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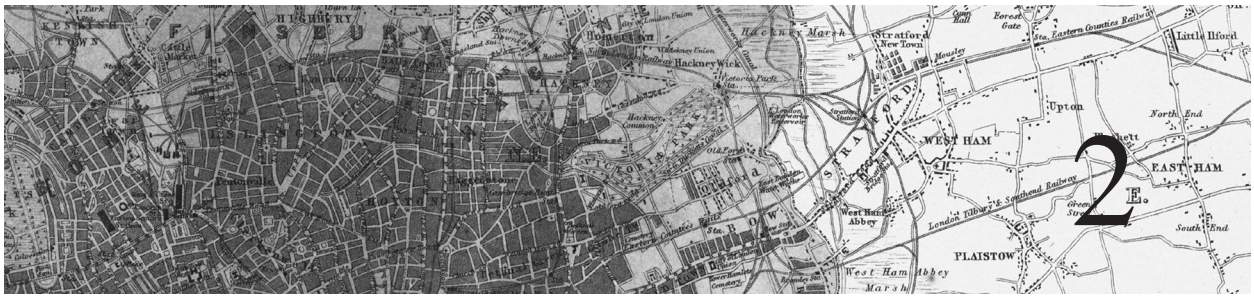

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Michael Heffernan and Karen M. Morin

INTRODUCTION

During the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, attempts were made by academics, scholars and writers of varying predilections and affiliations to bring together approaches and methods from history and geography to create a hybrid intellectual project, generally described as 'historical geography', in the belief that this would speak directly to the cultural and political challenges of the *fin-de-siècle* world. These efforts to 'bridge the divide' between the disciplines of time and space did not amount to a self-conscious, intellectually coherent campaign to recalibrate existing disciplinary formations, not least because the early proponents of historical geography held diverse opinions and were motivated by different viewpoints. Notwithstanding these differences, however, a broadly similar appeal to historical geography as a novel way to conceptualise and communicate the interrelationships between past and present can be discerned in several countries in this period. This chapter focuses on writers from Europe and before United States but similar histories could be discussed in other parts of the world (see Chiang 2005; Que 1995 on China; Kinda 1997; Takeuchi 2000 on Japan).

While some of the leading advocates of late nineteenth-century historical geography have been studied in detail, and are amply referenced in other chapters in this volume, until very recently there was a curious unwillingness on the part of modern historical geographers to acknowledge this earlier episode as a part of their own intellectual history (see, however, Baker 2003, 1–36; Butlin 1993, 1–22). The objectives of this chapter are to consider examples from this recondite early tradition of historical geography in an international, comparative context, and to examine how this perspective survived in some countries more than others.

The reasons why modern practitioners of historical geography have been relatively silent about this episode can perhaps

be explained by reference to the subsequent politics of disciplinary formation. Although early proponents of historical geography habitually used that term to describe their writings, only a handful self-identified as 'historical geographers', or indeed as geographers. Their objectives, methods and styles of writing were, moreover, quite different from the generation of scholars who established a recognisably modern version of historical geography after the First World War, and who increasingly called themselves 'historical geographers'. While the former constituency were trained in traditional disciplines of the humanities – classics, archaeology and history – and had few institutional associations with the inchoate discipline of geography, the latter group were either trained as geographers, or owed their allegiance to this discipline as teachers in newly-established university departments of geography.

The questions asked by these two generations, and the scales at which their scholarship operated, were also quite different. The early practitioners built on a much older idea of historical geography, initially articulated in the eighteenth century, as an essentially political project, exemplified by the writings of Edward Gibbon on the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Like Gibbon, late Victorian and Edwardian historical geographers were concerned with the waxing and waning of states and empires over long periods and across substantial sections of the globe. In these 'big picture' narratives of civilisational flux, geography was considered in three ways – as a significant, sometimes determining explanatory factor, especially when considering the role of the natural environment; as a manifestation of political changes, notably when considering the shifting boundaries and frontiers of states and empires; and as a body of geographical knowledge directly implicated in these political processes.

This fusion of history and geography was given some political support during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, notably in France. In the wake of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, the Ministry of Public Instruction commissioned a report on the teaching of history and geography in French primary and secondary schools. The authors were Pierre-Émile Levasseur (1828–1911), an economist, statistician and geographer at the Collège de France, and Louis-Auguste Himly (1823–1903), an historian-turned-geographer at the Sorbonne and a specialist in historical geography. Their report argued that France's national humiliation in 1870–71, which brought an ignominious end to the Napoleonic Second Empire, was due in part to the absence of a carefully-formulated civic educational system in which patriotic ideals could be actively promoted. According to Levasseur and Himly, France needed a new educational programme to rival the system in the new German Empire, in which history and geography could be taught together and to a much higher level (Levasseur and Himly 1871; see also Levasseur 1872).

The generation who created the modern version of historical geography in the decades after the First World War sought to distance themselves from the *fin-de-siècle* tradition of historical geography. From their post-1918 perspective, these earlier writings belonged to another world and another era – to the complacent Victorian and Edwardian age that ended so abruptly in 1914. That earlier historical geographies had often peddled increasingly discredited theories of environmental determinism and pseudo-scientific racialism intensified the separation of the old from the new, of 'then' from 'now'. Interwar historical geographers, led by Clifford Darby in Britain and Carl Sauer in the United States, saw themselves as pioneers of a new and quite distinct intellectual project – a *geographical* historical and cultural geography, anchored in the self-consciously modern discipline of geography. Although this project was itself highly varied, in the minds of its still youthful proponents it was not to be confused with the tradition of *historical* historical geography previously championed by classically-trained historians and

archaeologists in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

The new version of historical geography established in the 1920s and 1930s was less overtly political and more consistently empirical. It relied on painstaking research in previously overlooked archives and extensive field investigation. The objective was to reveal the long-term, secular impact of humanity on the natural world, rather than the other way around. This was an historical geography that gave priority to the clearing of primordial woodlands, the draining of ancient wetlands, and the creation of early agricultural systems. Its findings were expressed not in the sweeping, curlicued Edwardian prose of an earlier generation but in a restrained, modest and disinterested register.

