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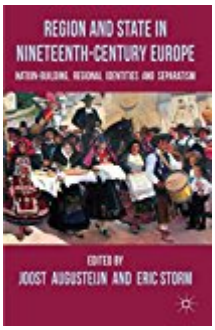

Joost Augusteijn, Eric Storm. *Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building, Regional Identities and Separatism.* Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 293 S. ISBN 978-0-230-31394-1.

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Nations and nation-states, we are told, lie at the heart of nineteenth-century European modernity. Even if historians and theorists, notably Benedict Anderson Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London 1983. , frequently refer to them today as "communities," following Ferdinand Tönnies it seems more appropriate to regard the nation and the nation-state as examples of what he called "society," thereby inscribing the emergence of nation-states into the sociologist's modernization thesis, namely that it implied the passage from "community" [Gemeinschaft] to "society" [Gesellschaft]. One consequence of this modernizing discourse, of course, was the notion, especially evident in the nineteenth century's second half, that the nation-state represented the apex of state development. Stateless nations (Poles, Irish, etc.) yearned for their own states, while existing or newly-created states (Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany) strove to develop and assert a more nationalist character. The other implication of this evolutionary dynamic, as Eugen Weber contended in his seminal Peasants into Frenchmen Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914, Stanford 1976. , was the victory of the nation over the region. Namely, regions either succumbed to the pressures of the centralizing, modernizing nation-state or they clamored to create their own nation-state, a dynamic that had especially profound repercussions for the reorganization of Central and Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century.

With the present collection of essays, Joost Augusteijn and Eric Storm seek to challenge scholars' assumptions about regions in nineteenth-century Europe. They argue that this was just as much an era of region and region-building as it was of nations and nation-building, even in Western and Central Europe. Indeed, far from being the victims of nineteenth-century nationalist urges, they argue, regions were the consequences of nation-building and were largely constructed using the same technologies (school curricula, holidays, cultural associations, etc.). One broad goal of the volume, thus, is to shed light on the "regionalization" of nineteenth-century western and central Europe and, thereby, problematize

further the complex relations among regions, nations and nation-states. A second objective is to demonstrate the transnational dimension of this region-building dynamic. For the most part, the authors employ the word "transnational" here in a rather loose sense, denoting merely the simultaneous presence of regional movements in many parts of Europe, from Scotland to Spain, and from Brittany to Upper Silesia. But, occasionally, it is also used to highlight a degree of awareness of and cross-fertilization between regional movements in different national contexts.

The first three essays address the volume's conceptual foundations. Augusteijn and Storm's brief introduction makes a case for viewing 1890–1914 as a "first golden age of regionalism" (p. 2). It also surveys various forms that regionalism took, placing particular emphasis on the complex relationships between cultural and political regionalism. Given that this opening essay lacks an explicit engagement with the relevant literature, it falls on Xosé-Manoel Núñez's contribution to lay that groundwork. He does this largely by reflecting on the differences between regions and nations (noting in particular the absence of regional sovereignty claims and a lower level of emotional commitment to the region than to the nation) and by highlighting questions that warrant future research. Although the essay's programmatic elements seem a bit forced (as the author and the volume's editors concede, there is actually a good deal of work out there on Europe's regions, it is just that much of it has been conducted as part of inquiries into nationalism), it usefully reminds us that, even in France, regions also served as important focal points of supralocal identities and that their construction sometimes challenged, but also sometimes complemented the notion of the nation. In his essay, Eric Storm demonstrates how the ideas of such intellectuals as Julius Langbehn (Germany), Maurice Barrès (France) and Ángel Ganivet (Spain) helped nourish the emergence of regional cultures across Europe, especially in painting and art, by emphasizing the importance of rural "tradition, roots and authenticity" (p. 52) over urban science, progress and inventiveness.

The next four essays explore the relationship between region and state, in the context first of "centralized" nation-states, then that of continental empires. In his brief piece on France, Timothy Baycroft points out that the French state, even during the Third Republic, was fairly tolerant of cultural regionalism. While there were periodic calls for decentralization, the intense fight between republicanism and monarchism blocked the appeal for political regionalism, much less separatism. Meandering and poorly focused, Stefano Cavazza's essay suggests nonetheless that regional cultures flourished in united Italy, which is hardly surprising given the timing and nature of Italian unification. However, in ways resembling of Celia Applegate's and Alon Confino's understandings of Heimat in imperial Germany Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat, Berkeley / Los Angeles 1990; Alon Confino, The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Wurttemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918, Chapel Hill 1997. , he suggests that after 1860 local and regional identities were rallied to support national identifications, rather than either particularism or separatism. Siegfried Weichlein's contribution essentially reprises arguments he has made elsewhere about the relationship between regional and national identities in Imperial Germany Namely: Siegfried Weichlein, Nation und Region. Integrationsprozesse im Bismarckreich, Düsseldorf 2004. . Specifically, he argues that the creation of the federal empire, accompanied by a certain democratization of political life and major improvements to transportation and communications networks, encouraged regional and national identities to reinforce instead of oppose one another, as had largely been true prior to 1871. Given that the Habsburg Empire was not a nation-state and that it is as much an Eastern European as a Central European state, Peter Haslinger's essay on Austria-Hungary is a curious choice for the volume. Nonetheless, it is well-

written and insightful, showing in particular how the Empire's efforts to transcend nationalist discourses ultimately made the regions, the Austrian crown-lands, focal points of nationalist contestation.

