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for the Citizens of a Growing Europe

THEMATIC WORK GROUP 5

Frontiers and Identities

IV

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# Frontiers, Regions and Identities in Europe

*edited by*  
*Steven G. Ellis and Raingard Eßer*  
*with Jean-François Berdah and Miloš Řezník*

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# Preface

*Frontiers, regions and identities in Europe* is the fourth volume prepared by the Thematic Work Group 5, on “Frontiers and Identities”, of the CLIOHRES.net research Network of Excellence. It addresses territorial frontiers and regions, looking particularly at their use as markers of identity in European countries. It is the product of a collective effort by 16 historians from 10 countries. Work has been coordinated by two general editors, Steven G. Ellis and Raingard Eßer, and by co-editors Jean-François Berdah and Miloš Rezník. The volume builds on the three earlier publications, and on the debates and discussions that have taken place at the work group’s meetings over the past four years.

The terms ‘frontiers’, ‘regions’ and ‘identities’ are clearly connected. Regions are surrounded by borders or frontiers, and identities are formed through ideas that people hold about the characteristics and the genesis of geographic, cultural and political spaces they (or others) inhabit. However, the concepts which these terms represent are complex, multilayered and usually ambiguous. Often ‘region’ refers to an intermediate level between national governments and local communities, and this seems to be the most common understanding in official documents of the European Union, and amongst historians as well. But ‘region’ can also refer to larger geographic areas, where a number of states are grouped together on the basis of perceived commonalities, cultural, political, economic or geographical: in this sense, ‘Europe’ as a whole is a region. Eurasia is considered by some a macro-region. Although regions usually refer explicitly to geographic spaces, and therefore are somehow presumed to be more ‘authentic’, ‘natural’ or ‘tangible’ than such groupings of populations as ‘nations’, regions too are in essence ‘imagined communities’, often contested, usually overlapping and always changing.

In many cases, today’s regions are based on former states or the internal divisions of them; and their histories are thought of as continuing back to former times of independence. In others, regions have been moulded more recently due to shifts of boundaries, and hence of the perception of their meaning. The historical province of Brittany is, for example, not coterminous with the modern Breton administrative region. For some diehard Breton ‘nationalists’ (or ‘regionalists’ for those who do not regard Bretons as a nation) of the early 20th century, Breton speaking Lower Brittany was the ‘real Brittany’, while ‘French’ speaking Upper Brittany was a part of the French nation-state. The region ‘Brittany’ has therefore a long history, but means different things at different times and for different people.

Regions are neither static nor clearly demarcated. Frontiers and boundaries are frequently redrawn: provinces of existing nation states are either ‘lost’ or ‘(re)gained’, depending on the perspective of the people involved. New political boundaries may divide ethnic or religious communities, creating new regions where no one saw them before and forging new identities or opening possibilities for people to identify themselves in

new ways. Moreover, when empires or states dissolve into smaller political units, former provinces or regions can turn into separate nation-states; in other cases, former states have become, through conquest or voluntary merger, provinces in larger states. And finally, frontiers not only divide geographic spaces into regions, they also connect them in ‘frontier’ or ‘border’ areas.

These and other complexities and their implications are investigated in the present volume through comparative chapters on larger geographic areas in Europe and a number of historical case studies. The intention is not to propose a uniform theory, but rather to promote a new way of looking at regions, frontiers and identities.

The illustration on the cover is emblematic: Maria Ender’s “Attempt at a New Spatial Dimension”, fruit of the lively artistic experimentation that took place in Russia in the early 1920s. With its shifting shapes, colours, and dimensions, Ender’s painting symbolizes the idea that space can be seen in different ways, depending on how one looks at it. There are micro- and macro- ‘regions’ in the painting, it is up to the viewer to group them together or separate them.