This change reflected the political culture of the post-1918 world, after the collapse of European imperial dynasties and at a time when governments were, rhetorically at least, seeking to create a 'land fit for heroes' (Heffernan and Gruffudd 1988). The new interwar historical geography was less concerned with the lofty processes by which nations and empires had risen and fallen, and more interested in down-to-earth economic and social questions of agricultural production and practices. Out went discussions of ancient battlefields, military strategy and the fortunes of the crowned heads of Europe; in came carefully prepared maps showing the distributions of oxen, ploughed land and domesticated animals.

The temporal and spatial focus of inquiry also changed. The classical eras of Rome and Greece became less dominant in interwar historical geography, as did the regional focus on the Mediterranean, to be replaced by new geographical inquiries on the medieval and early-modern periods in the regions of northern Europe and North America in which the research was conducted. Whereas earlier historical geographers sought to excavate their cultural and political roots in the ancient landscapes of the sun-drenched Mediterranean, the post-1918 generation explored the legacies of a more recent past in the landscapes and environments in which they lived and worked.

While understandable in this context, the desire of modern historical geographers to disown earlier versions of their subject, and to deny any significant continuity across the chasm of the First World War, seems more problematic today given that the approach developed by scholars such as Darby and Sauer no longer enjoys the hegemonic status it acquired in the middle decades of the twentieth century. As historical geography has recently reconnected with larger political themes of nationalism and imperialism, and with the global challenges of environmental and climate change, a reconsideration of how late Victorian and Edwardian versions of historical geography engaged with these same themes, for different reasons and with different objectives, seems overdue. This task has an additional significance given that historical geography has recently re-incorporated the history of geography within its remit, recreating a combination accepted in the earlier tradition of historical geography but not by the intervening generation for whom the history of geography, insofar as it was considered at all, was deemed an entirely separate project. In that sense, this chapter can be read as an attempt to reconsider the thematic affinities between the forms of historical geography that developed at the last two *fin-de-siècles*, in the late Victorian and Edwardian era, and in the past three decades.

ANCIENTS AND MODERNS

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historical geography focused to a considerable extent on the geography of the ancient world, especially – though not exclusively – the classical civilisations of the Mediterranean. This literature, which includes the hundreds of travel narratives and related commentaries on the Holy Land,

Chateaubriand's 'land weathered by miracles', has recently been as reconsidered as modern historical geography's 'forgotten past' by William Koelsch (2013; see also Idinopulos 1998). In an outstanding recent volume, Koelsch charts the development of this literary tradition in Britain and the United States, demonstrating how an interest in the geographies of ancient empires and civilisations was invariably connected to the contemporary cultural, religious and geopolitical concerns of those who wrote these accounts (Goldhill 2011; Jenkyns 1980).

Historical geographies of the ancient world captured the imaginations of a surprising number of prominent public figures, including Thomas Jefferson in the United States and William Gladstone in Britain (Koelsch 2013, 75–104, 141–62). In the latter country, much of the literature was generated by a group of liberal Anglican scholars, mainly associated with the University of Oxford, who were strongly influenced by the ideas of Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), the legendary headmaster of Rugby School and Oxford's first Regius Professor of History (Koelsch 2013, 164–72; see also Burrow 1981; Koditschek 2011). Arnold's reform-minded educational ideas were based on the study of the classics which he believed provided the essential moral and political foundations for modern, liberal and enlightened citizenship. In his inaugural lectures at Oxford in 1841–42, delivered shortly before his death, Arnold insisted on the need to consider the history and geography of the ancient world together. Geography was more than a neutral backdrop for the grand sweep of history, he argued, but less than a determining influence (Arnold 1843).

The historical geography of the classical world became a common feature in the reformed curricula of leading British schools and universities by the 1870s, encouraged by several Oxford classicists and historians, including Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815–81), Arnold's former pupil and biographer, and Henry Fanshawe Tozer (1829–1916). Tozer, in particular, focused almost exclusively on historical geography, publishing two widely-read texts based on his Oxford lectures on the geography of ancient Greece and on classical geography, as well as a later work on the history of geography in the ancient world (Tozer 1873, 1876, 1897; see also della Dora 2008; Koelsch 2010, 127; 2013, 117–37).

As Koelsch notes, the establishment of a geography programme at Oxford, directed by Halford Mackinder from 1887, was facilitated not only by the national campaign coordinated by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in London, but also by sympathetic interventions from classicists, theologians and historians elsewhere in the university who had long been attracted by the value of teaching the historical geography of the ancient world. These 'fellow travellers' included John Linton Myres (1869–1954), the first Wykeham Professor of Ancient History; David G. Hogarth (1862–1927), an archaeologist specialising in the Middle East who later directed the University's Ashmolean Museum; William Mitchell Ramsey (1851–1939), a leading archaeologist, New Testament scholar and an authority on Asia Minor about which he wrote a celebrated historical geography (Ramsey 1890; see also Scargill 1976; Stoddart 1986, 127–40). Historical geography loomed large in the new geography curriculum at Oxford, notably in the lectures presented by Mackinder himself. The historical geography of the classical world, represented by the teaching of G. Beardoe Grundy (1861–1948) and – briefly – the young Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975), was a significant, though eventually tenuous element in this programme (Koelsch 2013, 241–71).

This story was by no means limited to Oxford. In 1886, Ramsey moved to a chair at the University of Aberdeen, where he completed his work on the historical geography of Asia Minor. He was later joined at Aberdeen by the Old Testament theologian George Adam Smith (1856–1942), who was elected as the university's vice chancellor in

1909. Smith was the author of a popular volume on the *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, first published in 1894 and re-issued through 25 editions by the 1930s, as well as an associated atlas, published in 1915 (Smith 1894). The dozens of other atlases of ancient geography published in this period attest to the significance of this topic in late Victorian and Edwardian schools and universities (e.g., Smith 1872–74; see also Butlin 1988; Koelsch 2013, 273–312).

