

# Continental Connections: Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century

---

STEPHEN CONWAY

*University College London*

## Abstract

The topic of empire has loomed large in recent writings on eighteenth-century Britain. This article attempts to encourage greater appreciation of Britain's multifarious connections with continental Europe in this period. It also seeks to establish that empire and Europe were seen by many Britons as complementary rather than competing areas of interest and engagement.

To claim that the burial records of eighteenth-century Falmouth make fascinating reading would be going too far, but they certainly contain some surprises. The list of mainly Cornish-sounding names is interrupted in 1739 by entries for three Dutchmen. Another Dutchman was buried in Falmouth the following year; sixteen Frenchmen in 1744, and nine more in 1745. Over the next thirty-five years, more deceased Dutch and French make a fleeting appearance, together with smaller numbers of Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Germans and Italians.<sup>1</sup> The records give no clues as to why they were in Falmouth. At least some of them were probably prisoners of war and most of the rest were almost certainly mariners.

This glimpse into life – or rather death – in Falmouth is suggestive of some of the continental connections of a modest English coastal town. Yet recent historical scholarship on eighteenth-century Britain has for the most part been much more interested in the impact of empire than in links with the rest of Europe. Very different historians, approaching the subject from a variety of angles, have stressed the importance of Britain's overseas possessions to domestic developments. Peter Marshall has

I am grateful for permission to quote from the manuscript collections cited in subsequent footnotes. I also wish to acknowledge my thanks to Reider Payne for information on material in the Lambeth Palace Library, and to Peter Marshall and Julian Hoppit for advice and encouragement. A shorter version of this article was delivered as an inaugural lecture at University College London in March 2004.

<sup>1</sup> *The Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials of the Parish of Falmouth in the County of Cornwall, 1663–1812*, pt. ii, ed. Susan Elizabeth Gay and Mrs Howard Fox (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, Exeter, 1915), pp. 768–862.

contributed more than anyone to this historiographical trend with his explorations of changing attitudes to empire, and the boundaries of Britishness, from the 1740s to the 1790s.<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Wilson, another influential figure in the field, has meanwhile identified ‘imperialism’ as a vital force in eighteenth-century English life.<sup>3</sup>

The recognition that British history needs to be studied by reference to events outside these islands is greatly to be welcomed. Unfortunately this widening of horizons has largely been confined to empire. There has been no comparable acknowledgement in the recent literature of the importance of continental Europe. It almost seems as if the preferences of those eighteenth-century commentators who longed for Britain to avoid continental connections and concentrate instead on imperial security and expansion have been accepted as undisputed expressions of national sentiment or even as descriptions of established reality. Some scholars appear to ignore the European dimensions of eighteenth-century Britain altogether. Others present empire and Europe as alternatives, and point to a turning away from the continent in the middle of the century. While both Daniel Baugh and Eliga Gould suggest that there was a return to an emphasis on Britain’s European persona after defeat in the American war of 1775–83 and the loss of most of the mainland North American colonies, they see this return as following a long period of disengagement – in Baugh’s words a ‘withdrawing from Europe’ – which took place from the time of the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–8 and the Seven Years War of 1756–63.<sup>4</sup>

If the period from the middle of the century to the conclusion of the American war did in some respects see a withdrawal from Europe, in others it most emphatically did not. And viewing the eighteenth century as a whole, it must be said that, if Britain and Ireland were the centres of an empire, and particularly an Atlantic empire, which in some minds stretched definitions of the nation across the ocean to include the North

<sup>2</sup> ‘“Cornwallis Triumphant”: War in India and the British Public in the Late-Eighteenth Century’, in *War, Strategy, and International Politics: Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard*, ed. Lawrence Freedman, Paul Hayes, and Robert O’Neill (Oxford, 1992), pp. 57–74; ‘A Nation Defined by Empire, 1755–1776’, in *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (1995), pp. 208–22; ‘Britain and the World in the Eighteenth Century: I, Reshaping the Empire’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* [hereafter *TRHS*], 6th ser., viii (1998), 1–18; and ‘Britain and the World in the Eighteenth Century: II, Britons and Americans’, *TRHS*, 6th ser., ix (1999), 1–16.

<sup>3</sup> See her ‘Empire, Trade and Popular Politics in Mid-Hanoverian Britain: The Case of Admiral Vernon’, *Past and Present* [hereafter *P & P*], cxxi (1988), 74–109; ‘Empire and Virtue: The Imperial Project and Hanoverian Culture, c.1720–1785’, in *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, ed. Lawrence Stone (1994) [hereafter Stone, *Imperial State*], pp. 128–64; *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, 1995); and *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Daniel A. Baugh, ‘Withdrawing from Europe: Anglo-French Maritime Geopolitics, 1750–1800’, *International History Review*, xx (1988), 1–32, and ‘Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce: The Uses of a “Grand Maritime Empire”’, in Stone, *Imperial State*, pp. 185–223; Eliga Gould, ‘American Independence and Britain’s Counter-Revolution’, *P & P*, cliv (1997), 107–41, and *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000). See also Jeremy Black, *America or Europe? British Foreign Policy 1739–63* (1998).

American colonies, then Britain and Ireland were also part of Europe and tied to the continent in innumerable ways. These ties might not have been welcome to all the British and Irish – to put it mildly – but they undoubtedly existed, and it could be argued that the very strength of opposition to certain of them only serves to demonstrate their importance.

The primary objective of this article is simply to sketch out a number of these continental connections. By trying to encourage more recognition of the European dimensions of eighteenth-century Britain,<sup>5</sup> the intention is not to diminish the role of empire, but to present its importance in a way that would have been familiar to many contemporaries, but tends to be overlooked, or at least under-emphasized, by all but a few modern historians. Empire and continental Europe, as the second section of the article seeks to demonstrate, can most usefully be seen as complementary rather than competing or alternating sites of British interest.

## I

Britain and Ireland were tied to continental Europe for most of the eighteenth century by their rulers. George I, who succeeded to the British and Irish crowns in 1714, did not abandon his German territories, but remained elector of Hanover. He and his successor George II spent much of their time visiting their German dominions and much of their energy trying to expand or defend them. British ministers who wanted to further their careers were well advised to indulge their royal masters in their Hanoverian predilections.<sup>6</sup> The German orientation of the first two Hanoverian monarchs was much criticized by opposition politicians and newspapers, especially during wartime, when the need to protect their electoral lands was seen by some observers as a great limitation on British strategy.<sup>7</sup> Frederick, Prince of Wales, George II's son but also one of his most implacable enemies, sought to appease anti-Hanoverians by planning formally to divide his inheritance, so that his eldest son became king of Britain and Ireland and the next in line succeeded to Hanover.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bob Harris, focusing on the mid-eighteenth century, has been drawing attention to the importance of Europe for some years: see ‘“American Idols”: Empire, War and the Middling Ranks in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *P & P*, xl (1996), 111–41; ‘Patriotic Commerce and National Revival: The Free British Fishery Society and British Politics, c.1749–58’, *English Historical Review* [hereafter *EHR*], cxiv (1999), esp. 312; *Politics and the Nation: Britain in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2002). J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985), famously tried to place the England of his period in a European context. But the controversy surrounding his work perhaps delayed rather than advanced further engagement with the European dimensions of eighteenth-century British history.

<sup>6</sup> See Jeremy Black, ‘Britain and Hanover, 1714–60’, *EHR* (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Glasgow City Archives, Stirling of Keir Papers, T-SK 11/2/25, John Stirling to Robert Stirling, 22 April 1742. For anti-Hanoverian feeling at this time, see especially Uriel Dann, *Hanover and Great Britain, 1740–1760* (Leicester, 1991), pp. 55–6.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Leicester House Politics, 1750–60: From the Papers of John, Second Earl of Egmont’, ed. A. N. Newman, in *Camden Miscellany*, xxiii (Royal Historical Society, Camden 4th ser., vii, 1969), 192.

