In the course of time hardly any studies have been published about the Dutch of the 19th century and their image of Europe. The question may be raised if the Dutch of this period were interested at all in their continent, and for that reason it would be worthwhile to subject their image of Europe to scholarly research. It is a fact, however, that willingly or unwillingly, they repeatedly got involved in the political developments in Europe. In a direct sense this was the case during the French era (1795–1813) and when the Northern and Southern Netherlands were united considering European peace (1815–1830). Indirectly because, in the wake of European revolutions, The Netherlands underwent a drastic revision of the constitution, the Dutch independence came under pressure because of Napoleon III’s foreign policy and Bismarck’s unification policy, and because in the second half of the 19th century nationalism got its hold on Europe.

As regards the anti-revolutionary and protestant thinker, historian and politician Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–1876), it was well-known that he was interested in foreign politics. However, in research concerning Groen this fact had received little attention. My own research concerning Groen’s commentaries on Bonaparte’s France and Bismarck’s Prussia of the period 1848–1871 had made it clear, however, that they were based on a certain image of Europe. On the basis of the result of this research it was deemed useful to connect his commentaries on foreign politics with a European question and consequently to extend this to his whole life as a productive writer. The concentration on the development of his thinking about Europe explains why Groen’s view of Europe has been put central in this study. However, A European anti-revolutionary shows the character of a conceptual historiography as well as that of an intellectual biography.

Three aims were pursued with this combined form of historiography. By highlighting Groen as a European it was first of all tried to fill the historiographic gap in research concerning Groen. Thus far, attention had mainly been paid to a national Groen and his image of European history and actuality only came up in a limited sense. The question if such research had been based on a well-defined image of Europe had not been raised at all. Secondly, it was tried in a specific sense to make a connection with the historiography about Europe as an idea and in a general sense with the new discipline of European Studies.

A third aim was concerned with the method of research. In order to do more justice to the origin and development of Groen’s image of Europe, and after a critical consideration of the fundamental starting points, connection was sought with the conceptual history method of the German historian R. Koselleck and with the
linguistic-contextual method of the English historian Q. Skinner. By broadening the historical-genetic approach of this study with research into the use, the meaning and the development of the notion of Europe and related notions with Groen, and by completing this extensive longitudinal section with a cross-section of the time, both Groen’s image of Europe and that of his contemporaries could be recovered. An objective by which the connection with the historiography of Europe could be optimized.

After the field of research had been mapped out somewhat by means of delimitation and image determination, it resulted in a hypothesis highlighting the aspects of development as well as the development of Groen’s image of Europe. As regards the aspects, four of them were distinguished beforehand. Namely: constitutional, concerning international law, cultural and religious. With respect to the development of Groen’s image of Europe, it was indicated that it would be studied how the development of the way of thinking under the influence of time had come about. As for the build-up of the study it was decided that, for the periodisation of Groen’s image of Europe, the line would be followed of the European questions, which had played a role between 1825 and 1876. On the understanding that essays, periodicals and publications selected within the delimitation, turned out by Groen during these years, formed the starting point.

The demarcation of source and time led to a division of chapters for which the following periods were considered: 1825-1826, 1829-1832, 1834-1847, 1848-1863, 1864-1871 and 1871-1876. The complexity of the method to be applied demanded a logical structure, in which each chapter would comprise four parts. Under the heading ‘Groen’s text’ a microscopic analysis of Groen’s image of Europe would be carried out in the first part. Under the heading ‘context’ the linguistic context of public opinion would be central in the second part. By looking with him, as it were, over Groen’s shoulders of what he read or probably saw, it would be examined which images of Europe he responded to in his commentaries and contemplations. In the third part Groen’s text would be compared in an often telescopic way with contemporary images of Europe. In this part, indicated as ‘text and context’, it would be tried to recover Groen’s textual motives as a European as well a tracing the spiritual influences in his image of Europe. Each chapter would be concluded with a conceptual history retrospect of Groen’s image of Europe.