In the United States, something approaching a 'school' specialising in the geography of the ancient world emerged at Harvard following attempts by classicist Cornelius Conway Felton (1807–62) and historian Henry Warren Torrey (1814–93) to reform the university's curriculum before and after the Civil War (Koelsch 2013, 203–39). Similar forms of historical geography developed in other American universities in later decades, including Berkeley, Chicago, Clark, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins, promoted by influential figures in the emerging discipline of geography such as Ellen Churchill Semple (1863–1932), to whom we shall return, and by sympathetic university leaders such as Wallace W. Atwood (1872–1949) and Daniel Coit Gilman (1831–1908) (Koelsch 2013, 313–45; Semple 1931; see also Heyman 2001).

The imperial implications of late nineteenth-century British and American writings on ancient geographies conformed to the standard 'Orientalist' template famously discussed by Edward Said (1978). The lands in which the classical civilisations of Rome, Greece and Egypt had once flourished had degenerated in the intervening centuries, it was consistently argued, and now required the civilising, stabilising and modernising presence of a benign, enlightened Europe to re-create these inspirational geographies, on paper in learned treatises and ultimately in reality. This theme of 'past glory and present decay', inspired by both religious and secular political concerns, was equally evident in the historical geographies of the ancient world produced by continental European scholars. As much of this work built on the German tradition of biblical exegesis and the closely related German geographical scholarship of Carl Ritter (1779–1859), it is scarcely surprising that the historical geography of the ancient world remained a prominent research interest in Wilhelmine Germany. In this national context, however, ancient geographies were often subsumed within specifically German imperial narratives, including those associated with the (in)famous theory of *Lebensraum*, or 'living space', formulated at the time by the Leipzig geographer and anthropologist Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and later used extensively by the Nazis to justify their imperial ambitions (Ratzel 2018 [1901]; see also Ratzel 1897, 1909; Abrahamsson 2013; Smith 1980).

Ratzel's successor at the University of Leipzig, Joseph Partsch (1851–1925), devoted much of his career to the ancient geographies of Greece (Neumann and Partsch 1885; Partsch 1891), but the clearest German manifestation of the fusion between ancient geographies and imperial ambition were the writings of Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905), briefly Ratzel's colleague at Leipzig. At the University of Berlin, where Richthofen became professor of geography in 1886, a previously overlooked 'school' of historical geography developed, based on his interests. Richthofen's most famous work was a five-volume account of his travels in China, the first volume of which featured a map on which he coined the phrase 'Seidenstraße', or Silk Road (Richthofen 1877–1912; see also Richthofen 1877; Zimmerer 2016). This richly evocative term has acquired multiple layers of meaning over the decades, and has paradoxically been reappropriated in recent years by the current regime in China, but it was originally formulated by von Richtoften to highlight how the near-mythical global trading routes across central Asia that had once linked the ancient civilisations of China and the Mediterranean might once again become an economic and

geopolitical reality, with the impulse and dynamism emerging from the developed west rather than the impoverished east, facilitated by new, continental rail and road connections (Chin 2013; Danielsson 2009; Wu 2014, 2015). The impact of von Richthofen's Asian dreaming on the geopolitical theories subsequently elaborated by Mackinder in his famous 1904 lecture to the RGS on the 'geographical pivot of history' is striking, and followed Mackinder's previous borrowing from his German counterpart for an earlier RGS lecture, delivered shortly before he accepted the Oxford readership, on the 'scope and methods of geography', a prospectus that drew extensively on the inaugural lecture von Richtoften delivered at Leipzig three years before he moved to Berlin (Mackinder 1887, 1904, 1919; and Richthofen 1883).

Similar geopolitical research on the historical geography of the ancient world was continued by von Richthofen's students and colleagues in Berlin, notably Wilhelm Sieglin (1855–1935), previously librarian at the University of Leipzig, where he was greatly influenced by Ratzel. Shortly after Sieglin was appointed by von Richthofen to a chair in historical geography at Berlin in 1899, he established a series of research monographs on the historical geography of the classical world, *Quellen und Forschungen zur alten Geschichte und Geographie* (*Sources and Research on Ancient History and Geography*). These monographs, published in Berlin and Leipzig from 1901 to 1918, eventually extended to 28 volumes, the work of an eclectic group of historians, classicists and theologians. The series included several volumes by the historian Detlef Detlefsen (1833–1911) on Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* (1901, 1904, 1906, 1908 and 1909), the idea of the north in German mythology (1904), and the Agrippa Map of the Roman Empire (1906); nine volumes by the Dresden historian and librarian Ludwig Schmidt (1862–1944) on the migrations of Germanic tribes during the *Völkerwanderung* (1904–18); and single-volume contributions by Fritz Pichler (1834–1911) on Austria under the Roman Empire (1902–04); Gustav Hölscher (1877–1955) on Persian and Hellenistic Palestine (1903); Fritz Geyer (1879–1938) on the Greek island of Euboea (1903); Alfred Klotz (1874–1956) on Pliny (1906); Hans Philipp (1884–1968) on the historical geographies of the Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (1912–13); and a fascinating study by the Jewish linguist Sigmund Feist (1865–1943) on the geography of Indo-European languages (1910). The series also included a 1910 volume by Albert Herrmann (1886–1945), to whom we shall return, on the ancient Silk Roads between China and Syria, the first publication to use the phrase 'Silk Road' in the title (Herrmann 1910a; see also Herrmann 1910b). Sieglin's own contribution never materialised, and his reputation – such as it was – rested on his successful atlas of the ancient world, though he also wrote a bizarre treatise in 1905 on the incidence of blond hair in the ancient world. This failed to find a publisher at the time but was eventually printed in 1935 by a pro-Nazi publisher specialising in anti-Semitic and racialist literature about Aryanism (Sieglin 1893, 1935; see Chapoutot 2016, 410). As this implies, the seeds were already being sown in early twentieth-century German historical geography for a much darker story to which we will soon return.