Nothing came of this proposed division, as Frederick died before his father. But George III, Frederick's heir, carried on the tradition of disparaging his family's German homeland, petulantly describing it, while he was Prince of Wales, as 'that horrid electorate'.<sup>9</sup> On succeeding to the throne in 1760, he paraded his British credentials and put pressure on his ministers to end the German phase of the Seven Years War as speedily as possible. But even during the 1760s George III carried on an extensive correspondence – in German – with his Hanoverian ministers;<sup>10</sup> and, like his predecessors, he patronized German tradesmen in London.<sup>11</sup> From the time of the American war, when Hanoverian military resources were deployed to assist the British state, rather than British troops and money used to support Hanover, royal criticism of 'that horrid electorate' seems to have been dropped. By the mid-1780s George III was enthusiastically playing the part of a German prince and displaying almost as much solicitude for Hanover as his grandfather had done before him.<sup>12</sup>

For a significant part of the century, there was an alternative dynasty to the Hanoverians. The Catholic Stuarts, who had been removed from the British and Irish thrones in 1689–90, continued to hope for their restoration with varying degrees of expectation until the 1760s when hope as well as expectation finally evaporated. Although the Stuarts were originally Scottish, in the eighteenth century they were as closely associated with the continent as were the Hanoverian incumbents. James II had fled into exile in France, and his son James Francis Edward spent most of his life in Rome. James Francis Edward's eldest son, Charles Edward, was born in that city, and when he tried to reclaim his father's inheritance in 1745–6, he was dismissively described by sources loyal to the Hanoverians as 'the Young Italian'.<sup>13</sup> Plans for a Stuart restoration had a measure of domestic support, especially in Scotland and amongst Ireland's Catholic population,<sup>14</sup> but a Stuart comeback was ultimately dependent upon foreign military backing, which usually meant French assistance. Yet French association with the Jacobite cause, perhaps more than anything else, condemned it to failure. A contemporary cartoon conveyed the message that England under the restored Stuarts would dance to France's tune,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> G. M. Ditchfield, *George III: An Essay in Monarchy* (2002), p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Thomas Mortimer, *The Universal Director; Or, the Nobleman and Gentleman's True Guide* (1763), pt. ii, pp. 28, 39, 51.

<sup>12</sup> T. C. W. Blanning, "'That Horrid Electorate' or 'Ma Patrie Germanique'?" George III, Hanover and the *Fürstenbund* of 1785', *Historical Journal* [hereafter *HJ*], xx (1977), 311–44.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, *Oxford Gazette and Reading Mercury*, 12 May 1746; Historical Manuscripts Commission [hereafter HMC], *DuCane MSS* (1905), p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 1994); Éamonn Ó Ciardha, 'The Stuarts and Deliverance in Irish and Scots-Gaelic Poetry, 1690–1760', in *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500: Integration and Diversity*, ed. S. J. Connolly (Dublin, 1999), pp. 78–94, and Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766: A Fatal Attachment* (Dublin, 2002) [hereafter Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*].

<sup>15</sup> British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, 2659, *The Plagues of England or the Jacobites Folly*.

while a leading periodical of the day had no hesitation in pronouncing that a consequence of the Pretender's success would be that England became 'a province to *France*'.<sup>16</sup> Faced with a choice between the Hanoverians and the French-backed Stuarts, most Protestant Britons were almost bound to opt for the incumbent dynasty.<sup>17</sup>

In the field of foreign policy, the idea that British governments withdrew from Europe after the War of the Austrian Succession, or more particularly between the end of the Seven Years War and the acknowledgement of American independence in 1783, would seem, on the face of it, hard to deny. From 1762 until 1787, Britain had no European ally of any substance, and in 1768 domestic turmoil and imperial issues – in both North America and India – preoccupied British government ministers to such an extent that they did nothing to prevent the French annexation of Corsica.<sup>18</sup> But even in this least obviously 'European' of periods, the continent was not ignored. Ministers might have been caught off-guard during the Corsican affair, but their critics, inside and outside parliament, seized upon this episode in a manner that suggests that the public had far from turned its back on Europe. The famous letters of 'Junius', which appeared in an opposition newspaper, lambasted the government over its handling of the Corsican episode.<sup>19</sup> Pamphlet literature was no less critical.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps most revealingly, James Boswell's *Account of Corsica*, first published in Glasgow and London in 1768, went through at least five editions before the end of 1769.<sup>21</sup> Nor should it be forgotten that between 1763 and 1765 there were attempts to resurrect an alliance with Austria, that in the late 1760s the British government sought to counter French influence in Sweden, that a few years later British ministers even contemplated an alliance with France to check the expansionism of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and that during the American war a great deal of British diplomatic effort was put into trying to secure the active friendship of a major European power, with repeated attempts to win over Catherine the Great of Russia.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, xv (1745), 525.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the comments in 'Extracts from the Diary of the Reverend John Bisset, Minister at Aberdeen, 1745–1746', *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, i, ed. John Stuart (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1841), p. 358.

<sup>18</sup> Peter D. G. Thomas, *George III: King and Politicians* (Manchester, 2002), esp. pp. 188–9. See also H. M. Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 1990) [hereafter Scott, *British Foreign Policy*], esp. pp. 115–22.

<sup>19</sup> *The Letters of Junius*, ed. John Cannon (Oxford, 1978), pp. 72–3, 76, 79, 83. For debate in the British parliament, see *The Parliamentary History of England*, ed. William Cobbett and J. Wright (36 vols., 1806–20), xvi, col. 475.

<sup>20</sup> [Anon.], *A Letter to the Earl of Shelburne on the Fatal Consequences of Suffering the French to Invade Corsica* (1768).

<sup>21</sup> Editions were published in Glasgow, London and Dublin. Another sign of public interest in Corsica was the publication of Frederic de Neuhoff's *Memoirs of Corsica. Containing the Natural and Political History of that Important Island* (1768). Neuhoff was the son of Theodore, Freiherr von Neuhoff, who had been the British-supported king of Corsica in the 1730s and 1740s. See also William Richardson, *Corsica: A Poetical Address* (2nd edn., Glasgow, 1769).

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven, Conn., 1985), ch. 15, and Scott, *British Foreign Policy*, chs. 4, 7, 10–11.

If Britain failed to secure any significant alliance in this period, it was not for want of trying.

Looking beyond the years 1762–87, it becomes clear that eighteenth-century British governments generally pursued an active and interventionist foreign policy, designed principally to curb French power in Europe. Sir Robert Walpole's ministry was a significant exception, as he presided over a period of Anglo-French *détente*, and refused to allow Britain to be drawn into the War of the Polish Succession of 1733–5.<sup>23</sup> But British troops were committed to the continent during the War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s and the Seven Years War in the late 1750s and early 1760s. They returned in the conflict with revolutionary France at the end of the century. This commitment was only partly attributable to the natural concerns of George II and George III about the security of their German territories: there had been a similar commitment of manpower and money in the War of the Spanish Succession of 1702–13, before the Hanoverians succeeded to the British and Irish thrones, and British involvement in the French Revolutionary War of 1793–1802 owed little or nothing to Hanoverian considerations.

The main determinant in each of these eighteenth-century conflicts was the desire to preserve the existing balance of power in Europe, which essentially meant checking French territorial expansion and influence. A particular priority was keeping the Low Countries free from French domination, as it was perceived that Britain's own security would be greatly undermined if the French gained access to the ports of the Austrian Netherlands and the Dutch Republic from which they could extend the threat of invasion to the whole of the exposed North Sea coast of England and Scotland. As a pro-ministerial pamphleteer explained in the Austrian Succession conflict, 'this island would be the Seat of the War, if once our Out-works on the Continent were entirely in the Possession of the Enemy'.<sup>24</sup> But commitment to checking French power in Europe was also bound up with the protection of British trade. Recent scholarship has stressed the growth in the importance of imperial commerce in the eighteenth century,<sup>25</sup> but it was not until the late 1760s and early 1770s that officially recorded exports to North America, the Caribbean and the empire generally started to exceed officially recorded exports to continental Europe. Even in the early 1790s, the continent remained a major market for British exports, and a few decades earlier it was the key consumer of British goods. Customs accounts suggest that in 1750–1 Europe accounted for 71 per cent of all English domestically

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (1986), pp. 29–31.