As for the research in a general sense, the issue and the applied method have amply shown that Groen was an committed European in his observations on history and in his commentaries on current affairs. Two things drew the attention in this respect. First of all it was the European and coherent perspective that he used and secondly the well-defined image of Europe which he used as his standard for past and present.
This European perspective and pattern of values and standards could already be reduced to the *Göttinger Schule* in the first chapter thanks to contextual research and the Groen archives. In research concerning Groen a completely unknown fact. Groen’s *Bedenkingen* (1825) and his *Historische Proeve* (1826), the first a critical manuscript about the legitimacy of the Greek Uprising and the second about the approach of the civilized peoples, appeared, as regards method and context, to be based on the *Handbuch der Geschichte des Europäischen Staatsystems und seiner Colonien* (1809) by the Göttingen Historian A.H.L. Heeren. Albeit that Groen, in his conceptualising also reverted to the eighteenth century Scottish historian W. Robertson.

That Groen had applied the synchronic-ethnographic method of the *Göttinger Schule*, became especially manifest in the *Historische Proeve*. From his teachers at the Leyden Academy Groen had acquired this historical method, in which first, via a selection of most important nations, a cross-section and next a longitudinal of time was sketched. Explaining his connection with Heeren it appeared that, via the Heeren-adherents Ph.W. van Heusde and G. Dorn Seiffen, it was even possible to go further back in time. Because a clear like-mindedness with Heeren, who was hardly known in research concerning Groen, could be demonstrated, a possible explanation for Groen’s aversion of the revolution was looked for in the *Handbuch*. By looking for a starting point in Heeren’s description of the French revolution, it became clear that the historian from Göttingen continued on the anti-revolutionary ideas of the Irish-English politician and philosopher E. Burke. An appraisal which could above all be explained from the influence of burkean philosophy at the Georg-August-Universität at Göttingen. The thesis that Groen took an opposite stance concerning the spirit of revolution as early as 1825-1826, could be supported by drawing a line from the *Historische Proeve* to Burke by way of Heeren’s *Handbuch*.

On the basis of contextual and idea-historical research Groen’s attitude as a European in 1825-1826 was placed within the framework of an early nineteenth century European awareness, which was rooted in the burkean reaction on the French revolution. A revival in which the conceptualisation of Europe as a unity stood central, a recovery of Europe as a community of values was pursued and which involved historiorating and politicising of European history. That Groen, in his European view on the history of civilisation, was part of a romantic-conservative Europe discourse appeared from the unity concepts which he used as well as from his plea for national diversity. In this respect it could be made clear that his aversion of the cultural uniformity of Europe was especially derived from the organic view on history of F.C. von Savigny and from figures like J.G. Herder, Madame de Staël and J.P.F. Ancillon. It appeared from papers written by Groen in his youth and the
notional language he used in them, that he had considered Europe mainly from a cultural, constitutional and international law perspective.

Groen’s involvement as a European and the European perspective and pattern of values and norms used by him demonstrated itself more profoundly in the years 1829-1832. This appeared especially in *Nederlandsche Gedachten*, a periodical which he edited from October 1829 until July 1832. Nevertheless, it was established in the second chapter that Groen argued in his anti-revolutionary criticism on the July revolution and the Belgian Uprising on the basis of concepts of Europe which had also determined the papers of his youth. That in Groen’s brochure *Over Volksgeest en Burgerzin* (1829) there would be a question of ‘a beginning of principal change’ could neither be applied to his view on the state, nor to his image of Europe. Therefore, the thesis was defended that, in his criticism on the Vienna Congress and the European Restoration, he had continued the line Burke-Heeren. Albeit that this line of thought was more religious in comparison with the years 1825-1826. A tendency which, on the one hand, could be reduced to the Swiss Revival preacher J.H. Merle d’Aubigné and, on the other hand, on to the French ultramontanist H.F.R. de Lamennais.

That, in the period 1829-1832 Groen tended to give more emphasis to the state and international law aspects of his image of Europe and supported this increasingly from a religious point of view, depended strongly on the climate of opinion. Thus it appeared that his legitimizing of the state principles as European values, during the atmosphere of crisis preceding the revolution of 1830, was above all a reflection on the call for political reforms in leading Dutch daily newspapers. That, in his commentaries on the July revolution and the Belgian Uprising, Groen showed himself an ardent advocate of Europe as a Community of values for state- and international law and herewith drew attention to its Christian-historical roots, was explained as a response to the *juste milieu*.