The equivalent tradition in France can be traced in the writings of Ernest Desjardins (1823–86) and Auguste Longnon (1844–1911). Desjardins, whose expertise in the ancient world was established during several excavations around the Mediterranean, was appointed professor of epigraphy at the Collège de France in 1886. Among his prolific writings was an atlas of ancient Italy, a geography of Roman Gaul revealed by the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the thirteenth-century copy of a Roman *itinerarium* map of the empire, and a four-volume historical and administrative geography of Roman Gaul (Desjardins 1852, 1870, 1876–93). The final, posthumous volume of Desjardins' work on

Roman Gaul was edited and co-authored by Longnon, at the time employed as deputy to the national archivist Alfred Maury (1817–92), a remarkable polymath whose writings ranged from a theory of dreams that anticipated Freud to histories of medieval astrology, magic, myths, legends and fairy stories, and who combined his role as keeper of the country's archives with professorial responsibilities at the Collège de France. During Longnon's time as Maury's assistant, he discovered, and later edited, the papers of the fifteenth-century poet François Villon, and published important volumes on the geography of sixth-century Frankish Gaul, a work that was awarded the 1878 Prix Gobert of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, and a pioneering historical atlas of France from the Roman era to the late nineteenth century (Longnon 1878, 1885–89). Maury died while Longon was working on Desjardin's final volume, and his faithful assistant was promptly appointed to succeed him as professor at the Collège de France. On his election, Longnon decided to change the designation of the chair to historical geography, though his intellectual debt to his predecessor is revealed by his careful editing of Maury's posthumous *Croyances et légendes du Moyen Âge*, published in 1896 (Darby 2002, 101–10). The influence of Desjardins, Longnon and indeed Maury can be traced in the pages of the *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive*, published from 1887 to 1913 by the Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, one of several scholarly committees created by the French Ministry of Education. This journal was almost entirely devoted to ancient geographies, borders and fortifications, and toponymy, with particular reference to Roman Gaul.

NATIONS AND EMPIRES

While the historical geography of the ancient world provided a convenient conceptual framework for classically trained scholars to explore the dilemmas and challenges of the era in which they lived, other authors turned to the historical geographies of a more recent past to develop their equally impassioned criticisms of the present, often using similar methods of inquiry and techniques of exposition. The most opinionated and influential of this latter group was probably Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92), a Liberal politician and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1884, whose prolific writings have recently been reconsidered (Bremner and Conlin 2015; Randall 2020). Freeman – best known for his six-volume *magnum opus* on *The History of the Norman Conquest of England* (1867–79) – was an important public intellectual of the Victorian age, and he exerted a substantial influence on the Arnoldian tradition of liberal Anglicanism that informed many of the British authors who wrote historical geographies of the ancient world (Jones 2015; Koelsch 2013, 172–82).

An energetic traveller, despite his debilitating gout, Freeman saw history and geography as mutually sustaining and inextricably interwoven projects. In an essay on 'Geography and Travel', part of a longer commentary on historical methodology, he argued that 'Geography, in one of its aspects, is simply a branch of history; in the other it is a precious help to history. In one aspect, it is a form of knowledge which may be mastered in the study of books and maps; in the other, it is a matter of travel, a matter of seeing things with our own eyes' (Freeman 1886, 296–327, 296; see also Aird 2015; Paul 2015a). Freeman repeatedly returned to this relationship in his other writings on architectural history, on what he saw as the 'dark abyss' of imperial federation, and on British national unity, a theme he discussed in a notable contribution to a collection of essays on *Britannic Confederation*, edited by the cartographer and later secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Arthur Silva White (Freeman 1863, 1883,

1886, 1892, 45; see also Bremner and Conlin 2011).

In 1881, the year when Freeman coined his most famous adage that 'history is past politics, and politics is present history', he published a two-volume study on *The Historical Geography of Europe*, the second volume of which was an atlas of 65 fold-out maps prepared by Edward Weller, a well-known London cartographer (Freeman 1881; see also Hesketh 2014; Paul 2015b). Freeman's objective was 'to trace out the extent of territory which the different states and nations of Europe and the neighbouring lands have held at different times in the world's history' and, in so doing, reveal 'geography as influenced by history' and 'history as influenced by geography' (Freeman 1881, 1, 11). As this implies, Freeman saw historical geography as an essentially political discipline, primarily concerned with changing political divisions. Following opening chapters on Greece and the Greek colonies, and on the rise, 'dismemberment' and 'final division' of the Roman Empire, Freeman outlined the emergence of the European state system, the 'ecclesiastical geography' of western Europe, and then reviewed the changing spatial configuration of different countries and regions – German central Europe, eastern Europe, the Baltic Lands, France, and Spain. Britain and its colonies were considered in the final chapter (Freeman 1881, 563–88).

Racial theories occasionally surfaced in the previously discussed historical geographies of the ancient world but were front and centre of Freeman's historical geography of Europe (Bell 2015; Koditschek 2015; Morrisroe 2013; Parker 1981). In his introductory chapter, alongside discussions on the 'geographical aspect of Europe' and the 'effects of geography on history', Freeman included an assertive discussion of the 'geographical distribution of races' (Freeman 1881, 12–17). Europe was 'an Aryan continent', he insisted, albeit with 'non-Aryan remnants and later settlements', and what he was no doubt pleased to call 'intrusions' by Saracens, Bulgarians, Magyars, Ottomans and other non-European peoples, a classification that revealed his wider concerns about the likelihood of a future civilisational clash between Christian Europe and the Islamic world, and his anxieties about the fate of the English 'race', not least in the United States, a nation he famously described as 'England with a difference' (Freeman 1883, 10; see also Conlin 2015; Morrisroe 2011; Randall 2020).