Ostensibly, empire remains a context for the next two essays, Joseph M. Fradera's on Spain and Andrew G. Neely's on Scotland. In his contribution, Fradera suggests that the breakdown of Spain's global empire helped push the Catalan and Basque regional movements into overt nationalism, which in the twentieth century morphed into outright separatism. But it is a rambling essay in which the imperial story appears largely disconnected from the regionalist narrative. The British Empire actually plays a rather minor role in Neely's analysis of the revival of a distinct Scot's identity and the turn-of-the century campaign for Scottish home rule. Nonetheless, it is important, for he argues that Scottish pride vis-à-vis its participation in the imperial project and its contributions to the Union prevented Scottish nationalism from turning separatist.

The next group of essays explores the theme of competing regionalisms, first in Great Britain, then in Belgium. Robert Colt compares the phenomenon of cultural regionalism in Northumbria (Northeast England) and Southern Ireland between 1890 and 1920. Whereas the Irish increasingly strove to define themselves as non-English, even though most Irish did not advocate separatism, he notes that Northumbrians promoted a cultural sense of regional identity in which they championed being just "a different kind of English" (p. 185). Joost Augusteijn also focuses his attention on Ireland. He argues that, until 1911, regionalist and national sentiments peacefully coexisted in Ireland; thereafter, once the weakening of the House of Lords made separation constitutionally possible, they went their separate ways. But whereas the growth of cultural and political distinctiveness went hand in hand in the Catholic south, in the Protestant north, he points out, cultural regionalism took form only after the Ulster political movement emerged. With Maarten Van Ginderachter's fine piece, Belgian experiences are added to the mix. In particular, he highlights the difficulties of making clear differentiations between regionalism and nationalism, Walloon "regionalism" being hardly distinguishable from Flemish "nationalism" in form and support for the Belgian state, even if there were variations in content (most notably language, but also support for Catholicism).

Contributions from Goffe Jensma and Jim Bjork (and a conclusion) round out the volume. Goffe Jensma's rather disorganized piece looks at Frisian regionalism, a notion based à la Herder on a strong sense of linguistic identity and history, but which remained almost exclusively a cultural construct. Language also plays an important role in Jim Bjork's essay on the borderland area of Upper Silesia, a region where competing nationalisms expressed themselves, in part, through language choice (German and Polish). But Bjork's main concern is religion: what role did Catholicism play in particular regional or nationalist claims? As he shows, the Catholic Church's position was often quite ambiguous, because the needs of the faith were not always fully consonant with either political regionalism or nationalism. At the same time, Bjork's study raises the important question of how to conceptualize a region like Upper Silesia, where the inhabitants' sense of region was actually quite weak and generally subordinate to the competing national identities.

In their conclusion, Augusteijn and Storm return to the ideas presented in the introduction, seeking to reiterate and refine the initial claims based on the material developed in the several essays. Unfortunately, it does not fully succeed in convincing the reader about the overall success of their endeavor. In the final analysis, this is an uneven volume. The editors are to be applauded for calling attention to the importance of regions in nineteenth-century Europe and for highlighting

some of the analytical questions their study necessarily raises: how do we understand center-periphery relations? How do federal political structures affect notions of regional identity? How do cultural and political nationalism interrelate? But while the essays shed useful light on regional developments in many parts of Western and Central Europe, ultimately one senses that the nation and the nation-state are the volume's real focus. In part, this reflects the editors' views on regions' origins (i.e., they are byproducts of nation-building processes) and their analytical program, particularly their desire to understand the regions' divergent fates within a (nation-) state, namely integration or separation. But it also stems from the weakness of the transnational argument. Eric Storm's essay apart, which nicely calls attention to flows of ideas and practices across state borders, neither individually nor collectively do the essays provide a picture of regionalism (or region-building) as a coherent, European-wide phenomenon. It seems rather that we have here a number of individual cases with some passing resemblance to one another, instead of a clear instance of theme and variation.

In short, this is a volume where the individual parts outshine the whole. Several of the individual contributions (notably those by Nuñez, Storm, Augusteijn, Van Ginderachter, and Bjork) are first-rate. Similarly, Augsteijn and Storm's opening and closing essays raise valuable concerns, even if this reviewer finds their conclusions a bit overstated. So while hardly a groundbreaking addition to the literature, historians and other scholars of modern Europe will find much of interest in the stronger parts of the collection.

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