Groen’s unconditional rejection of mediation efforts between advocates and opponents of the revolution brings to light in which direction his image of Europe had developed in the period 1829-1832 and how, according to him, should be reacted on the paradigm switch of the revolution year 1830. By stressing that the revolution was based on unbelief and therefore carried the beginning of dissolution, he saw a conservative attitude against the new situation as inadequate. Consequently Groen and Thorbecke, professor of European history and international law in Ghent, who had both shown a surprising like-mindedness in sticking to the unity of the state and in their criticism of Dutch pamphleteers like G.K. van Hogendorp and S.P. Lipman, were beginning to grow apart. However, that Groen sought the foundation for a united struggle of Protestants and Catholics against the revolution in the
Christian-Germanic principles of the European state and international law, raised the question how this related to his appreciation of Burke and Heeren.

Because, until 1848, Europe was spared crisis situations as in 1830, Groen could publish three studies in the period 1834-1847, which are considered a scholarly treatment of his anti-revolutionary ideas. In the third chapter these studies were the starting point for a systematic research on Groen’s image of Europe, with the help of three aspects. It concerned respectively the constitutional aspect, which was highlighted mainly from the Proeve (1834) and Ongeloof en Revolutie (1847), the aspect of international law, which received especially an exposition from the Handboek der Geschiedenis van het Vaderland (1846), and the historical-philosophical aspect, which was looked into from all three studies. Bearing in mind that the European perspective was considered the most innovative in this research.

As regards the historical basis of the European process of constitution it was conspicuous that Groen had approached this from a conceptualising rather than a historiorising point of view. The text analysis even brought to light a discrepancy between a static state authority and a dynamic vision on society. A similar conception of European history occurred in Groen’s periodisation of the vision on the doctrine of revolution, which he described as ‘Europesche Fyzionomie’. Also, on the ground of this description, the thesis was defended that Groen’s magnum opus Ongeloof en Revolutie had to be characterised as a European study. A similar qualification was assigned to the Handboek, because this major work by Groen unfolded itself in the field of international law as a diptych of national and European historiography. For this European elucidation of Dutch history an explanation was also looked for in Groen’s monumental edition of the first, eight-chapter series Archives ou Correspondence de la Maison d’Orange-Nassau (1835-1847), a publication of sources he had also gained international esteem with.

A comparative research made it clear that, concerning the structure of the Handboek, Groen had used Heeren’s Handbuch as a model. Based on this research it could also be demonstrated that Groen had applied the synchronic-ethnographic system of the Göttinger Schule in general and the ‘Epochenspezifische’ historiography of Heeren in particular. As regards the historical philosophical aspect of Groen’s image of Europe, the text analysis made it clear that in his metahistorical interpretation of world history he made a direct connection between Evangelical and European development. In doing so he distinguished three main points: the Christianisation of Europe, the Reformation and, in absolute contrast with the first two, the revolutionary era.

Contextual research showed in a general sense that Groen’s scholarly reflection on the revolution year 1830 was not an isolated matter, but was part of a post-
revolutionary reflection at home and abroad. In a particular sense this research made clear that his periodisation of the theory of revolution was directed against the *juste milieu*. In the period 1834-1847 Groen tried to refute, especially from a historical point of view, that the process of revolution would be controllable, as the just middle supposed. Idea-historical research made it plausible that, in his historical reflections, he still continued on the Europe-concepts of Heeren and that he counted the scholars from Göttingen among Burke’s adherents. The discrepancy in the historical support of the process of forming a constitution could, as far as static state authority was concerned, be reduced to the Greek philosopher Plato and the Swiss scholar of constitutional law C.L. von Haller, concerning the dynamic view on society, to Burke and the Historical Law School. In Groen’s linking of Evangelical and European development of history the influence of Merle d’Aubigné illuminated.

The conceptual history retrospect underlined that the characteristic difference between Groen and the representatives of the *juste milieu* was not so much a matter of concepts as well as of adaptations of their concepts of unity. To indicate that ‘Christian Europe’ had degenerated into a place of evil spirits, he interpreted the revolution as a revolution of Christendom. As, according to Groen, the anti-revolutionary struggle was a matter of Protestants and Catholics, he used the expression Protestant Europe almost exclusively in a historical sense.