While Freeman's historical geography of Europe was reaching an increasingly global English readership, continental Europeans were preparing their own distinctive accounts. The aforementioned Sorbonne historical geographer Louis-Auguste Himly wrote a fascinating but now almost entirely forgotten two-volume study on the territorial formation of central European states, a pioneering work of political-historical geography (Himly 1894). By the close of the nineteenth century, the new generation of professional university geographers also began to prepare their own historical geographies of Europe, some of which challenged Freeman's approach. The previously mentioned German geographer Joseph Partsch was commissioned by Mackinder to prepare a volume on Central Europe for a new book series for the London publisher William Heinemann on 'The Regions of the World', in which Mackinder included his own volume on Britain's sea power and a treatise by D. G. Hogarth on the Middle East (Mackinder 1902; Hogarth 1902; Partsch 1903). Partsch's substantial German manuscript, completed in 1899, was translated and abridged by Clementine Black, a feminist trade unionist and close friend of Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor, and further 'curtailed' by E. A. Reeves, the RGS's eccentric map curator (Partsch 1903). The original German version was published in 1904, and the English text repeatedly re-issued in Britain and United States, prompted by debates about its final chapter on 'The Geographical Conditions of National Defense', which considered the military and

geopolitical threats posed by Russia (Partsch 1904). Konrad Kretschmer (1864–1945), another von Richthofen student, taught historical geography at the University of Berlin and at the Prussian Military Academy before, during and after the First World War and produced an alternative reading of the historical geography of Central Europe, noteworthy for its cross-sectional approach, later championed by Darby, in which separate chapters were provided on the region's cultural and political geographies in specific years from 1000 to 1770 (Kretschmer 1904, 1912).

Debates about the relationship between history and geography continued into the early years of the twentieth century. James Bryce (1838–1922), a Liberal politician and later British Ambassador to the United States, was probably expressing a commonplace in 1902 when he described geography as 'the key to history' (Bryce 1902, 54; see also Baker 2003, 16). The relationship was also explored in book-length detail by H. B. George (1838–1910), a lawyer, military historian and Alpinist. For George:

> History is not intelligible without geography. This is obviously true in the sense that the reader of history must learn where are the frontiers of states, where wars are fought, whither colonies were dispatched. It is equally, if less obviously, true that geographical facts largely influence the course of history. Even the constitutional and social developments within a settled nation are scarcely independent of them, since the geographical position affects the nature and extent of geographical intercourse with other nations, and therefore of the influence exerted by foreign ideas. All external relations, hostile and peaceful, are based largely on geography, while industrial progress depends primarily, though not exclusively, on matters described in every geography textbook – the natural products of a country, and the facilities which its structure affords for trade, both domestic and foreign. (George 1901, 1)

Whereas Freeman believed the relationship between history and geography was best explored on the 'old continent' of Europe, George sought to examine these interactions in the imperial arena in a 1904 volume on the historical geography of the British Empire, a work that drew inspiration in equal measure from Freeman and the Cambridge historian J. R. Seeley, whose hugely successful *The Expansion of England* (1883), described by journalist and Liberal politician G. P. Gooch as the 'bible of British imperialists', considered Englishness as a national sensibility shaped by the experiences of empire (George 1904; Gooch 1913, 12; and, especially, Butlin 1995, 2009). In an era when several British politicians, led by Joseph Chamberlain, were challenging the idea of free trade and calling for an alternative policy of imperial preference that would make the British empire into a functioning economic system, George's historical geography was an attempt to 'naturalise' the red bits on the map; to convert what Ronald Robinson and Jack Gallagher once called a 'gaudy' empire, 'spatch-cocked' together across Africa and Asia in scarcely more than a century, into a permanent feature of the global order (Robinson and Gallagher 1962, 639). In this task, George was joined by C. P. Lucas, general editor of a series of repeatedly revised volumes, published from 1887 to 1925, under the initial title *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies* (Butlin 1995; see also Bell 2007, 2016).

Debates about the role of history and geography in the rise and fall of nations and empires had particular resonance for late nineteenth-century American intellectuals who viewed their country as both a nation-state and a continental empire (Morin 2011). Historical geography gradually emerged as a distinctive mode of inquiry in the United States in this period, shaped by its distinctive national and imperial impulses. The term was deployed by politicians, academics, school educators, journalists and business entrepreneurs to justify the 'manifest destiny' of American national and eventually global expansion and ambition. The belief that the westward expansion of European settlement on the American continent was in accordance with divine will had

been a pervasive rhetorical idea from the earliest Puritan colonists. This idea gained momentum throughout the nineteenth century and was eventually crystallised in the writings of the historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932), most famously in his essay on 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History', first presented at a special meeting of the American Historical Association at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and at various venues thereafter, including the American Geographical Society (Turner 1893). Turner argued that history and geography had together created and solidified the idea of America as a nation and an empire, forged by a westward moving continental frontier of European settlement that shaped the American character and drove its 'exceptional' history. In Turner's view: 'The whole history of what it means to be an American can be explained by free land, its continuous recession, and advancement of settlement westward' (Turner 1893, 201). In a continental frontier zone of 'free land', settler communities existed in permanent and close interaction with nature, the wilderness engendering a process of 'perennial rebirth' that had created a composite national identity. The frontier had created a Euro-American character founded on democratic values of equality, independence, rugged individualism and inventiveness. In this mythical imaginary, the colonist could envision himself as a subject whose responsibility was to bring these values to fruition on the continent and beyond. This was particularly noteworthy because, as Turner warned, the continental frontier was 'closed' by 1893, according to an official statement in the preceding US census, and the continued development of the American character, and of American democracy itself, therefore required more distant and ever-expanding frontiers. Turner's work influenced a whole generation of geographers to reflect on their continent's 'settlement history', and historians to consider its 'settlement geography'.

Turner's frontier thesis provided the intellectual basis for an institutional-disciplinary order that would eventually become the American version of historical-cultural geography. The process was overseen and encouraged by the American Geographical Society (AGS), established in 1851 in New York, and an organisation that had close ties, and an overlapping membership, with both the American Historical Association and the New York Historical Society (Koelsch 2014). Turner's views also shaped the version of academic geography advocated in American universities by the discipline's leading representatives, including the previously mentioned Ellen Churchill Semple, who sought to develop a historically-informed geography that could do more than merely describe the earth's surface. For Semple, geography's explanatory potential could only be realised through the deployment of a coherent theory described by its opponents rather than its advocates as 'environmental determinism', which she learned from Ratzel, with whom she studied in Germany. In her widely-read 1911 volume on *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropo-Geography*, Semple argued that differences in human activity across space were determined not by economic, social or political conditions but by the physical environment of the earth's surface (Semple 1911; also Keighren 2011).