<sup>24</sup> [Anon.], *A Proper Answer to a Late Scurrilous Libel, Entitled, an Apology for the Conduct of a Late Celebrated Second-Rate Minister* (1747), pp. 20–1.

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, Jacob M. Price, 'The Imperial Economy, 1700–1776', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ii: *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1998), pp. 87 and 101 (table 4.4).

produced exports.<sup>26</sup> In the words of Malachy Postlethwayt, a noted writer on political economy, 'Such are our commercial Connections with the *Continent*, that, if we will support our Trade, we must support our Customers when they need our Protection'.<sup>27</sup>

Eighteenth-century British and Irish newspapers and periodicals helped to make continental politics accessible to a wider public, especially in wartime. During the Jacobite rebellion of 1745–6, when domestic concerns might have been expected to dominate, there were still lengthy reports published on military operations in Flanders, Germany and Italy.<sup>28</sup> Thirty-odd years later, during the American war, when events across the Atlantic might have squeezed European news out of the papers and magazines, there was nearly always attention paid to what was happening on the continent, with detailed coverage devoted to the crisis surrounding the Bavarian succession and the brief war in 1778–9 between Austria and Prussia in Bohemia.<sup>29</sup> Given the extent of continental news, it would have been difficult for readers not to have believed that Britain was profoundly affected by continental occurrences. In December 1745 the church bells in Shrewsbury were rung when it was learned that the Austrians had stopped fighting the Prussians in Germany, which was welcomed because it promised to make possible the renewed concentration of Habsburg forces against the French.<sup>30</sup> In the next war, the military progress of Frederick the Great of Prussia, now an ally of Britain, was followed with enormous emotional commitment. His victories were celebrated almost as much as British triumphs, while his defeats were lamented scarcely less than if they had been inflicted on a British army.<sup>31</sup>

Formal relations between states, important though they were, are an inadequate guide to the importance of continental connections. All manner of individuals, acting on their own initiative, sought to survey continental practices, often to promote emulation in Britain and Ireland.

<sup>26</sup> Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688–1959* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1967), table 22.

<sup>27</sup> Malachy Postlethwayt, *Great-Britain's True System* (1757), p. cxxx. See also Postlethwayt's *Britain's Commercial Interest Explained and Improved* (2 vols., 1757), ii. 511; and [Anon.], *The Occasional Patriot: Or, an Enquiry into the Present Connections of Great Britain with the Continent* (1756).

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, *Penny Post, or The Morning Advertiser*, 23–5 Sept. 1745, and also 'A Faithful Soldier's Address', in *General Evening Post*, 14–17 Sept. 1745. On 11 Jan. 1746, the *Westminster Journal*, an essay paper, devoted the whole of the front page and a column of the second to 'A Short Review of the Affairs of Europe for the Year 1745'.

<sup>29</sup> In July 1778, every issue of the twice-weekly *London Chronicle* carried news of the Austro-Prussian war. The conflict was also reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 11, 18, 20, 23, 25, 29 July, and 3, 5, 7, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27, 29 Aug. 1778, and *Gentleman's Magazine*, xlviii (1778), pp. 330, 331, 333, 357–9, 370–2, etc.

<sup>30</sup> Shropshire Record Office, Attingham Collection, 112/12/Box 20/109.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, National Library of Wales, Nanteos MSS, L 144; Hampshire Record Office, Jervoise of Herriard Papers, 44M69/F7/14/12/4; Derbyshire Record Office, Wilmot Horton of Catton Collection, D 3155 C2049; Somerset Record Office, Dickinson Papers, DD/DN 498, Ambrose Isted to Stephen Fuller, 11 Dec. 1757.

Agricultural techniques<sup>32</sup> were a favourite subject of enquiry,<sup>32</sup> as were military matters,<sup>33</sup> and even governmental institutions. William Mildmay produced in 1763 an account of the French methods of preventing robberies – a decidedly topical issue in the aftermath of the Seven Years War, when large numbers of men were demobilized from the armed forces and fear of crime was rampant. Mindful of the prejudice against importing ideas from the recently defeated enemy, Mildmay was at pains to stress that he was not recommending but describing. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt of his hope that, suitably adapted to British conditions, French example might be followed.<sup>34</sup>

On a more intellectual level, the links between the British Isles and continental Europe are readily apparent. There was a steady two-way traffic in publications on the science of government, political economy, social development, history, and jurisprudence. The works of the Italian penal theorist Beccaria, and the French philosophers Burlamaqui, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire were consumed in Britain and Ireland both in French and in English translations,<sup>35</sup> while the writings of such luminaries as David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson appeared in French editions.<sup>36</sup> The ‘Enlightenment’ might be a label adopted by historians, and can certainly be viewed in different national contexts,<sup>37</sup> but at least some contemporaries believed that they were living through a period in which there were common European intellectual currents.<sup>38</sup> In the late 1760s, Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian philosopher, saw himself building upon the foundations provided by Helvétius,<sup>39</sup> while William Eden, in his work on penal theory, published in 1771, candidly acknowledged his debt to Montesquieu and Beccaria as well as to English legal authorities.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, [Anon.], *Foreign Essays on Agriculture and Arts. Consisting Chiefly of the Most Curious Discoveries made in the Several Provinces of France, Germany, Flanders, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland, &c. and Communicated . . . for the Improvement of British Husbandry* (1766).

<sup>33</sup> Earl of Pembroke, *Military Equitation; Or, a Method of Breaking Horses and Teaching Soldiers How to Ride* (1761), which was based on the author’s continental experiences.

<sup>34</sup> William Mildmay, *The Police of France: Or, an Account of the Laws and Regulations Established in that Kingdom, for the Preservation of Peace, and the Preventing of Robberies. To which is Added, a Particular Description of the Police and Government of the City of Paris* (1763), esp. iii, v, vi, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Nugent translated a vast amount of French philosophical literature into English: see Beccaria, *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments* (1767); Burlamaqui, *The Principles of Natural and Politic Law* (2nd edn., 1763); Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (5th edn., 2 vols., 1773); Rousseau, *Emilius and Sophia; Or, an Essay on Education* (2 vols., Dublin, 1765?); Voltaire, *An Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations from the Reign of Charlemaign to the Age of Lewis XIV* (4 vols., 1759).

<sup>36</sup> *Oeuvres philosophiques de Mr. D. Hume* (5 vols., Amsterdam, 1758–60); Smith, *Recherches sur la nature et les causes de la richesse des nations*, trans. J. L. Blavet (2 vols., 1788); Ferguson, *Essai sur l’histoire de la société civile*, trans. Claude François Meunier (2 vols., Paris, 1783).

<sup>37</sup> *The Enlightenment in National Context*, ed. Roy Porter and M. Teich (Cambridge, 1981).

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment: A Comparative Social History, 1721–1794* (2000).

<sup>39</sup> *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham, i, 1752–76*, ed. T. L. S. Sprigge (1968), pp. 134n., 261, 282, 367, 368.

<sup>40</sup> William Eden, *Principles of Penal Law* (1771), pp. 8&n., 13&n., 88&n., 100&n., 152&n., 159&n., 179&n., 185n., 235n., 263n., 264, 274n., 284n., 287n., 293&n., 296n. See also Anthony J. Draper, ‘William Eden and Leniency in Punishment’, *History of Political Thought*, xxii (2001), 106–30.