Because of the turbulent character of the European developments in the years 1848-1863 Groen was manoeuvred into the position of a commentator right from the start. This was considered interesting, because in this way it could be determined how his scholarly view on revolution related itself to revolutionary practice. In the fourth chapter a number of political works by Groen from 1848 and 1850 formed a guide line for this, the daily newspaper *De Nederlander* which he edited between 1850-1855, *Le Parti Anti-Revolutionnaire et Confessionnel* (1860) and the necrology *Ter Nagedachternis van Stahl* (1862). From the analysis of Groen’s commentary on the revolutionary years 1848-1850 it became clear that the capricious course of the revolution forced him to adjust the strict periodisation of the revolution doctrine. A second consequence of the revolutionary practice manifested itself in the field of constitutional law. Although Groen vigorously rejected liberal reforms, he appeared prepared in spite of this to accept participation of government by the people. Proof that he had abandoned Haller’s convictions concerning civil law and had made his own the view on public law of the Prussian law philosopher and politician F.J. Stahl.

That from the fifties onward Groen’s commentaries on foreign policy would be determined especially by France, had to do everything with the changes of power in this country. In doing so it was striking that in the diplomatic recognition of the Bonaparte *coup d’état* of 1851 he saw a constitutional and in that of the Bonaparte
emperorship of 1852 a civil law violation of Europe. How much Groen’s image of Europe was at stake, became clear from his increasing fixation on the work Des Idées Napoléoniennes by Louis Napoleon from 1839. On the ground of this work he began to mistrust wholeheartedly the interior and foreign policy of the president and later emperor Napoleon III and judged the latter from an ideal rather than from a factual point of view. This mistrust increased when French ultramontanism concluded a monstrous alliance with Bonapartism and when he started to fear for religious as well as political liberties of Europe.

No less did Groen’s ideal elucidation of Napoleon III’s European policy become prominent in his commentaries on the Crimean War (1853-1856), the Italian War (1859-1861) and the Polish Uprising (1863). That a dominant role of Bonaparte France in Europe was dangerous, was, according to him, linked with the fact that bonapartism aspired a world monarchy and tried to destroy historic international law with its spreading of revolutionary concepts. How much Groen indissolubly took connection between the Napoleonic ideas and the European facts as a starting point appeared in particular from the interpellation debate about the protest note of the Dutch government to Russia because of the crushing of the Polish Uprising.

In a general sense contextual research made it clear that Groen’s commentaries on European revolutionary practice were part of heated political debates at home and abroad. In a specific sense this study made clear how much these commentaries were a reaction on the liberal interpretations of European developments of the period 1848-1863. Herewith Groen especially tried to show that the liberal reforms of European constitutional and civil law necessarily caused radical, reactionary and nationalistic side-effects. The context elucidated that in the liberal desire for applying the right of self-determination lay for Groen the textual motive to direct the public spotlight on the order of 1815 and conservative Europe. Especially inspired to this end by Stahl’s orations.

Groen’s close like-mindedness with Stahl, in the sense of constitutional as well as international law, was seen as a justification for an extensive comparison between their images of Europe. Concerning the constitutional switch from Haller to Stahl, hitherto untried historiorating and European contextualising in research concerning Groen led to new insights. In this way it became clear that Stahl had offered to Groen the law-philosophical way out from the constitutional stalemate in which he had drifted because of the revolutionary practice of 1848 and the unsolved tension in his constitutional thinking from the period before 1848.

At the same time the comparison exposed a number of differences. Contrary to Groen Stahl described especially the facts of the revolutionary process, judged Napoleon III more personally than ideally and did not develop a periodisation of revolutionary doctrine. Differences which were principally reduced to Stahl’s law
philosophy, in which history was conceived on the basis of the ‘Persönlichkeit Gottes’ as an interaction between man and his Creator. Because, in conceiving the revolution, Groen saw a particular parallel between himself and Heeren, the conclusion was drawn that in the conceptual reflection of his image of Europe he still continued on the anti-revolutionary line Burke-Heeren and had completed this from 1848 onwards with Stahl. As regards conceptual history this came notably apparent in the anti-revolutionary elaboration of the Europe-terminology.