The writings of Turner and Semple, and of their many disciples, were central to American university and school education and to wider geopolitical, military and commercial debates about American expansion beyond the North American continent. The conviction that American commercial expansion around the world could be incorporated within the same frontier mythology became firmly entrenched in the opening years of the twentieth century, accepted by academics and within popular culture. The activities of the AGS and other late nineteenth-century American scholarly and charitable foundations, including the National Geographic Society, established in

1888, were important in this regard as both organisations were closely associated with American expansionism into the Caribbean and Pacific (Rothenberg 2007). The projects, expeditions and events encouraged by the AGS in this period invariably reflected its original maxim: 'Geographical Exploration is Commercial Progress'. As Richard Slotkin (1992) argues, a racialist version of America's historical geography that accorded superiority to the Anglo-Saxon race, a viewpoint articulated most forcefully in Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West* (1889), dominated popular culture and government policy-making in this period, and directly influenced America's expansionist policies with respect to Native and Hispanic America, the Philippines, Panama and Cuba. As Neil Smith argues in his extraordinary biography of Isaiah Bowman (1878–1950), the AGS's first full-time director and later an influential foreign policy expert, the expansion of the United States beyond its borders before and after the First World War was achieved not by military occupation or colonial administration but by establishing trading networks, corporate markets and financial investments around the globe, leaving the surprisingly slender resources of the US government to focus on maintaining the legal conditions that enabled these markets and investments to bear fruit (Smith 2003). This involved the public mobilisation of a more abstract American historical geography pitched beyond the nation's territory, a 'global power beyond geography'. According to Smith, this required a 'depoliticization of history' that allowed – and perhaps required – Americans to define themselves as anti-imperialist while profiting from markets created by that very economic and geopolitical system. For Smith, this represented a 'breach in the connection between history and geography' so that economic growth and development, real historical outcomes, were no longer tied to territorial expansion but rather to a new, twentieth-century 'relational' geography (see also Schulten 2001).

GERMAN AFTERLIFE

As the preceding discussion implies, the emergence of the so-called 'new' geography in European and American universities initially sustained these early forms of historical geography. Although historical geography was associated for the most part with history and other humanities disciplines, Freeman and other leading proponents of this approach were often accorded the status of 'honorary' geographers by representatives of leading geographical societies (Markham 1892). But as the discipline of geography developed a more self-confident position in schools and universities, criticisms of the pre-existing form of historical geography began to emerge. In Britain, the charge was led by Mackinder. In his 1904 lecture to the RGS on the 'geographical pivot of history', Mackinder drew implicitly on the argument that nations are civic rather than racial or biological categories, an idea famously articulated by the French philosopher Ernest Renan in 1882, to criticise Freeman's Eurocentrism and racial preoccupations:

> The late Prof. Freeman held that the only history which counts is that of the Mediterranean and European races. In a sense, of course, this is true, for it is among these races that have originated the ideas which have rendered the inheritors of Greece and Rome dominant throughout the world. In another and very important sense, however, such a limitation has a cramping effect upon thought. The ideas which go to form a nation, as opposed to a mere crowd of human animals, have usually been accepted under the pressure of common tribulations, and under a common necessity of resistance to external force. … What I may describe as the literary conception of history, by concentrating attention upon ideas and upon the civilization which is their outcome, is apt to lose sight of the more elemental movements whose pressure is commonly the exciting cause of the efforts in which great ideas are nourished. (Mackinder 1904, 422–3; see also Renan 1996 [1882])

In contrast to Freeman's view of historical geography as a way of conceptualising grand civilisational narratives, Mackinder (1919)

proposed a more down-to-earth, practical science, concerned with what he later called the geographical 'reality' of locations, resources, lands and livelihoods rather than abstract cultural or political 'ideals'. Whereas Freeman's historical geography presented geography as the subservient partner in the relationship, forever press-ganged into the service of history, Mackinder insisted that the two subjects could only work together, to their mutual benefit, as separate and independent disciplines. He rehearsed this argument the following year in a letter to the *Times*, prompted by concerns about the teaching of history and geography in military academies. The two disciplines were 'sisters' rather than 'Siamese twins', insisted Mackinder, and needed to retain independent existence in order to be of use to each other.[1]

A similar argument emerged in France, where the discipline of geography was largely reconfigured in the image of its leading representative, Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918), and his many students and collaborators (Sanguin 1993). The Vidalians, as this group increasingly called themselves, promoted a scholarly, historically-based regional geography, often involving archival research. Although focused initially on France, the Vidalian regional approach was later deployed by interwar French geographers across much of Europe, the French overseas empire, and the wider world. The Vidalians focused on complex, non-determinist material interactions between human societies and the natural environment considered over a long historical period. From their perspective, a separately constituted historical geography, still dominated by historians, classicists or archaeologists, was a pointless and ultimately self-defeating project, liable to undermine the growing status of human geography as a respected, independent and historically-informed social science (Claval 1984; Pitte 1995). If human geography as a whole was inherently historical, why persist with a specialised sub-discipline of history to promote an out-dated version of that idea? While most Vidalians, including their eponymous leader, acknowledged the geopolitical implications of their regional inquiries, not least for disputed regions such as Alsace–Lorraine, they presented their investigations of human–environmental interactions in a disinterested, scholarly register in keeping with the subtle, civic patriotism advocated by Renan, and in contrast to the overarching, 'top-down' political and administrative historical geographies championed in France by Longnon, Desjardins and Himly, and in Britain by Freeman and his fellow historians (Heffernan 2001). This was a compelling argument, subsequently absorbed by like-minded French historians, such as Marc Bloch (1886–1944) and Lucien Febvre (1878–1956), who established the so-called *Annales* school of history at the University of Strasbourg after the First World War, based in part on methods and techniques pioneered by the Vidalians (Baker 1984; Friedman 1996).