Religious sentiment, which used to be seen by historians as the implacable enemy of enlightened ideas, was perhaps still more pan-European. This was most obviously the case with Catholicism, which everywhere acknowledged, if with varying degrees of enthusiasm, the spiritual authority of the papacy. Ireland's Catholic majority not only looked to the pope and continental-trained clergy for moral leadership but also to the Catholic powers for protection. France and Spain were viewed by at least some Catholics as potential deliverers. In fact, Irish Catholic dreams of the overthrow of the Protestant regime rested on hopes of foreign – and particularly French – military intervention.<sup>41</sup> Less dramatically, Catholics in Britain and Ireland, but especially in Ireland, relied on the Austrian Habsburgs, Britain's allies for much of the eighteenth century, to protect them from even harsher penal laws: the behind-the-scenes lobbying of Austrian diplomacy appears to have provided an important check on the ferocity of anti-Catholic legislation.<sup>42</sup>

Protestantism has often been viewed by historians as less cosmopolitan – indeed, the Protestantism of the British has been identified by Linda Colley as one of the key ingredients of a national consciousness forged in reaction to the Catholicism of France and Spain.<sup>43</sup> Other scholars have stressed the fissiparous tendencies within British Protestantism, with sharp divisions between the Anglican establishment in England and the Presbyterian establishment in Scotland, and between the established churches and Protestant Dissenters in each of the four countries of the British Isles.<sup>44</sup> Yet eighteenth-century British and Irish Protestants were perfectly capable, in the appropriate circumstances, of seeing themselves as part of a wider movement.<sup>45</sup> The transatlantic dimension of Protestant evangelicalism has been highlighted in a number of important studies,<sup>46</sup> but evangelicalism also had an important European aspect.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the persecution of Protestants in the Catholic states on the continent gave a

<sup>41</sup> See Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, esp. chs. 6 and 7; Vincent Morley, *Irish Opinion and the American Revolution, 1760–1783* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. pp. 1–14.

<sup>42</sup> David Dickson, *New Foundations: Ireland, 1660–1800* (2nd edn., Dublin, 2000), pp. 45, 80, 102.

<sup>43</sup> See esp. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, Conn., 1992), ch. 1.

<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Richard J. Finlay, 'Caledonia or North Britain? Scottish Identity in the Eighteenth Century', in *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-making of Scotland through the Ages*, ed. D. Broun, R. J. Finlay, and M. Lynch (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 143–56; J. C. D. Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism and National Identity', *HJ*, xliii (2000), 249–76.

<sup>45</sup> As W. R. Ward has commented, 'though one might never guess it from modern historical writing, there was still a Protestant world in the eighteenth century to which the Church of England belonged, to which it was acknowledged to belong and to which it regarded itself as belonging'. See 'The Eighteenth-Century Church: A European View', in *The Church of England, c.1689–c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge, 1993), p. 285.

<sup>46</sup> Susan O'Brien, 'A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735–1755', *American Historical Review*, xci (1986), 811–32, and Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in its British Context* (Oxford, 1991).

<sup>47</sup> This is well brought out in a number of recent studies including D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989); W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge, 1992) and *Christianity Under the Ancien Régime, 1648–1789* (Cambridge, 1999); and G. M. Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival* (1998).

great boost to religious revivalism in the English-speaking world: George Whitfield, the great evangelical preacher, expended many words in his sermons denouncing the treatment of France's Protestant minority,<sup>48</sup> while the fate of the Protestant subjects of the Catholic archbishop of Salzburg was no less roundly condemned.<sup>49</sup> Foreign Protestant refugees reinforced the sense that there existed a European community of faith. The French Huguenots, who arrived in Britain and Ireland in considerable numbers after the abandonment of the policy of toleration by the French monarchy in 1685,<sup>50</sup> are perhaps the most well known of these Protestant immigrant groups, but there were also the German Palatines who came in the early years of the eighteenth century. A further reminder of the continental connections of British Protestantism is provided by the Moravians, a group of proselytizing German evangelists who established a mission in England in 1728.<sup>51</sup>

There were, to be sure, some British Protestants who, from the 1760s onwards, were apparently less interested in Protestant solidarity than Catholic rehabilitation. To British governments trying to deal with the rebellious Protestant North American colonies and then the threat of atheistic republicanism emanating from revolutionary France, the essential conservatism of the Catholic Church made it appear more as a potential ally in the defence of the established order and less as a threat to that order. The concessions given to Catholics in Britain and Ireland on landownership, education and worship during the American and French Revolutionary Wars can be understood in this context. Much earlier, William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury from 1716 to 1737, had anticipated this softer line towards Catholicism – or, in his case, towards some Catholics – by floating the idea of a union, or alliance, between the Church of England and the Gallicans of the French Catholic Church, who were resistant to papal interference.<sup>52</sup>

But Wake's plans – like later proposed concessions to Catholics – can also be interpreted as an attempt to undermine Catholicism. Wake was trying, in effect, to encourage the birth of a French equivalent of the Anglican Church and thereby to weaken international 'popery'. Indeed,

<sup>48</sup> Whitfield, *A Short Address to Persons of All Denominations, Occasioned by the Alarm of an Intended Invasion* (1756), esp. p. 17. See also Richard Winter, *The Importance and Necessity of His Majesty's Declaration of War with France Considered and Improved, in a Sermon, Preached, May 23rd 1756, at the Meeting-House in Moorfields, and to the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Islington* (1756), p. iii; and, for earlier concern, *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxii (1752), 386 and 538.

<sup>49</sup> [Anon.], *A Serious Call to the City of London, and Thro' them to the Whole Nation, to the Relief of the Persecuted Protestants of Saltzburg* (1732); [Anon.], *An Account of the Sufferings of the Persecuted Protestants in the Archbishoprick of Saltzburg* (1732); [Anon.], *A Further Account of the Sufferings of the Persecuted Protestants in the Archbishoprick of Saltzburg* (1733).

<sup>50</sup> Bernard Cottret, *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and Settlement, c.1550–1700*, trans. Peregrine Stevenson and Adriana Stevenson (Cambridge, 1991).

<sup>51</sup> Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England, 1728–1760* (Oxford, 1998), and Geoffrey Stead, *The Moravian Settlement at Fulneck, 1742–1790* (Thoresby Society, 2nd ser., ix, Leeds, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> See *William Wake's Gallican Correspondence and Related Documents, 1716–1731*, ed. Leonard Adams (5 vols., New York, 1988–91).

for most of the eighteenth century, British and Irish Protestants seem to have seen themselves as part of a European-wide 'Protestant Interest', which they believed was locked in a life-and-death struggle with Catholicism. For example, this sense of Protestant solidarity emerged strongly during the 1745 rebellion, when the threat of the restoration of the Catholic Stuarts led to great emphasis on Britain's role as 'the *Buttress* of the Protestant Cause',<sup>53</sup> and no less strongly immediately after the uprising was crushed, when serious consideration was given to transporting the rebel clans to the West Indies and repopulating the vacated parts of the Highlands with 'imported foreign Protestants'.<sup>54</sup> Protestant solidarity similarly helps to explain the hero worship of Frederick the Great of Prussia in the Seven Years War and the willingness of the British public to accept a substantial British military and financial commitment to continental Europe during the same conflict.<sup>55</sup> It also partly accounts for the bitterness in Britain when the Dutch assisted the French and Spanish, as well as the rebellious colonists, in the American war.<sup>56</sup>

Connections in the realm of ideas – secular and religious – were further reinforced by the personal experience of countless individuals on the move. Continental institutions of learning attracted elite Britons. Most notable was the University of Leiden, in the Netherlands, where there were significant numbers of English and still more so of Scots in the student body. Around 1745, British students at Leiden included George Colebrooke, later chairman of the East India Company, John Wilkes, subsequently a popular anti-authoritarian hero, and William Dowdeswell and Charles Townshend, future chancellors of the exchequer. The University of Utrecht could count amongst its alumni no less a person than William Pitt the Elder. Lord Barrington, a minister in almost every government between 1746 and 1778, studied for three years at Geneva in the 1730s.<sup>57</sup> It should also be noted that continental military academies, such as Strasbourg, Caen and Turin, provided instruction for a number of young men who became officers in the British army.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> [Anon.], *An Earnest Address to Britons* ([1745]), p. 22. See also, for instance, *Gentleman's Magazine*, xv (1745), 634; Thomas Amory, *The Prayer of King Jehoshaphat Considered and Applied to the State of the Nation* (1745), p. 27; Dr Williams's Library, MS 90.2, Sarah Savage's Journal, 30 Sept. 1745.

<sup>54</sup> Nottingham University Library, Newcastle of Clumber MSS, NeC 1534/2.

<sup>55</sup> For a good example, see Bedfordshire Record Office, Lucas of Wrest Park Papers, L 30/9/3/62, Lady Anson to Marchioness Grey, 2 Aug. 1757.