In the years 1864-1871 the perspective of Groen’s image of Europe shifted from Bonaparte France to Bismarck Prussia. This shift became a central issue in the fifth chapter. Although the acting of the Prussian chancellor Bismarck, as it took shape between 1862 and 1866, showed Bonaparte-like features, this anti-revolutionary commentary was not considered very firm. However, contextual research provided much clarity about this reticence. Because Groen was a constant reader of the Kreuzzeitung, it was considered acceptable that he knew about the ‘Prinzipienfrage’ within the Prussian conservative party and that he had granted Bismarck for this reason the benefit of the doubt. The commentary metamorphosed into an ardent argumentation against the Prussian unification policy as a result of the Bruderkrieg (1866), even though he peculiarly observed certain carefulness.

In the French brochures La Prusse et les Pays Bas and L’Empire prussien et l’Apocalypse from 1867 Groen confronted his ‘Amis de Berlin’ with the question how they thought to reconcile Stahl’s principles with Bismarck’s unity policy and how their prostration for the ‘patriotisme idolâtre’ related itself to Stahl’s appeal to Prussia’s European call. The intentional address to his Berlin friends raised the question, however, why Groen reminded them in public so importantly to Stahl’s appeal to ‘Erfüllung eines Europäischen Berufes’. Contextual research showed that Groen as Stahl’s brother-in-arms had wanted to put new life into it into the discussion about the ‘Prinzipienfrage’ within the conservative party. Groen’s most important motive was – and this explained at the same time his carefulness – adjusting government policy into Stahl’s European direction. Recovery of the text motives made it clear that Groen as a European anti-revolutionary had also wanted to initiate in the rest of Europe a discussion about the policy of principles.

Groen’s involvement as a European manifested itself at new during the French-German war (1870-1871), a conflict that he considered a European question of the first order. That in his periodical Nederlandsche Gedachten Groen commented almost exclusively for six months on this war, had everything to do with his conviction that the christian-historical principles of the European constitutional and international law were hereby at stake. Two themes were central in this commentary. As, according to Groen, the position of Europe had to be connected with the light of
Revelation and with the key note of the age, he asked, in view of the causes of the war, attention for the revolutionary outline and highlighted the continuation of the struggle against the French nation as an dechristianization of the European family tie.

In Groen’s revolutionary outline the accent was on the revolutionalized law of nations. The outline was meant to refute all kinds of presentations concerning the nature and the cause of the facts of war. What he heard insufficiently in the climate of opinion, as appeared from contextual research, was that Napoleon III as well as Bismarck should be held responsible for the outbreak of war. Groen blamed the two players especially that they had put at stake the wellbeing and esteem of their nations. How much he saw himself as the advocate of nations came to light particularly concerning the stigmatizing of the French nation as bellicose. On the one hand Groen disputed this as pseudo nationalization and on the other hand as a breach of the Christian family tie.

Contextual research also showed that Groen’s commentary on the germanization of the struggle was meant to get going a principal exchange of ideas about Europe, all the more because the climate of opinion fell short badly in this respect. This explained why Groen stressed that vindictive German nationalism against the French drastically threatened to disturb the relationship of the two nations and was the seed of a future war. He also declared why he had argued that the crater of revolution had been replaced from France to Germany and the balance of Europe had been destroyed, a situation for which he held English diplomacy jointly responsible.

On the basis of notion-historical research it was claimed that in Groen’s anti-Bismarck image of Europe Stahl’s philosophy prevailed, with the latter’s appeal to the European calling of Prussia as the starting point. Research also clarified that Groen had in fact accepted the micro-German solution of 1866. Because Groen’s earlier concepts of Europe had remained unimpaired, it was concluded that the line Burke-Heeren-Stahl had continued itself in the period 1864-1871. Albeit that, as a reaction on the climate of opinion, he had added to notions like the European law of nations and the family tie of nations the adjective Christian and moral.