As noted in the introduction, the establishment of separate geography programmes in leading universities across the world before and after the First World War spelled the end for this earlier tradition of historical geography. After 1918, historians and geographers both re-orientated their interests away from the themes and agendas promoted prior to the First World War. The new form of historical geography that emerged in the interwar years was now rooted in geography rather than history, and influenced by both field- and archive-based inquiry. Although there were attempts to revive a more overtly political form of historical geography in France during the 1930s, building on the earlier tradition, these came to nought (Butlin 1990). With historical geography now firmly associated with the discipline of geography, international conversations between historians and historical geographers intensified, just as Mackinder had hoped, under the auspices of the International Geographical Union (IGU), established in Brussels in 1922, and at the First International Congress of Historical Geography organised in the same

city in August 1930 by the medievalist Henri Pirenne (1862–1935), an internationally-minded Belgian historian whose approach had strong affinities with the *Annales* school (Robic, Briend and Rössler 1996; Warland and Middell 2012).

The earlier tradition of historical geography lingered in some countries, however, especially Germany. Although the IGU sought to revive international collaboration through the 1920s, its room for manoeuvre was limited by the draconian and self-defeating rules of the International Research Council (IRC), established in 1919 under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which banned scientists from Germany and allied countries from international conferences. Such was the bitterness generated by the IRC policy among German geographers, who understandably viewed themselves as the modern custodians of a science created by Humboldt and Ritter, that even after the IRC restriction was removed in the mid-1920s, following near universal condemnation, German geographers boycotted IGU conferences well into the 1930s, by which time German delegates to international academic conferences were carefully vetted by the Nazi authorities to ensure their compatibility with the new regime (Fox 2016). Although leading German geographers such as Alfred Hettner (1859–1941), doyen of the Heidelberg school of geography, continued to influence philosophical debates about the nature of geography and its relation to other disciplines through the interwar years, the dynamism that had previously characterised German geography was undoubtedly diminished (Entrikin and Brunn 1989; Harvey and Wardenga 2006).

In these unusual circumstances, overtly political forms of historical geography bearing the obvious imprint of late nineteenth-century racial and spatial theories were practised and promoted in Weimar and Nazi Germany, initially to expose the perceived injustices of the territorial changes imposed by the Allied powers at the Paris Peace Conferences, and subsequently in response to the often idiosyncratic cultural agendas of the Nazi regime. It is important to consider the survival of these earlier German traditions of historical geography into the Nazi period in order to balance the otherwise skewed recent literature in English on German geography in this period. Most of this important work has focused on various forms of 'applied' geography, associated with the modernist strand in Nazi ideology, and characterised by formal spatial models of settlement patterns, urban hierarchies and economic interactions, often expressed in mathematical and statistical terms. Central Place Theory, devised by Walter Christaller (1893–1969), is the perfect exemplification of the interwar German geographical writing most widely studied in recent years (see, as early and recent examples from this large literature, Rössler 1989; Barnes 2012). But in tracing the darker roots of late twentieth-century quantitative and mathematical geography back to Nazi officials and research agencies, some of this invaluable recent research has overlooked the different but no less significant history of German historical geography in this period, and therefore overlooked the degree to which German geography also reflected the anti-modern, *völkisch* strand of Nazi ideology (on this duality, see Herf 1984).

The 'mobilisation' of German historical geography took several forms, the most obvious of which has been charted in encyclopedic detail by Michael Fahlbusch in his monumental study of the *Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften* (VFG), the six regional research associations established in German universities, some long pre-dating the Nazis, to generate historical and geographical evidence, often expressed in maps of language use, place names, settlement patterns, field systems, folk customs and architectural styles, initially to challenge the diminished borders of Germany, and later to justify German territorial expansion to the east (Ostforschung) and the west (Westforschung) (Fahlbusch 1999; see also Burleigh 1988; Fahlbusch, Haar and Pinwinkle 2017).

Around 1000 academics, including dozens of historical geographers, contributed to the five VFGs concerned with North-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Western Europe, and the sixth that focused on countries outside Europe where Germans had settled in large numbers. One of these associations, the *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (South East German Research Association) in Vienna, directed by the pro-Nazi medievalist Otto Brunner (1898–1982), has recently been studied by Petra Svatek (Svatek 2010, 2018a, 2018b). This association sponsored an impressive volume of research by historical geographers, including the works of Hugo Hassinger (1877–1952) and Wilfried Krallert (1912–60) on ethnographic maps that sought to justify the resettlement of Slavic populations and the eastern expansion of German territory (Fahlbusch 2008; Haar and Fahlbusch 2005; see also Hassinger 1931; Kötzschke 1936).[2]

Beyond these formal organisations, German historical geographers pursued a range of personal research projects designed to appeal to the political authorities, motivated sometimes by ideological conviction, sometimes by personal ambition to secure funds from potentially generous official patrons. Franz Petri (1903–93), from the University of Cologne, drew on a long-established tradition of German scholarship on the cultural landscape, mixing archaeological, historical and geographical investigations of field systems, place names, burial sites and even skeletal remains, to justify the claim that large segments of northern and eastern France and the Netherlands were essentially German (Derks 2005; Ditt 2001).