The research group in “Frontiers and Identities” which has created this volume is part of the larger CLIOHRES Network, dedicated to exploring how better knowledge and more widespread understanding of the history of Europe can contribute to building European citizenship. For making this work possible, we thank first of all the European Commission which supports the Network through its Sixth Framework Programme. We also thank the Rector Prof. Marco Pasquali, Pro-rector Paolo Miccoli and the Administration of the University of Pisa (in the persons of Dr Riccardo Grasso, Administrative Director, and Dr Vincenzo Tedesco) for their support for the complex tasks undertaken to coordinate the Network. And we thank the CLIOHRES team (Laura Burgisano, Răzvan Adrian Marinescu, Viktoriya Kolp, Cecilia Asso, Laura Franciosi and Tommaso Salamone) for their dedication and effective work in a variety of sectors, including those directly connected with publication.

We especially thank the Thematic Work Group 5, its members, its leaders and the editors of this volume. Regions, frontiers and identities are used as a testing ground for developing a new historical agenda, and thus a novel way of understanding contemporary Europe. This volume shows convincingly how using the human and intellectual resources of our Network it is possible to reach a better understanding of the conceptual and factual backgrounds of historical studies in Europe.

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# The CLIOHRES Network of Excellence

CLIOHRES is a consortium of 45 universities and research institutions in 31 countries. Each institution is represented by two senior researchers and two doctoral students coming from various academic fields – primarily from history, but also from art history, archaeology, architecture, philology, philosophy, political science, sociology, literary studies and geography. The 180 researchers in the network are divided into six “Thematic Work Groups”, each of which deals with a broadly defined research area – ‘States, Institutions and Legislation’, ‘Power and Culture’, ‘Religion and Philosophy’, ‘Work, Gender and Society’, ‘Frontiers and Identities’, and ‘Europe and the Wider World’. Furthermore, the Network as a whole addresses ‘transversal themes’ of general relevance. These include ‘Citizenship’, ‘Migration’, ‘Discrimination and Tolerance’, ‘Gender’ and ‘Citizenship and Identities’; one of these is targeted each year. As a Network of Excellence, CLIOHRES is not an ordinary research project. It does not focus on a single research question or on a set of specific questions. Rather it is conceived as a forum where researchers representing various national and regional traditions can meet and elaborate their work in new ways thanks to structured interaction with their colleagues. The objective is not only to transcend the national boundaries that still largely define historical research agendas, opening new avenues for research, but also to use those very differences to become critically aware of how current research agendas have evolved. Thus, the goal is to examine basic and unquestioned attitudes about ourselves and others, which are rooted in the ways that the scientific community in each country looks at history.

Historians create and cultivate selective views of the national or local past, which in turn underpin pervasive ideas about identities and stereotypes: national, religious, gender, political, etc. National historiographies today are still largely shaped by problems and preoccupations reflecting previous political and cultural contexts. CLIOHRES aims to create and promote a new structure and agenda for the community of historical research, redirecting its critical efforts along more fruitful lines. The Network began its work in June 2005, thanks to a five-year contract with the European Commission through the Sixth Framework Programme of its Directorate General for Research, under Priority 7, dealing with “Citizenship”. Its activities aim to contribute to the development of innovative approaches to history as regards both the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. The Network works for a closer connection between research and learning/teaching, holding that this is essential in order to ensure that European citizens possess the necessary information, conceptual tools and more in general the vital critical and self-critical abilities which they will need in the future.

All the thematic groups have worked from the start according to a common research plan, beginning in the first year with reconnaissance or mapping, of how the questions

perceived as important for their thematic area appear in the different national historiographies. During the second year they defined 'connecting' themes, which are relevant for research in a wider geographical and chronological context. The third phase concentrated on comparing and reviewing sources and methodologies; the fourth focuses on 'cross-fertilisation', that is on showing how problems identified in the previous phases can be developed in new contexts. During the last phase, the groups will define new and relevant projects, in the broadest sense, for future research in the sector.

Each Thematic Work Group publishes one volume a year in order to share and discuss the results of their work with the broader academic community. The volumes are not conceived as the final word on the issues that they deal with, but rather as work-in-progress. In addition to the six Thematic Work Group volumes, the Network publishes one common volume per year dealing with the transversal theme targeted. It also publishes abridged versions of the dissertations written by doctoral students who have participated in its work. Together the volumes already published form an invitation to discuss the results of the Network and the novel directions that are emerging from its work; they also constitute a unique patrimony of up-to-date studies on well-known and less well-known aspects of Europe and its history.