Two issues which had hardly been given any attention in research concerning Groen were the political developments in republican France and in imperial Germany. Studying the Nederlandsche Gedachten from the years 1871-1876 of the ‘rewritten’ Handboek (1872) and of Maurice et Barnevelt (1875), however, threw a vivid light on Groen’s role as advocate of the European political and religious liberties. Besides the preview Groen’s retrospect of Europe was also studied in the sixth chapter. For the latter point of view the historical and autobiographical articles from his period were used.
Text analysis made it clear that the political developments in France were repeatedly placed by Groen in a European perspective. Afraid as he was that a radicalization of the French Republic would be accompanied by a revival of international socialism. From the commentary it became also clear that in an antiradical republic lay the ultimate limit to accept political changes in France and Europe. Also for this reason he argued to have more confidence in the orleanistic opposition leader A. de Broglie than in the conservative-liberal president L.A. Thiers.

This European perspective appeared no less from Groen’s observations concerning imperial Germany. That he described the form of government of the Empire as centralistic-militaristic had everything to do with his conviction that it harboured a danger for the liberties of the German states and the independence of Europe. Nevertheless it could be established that he never put up for debate the right to exist of the new state. How much, for European reasons, Groen felt an interest in the developments in Germany became particularly manifest in his observations concerning the *Kulturkampf*. In these observations he stressed that Bismarck, in his effort to evade the ultramontane ‘Church State’ should not have reverted to the modern principle of ‘the Church under the State’ but to the reformed principle of ‘the independence of Church and State’. That the political and religious liberties of Europe were threatened by state liberalism as well as by papism was also the alarming message of *Maurice et Barnevelt*. A study which was characterized as Groen’s last appeal to the European civilization to ground its constitutional values on Christianity and to reassess its liberties in accordance with the reformed vision on church and state. This constitutional accentuation of Groen’s image of Europe could also be clarified from the French, German and ultramontane context.

Notion-historical research showed that, concerning European perspective of France, Groen based himself on the ex-statesman F. Guizot and Broglie and for this perspective of Germany on Stahl and the Lutheran theologian C.E. Luthardt. Groen’s orientation on Stahl was also concluded from the fact that, on the one hand he could accept the French republic and the German empire on the ground of the latter’s historical philosophy and, on the other hand, considered a foundation of the new form of government on the anti-revolutionary principles necessary. That Groen’s like-mindedness with Stahl would be over and done with, because he had embraced the ‘Christian liberalism’ of his anti-revolutionary successor A. Kuyper, however, appeared not to correspond with his constitutional vision of Europe. That Stahl’s image of Europe would be a great source of inspiration for Groen until his death became also clear from his like-mindedness with Luthardt and the Stahlbiographer *in spe* C.A. Wilkens.
Not only did Groen’s autobiography clarify that he had not lessened his new religious insight on the methodical and conceptual shaping of his image of Europe, but also that he had presented the religious deepening around 1830 too much as a breach with his ways of thinking. On the basis of this the conclusion was drawn that, in his thinking about Europe, in methodical and conceptual respect Groen still continued on the *Göttinger Schule* in general and on Heeren in particular. It was concluded from the lessened use of familiar Europe-concepts in Groen’s text, that he considered the Christian values of Europe in the sense of international law almost vanished and saw it meet its end in a constitutional sense.

This study has shown that Groen was not only an involved European, but that he also elucidated history and topicality from a European and coherent perspective and maintained a pronounced image of Europe. Research results that necessitate a new implementation of Groen’s image. Groen was, it must be worded as such, Dutchman and European at the same time. It can be added that contextual research has shown that Groen with his double nationality was certainly not a solitary person. Many of his contemporaries at home and abroad appeared to be in the Göttinger tradition and considered, certainly until 1848, to Heeren’s *Handbuch* and adhered to - some more than others - besides national also to European values.

What makes Groen’s image of Europe, with an eye on the European historiography of the modern time, interesting is unity in diversity as advocated by him and the way in which he made an effort in the years 1871-1876 for the political and religious liberties in Europe. Groen also deserves to be saved from oblivion of European historiography concerning his commentary on the German unification policy and its consequences for Europe. Finally, it must be observed that the surprising results of this study resulted from the European question and the combined methodical get-up of this study. In this way it could be clarified that Groen stuck closely to the developments concerning constitutional and international law, read up broadly and profoundly for orientation via internationally authoritative voices and evolved in his way of thinking. As a result of this conservatism could also be differentiated and the image could be outlined of a European anti-revolutionary.