Some German historical geographers enthusiastically embraced highly unconventional research in the hope of currying favour with the Nazi regime. The previously mentioned Albert Herrmann, who succeeded to Sieglin's chair in historical geography at Berlin in 1923, was an enthusiastic Nazi and continued his prewar work on ancient trading routes in terms that reflected growing official interest in Aryan myths and ancient occult practices (Goodrick-Clark 1985; Kurlander 2017). In addition to relatively conventional work on an important atlas of China, published in 1935, and with Sven Hedin, the pro-Nazi Swedish explorer of central Asia, for whom he prepared historical maps purporting to demonstrate interactions of western and Chinese geographical knowledge, Herrmann became increasingly preoccupied with establishing the location of fabled lost cities around the shores of the Mediterranean, including Tartessos and Atlantis (Herrmann 1913, 1914, 1919–20, 1922a, 1922b, 1931, 1934, 1935a, 1935b, 1936; see also Heffernan and Delano-Smith 2014). Based on his own excavations and those of Paul Borchardt (1886–1953), a Jewish student of the notoriously anti-Semitic geographer Siegfried Passarge, Herrmann was convinced that Atlantis was awaiting discovery in saline depressions on the border of Algeria and Tunisia (Heffernan 1990; see also Michel 2018; Passarge 1929). In his fevered imagination, Atlantis and other lost cities were creations of an Aryan race that had colonised important locations around the Mediterranean from their Nordic heartlands in the north and east, and spawned the ancient civilisations on which European culture was constructed (Herrmann 1939; see also Edelstein 2006). As Herrmann knew well, outlandish Aryan theories were enthusiastically received by senior Nazis, especially Heinrich Himmler, whose SS Ahnenerbe research unit was established in 1935 to investigate the prehistoric racial origins of the German people (Hale 2003; Kater 1974; Pringle 2006). Herrmann shamelessly promoted his Atlantis theories in the pages of the Nazi party newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, edited by the sinister champion of other Aryan myths, Alfred Rosenberg. According to the French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, an expert on the Atlantis mythology, Herrmann 'became more or less the "Führer" of the Nazi press' (Vidal-Naquet 2007, 121).

In 1938, Herrmann established a new series of research monographs on the history of geography and *Völkerkunde*, expensively produced by a leading Leipzig publisher, to continue the work initiated by his predecessor Sieglin. The series was overseen by an editorial board that included Hedin and a roll-call of senior historians, geographers and anthropologists, several of whom were enthusiastic Nazis and/or racial theorists. The list included Eugen Fischer, the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics in Berlin and a key influence on the 1935 Nuremberg race laws; Hans Günther, author of *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (1922), one of Hitler's favourite books that was translated as *The Racial Elements of European History* (1927); and Walter Krickeberg, director of the Berlin Museum of Ethnology. Geographers involved included Eugen Oberhummer (1859–1944), a leading Austrian historical geographer who edited the 1923 edition of Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* to strengthen the geopolitical implications of the discussion of *Lebensraum*; Walter Behrmann (1882–1955), a well-known cartographer; and Heinrich Schmitthenner (1887–1957), the editor of *Geographische Zeitschrift* (Dietzel, Schmieder, and Schmitthenner 1941–43; see also Bertele and Wacker 2004; Brendel 2108; Rogge 2014; Ryback 2008, 110; Sandner 1983).[3] Herrmann wrote the first volume for this series on Tibet and the 'land of silk' in antiquity, for which Hedin provided a foreword (Herrmann 1938). Other volumes were written by assorted historians, Orientalists and classicists, including Paul Schnabel on Ptolemy (Schnabel 1938), Christine von Rohr on Vasco de Gama (Rohr 1939), Hermann Trimborn on the sixteenth-century Huarochirí manuscript on the myths of Peruvian Indians he discovered in Madrid and which was later destroyed during the war (Trimborn 1939), and Dominik Josef Wölfel on a sixteenth-century account of the Canary Isles (Wölfel 1940).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined a largely forgotten, and perhaps deliberately overlooked episode in the history of historical geography. The objective is not to reassert the value of these earlier forms of inquiry for historical geography in the present, or to rescue this early and admittedly diverse generation from the condescension of posterity. Rather, we have sought to demonstrate how the diversity and dynamism of historical geography in the present has emerged from an equally complex, and sometimes troubling, past. In making this modest claim, we also acknowledge that the practice of historical geography, wherever it has been conducted, has involved acts of manipulation, silencing and even effacement – whether of aspects from its own intellectual history or from the landscapes, environments and societies that historical geographers have described and analysed. As the current generation of historical geographers seeks to internationalise and diversify the reach and range of their interests, methods and practices, and to counter the still prevalent masculinist, patriarchal and exclusionary assumptions that shape so much geographical inquiry, it is all the more important to acknowledge the richness, complexity and occasional ironies of historical geography's intellectual history.

We are acutely aware that the characters discussed in this chapter are almost entirely white men who lived and worked in richer parts of the world. Questions of epistemological orientations, narrowly defined subjects of study, and available evidence and research methodologies remain at the forefront of producing more critical and polyvocal historical geographies, as other authors in this volume attest. While we have endeavoured to highlight the deeply problematic assumptions and values that informed the historical geographies created by the men discussed in this chapter, we must also acknowledge the historical reality of their dominance and the impacts of their work. Our ongoing hope is,

of course, to challenge these assumptions and values in the present and to recover the silenced voices in historical geography, past and present.

Notes

1 Halford J. Mackinder, Geography and history. *The Times* 9 February 1905, p. 6.

2 Some of these regional institutes continued after 1945, with suitably adjusted titles, and are now distinguished centres of historical and geographical research. The Heidelberg *Institut für Fränkische-Pfälzische Landes- und Volksforschung*, established in the late 1930s by the geographer Wolfgang Panzer and the historian Fritz Ernst, based on a model suggested by the leading medieval historian, and prominent Nazi supporter, Günther Franz, was renamed the *Institut für Frankische-Pfälzische Geschichte und Landeskunde* and became a focus of important collaborative European research with regional historians from France and elsewhere (Remy 2002, 68–9; also Miethke 1992; Wardenga 2006).

3 Other editorial board members were opponents of the Nazis, including Franz Termer (1894–1968), director of the Hamburg *Museum für Völkerkunde* and expert on Mayan civilization, who was later involved in denazification of German universities; Paul Kahle (1875–1964), an expert on the Hebrew Bible, who fled to Oxford shortly after accepting Herrmann's invitation; and Ernst Zyhlarz, an Austrian Africanist based at the University of Hamburg, who had secretly converted to Judaism in 1910.

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