All publications are available in book form and on the [www.cliohres.net](http://www.cliohres.net) website. They can be downloaded without charge. A list of publications to date can be found at the end of this volume.

# Introduction: Frontiers and Regions in Comparative Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Frontiers and regions are a natural outgrowth of the process of state formation. Regardless of whether the unit of political organization was a medieval kingdom, an early modern multiple monarchy, or a modern nation-state, the defence and policing of territorial frontiers has proved a perennial task of government. Region is, by contrast, a geographical term, normally denoting a medium-size area, smaller than the whole. Politically, regions may constitute a unit of government, but their relationship with the centre is critical and frequently changes over time. And historically, regions may include erstwhile independent entities – kingdoms, duchies, or city republics – which have been absorbed into centralizing states, but are liable to change their allegiance if central authority weakens.

This, the fourth volume of Thematic Work Group 5: Frontiers and Identities of CLIOHRES, a Network of Excellence sponsored by the European Commission's 6th Framework programme, examines the relationship between territorial frontiers and regions and their respective roles as markers of identity<sup>1</sup>. It also takes up some of the concluding remarks in the third volume of the series, which focused on urban identities<sup>2</sup>. While, as has been claimed, national identities are determined by 'hard' as well as by 'soft' variables, internationally-agreed state borders, passports, national law on the one hand, and on the other, language, heritage and culture, regional identities (as well as the urban identities discussed in volume three) seem, at first sight, far more flexible, multilayered and hybrid. The policy of the European Union over the last decades, with its vision of a 'Europe of the Regions', has challenged traditional assumptions about the nation state, and it requires academics as well as policy makers and European citizens to rethink the relationship between national and regional identities and the borders between them. This is also the aim of this present volume. The authors of the chapters

assembled in this book address concepts of regionalism and the relationship between state and region from a historical perspective<sup>3</sup>. That the focus of this book is history, rather than, for instance, geography, ethnography or sociology, is partly the result of the specialism of the team which came together to undertake the task: but partly it also reflects, so it may be argued, the important role of a historical consciousness and memory which informs many aspects of regional identity formation. History, perhaps more than any other aspect of human life, has been and still is evoked to create a sense of belonging to a geographical entity, a region, whose borders were in many cases not fixed by strict political lines of demarcation, and, in the case of border regions, were usually also contested by markers of ethnicity, religion, economy or geography. Moreover, versions of what was within and what was outside a region often changed with the changing parameters of historical narratives produced by politicians, pressure groups, history societies and artists. We, therefore, approach the task of analysing regions, borders and identities by applying the distinction which was recently suggested by Anssi Paasi between the identity of a region and regional identity (or regional consciousness)<sup>4</sup>. While geographers, historians and others, he argues, chart and define the identity of a region, applying different criteria and analytical tools to a specifically circumscribed area, regional identity is created by the people living in a region or outside it.

It is a truism to say that each generation is condemned to rewrite its own history, but the replacement of a Europe of competing nation-states through the development of the European Union by a federation of states has transformed the context in which both territorial frontiers and regions are studied. For instance, the Schengen Agreement of 1985 has led to the abolition of systematic border controls between the participating countries, now numbering twenty-five, with the removal of internal border posts and checks in the member-states of the Schengen area, the creation of a common visa for visitors to the area, and the harmonization of external border controls. In these circumstances, the erstwhile frontiers of the member states have been reduced to the status of mere administrative borders, separating different areas of jurisdiction. Thus, while territorial frontiers and their associated system of border controls still survive on the margins of Europe, for many Europeans what had been a familiar aspect of everyday life extending back over many centuries is now gradually disappearing.

