

---

*H-France Review* Vol. 22 (October 2022), No. 162

Dean Kostantaras, *Nationalism and Revolution in Europe, 1763-1848*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. 272 pp. €99.00 (hb). ISBN 9789462985186; €98.99 (eb). ISBN 9789048536214.

Response by Dean Kostantaras, Northwestern State University.

I would like to thank the editors of *H-France Review* for inviting me to take part in this discussion and respond to a few points made in the review. My first concern is that, based on the reviewer's description, readers may expect to find a lightly examined account of how terms such as nation, nationalism, etc. were used during the period. This is in fact one of the chief preoccupations of the book, as made clear in the introduction and pursued at length throughout. The early chapters are almost entirely given to the problem and considerable space is subsequently occupied in recalling this intent to readers and discussing its significance for the subject matter and circumstances at hand. In fact, I find that there is very little in the way of engagement with the book's aims and actual substance in the review for reasons perhaps explained below. For example, although Professor Hippler does acknowledge the effort made to challenge "the still existing ideas of a dichotomy between Western and Eastern European understandings of the nation," there is no further comment on the novel and definitive manner, in my opinion, in which this is accomplished. Other major points of enquiry are omitted from view or make a fleeting appearance in the one- and occasionally two-sentence summaries of individual chapters.

The review is mostly concerned with problematizing the practice of comparative history and specifically the challenges it poses to scholars from a standpoint of linguistic dexterity. That is certainly a valid point, however such works play an important role in nationalism studies, especially those dealing with the times in question where the near simultaneity of mobilization over so great a space renders almost every investigation of the subject an exercise in epidemiology. I am not in a position to judge what the reviewer counts as "surprising" or not, but I believe that the results of the present study supply important insights for those interested in learning more, among other things, about the pre-revolutionary conceptual context and dichotomy alluded to above, the extent to which certain terms, concepts and even whole narratives were reproduced and employed throughout the continent, a comparison (rarely found) between Balkan and northwestern European revolutionary experiences, or the remarkable cross-border escalation in the level of political contention that occurred in the years immediately preceding 1848. In each effort of this kind, one unfortunately runs up against the limits of their mastery of different languages and that is, of course, the case here. Still, I do not believe that knowledge and meaning are wholly incapable of being communicated. Although a Greek historian, or so the reviewer is keen to remind me, I am confident that I can give English readers

---

a sense of the diverse ways in which the nation was represented in Greek sources from context to context and I suspect that feeling prevails for many of the scholars whose works I have consulted. All that being said, the reviewer falsely claims that the book “almost exclusively engages with and indeed relies on anglophone historiography,” a statement that in fact clashes with his observation made elsewhere that works in French are “quite prominently represented.” This includes, incidentally, an original French reading of Thierry’s *Histoire de la conquête de l’Angleterre par les Normands*, parts of which are duly cited.

These differences in opinion notwithstanding, I thank the reviewer for his time in considering the work. My thanks again also to the editors at *H-France Review* for permitting me some space to respond.

Dean Kostantaras  
Northwestern State University  
[kostantarasd@nsula.edu](mailto:kostantarasd@nsula.edu)

Copyright © 2022 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of *H-France Review* nor republication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on *H-France Review* are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172