<sup>56</sup> See, for instance, Lincolnshire Archives Office, Diary and Account-book of Matthew Flinders, 30 Dec. 1780. Protestant solidarity might also help to explain the uneasiness of some government supporters about war with a traditional ally: see *A Selection of William Twining's Letters, 1734–1804*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (2 vols., Lampeter, 1991), i. 212.

<sup>57</sup> *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754–1790*, ed. Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke (3 vols., 1964), i. 111–12. See also Hilde de Ridder-Symeons, 'Mobility', in *A History of the University in Europe*, ii: *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symeons (Cambridge, 1996), p. 423.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Augustus Wyvill, for instance, spent two years at Strasbourg before joining the 38th Foot in 1780 (see his journal in the Peter Force collection, Library of Congress). Sir Mathew Blakiston, a cornet in the 2nd Horse, was given leave of absence in the same year to study at the University of Göttingen in Hanover (PRO, State Papers Ireland, SP 63/469, fo. 21).

The Grand Tour took many members of the nobility and gentry to the continent.<sup>59</sup> During a peregrination lasting perhaps a couple of years or more, they were expected to polish their foreign-language skills and broaden their minds by visiting major cities and other places of interest. France was a particular magnet owing to its cultural, intellectual and military stature, not to mention its food and wine, and if wartime effectively made the country out of bounds, the coming of peace – in 1748, 1763, 1783 and 1802 – saw a surge of visitors anxious to make up for lost time. Large numbers also flocked to Italy and especially Rome, ‘this great Capital of the world’, as one tourist enthused in 1780,<sup>60</sup> which to the British social and political elite was one of the centres of a European civilization kept alive by an education dominated by the works of classical antiquity.<sup>61</sup>

A substantial travel literature existed to assist these upper-class tourists.<sup>62</sup> Such publications could reinforce rather than counter prejudices against foreigners in general, and the French in particular: one guide urged would-be travellers in its very title *Not to Spend More Money in the Country of our Natural Enemy, than is Requisite to Support with Decency the Character of an English Man*.<sup>63</sup> No doubt many of those who read such material probably never left the shores of Britain or Ireland. Nevertheless, the popularity of Tobias Smollett’s *Travels through France and Italy* of 1766, and still more so of Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, a riposte to Smollett, which was first published in 1768, suggests that there was a public appetite for literature relating to the continent – whether imaginative or based on fact – that far outstripped the number of those who went on the Grand Tour.

It would be a mistake to assume that direct contact with the continent was confined to the aristocracy and gentry. Many British and Irish men and women of more humble birth also had first-hand knowledge of Europe and its peoples. Five occupational categories were perhaps particularly important in this regard: first, seafarers; second, merchants; third, skilled craftsmen, specialist retailers, and technicians who can be grouped together as economic migrants; fourth, smugglers; and, finally, soldiers. In each case there was significant bilateral traffic that gave both

<sup>59</sup> See Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (1985) and *France and the Grand Tour* (2003).

<sup>60</sup> *The Pembroke Papers (1734–1780): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and His Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (1942), p. 376.

<sup>61</sup> See, for instance, *The History of the University of Oxford*, v: *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell (Oxford, 1986), chs. 15 and 17.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour. Containing an Exact Description of Most of the Cities, Towns, and Remarkable Places of Europe* (4 vols., 1749); Philip Thicknesse, *Useful Hints to Those who Make the Tour of France, in a Series of Letters Written from that Kingdom* (2nd edn., 1770); Harry Peckham, *The Tour of Holland, Dutch Brabant, the Austrian Netherland, and Part of France; in which is Included a Description of Paris and its Environs* (1772).

<sup>63</sup> [Philip Playstowe?], *The Gentleman’s Guide, in His Tour through France. Wrote by an Officer in the Royal-Navy, who Lately Travelled on a Principle . . . viz. Not to Spend More Money in the Country of Our Natural Enemy, than is Requisite to Support with Decency the Character of an English Man* (Bristol, 1766). A 9th London edition was published in 1787.

depth and breadth to the continental connections of eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland.

There were sailors from continental Europe serving in the Royal Navy, especially during the century's many wars, when the press gangs were not very scrupulous about whom they rounded up. Dutch neutrals were recruited in the Seven Years War,<sup>64</sup> while in 1778, during the American conflict, the Danish consul in London protested at the 'great Number of our Seamen pressed'.<sup>65</sup> The European contribution should not be exaggerated: probably no more than 5–6 per cent of the navy's ratings were categorized as 'foreign' at this time, which hardly made the senior service cosmopolitan.<sup>66</sup> But many people who never joined the navy would have come into contact with foreign mariners. In wartime, captured enemy sailors – from naval vessels, privateers, and merchant ships – were sometimes paroled and allowed, under certain restrictions, to mix with the local population. Some 200 French mariners, for instance, were temporarily resident in the Devonshire town of Tavistock in June 1759.<sup>67</sup> More importantly, sailors from continental Europe carried goods to and from British ports in foreign ships – especially in wartime, when large numbers of British merchant vessels were employed for military purposes, and those still available to carry merchant cargoes paid high insurance premiums.<sup>68</sup> Continental mariners also served on board British and Irish merchant vessels – again, especially in time of war, when the conscription of large numbers of local seafarers caused a labour shortage, pushed up wages, and attracted trained mariners from abroad. According to a recent study, in wartime up to 75 per cent of the crews in London's merchant fleet were foreigners, mainly Dutch and Scandinavian.<sup>69</sup> Hence, no doubt, the establishment of places of worship for these sailors in Wapping – John Rocque's *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark* of 1747 shows that there was a Danish Church in Wellclose Square, and a Swedish Church in nearby Princes Square, both just north of Ratcliff Highway.<sup>70</sup>

There were also many British and Irish sailors with experience of continental Europe. True, the crews of Royal Navy ships tended to see the European mainland from afar – from ships cruising off the coast, blockading enemy bases, or mooring off friendly ports while protecting convoys

<sup>64</sup> PRO, Admiralty Papers, ADM 1/2011, Capt. Joseph Knight to John Cleveland, 3 Nov. 1761.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, ADM 1/5118/21, fo. 520.

<sup>66</sup> Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, 2000), p. 36.

<sup>67</sup> Devon Record Office, Bedford Papers, L 1258M/SS/C (LP 18), bundle 1, 'A true and perfect list of the prisoners on parole at Tavistock with their respective qualitey', 8 June 1759.

<sup>68</sup> For the increase in the number of foreign vessels engaged in overseas trade, see Gordon Jackson, *Hull in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Economic and Social History* (Oxford, 1972), p. 133; *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden*, v: 1755–1760, ed. Alexander J. Wall (New-York Historical Society Collections for 1921, New York, 1923), p. 93; *The Torrington Diaries*, ed. C. Bruyn Andrews (4 vols., 1934–8), i. 94.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen, 1650–1775* (1998), p. 203.

<sup>70</sup> Ralph Hyde, *The A to Z of Georgian London* (London Topographical Society, Publication no. 126, 1982), p. 28.

of merchant vessels. But naval crews were sometimes allowed ashore, despite fears that they might desert.<sup>71</sup> Merchant seamen were perhaps more likely to be familiar with European ports. British trade with the continent was extensive – for most of the eighteenth century, it was much more extensive than trade with British possessions beyond Europe. British and Irish ships plied to and from ports in the Baltic, North Germany, the Low Countries, the Iberian Peninsula, and Italy. There was even a substantial volume of maritime trade with France. In time of war merchant sailors might be captured by enemy privateers and compelled to remain in a foreign port until their return could be negotiated.<sup>72</sup> Others deliberately tarried in European ports to avoid the press gangs that might attempt forcibly to conscript them into the Royal Navy once they reached, or even approached, their home port. Lisbon was a well-known hideaway for British and Irish sailors reluctant to serve on His Majesty's ships.<sup>73</sup>

If British trade with the continent explains the contact experienced by many seafarers, it also helps to account for the presence of European merchants in the British Isles and of British and Irish merchants in Europe. Major English ports, especially London, had identifiable resident foreign merchants. A London trade directory of 1740 includes amongst the merchants listed a great number of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, and German names, besides a significant number of French ones, most of which probably belonged to the descendants of Huguenot refugees.<sup>74</sup> There were perhaps still larger numbers of British and Irish merchants living – permanently or temporarily – in coastal communities in continental Europe. Some were scattered in penny packets, such as William Keetin, who was based at Dunkirk in the middle of the century and took a necessarily detached view of Anglo-French tensions.<sup>75</sup> Others were concentrated in larger enclaves. Bordeaux had a sizeable Irish Catholic merchant community, as did Nantes and Cadiz.<sup>76</sup> There were enough British merchants in the Dutch Republic to justify the appointment of Anglican clergymen at Amsterdam and Rotterdam.<sup>77</sup> Oporto was described by Malachy Postlethwayt, in an account of trade with Portugal, as 'so well known and frequented by our nation' that very little needed to be said about it.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (1988), p. 143.

