THE DISCIPLINE OF ‘GERMANIC’ ANTIQUITY AND ITS CONTEMPORARY INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment. This thesis rests on close, critical examination of the research of Klaus von See (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main), Dieter Geuenich (Universität Duisburg-Essen), Walter Pohl (Universität Wien) and Sebastian Brather (Universität Freiburg). Their works on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian form a core of primary sources.

The four scholars are treated as individual case studies. The analysis of these case studies draws on the Bourdieusian principles of Field, Capital and Habitus. These principles form the central underpinnings of this dissertation’s methodology, focusing attention on the question of the relationship between the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its broader context. Each case study has made extensive contributions to discussions concerning ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and the development of these contributions is discussed chronologically in Chapters 3-6. The common thread that ties the four case studies together is their shared interest in the historiographical challenges associated with the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past and their use of approaches from outside of the discipline to inform their discussion.

Analysis of the works of von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather has led to the conclusion that there has been a shift in methodologies used by the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The discipline appears to be redefining itself along interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary lines. This has been seen with the use of ethnicity since the 1960s, when the term started to emerge in the broader academic world. The four case studies recognise that ethnicity is socially constructed rather than biologically defined and it provides them with wider academic contexts upon which their
discussions about ‘Germanic’ barbarian identity in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods can be developed.
Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Timothy John Scott (30307503)

27 March 2015
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Chapter 1: Introduction

When research comes to study the very realm within which it operates, the results which it obtains can be immediately reinvested in scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and the social limits of this work, which is one of the principal weapons of epistemological vigilance. Indeed, perhaps we can only make our knowledge of the scientific field progress by using whatever knowledge we may have available in order to discover and overcome the obstacles to science which are entailed by the fact of holding a determined position in the field. And not, as is so often the case, to reduce the reasons of our adversaries to causes, to social interests.

1 Introduction

At the heart of this dissertation is the question: how has the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity in modern Germany and Austria negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment? The approach used to answer this question is to examine the works of four key scholars from the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity: Klaus von See (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main), Dieter Geuenich (Universität Duisburg-Essen), Walter Pohl (Universität Wien) and Sebastian Brather (Universität Freiburg). The four key scholars are treated as individual case studies, the analysis of which will draw on the Bourdieusian principles of Field, Capital and Habitus. These principles form the central underpinnings of this dissertation’s methodology, focusing attention on the question of the relationship between the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its broader context. The principles also guide the research towards positing theories of

1 Bourdieu 1988: 15-16.
historical and archaeological practice for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity in light of the influences brought to bear by the discipline’s contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment.

The present chapter starts with a broad overview of the different interpretations of the ‘Germanic’ past before proceeding to account for why the present study exists. The purpose of the broad overview is to provide the reader with a sense of the varying interpretations of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The range of perspectives is indicative as to why it is necessary to consider the way in which contemporary German-language historians and archaeologists go about their work. The provided sample of the broader academic milieu in which German-language scholarship might find itself helps to establish a backdrop for a brief discussion about the rationale of the present research project. Following this, the chapter then outlines the methodology of this thesis. This includes defining the key Bourdieusian principles that have guided the analysis carried out by this thesis in addition to clarifying the selection of particular contemporary historians and archaeologists for study by this dissertation. The final section of this chapter will provide an overview of the thesis.

Different perspectives on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity from the past 80 years have tended to fall into ‘Germanist’ or ‘Romanist’ categories of analysis. ‘Germanist’ views of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian hold “that everything new and different about the fifth, sixth, seventh and later centuries must be attributed to ‘Germanic’ influence” and the barbarian migrations that took place during that time. The ‘Romanist’ perspective counters this by positing an argument based on notions of continuity and that the ‘Germanic’ barbarian created little that was new.

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2 Halsall 2005: 35-36.
3 Halsall 2005: 36.
It should be no surprise that the political circumstances in which ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has been studied has led to multiple interpretations and depictions of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. Presentations of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian that appeared following World War Two offer good examples. English and French perspectives were negative. English medievalist Eileen Power put the ‘barbarian’ forward during the 1930s as part of an uncomplicated contrast between Roman civilisation and ‘Germanic’ barbarism. French scholars adopted a Romanist perspective. Prosper Boissonade (1862-1935) presented the ‘Germanic’ barbarian in a markedly negative manner. Groups who were considered to be half-Romanised and therefore civil, such as the Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Franks, are described as possessing a ferocity akin to “unchained murderers”. André Piganiol and Pierre Courcelle offered assessments of the fall of the Roman West that were influenced heavily by the invasion and occupation of France in the 1940s. Piganiol held the ‘Germanic’ barbarian responsible for the death of the Roman Empire. Courcelle’s discussion of the fifth century, and of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian in particular, consists of explicitly anti-Germanic language and argument. The tripartite division of the text into sections entitled L’invasion, L’occupation and La libération suggests his approach to the fall of Rome was influenced by Germany’s actions in the Second World War. These views are a brief overview of the dichotomous perception held by some scholarly traditions. There was the ‘Germanic’ barbarian and there was Roman civilisation; the former was responsible for the downfall of the latter.