This downgrading of European frontiers in turn calls in question central aspects of Europe's traditional national historiographies. These include issues of cultural and social perceptions of frontiers, perceptions of frontier societies, and most especially perceptions of alterity – attitudes to those 'other' peoples dwelling on the far side of the frontier. Different types of frontier have conjured up different connotations in different societies – as is amply demonstrated by the chapters of this volume – but in the historiographical master narratives of Europe's competing nation-states there was a reductionist tendency to oversimplify these differences in terms of 'them' and 'us'. Commonly, these competing historiographies themselves drew on a 'national agenda,'

exaggerating the frontier's significance by deploying a rhetoric of difference, or 'otherness' (more rarely, a rhetoric of identity or unity), which reflected the aspirations of the state, or more particularly of the centre.

The recent development of European federalism thus affords an opportunity for its historians to take stock of these inherited perspectives on a Europe of frontiers. Detached from their national historiographies, can the different types of territorial frontier be compared in a more meaningful way? Indeed, can the two sides of longstanding frontiers be reassembled historiographically into a more coherent whole? For one thing, military frontiers were by no means the norm throughout history. Frontiers between generally friendly nations might require, at particular times, no more than a boundary marker: in this sense, the Schengen Agreement may be seen to consolidate multilaterally what was an accepted pattern of frontier development. And even in the case of military frontiers, the preferred means of defence frequently reflected such factors as the frontier's strategic importance, the geography and terrain through which it ran, patterns of land usage, social structures, and ethno-cultural divisions. The question then arises as to whether such factors exercised a stronger or lesser influence in shaping the nature of the frontier at particular periods of its history.

Until recently studies by historians which attempted to compare developments across a range of European frontiers over a major historical period were few and far between, even though studies of individual frontiers were quite common<sup>5</sup>. Thanks to the recent upsurge of interest in frontiers, these are questions which may now be addressed. Within the last two decades, a number of collaborative volumes of a broadly comparative nature have appeared<sup>6</sup>. How far this upsurge reflects a specific awareness and response among historians to the passing of the European age of frontiers is hard to say; but Frontier Studies, as it has become known, is now an accepted area of historical inquiry.

By contrast, regional history and identity has long been a dynamic branch of research<sup>7</sup>. This interest has been further stimulated by the European Union's vision of a "Europe of the Regions" – a concept that has been eloquently propagated by intellectuals such as Denis de Rougemont since the 1930s<sup>8</sup>. De Rougemont and the probably better known other great advocate of postwar European federalism, Jean Monnet, designed their idea of Europe as an antidote to the aggressive and exclusive nationalisms whose devastating effects they had witnessed. It might even be argued that the European concept of federal states outlined above has now been overtaken by the parameter of 'regionality'. The dichotomy, if not antagonism, between 'nation' and 'region' that the architects of the European Union had detected still seems to overshadow the public as well as the academic debate about what is meant by a region today. The notion of a distant, *dirigiste* state versus a "warm, personal localism"<sup>9</sup> has gathered further momentum from the fall of macro, transnational systems such as Communism in Eastern Europe and Central Asia<sup>10</sup>. It has also been argued that dramatic events in recent history such as the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 further stimulated a retreat into a regional and local

arena<sup>11</sup>. This retreat into the seemingly known and therefore secure area of regional (and local) identity also seems to offer a shield against globalizing forces which are frequently perceived as a threat to the clear demarcations between ‘them’ and ‘us’ that have underpinned nationalist ideologies since the Long Eighteenth Century<sup>12</sup>. Regionalism, therefore, has become a marker of what has been labelled the *Zweite Moderne* [Second Modernity]<sup>13</sup>. Despite the ever-increasing presence of “regions” and “regionalism(s)” in contemporary discourse, however, the term itself still remains rather open-ended. A closer look at the definition of “region”, as presented in its Wikipedia entry offers a variety and, it seems, a growing number of areas and parameters which may be used to describe the concept. They reach well beyond the political sphere and the shadow of the concentration camps in which the idea of European regionalism was conceived by thinkers and politicians of the European Movement. These definitions include geographical, historical, social, cultural and administrative markers, to name just a few criteria which immediately spring to mind. These categories in some way transgress the above-mentioned dichotomy between “region” and “nation”. Macro-regions, such as the Baltic and the Mediterranean, can cross national boundaries and are defined by academics, bureaucrats and politicians through a common economic or geographical outlook and a more or less common culture – a perspective which seems to be shared by the people living in these areas<sup>14</sup>. Regions may also be constructed as areas on either side of national borders and they may be defined through a common heritage which precedes current national divisions<sup>15</sup>. Regional identity has also been used as a marker for what may perhaps be more accurately labelled ‘would-be nations’<sup>16</sup>, such as Scotland, Wales, and for some observers, Cornwall in Great Britain; the Basque Country or Catalonia in Spain; and Flanders and Wallonia in Belgium. It might be argued that the nomenclature used by policy makers, political parties and interest groups in these areas has proved very useful in negotiations with the European Union, particularly in regard to its financial initiatives to support regions and their distinct cultural markers such as language or dialect, architecture, heritage or outstanding natural features.

