers, thus, were united in their attitudes towards what they thought of as the darker aspects of Western modernity, and their reflections on Tibet and the Himalayas often provided them with common ground.

This extended to the solutions some authors offered to the problems they had diagnosed. Some believed that radical re-generation through an active lifestyle and through contact with nature were the best way of responding to the challenges Western civilization supposedly faced – an impulse that went back to the nineteenth century and was not confined to Germany. Ernst Grob, Ludwig Schmaderer and Herbert Paidar, for instance, in an account of their 1939 journey to Sikkim, claimed that nature provided 'a fresh bath for heart and soul' and had endowed them with 'vigour and courage'. It would be relatively straightforward to interpret such rhetoric emphasising strength, victory, self-

discipline and courage as a prime example of the influence of National Socialist ideology. Upon closer inspection, however, it may be more useful to see it as a result of concerns that were common to travellers from a number of nations. A report published in 1938, in which the history of German Himalayan expeditions was summarized, did refer to the 1920s and early 1930s as a time of 'national despair' (clearly echoing official Nazi interpretations of German history), but also claimed that the issues faced by Germans during this time were not unique to Germany. 'It was not in order to pre-empt the English', the report went on, 'that the Germans attacked the monumental ice castle of Kanchenjunga, but in order to accomplish a common, supra-national [*übervölkisch*] goal together with them - each in their own way.' Reports such as this one effectively combined talk of German patriotism and concerns about Germany's position in the world with wider anxieties about the state of humanity and Western 'civilization' beyond the borders of Germany.

IV.

The Second World War put an end to much of this rhetoric, and with the outbreak of war British and German comments about the other country, not altogether unexpectedly, became much more consistently hostile than they had been up to 1939. German newspapers carried stories about how the British administration had supposedly put obstacles in the way of German travellers, and British officials were concerned about the potential for espionage in the activities of Germans in South and Inner Asia. Expeditions themselves came almost to a halt, as other priorities became more important. The first Tibetan post-war encounter between Britons and Germans took place not in the physical

reality of Tibet, but in fiction. In Douglas Valder Duff's 1949 adventure story *On the World's Roof*, the plucky British protagonist Roger is parachuted into Tibet in order to prevent Nazi soldiers, who have fled there after the war, from building a nuclear bomb. Throughout the book, the level-headed British hero has to evade and fight arrogant Germans and their cruel and barbaric Tibetan allies. However, as we have seen, this portrayal of Germans and of Inner Asia was not necessarily indicative of the thoughts and actions of travellers during the interwar period. While a sense of patriotism and national rivalry played a role in motivating travel to Tibet and the Himalayas, most British and German travellers and writers cast their ambitions within a much more complex framework that combined patriotism with regional loyalties and cosmopolitan concerns. These seemingly different and contradictory loyalties not only often co-existed, but enhanced and reinforced each other. Regional loyalties did not preclude a sense of belonging to a nation – in fact, one could strengthen the other. More importantly, however, comparing different regions of the world with one another allowed travellers to appreciate commonalities between members of different nation-states and cultures. This, in turn, led them to explore problems which they believed transcended national and regional boundaries, problems that, in their estimation, faced either 'Western civilization' or mankind as a whole.

What this chapter hopes to have shown, therefore, is that studying the transnational dimensions of European history does not need to privilege a global perspective over local, regional and national histories – for that would be an artificial divide – but that a transnational perspective helps us understand these local, regional and national histories

better. It is undoubtedly true that the kind of engagement with other parts of the world outlined in this contribution was very much a minority activity, even though a much larger number of people engaged with the materials made public after the return of expeditions to Europe. However it is important to bear in mind that adopting a transnational perspective, and looking beyond Europe when studying European history, can help us become more attuned to the ways in which region, nation and culture interacted with each other in the minds of many Europeans. The transnational perspective therefore enhances our understanding of the local, regional and national contexts of European history as a whole.