<sup>72</sup> Somerset Record Office, Dickinson Papers, DD/DN 200, Nathaniel Alloway to Caleb Dickinson, 27 June 1740, and to Graffin Prankard, 30 June 1740; London Metropolitan Archives, Eliot and Howard Family Papers, Acc. 1017/944, Diary of John Eliot III, 24 Feb. 1757.

<sup>73</sup> *Naval Administration, 1715–1750*, ed. Daniel A. Baugh (Navy Records Society, cxx, 1977), p. 155.

<sup>74</sup> 'List of Merchants, &c.', in [Anon.], *A Complete Guide to All Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London and Parts Adjacent* (1740), pp. 116–48.

<sup>75</sup> See National Library of Wales, Powis Castle MSS, 2212–20.

<sup>76</sup> L. M. Cullen, 'The Irish Diaspora of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny (Oxford, 1994), p. 136.

<sup>77</sup> See Lambeth Palace Library, Fulham Papers, Terrick 2, appointment of Rev. William Atkinson as chaplain at Rotterdam, 26 May 1770; Sir Joseph Yorke to Bishop Terrick, 6 July 1770. I am grateful to Reider Payne for these references.

<sup>78</sup> Malachy Postlethwayt, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (4th edn., 2 vols., 1774), ii, under 'Portugal'.

The British factory at Lisbon was even larger, though weakened by the great earthquake of 1755.<sup>79</sup> St Petersburg also had a significant British community – estimated as about 500-strong in 1780 – which was based on the Russia Company's factory.<sup>80</sup>

Skilled craftsmen, specialist retailers, and technical experts formed another element in the movement of people. Continental craftsmen, shopkeepers and technicians in Britain and Ireland were often indistinguishable from religious refugees. Many of the Germans in London in the early decades of the century, for instance, were Protestants who had fled persecution or its threat in Catholic states.<sup>81</sup> But the attractions of the large London market for German and other continental specialist retailers should not be underestimated, as the German bookbinders, confectioners and musical-instrument-makers to be found in London in the second half of the century were almost certainly drawn by the hope of material gain rather than religious freedom.<sup>82</sup> Their British (if not Irish) counterparts were usually genuine economic migrants, seeking opportunities, rather than refuge, in foreign lands. This category includes William Jackman, a London watchmaker, who followed the British army to the Low Countries in the War of the Austrian Succession, and resided for some time in Brussels and Breda where he catered for both the military and the local population.<sup>83</sup> Just as representative were the craftsmen and technicians who went to Russia after the Seven Years War such as James Love, a watchmaker at St Petersburg, and Matthew Robinson, who ran a leather-making business, James Notman, the head of a tannery, and Anthony Young, a Newcastle millwright, all of whom worked on Prince Potemkin's great estate at Krichev, in the Ukraine, where a multiplicity of industrial enterprises were developed from the 1770s employing imported (and well-paid) British expertise.<sup>84</sup>

No less significant in bringing about international contact was the smuggling activity that linked Britain with the continent. The extent of smuggling is, by its very nature, impossible to measure with precision, but contemporary estimates of the value of the goods involved suggest a substantial hidden dimension to overseas trade.<sup>85</sup> The principal outgoing commodity was raw wool, the official export of which was prohibited to protect the local textile industry from foreign competition. The most

<sup>79</sup> L. M. E. Shaw, *The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and the English Merchants in Portugal, 1654–1810* (Aldershot, 1998), ch. 5. For losses incurred as a result of the earthquake, see Wiltshire Record Office, Wansey Papers, 314/5.

<sup>80</sup> A. G. Cross, 'The British in Catherine's Russia: A Preliminary Survey', in *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed. John Gordon Garrard (Oxford, 1973), pp. 233–63.

<sup>81</sup> See Panikos Panayi, 'Germans in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *Germans in Britain since 1500*, ed. Panikos Panayi (1996), pp. 29–48.

<sup>82</sup> See Ellic Howe, *A List of London Bookbinders, 1648–1815* (1950), pp. 8–9, 15, 53.

<sup>83</sup> East Suffolk Record Office, Albemarle Papers, HA 67/461/48.

<sup>84</sup> Ian R. Christie, *The Bentham's in Russia, 1780–1791* (Oxford, 1993), esp. pp. 132–3, 141.

<sup>85</sup> See the estimates produced by a House of Commons committee in 1783 in *House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Sheila Lambert (145 vols., Wilmington, Del., 1975), xxxviii. 219–20.

important incoming items included brandy and wines from France, and tea, which, though originating in Asia, arrived mainly in smuggling vessels from France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia, where it was available more cheaply than in Britain or Ireland.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, smuggling employed a workforce of considerable proportions.<sup>87</sup> While many of those engaged in inland distribution had no direct contact with the continent, there were large numbers of mariners involved in smuggling, especially across the Channel and the North Sea. In the middle of the century, the navy reckoned that 400 men regularly engaged in smuggling at Dover, 300 at Ramsgate and about the same number at Folkestone. Vessels from France and the Low Countries often brought contraband to within a few miles of the coast from where it was taken ashore by a host of small boats. However, most of the ships employed in this clandestine trade were British. For many of the coastal smugglers in Sussex and Kent, France must have seemed much closer and easier to access than the inland parts of their own counties. Significant numbers of them spent a good deal of time in foreign ports. So strong were their ties with the continent that British smugglers were often viewed as potentially treasonous. It was assumed that at least some of their number would have no scruples about providing information to the enemy or even piloting an invading force across the sea.<sup>88</sup>

Wartime provided many opportunities for both the British and the Irish to come into contact with the continent and its peoples. On two critical occasions, the defence of Britain itself relied on the import of foreign auxiliary troops. In 1745–6, when the Jacobite rebellion and French invasion threatened the Hanoverian regime and the Protestant succession, Dutch, Swiss and Hessian soldiers arrived in large numbers. Ten years later, the beginning of the Seven Years War in Europe, and another threat of French invasion, brought a further influx of foreign troops – this time Hessians and Hanoverians. Hostility to the use of auxiliaries is well known, and can perhaps be epitomized by the archbishop of York's chauvinistic comment during the 'Forty-five rebellion that 'England can never be properly defended but by Englishmen'.<sup>89</sup> Rather less well known is the more positive reception that these foreign soldiers received in many

<sup>86</sup> For tea-smuggling see H. S. K. Kent, *War and Trade in Northern Seas: Anglo-Scandinavian Economic Relations in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1973), ch. 7; for brandy see L. M. Cullen, *The Brandy Trade under the Ancien Regime: Regional Specialization in the Charente* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. pp. 19, 35, 37–8, 239, 240, 242, 246, and the same author's *The Irish Brandy Houses of Eighteenth-Century France* (Dublin, 2000), ch. 2.

<sup>87</sup> According to a witness at a House of Commons committee in March 1746, 'not less than 20,000': *Journals of the House of Commons*, xxv, 104.

<sup>88</sup> Christopher Duffy, *The '45: Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Untold Story of the Jacobite Rising* (2003) [hereafter Duffy, *The '45*], pp. 373–5. See also Paul Musket, 'Military Operations against Smugglers in Kent and Sussex, 1698–1750', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, lii (1974), 89–110; Cal Winslow, 'Sussex Smugglers', in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Douglas Hay et al. (1975), pp. 119–66.