Interest in regionalism(s) has spanned many arenas. More, perhaps, than many other concepts, it has transgressed the boundaries between academia and the public. It has become an important tool of policy makers across Europe, but it has also been extensively exploited by the heritage industry, by amateur history societies and by the media in general. The approaches of these various actors have, however – and this does not come as a surprise – differed markedly. Politicians in search of votes have promised regional autonomy to their constituents – very successfully in the case of Scotland and Wales, which now have their own parliament and regional assembly respectively, but with limited success in the case of the North East of England<sup>17</sup>. Historians have constructed regions as heuristic instruments to tackle specific research questions in search of facets of or counter-arguments against a national ‘master-narrative’<sup>18</sup>. Volunteer groups and schools have been and are involved in community-based projects such as

the Heritage-Lottery-funded “England’s Past for Everyone”, which aims to connect a local population with the past of its region, town or village<sup>19</sup>.

The following essays address questions of regional identity and borders from a historical perspective charting a wide geographical and chronological area. Taken as a whole they aim to outline and to understand the different interpretations of regionality and its role in the different national historiographies represented by the authors of the volume. This statement is itself a significant finding of the research group. Arguably, one way of approaching the question would have been to determine first what regionality is, and then to construct the volume in accordance with the agreed definition. What has been attempted here, however, is to encourage the authors to write regional history in accordance with their own particular traditions and then to seek to discover the historical, political and cultural contexts which prompted the contributors to write regional history in the way they have. At any rate, what is abundantly clear is that the definition of a region not only differs in terms of the arena in which it is used, it also differs substantially in the understanding of historians, politicians, and the general public in the different countries of Europe (and outside Europe). One important task of the volume, therefore, is to identify the different agents of regionality in the different national contexts. As chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the volume demonstrate, a regional agenda has developed very differently in the different national contexts. In post-war Eastern Europe, it reflects a national agenda which reduced regionalism and regional research to a field occupied by academics which did not fit into the ‘master narrative’ of socialism and progress. Thus, in the Slovak Republic, for instance, regional research is still very much in its infancy. In France, by contrast, research into regions blossomed in the 20th century with the rise of the “Annales” School and its multidisciplinary approach to research. And whereas England has a very well developed academic and “grassroots” infrastructure for regional history, it exhibits a very poor political response to a regional agenda. A comparison of the different agents of regionalism and their role within their respective national context may thus permit the development of a first, tentative typology of regionality and its political environments.

Although it has been argued that globalization has eroded the distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’ which was so prevalent in the development of national identity, the encounter with the ‘other’ as a marker of identity seems to have returned through the back door in regional identity formation. Pat Hudson has argued that “as outside influences get stronger, regional and local character and differences tend to be transformed.... They are as likely to be reinforced as reduced”<sup>20</sup>. It is important, as will be argued here, that historians address these questions with their tools of academic research and deconstruct all too comfortable myths and stereotypes about regional identities, lines of demarcation and attitudes towards perceived insiders and outsiders.

