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Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945): Texts and Commentaries: v.1: Late Enlightenment: Emergence of the Modern 'National Idea'

ed. by Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopecek.
Central European University, 2006. 351p

Review: P. W. Knoll, University of Southern California

ISBN [9637326529](#), \$39.95; ISBN [9789637326523](#), \$39.95.
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The first of four projected volumes, this intelligently chosen and extremely useful anthology provides insight into the way narratives of national identity were shaped in the region noted in the book's title. The editors (Central European Univ., Budapest, and Institute of Contemporary History, Prague) and collaborators focus on how the "national idea" emerged in the late Enlightenment and early Romantic period. They consciously seek to refute traditional national grand narratives, looking rather at cross-cultural links, pluralities, and shared experiences, while showing admirable sensitivity to specific local identities. After the editors' own essay on approach and methodology, two essays on the problem of the Enlightenment set the stage for the documents themselves. These are organized into four groups dealing, seriatim, with "symbolic geography," cultural and historiographical narratives, the creation of an enlightened national public, and issues of reform and revolution. Items include such richly varied materials as anthems, songs, constitutions, manifestos, novels, correspondence, autobiographical materials, and contemporary historical narratives. Each item is accompanied by information on the author and context as well as bibliographical material.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. -- *P. W. Knoll, University of Southern California*