<sup>89</sup> 'Correspondence of Archbishop Herring and Lord Hardwicke during the Rebellion of 1745', ed. R. Garnett, *EHR*, xix (1904), 733.



quarters. The corporation of Boston in Lincolnshire agreed unanimously to pay the subsistence costs of a small contingent of Dutch troops who were driven into their port en route to joining the British forces deployed against the Jacobites,<sup>90</sup> while at the beginning of the Seven Years War, Gertrude Savile, a Nottinghamshire gentlewoman, wrote in her diary that the Hanoverian soldiers she had seen encamped in Kent were much superior in discipline and behaviour to the rude and drunken British regulars.<sup>91</sup>

Besides foreign auxiliaries, there were also naturalized foreigners in the British army itself. Swiss families, such as the Prevosts, the Haldimands, the Bouquets, and the Cerjats, made a notable contribution to the officer ranks, but the Huguenots were numerically more important. Officers who could trace their origins or antecedents back to Protestant France were to be found in many regiments such as John Carnac of the Thirty-Ninth Foot and subsequently of the East India Company's army, who was born in Dublin of Huguenot parents.<sup>92</sup> Many Huguenots progressed to the army's senior posts: Sir John Ligonier, who was made a lieutenant-general in 1743, and as Lord Ligonier served as the commander-in-chief from 1757 to 1766, was born in a small town in the Massif Central as Jean-Louis Ligonier.<sup>93</sup>

While continental European soldiers served in Britain or in the British army, many British and Irish soldiers spent part of their lives serving on the continent. There were Englishmen who joined the armies of other European powers. Horace St Paul, a Northumberland gentleman, was with the Austrian forces in the Seven Years War,<sup>94</sup> while Francis Townley, a Lancashire Catholic executed for his part in the 'Forty-five rebellion, had been an officer in the French Régiment de Limousin.<sup>95</sup> Much more significant numerically were the Scottish and Irish contributions to foreign armies. There was a Scots brigade in the Dutch army from the sixteenth century onwards. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century its rank and file was no longer primarily Scottish, but until its disbandment in 1782 its officers continued to be drawn mainly from Scottish

<sup>90</sup> *Transcription of Minutes of the Corporation of Boston*, v, 1717 to 1763, ed. Betty Coy, Sheila Hill and Vera Sharp (Boston, 1993), p. 494.

<sup>91</sup> *Secret Comment: The Diaries of Gertrude Savile, 1721–1757*, ed. Alan Saville (Thoroton Society, record series, xl, Nottingham, 1997), pp. 318–19. See also *Letters of George Dempster to Sir Adam Fergusson, 1756–1813: With Some Account of his Life*, ed. James Fergusson (1934), p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> Carnac's mother sent him from Dublin regular reports on the progress of other Huguenot families in the army or company service: see Oriental and India Office Library, Sutton Court Collection, Carnac Papers, MS Eur. F128/23.

<sup>93</sup> Rex Whitworth, *Field Marshal Lord Ligonier: A Story of the British Army, 1702–1770* (Oxford, 1958).

<sup>94</sup> 1756: *The War in Bohemia: The Journal of Horace St Paul*, ed. Neil Cogswell (Guisborough, 1996), preface.

<sup>95</sup> Duffy, *The '45*, p. 66. Henry Humphrey Evans Lloyd, a Welshman, served as a senior officer in the Austrian army and his own account of the Seven Years War was published as *The History of the Late War in Germany, between the King of Prussia, and the Empress of Germany and her Allies* (3 vols., 1781–90).

landowning families.<sup>96</sup> There were also three Scottish regiments in the French army during the War of the Austrian Succession, which seem to have been overwhelmingly Scots in composition.<sup>97</sup> Irish regiments were to be found in Spanish service and Irish Catholic officers held commissions in the armies of every Catholic power from Austria to Piedmont-Sardinia. From the end of the seventeenth century, the Irish Brigade of the French army was the most important outlet for Irish Catholic military enthusiasm. As with the Scots Brigade in Dutch service, there was a change in the character of the corps from the middle of the eighteenth century, with continental Europeans filling the ranks.<sup>98</sup> This development owed something to the determination of the British army to tap Scottish and then Catholic Irish manpower more effectively. It was also linked to the decline of Jacobitism, which provided the ideological underpinning for the Irish presence in foreign armies and to a lesser extent for the Scottish also. Until the middle of the century, however, both the Dutch Scots Brigade and the French Irish Brigade were true to their national origins, and regularly sent recruiting parties to Scotland and Ireland respectively.<sup>99</sup>

Even so, service in the British army was the main means by which British and perhaps even Irish soldiers came to have first-hand knowledge of the continent and its peoples. Large numbers of British troops campaigned in Spain, Flanders and Germany during the War of the Spanish Succession at the beginning of the eighteenth century; 16,000 went to the Austrian Netherlands in 1742; 8,000 were sent to Germany in 1758, subsequently reinforced to nearly 25,000 before the end of the Seven Years War. In 1793 when the war against revolutionary France began, a force of about 20,000 troops was again dispatched to the Low Countries. In 1799 a British army about 36,000 strong was operating in the Netherlands. These soldiers, and in some cases their families, came into contact with the indigenous population; in the winter months they were usually quartered in taverns or even private homes. Proximity and mixing did not necessarily promote amity: in the Austrian Netherlands in the 1740s British troops caused much offence by disrupting Catholic ceremonies;<sup>100</sup> they were to do so again in Germany during the Seven Years War.<sup>101</sup> There is, however, evidence of more positive outcomes: the journal of a corporal serving in Germany in the Seven Years War

<sup>96</sup> See *Papers Illustrating the History of the Scots Brigade*, ii: 1698–1782, ed. James Ferguson (Scottish History Society, xxxv, Edinburgh, 1899), esp. p. 394.

<sup>97</sup> Helen C. McCorry, 'Rats, Lice and Scotchmen: Scottish Infantry Regiments in the Service of France, 1742–62', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, lxxiv (1996), 1–38.

<sup>98</sup> For French soldiers in the Irish Brigade, see Lee Kennett, *The French Armies in the Seven Years War: A Study in Military Organization and Administration* (Durham, NC, 1967), pp. 74–5.

<sup>99</sup> For the Irish character of the brigade in 1745, when it distinguished itself at the battle of Fontenoy, see Harman Murtagh, 'Irish Soldiers Abroad, 1600–1800', in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge, 1996), p. 312.

<sup>100</sup> Bodleian Library, MS Eng. hist. e. 214, fos. 37–8.

<sup>101</sup> HMC, 'Manuscripts of M. L. S. Clements', in *Various Collections* (8 vols., 1901–13), viii. 430, 517.

suggests that a good number of his colleagues married local women.<sup>102</sup> British troops also campaigned and fought alongside soldiers from other armies. Relations between British soldiers and their allies were not always cordial; Dutch and British troops seem literally to have come to blows on a number of occasions during the War of the Austrian Succession.<sup>103</sup> But German allied troops were sometimes treated with great respect, and even regarded as friends. In the summer of 1744, Lord George Sackville, an officer in the British army in Flanders, reported that, 'The Hanoverians are in great favour with us'. He added that the British and Hanoverian troops 'get drunk very comfortably together, and talk and sing a vast deal without understanding one syllable of what they say to one another'.<sup>104</sup>

## II

In addition to the continental connections of Britain and Ireland, there were also connections between Britain's empire and Europe. The empire itself, it should be remembered, had a European dimension in the eighteenth century. Leaving aside Ireland, which could be considered as part of the metropolitan core or as a colony or as both, there were Mediterranean outposts at Gibraltar and Minorca, acquired during the War of the Spanish Succession. Gibraltar, despite various attempts to restore it to Spain, remained in British hands throughout the century; Minorca was lost in 1756, regained in 1763, lost again in 1782, and briefly reoccupied during the French Revolutionary War. Corsica, the focus of much British interest at various times, was also held for a short period in the 1790s.