The emphasis on regionality as a concept as well as an area of historical investigation is, of course, not the product of the political developments of the last thirty years or so. Ever

since the antiquarian publications of the late 16th and 17th centuries, researchers have viewed their immediate and medium-range environments as a distinct area of study with clearly recognizable borders. Members of the *Antiquitates* movement operated largely within their own networks, received support and recognition from urban and regional elites, but collaborated, where possible, with academic historians. So far, the relationship between academics and antiquarians has not been adequately discussed in studies on early modern European historiography. On the contrary, antiquarians' contributions to the development of the discipline of History have, to date, either been belittled or ignored<sup>21</sup>. Antiquarian research has largely been perceived as an approach to the acquisition of the past which was distinctly different from the research agenda of the academy and remained separate from university studies until the more recent developments of local and regional history as academic fields of investigation<sup>22</sup>. One of the key criticisms of antiquarian, and therefore, 'traditional' regional and local studies has been their lack of analysis and contextualization, in essence, their parochialism, which has seemed to reduce their value to being a mere quarry of factual information rather than offering interpretations of change over time<sup>23</sup>. Such an approach would, indeed, be useless in the present context.

The aim here is therefore to address a number of questions in the case studies which form Part III of the present book. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the relationship between the nation and the region forms a substantial part of this investigation. It has been argued that the relationship between regional and national identity is constructed, negotiated and has to be understood as a performative discourse<sup>24</sup>. How, for instance, do regional agents at various levels respond to 'weak' or 'strong' states? What is the relationship between regions and composite states? How do regions, or rather, regional players and inhabitants react to the collapse of a state? How is a region created as a consequence of new border arrangements, of immigration or emigration or of economic changes? Can we detect common patterns across Europe and over time? Addressing these question horizontally, how may relations between regions in a specific state be characterized? Are they shaped by competition for resources, prominence and political power, or do they 'usually' form alliances against the political and economic centres in London, Paris or Amsterdam and their prosperous hinterlands<sup>25</sup>? How does the vicinity to a national border shape regional identity in contrast to (or in comparison with) a region that is geographically embedded within the nation state and has no national borders? This agenda also suggests the need for a closer look at regional consciousness, that is, regional identity as perceived by its inhabitants at various levels of society. Is identity "often easier to recognise by its absence than for its presence"<sup>26</sup> – in other words, through opposition to 'the other'? Or can we understand regional identity as kaleidoscopic, as suggested by Peter Sahlins and, more recently, by William O'Reilly, and adaptable to different times and circumstances<sup>27</sup>? What are the markers of identity, if any? How important, for instance, are confessional or religious homogeneity, or its absence, ethnicity, a homogenous economy or language, a distinct geography for the identification process of inhabitants of spaces

labelled and defined as regions? How can and is history used to construct or to deconstruct this entity, and how do historical back-projections change over time according to present-centred agendas? Who are the agents of these processes and constructions, and where do they operate? What is the relationship between regionalism and localism? Are the perceived distinctions between ‘them’ and ‘us’ based on a regional framework, or is a perceived identity focused rather on a city, town or village but simply uses a discourse of regionality in its arguments? Likewise, are categories of who belongs and who does not belong based on a distinct geographical space, or is regionality simply an easier and (currently, or at distinct times in the past) a more convenient label to disguise economic differences – for instance between rural and urban areas, centres and peripheries, metropolises and small(er) towns? Some of the questions enumerated here have been addressed in volume three of the Thematic Work Group which focused on urban identities and their connection to regional and national contexts. In this volume, therefore, the aim is to build on the findings and results of that research emphasizing the regional scenario. Overlaps, similarities, but perhaps also some differences, may thus be expected.

