

and modeling. Overall, the collection does not provide an easy, read-purpose course text for most history courses but does provide much to recommend it as a source for lecture material or for supplementary texts.

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Warren Breckman. *European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. Pp. 240. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 978-312-45023-6.

European Romanticism: A Brief History with Documents is another title in the Bedford Series in History and Culture. Well-organized and well-written, these books are designed for the student of history. Breckman's volume is another fine addition to this series. An eminently readable, forty-page introduction forms Part One of this book. Here Breckman defines Romanticism as a historical concept and considers its legacy, then moves to a discussion of its rise to significance in the years of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Individual sections follow: These examine the French Revolution's role as catalyst and the main features, but importantly the key similarities and differences, of the English, German, French, and European Romantic movements. Breckman then nicely links this cultural examination to Romantic Nationalism before providing readers with a concise conclusion that collects together the many strands of this broad, complex movement.

Part Two contains the primary source documents that are the heart of this volume. Author Breckman provides twenty-two documents of varying lengths (average seven pages) and types and augments these with well-chosen visual evidence (a total of eight works of art). Presented chronologically, with but a few exceptions, these sources feature a good range of voices, and include better known pieces such as William Wordsworth, *Preface to "Lyrical Ballads"* (1800); Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand, *The Genius of Christianity* (1802); and Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* (1821). But importantly, readers also encounter lesser known selections: Among these are Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Of Two Wonderful Languages and Their Mysterious Power* (1797); Karoline von Günderrode, *Idea of the Earth* (ca. 1806); and Victor Hugo, *Preface to "Cromwell"* (1827). Each source features an introduction on both text and author. Taken together, this is a balanced mix of English, German, French, and European examples. Among the appendixes are a helpful six-page "Chronology of European Romanticism (1789-1848)" that places cultural events of Romanticism in a wider historical context. Readers might find this helpful as they attempt to keep the many authors and ideas in time perspective.

How might an instructor use this book? The many volumes in the Bedford Series are written specifically with classroom use in mind, thus making course adoption a logical step. With its brief, focused introduction, and individual primary source

selections, *European Romanticism* would be an ideal addition to secondary classrooms, but also introductory university offerings in Western Civilization or World History or second-year courses in post-1750 European history. Instructors could elect to use some, or all, of the documents, depending on the focus of the course and the amount of time available for the subject matter. With regards to classroom adoption and use, helpful in this respect are "Questions for Consideration," in the appendixes. Instructors have a ready set of in-class discussion topics or project assignment starters.

Drawbacks to this book are few. The artwork is reproduced in black and white only, and the quality isn't always the best. Still, through these learners can gain some appreciation of the author's main points here. Also, several sources might have been excerpted a bit more carefully, to produce selections of less than ten pages. But these shortcomings do not detract from the overall positive impression.

In sum, Breckman's *European Romanticism* is an excellent classroom volume on this significant topic. Readable, brief, and with a very good set of primary sources, instructors at various levels could adopt it with confidence. Strongly recommended.

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Michael Paterson. *A Brief History of Life in Victorian Britain: A Social History of Queen Victoria's Reign.* Philadelphia: Running Press, 2008. Pp. 358. Paper, \$13.95; ISBN 978-0-7624-3518-0.

Much has been written of Queen Victoria and British society during her lengthy reign. Much has been presented about the advancements made by the time of her passing in 1901. Notwithstanding the fact that some scholars might suggest that in light of the volume of narratives already composed on Victorian History no more are needed, *A Brief History* shows that there is still much to learn. Asserting that the Victorian Age has dominated the popular British imagination like no other, Michael Paterson affirms that the surfeit of stories and myths surrounding the Victorians have thus produced a misrepresentation of what life was truly like during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Composed of an introduction and eleven chapters, *A Brief History* opens with an appraisal of Queen Victoria, a lady described by Thomas Carlyle in 1837 as being so young and naive that she couldn't be trusted to select a hat, a lady who nevertheless in later years transformed herself into the symbol of her age. Although Paterson's tome does not necessarily introduce a range of groundbreaking data to enlighten the already deeply informed of Victorian Britain, as his biographical chapter on Queen Victoria demonstrates, what he does adroitly tender as the book unfolds is an exclusive standpoint from which to reconsider key individuals, events, laws, and cultural turning points. As chapter two, "The Masses," reveals, while the overcrowded cities, working of children, and the domestic servitude of young, working-class women are well-known images of Victorian life, the reality is not so clear cut. As a case in point, the stereotype