

Matthijs Lok

## Europe against Revolution: Conservatism, Enlightenment and the Making of the Past

### Abstract:

In the decades around 1800, the era of the French Revolution, counter-revolutionary authors from all over Europe defended European civilisation against the onslaught of nationalist revolutionaries, bent on the destruction of the existing order, or so they believed. In opposition to the new revolutionary world of universal and abstract principles, the counter-revolutionary publicists proclaimed the concept of a gradually developing European society and political order, founded on a set of historical and - ultimately divine - institutions that had guaranteed Europe's unique freedom, moderation, diversity, and progress since the fall of the Roman Empire. These counter-revolutionary Europeanists drew on the cosmopolitan Enlightenment and simultaneously criticized its alleged revolutionary legacy. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these ideas of European history and civilisation were rediscovered and adapted to new political contexts, shaping in manifold ways our contested idea of European history and memory until today.