In compiling the present volume, the Thematic Work Group has profited from numerous discussions held in the context of the CLIOHRES Network. This is exemplified, as we hope, by the strongly collaborative approach in Part II of the volume, the section on Agencies. As with previous volumes of the Group, the chapters also include some contributions by authors from outside the formal Consortium, such as Cliohnet 2 or Clioh World partners. And in the case of one partner university, the collaborative work of a member and a non-member of the Group also afforded some valuable additional insights in regard to the volume. Members have also been able to draw, in their discussions and research, on earlier studies undertaken elsewhere in the Network, as is indicated by the numerous references to work published in other CLIOHRES volumes. Academic research into regions has traditionally been strong for the medieval and early modern periods when nation states were either absent or still in their political infancy<sup>28</sup>. This tendency is reflected in the contributions covering most of the western European case studies, those by Rhys Morgan and Gerald Power, Steven Ellis, Raingard Eßer, and Anna Maria Pult Quaglia. Regionalism as a political force played a much more decisive role in the 20th century in the turbulent histories of central and eastern European states. Again, this is reflected in the chapters assembled here by Miloš Řezník, Martin Moll, Elena Mannová, Ioan Marius Bucur and Ionut Costea<sup>29</sup>. Five contributors – Steven Ellis, Jean-François Berdah, Anna Maria Pult, Ioan Marius Bucur and Ionut Costea – have analysed their respective border areas, the English Far North, the Franco-Spanish border in the Pyrennees, Tuscany, and Transylvania through a long-term approach crossing traditional historiographical periodizations. In conclusion, therefore, it is hoped that the publication of this wide-ranging collection of essays will help to advance understanding both of the differences and the similarities in what may be perceived and described as a region across a spectrum of national European historiographies.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> We should like to record our thanks here to Dr. Diana Newton, University of Teesside, whose comments on earlier versions of this introduction and on some of the chapters in this volume have proved very helpful.
- <sup>2</sup> L. Klusáková, L. Teulières (eds.), *Frontiers and Identities, Cities in Regions and Nations*, Pisa 2008.
- <sup>3</sup> While Adrian Green and Anthony Pollard define regionalism as “seeking self-government”, we apply here a broader definition including forms of identity formation which extend the political arena implied in Green/Pollard. See A. Green, A.J. Pollard, *Introduction, Identifying Regions*, in Id. (eds.), *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300-2000*, Woodbridge 2007, pp. 1-27, at p. 8.
- <sup>4</sup> A. Paasi, *Region, and Place: Regional Identity in Question*, in “Progress in Human Geography”, 2003, 27, 4, p. 478.
- <sup>5</sup> See, for instance, the wide range of individual frontiers covered in the fine bibliography of secondary literature in R. Bartlett, A. Mackay (eds.), *Medieval frontier societies*, Oxford 1989, pp. 341-368.
- <sup>6</sup> For example, *Ibid.*; D. Power, N. Standen (eds.), *Frontiers in question: Eurasian borderlands, 700-1700*, Basingstoke 1999; S.G. Ellis, R. Eßer (eds.), *Frontiers and the writing of history, 1500-1850*, Hannover - Laatzten 2006; W. Haubrichs, R. Schneider (eds.), *Grenzen und Grenzregionen*, Saarbrücken 1993; W. Schmale, R. Stauber (eds.), *Menschen und Grenzen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin 1998; H. Gustafsson, H. Sanders (eds.), *Vid Gränsen: Integration och identitet i det förnationella Norden*, Gothenburg 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> See, for instance, H. Mommsen, *Die Nation ist tot, es lebe die Region*, in G. Knopp, S. Quant, H. Schefler (eds.), *Nation Deutschland?*, Munich 1984, pp. 35-38; R. Lindner (ed.), *Die Wiederkehr des Regionalen: Über neue Formen kultureller Identität*, Frankfurt 1994.
- <sup>8</sup> See also D. de Rougemont, *Vers une fédération des régions*, in “Naissance de L’Europe des régions: Bulletin de la Culture”, Geneva 1968, 2.
- <sup>9</sup> C. Applegate, *A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times*, in “The American Historical Review”, 1999, 104, 4, pp. 1157-1182, at p. 1158.
- <sup>10</sup> It seems that the term region is defined in Eastern Europe as a macro-region often embracing several states of the former Soviet Union. In this context, the concept of “regional families” on the Eurasian continent describes a useful analytical tool to understand politics in this area. See M. A. Molchanov, *Regional Promises in State Social Identity Construction: The Rhetoric of a Single Economic Space*, paper presented at the 6th Pan-European IR conference, Turin, Italy, 12-15 September 2007. The opposite effect, a renewed and very volatile nationalism, however, might and may still be witnessed in the former Yugoslavia and adjacent areas.
- <sup>11</sup> K. Dyson, *The Challenged Consensus, The 1987 German Federal Elections*, in “Political Quarterly”, 1987, 58, 2, pp. 152-166.
- <sup>12</sup> M. Castells, *Das Informationszeitalter*, Opladen 2004, pp. 373, 409. More critical, however, on the EU’s vision of regionalism is R. Dahrendorf, *Auf der Suche nach einer neuen Ordnung*, Munich 2003, p. 40.
- <sup>13</sup> S. Hummel, *Kulturpolitik der Zweiten Moderne*, in “Neues Archiv für Niedersachsen”, 2006, 2, pp. 28ff.
- <sup>14</sup> See, for instance, the initiative *Ars Baltica*, inaugurated in 1991 by the Ministries of Culture of the Baltic Sea Region in order to shape a common Baltic cultural policy, <http://www.ars-baltica.net>
- <sup>15</sup> See, for instance, the five Euregios in the German-Belgian-French-Dutch border areas.
- <sup>16</sup> Applegate, *Europe of Regions* cit., p. 1171.
- <sup>17</sup> See M. Sandford, *English regionalism through the looking glass: perspectives on the English Question from the North-East and Cornwall*, in “National Identities”, 2006, 8, 1, pp. 77-93.