Nor should it be forgotten that there was a significant continental contribution to British imperial expansion. Foreign – especially Dutch – investment in the national debt underwrote British military efforts throughout the world.<sup>105</sup> In North America, the Seven Years War saw the formation of the Royal American Regiment, which, despite its name, contained many recruits from the German states. Amongst the officers there were also many foreigners, particularly Germans and Swiss.<sup>106</sup> In India, another major area of imperial concern in the eighteenth century, the European component of the forces of the British East India Company was called 'European' advisedly – to term it 'British' would have been most inaccurate. Many of the rank and file were Germans or Swiss

<sup>102</sup> *The Journal of Corporal Todd 1745–1762*, ed. Andrew Cormack and Alan Jones (Army Records Society, xviii, Stroud, 2001), pp. 129, 131.

<sup>103</sup> See Bodleian Library, MS Eng. hist. c.314, fos. 13 and 33. For disparaging comments about Britain's Portuguese allies in the next war, see Hampshire Record Office, Banbury Papers, 1 M44/40/7.

<sup>104</sup> HMC, *Stopford Sackville MSS* (2 vols., 1904–10), i. 289–90. See also Buckinghamshire Record Office, Baker of Penn Papers, D/X 1069/2/116; North Yorkshire Record Office, Darley of Aldby Papers, ZDA/DAR CP/2/10; British Library, Dropmore Papers, Additional MS 69,382, fo. 96.

<sup>105</sup> J. F. Wright, 'The Contribution of Overseas Savings to the Funded Debt of Great Britain, 1750–1815', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., (1997), 657–74.

<sup>106</sup> Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755–1763* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 74–5.

or deserters from the armies of the other European powers stationed in the subcontinent.<sup>107</sup> During the American war, furthermore, two Hanoverian regiments, loaned by George III in his capacity as elector, served alongside the king's and the company's forces in India.

The fundamental point, however, is that in the eighteenth century the empire outside Europe was seen by many contemporaries as an adjunct rather than an alternative to Britain's engagement with Europe. Overseas possessions promoted naval power as the seventeenth-century Navigation Acts shut foreigners out of the transatlantic carrying trade and so enabled large numbers of British and colonial mariners to acquire skills in oceanic seamanship. Those same mariners, or many of them, were available for conscription into the Royal Navy during armed conflicts. It should be recognized, however, that the primary task of the navy in wartime was not imperial expansion but the European objective of shielding the home territories from invasion by the French and other continental enemies. With the exception of the Battle of the Saintes in the West Indies at the end of the American war, all the Royal Navy's major triumphs in the eighteenth century – from Barfleur in 1692 to Trafalgar in 1805 – were achieved in waters off the coast of continental Europe.<sup>108</sup>

Empire also contributed to European ends by providing state revenue, directly through customs duties levied on imports and indirectly through excises on domestic production and consumption that had been stimulated by the availability of imperial goods. This revenue facilitated the expansion of public credit, which in turn helped Britain to enjoy a war-making capacity well beyond its own manpower base. In every one of its eighteenth-century wars, Britain hired regiments from foreign rulers and provided subsidies to others who fielded whole armies against the enemy. In the American war, large numbers of German auxiliary troops were deployed in North America, and some Hanoverians, as already noted, were sent to India. For the most part, however, foreign troops were used in Europe – on some occasions for the defence of Britain itself but more often in campaigns against the French in the Low Countries and Germany.

These continental campaigns, it could be argued, merely aided British overseas expansion and so demonstrated that ultimately Europe was secondary to empire. Pitt the Elder, referring to the tying down of French military resources in Europe by subsidy allies, famously boasted that in the Seven Years War Britain had conquered America in Germany.<sup>109</sup> But even Pitt's most fervent supporters acknowledged that the relationship between the two military theatres was more complex than he suggested. While for the British government and public the Seven Years War began as a conflict to protect the North American colonies from French

<sup>107</sup> See *Documents Illustrating the British Conquest of Manila, 1762–1763*, ed. Nicholas P. Cushner (Royal Historical Society, Camden 4th ser., viii, 1971), p. 147.

<sup>108</sup> N. A. M. Rodger, 'Seapower and Empire: Cause and Effect?', in *Colonial Empires Compared: Britain and the Netherlands, 1750–1850*, ed. Bob Moore and Henk van Nierop (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 97–111.

<sup>109</sup> *Parliamentary History*, ed. Cobbett and Wright, xv, col. 1267 (9 Dec. 1762).

encroachments, it soon developed into a war against French power and pretensions everywhere. The French, it was widely believed, had to be checked on the continent as much as in areas of imperial competition. Without a European dimension to the war, France and its allies would dominate Germany with the result that the frequently invoked 'Protestant Interest' would be fatally undermined. Britain and Ireland would also be placed in great danger of external attack as the French would be free to devote most of their efforts to that end.<sup>110</sup> The fighting beyond Europe served much the same purpose as the raids on the French coast – the aim, in part at least, was to divert French military and financial resources from Germany, and so reduce the pressure on Frederick the Great and Britain's other subsidy allies.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, taking the war to French overseas possessions, especially in the Caribbean, not only stretched French military and naval resources, but also helped to undermine French public finances and therefore France's ability to fund its own armies in Germany and pay subsidies to its European allies. As a contemporary periodical explained, by attacking the French in the West Indies, the British would 'cut away one great part of the resources which fed the war'.<sup>112</sup>

In a very basic sense, Europe was primary rather than secondary. The imperial triumphs of the later part of the Seven Years War were celebrated because they were believed to have achieved enhanced standing for Britain. As the borough of New Windsor enthusiastically opined in its congratulatory address to the king at the end of 1759, 'The Reputation of Great Britain hath been raised to a Degree of Glory unknown in History'.<sup>113</sup> It was, needless to say, European rivals, and especially the French, whom the worthy townsmen of New Windsor believed would be impressed. To Britons, who had long wrestled with a form of inferiority complex so far as the French were concerned, imperial acquisitions helped to secure what a pamphlet of 1760 described as the ultimate national aim – a proper 'Weight, and Consideration in *Europe*'.<sup>114</sup>

British North Americans themselves were perfectly well aware of this function of empire. Robert Livingston of New York made this abundantly clear when he wrote to a Scottish correspondent at the beginning of the Seven Years War: the question, Livingston stated, was 'whither France or England has North America solely. Whoever has it will give

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, *Monitor, or British Freeholder*, 12 May, 4 Aug. 1759; [Anon.], *A Letter Addressed to Two Great Men, on the Prospect of Peace; and on the Terms Necessary to be Insisted Upon in the Negotiation* (2nd edn., Dublin, 1760), pp. 29, 31.

<sup>111</sup> See *Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, ed. W. S. Pringle and J. H. Taylor (4 vols., 1838–40), i. 329–30.

<sup>112</sup> *Annual Register*, ii (1759), 11. See also *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ed. Pringle and Taylor, i. 353; *Monitor, or British Freeholder*, 13 Jan. 1759; [Anon.], *A Letter to a Great M-r, on the Prospect of a Peace* (1761), p. 139.

<sup>113</sup> Berkshire Record Office, Windsor Borough Records, W1/AC 1/1/2, p. 323.

<sup>114</sup> [Anon.], *Remarks on the Letter Addressed to Two Great Men. In a Letter to the Author of that Piece* (Dublin, 1760), p. 10.

Law to Europe'.<sup>115</sup> In December 1760, with Canada conquered and the war in North America won, the assembly of Massachusetts announced that, 'This great event' would not only 'firmly establish' Britain's power in America, but would also 'contribute to maintaining the Figure which she now so gloriously makes among the Powers of *Europe*'.<sup>116</sup> At this moment of triumph, New Englanders had every reason to trumpet the intrinsic value of empire in North America; yet even they recognized both the interconnectedness of empire and Europe and the importance of Europe to Britain.

<sup>115</sup> Glasgow City Archives, Kippen and Glassford Papers, TD 132/48, Livingston to John Glassford, 3 Nov. 1755.

<sup>116</sup> *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts*, xxxvii, pt. ii: 1760–1761, ed. Malcolm Freiberg (Boston, 1965).