- <sup>18</sup> W. Freitag, *Landesgeschichte als Synthese – Regionalgeschichte als Methode?*, in “Westfälische Forschungen”, 2004, pp. 291-305.
- <sup>19</sup> [http://www.englishspastforeveryone.org.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=12&Session/@id=D\\_E46758O1drsSWu86HR34uk](http://www.englishspastforeveryone.org.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=12&Session/@id=D_E46758O1drsSWu86HR34uk)
- <sup>20</sup> P. Hudson, *Regional and local history: globalisation, postmodernism and the future*, in “Journal of Local and Regional Studies”, 1999, 20, 1, pp. 5-25, at p. 9.
- <sup>21</sup> M. Völkel, *Geschichtsschreibung*, Cologne 2006, pp. 204-206. For Britain, see also R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: the discovery of the past in eighteenth-century Britain*, London 2004.
- <sup>22</sup> In England, most notably since the development of Local History as a distinct branch of History with its own academic departments such as the English Local History Department at the University of Leicester (1948), the Centre for East Anglian Studies at the University of East Anglia (1967), and others. It is, perhaps, symptomatic that these initiatives were developed in what were then new universities, while older academic establishments initially harboured traditional reservations against what was then still perceived as an interest for amateurs rather than academics.
- <sup>23</sup> See, for instance, J.D. Marshall, *The tyranny of the discrete: a discussion of the problems of local history in England*, Aldershot 1997.
- <sup>24</sup> C. Tacke, *The Nation in the Region: National Movements in Germany and France in the 19th century*, in J.G. Beramendi, R. Máiz, X.M. Núñez, *Nationalisms in Europe: Past and Present*, Santiago de Compostella 1994, 2, pp. 691-703. See also Applegate, *Europe of Regions*, pp. 1177-1179.
- <sup>25</sup> See, for instance, R. Eßer, ‘*Concordia res parvae crescent*’. *Regional Histories and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, in J. Pollmann, A. Spicer (eds.), *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands. Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, Leiden 2006, pp. 229-248.
- <sup>26</sup> D. Newton, *North-East England, 1569-1625, Governance, Culture and Identity*, Woodbridge 2006, Introduction, p. 7.
- <sup>27</sup> P. Sahlins, *Boundaries: the making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Berkeley - Los Angeles 1981, p. 271; W. O'Reilly, *Border, Buffer and Bulwark. The Historiography of the Military Frontier, 1521-1881*, in S.G. Ellis, R. Eßer (eds.), *Frontiers and the Writing of History, 1500-1850*, Hannover 2006, pp. 229-244.
- <sup>28</sup> The School of the “Annales” has, perhaps, been the most important motor for this development.

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