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5 Boissande 1927: 21.
6 Piganiol 1947. Piganiol famously closed his book by stating "Roman civilisation did not pass peacefully away. It was assassinated".
7 Courcelle 1948.
8 Courcelle’s text is divided into three: L’invasion, L’occupation and La libération.
Not all academic interpretations of this period subscribed to such views. Henri Pirenne (1862-1935), a medievalist historian from Wallonia in French speaking Southern Belgium, argued in 1927 that ‘Germanic’ barbarian kingdoms such as those of the Franks were to be continuers of Roman political and economic life. French historian Louis Halphen (1880-1950) presented the barbarian in 1930 through ‘Germanic’ sources such as law codes in an attempt to balance the image of the barbarian that scholars at the time had reconstructed from Roman literary sources.

Seven years later, Austrian scholar Alfons Dopsch (1868-1953) posited that medieval agrarian organisation was a continuation of how things were organised in Late Roman times. Social philosopher C. Delisle Burns (1879-1942) suggested in 1947 that it was neither the Roman nor the ‘Germanic’ that had greater influence on the formation of European society following the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. In his opinion it was the distinctive nature of the Christian contribution.

There were a variety of views within the German historical tradition at this time. German historian Ludwig Schmidt (1862-1944) was strongly criticised during the 1930s for breaking from nineteenth-century depictions of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian that sought to connect the modern Deutschen with the Germanen. German historian and classical philologist Wilhelm Enßlin (1885-1965) examined ‘Germanic’ barbarians in the service of the Roman Empire and concluded that they slowed down the Empire's

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9 Pirenne 1952: 3-25. Olson 2007: 66 observes that Pirenne's interpretation was “Gallocentric, perceiving early European history mainly in terms of what was happening in Gaul or France”. His thesis was innovative, based on economic evidence and arguing a non-European explanation for the origins of Europe. See also Halsall 2007: 10.
10 Halphen 1930: 50-76.
12 Burns 1947: 23-36. This perspective appeared as early as the 1800s, with Ludwig Dindorff stating: "We owe barbarity not so much to the barbarians but to the Christians", Goffart 1989: 131.
13 An example of Schmidt positing a break from nineteenth-century scholarship that sought to connect the Germani with the Deutschen can be found in Schmidt 1969: 44.
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collapse rather than increasing the speed of the collapse. These types of views continued into the next generation of scholarship. Karl Friedrich Stroheker (1914-1988), for example, presented *Germanentum* from the standpoint of social history and prosopography and Heinz Löwe (1913-1991) interpreted the ‘Germanic’ past in the 1950s within a history of mentalities framework. Löwe focused on the spiritual transformations that were taking place during the time of transition between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, perceiving history as an expression of the political world of ideas from the Middle Ages. This brought him to focus on the imperial idea from the Carolingian period to the High Middle Ages and investigate its roots and limits.

The making of contemporary Europe during the 1960s and 1970s saw a shift in interpretative frameworks. These echoed earlier efforts by German historian Eugen Ewig (1913-2006) who did not depict the ‘Germanic’ barbarian as destructive as some English and French scholars had following World War Two. Instead, Ewig demonstrated the mutability of ethnic labels and the significance of territoriality rather than descent for the development ethnic identities. Ewig focused on the transformation of Frankish power from Late Antiquity to the Merovingian period, portraying the ‘Germanic’ barbarian as a means to identify common French and German historical roots. The myth of enmity between France and Germany could be therefore deconstructed and a push towards European unity established. Two works by Ewig published in the 1980s followed this theme.
Representations of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian in the 1960s and 1970s moved towards the idea of the constructive barbarian. For example, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (1916-1985) presented the ‘Germanic’ barbarian as a constructive influence, albeit not until the eighth or ninth centuries when the Merovingian dynasty was replaced by the Carolingian dynasty. German historian Reinhard Wenskus (1916-2002) incorporated traditional classical historians, geographers and ethnographers alongside contemporary social anthropological theory of his analysis of the formation of ‘Germanic’ groups. This approach reappeared in the late 1970s with Herwig Wolfram’s treatment of Gothic ethnogenesis. Lucien Musset (1922-2004) depicted the barbarian as a motif for Europe’s willingness to learn from its experiences and to create innovating syntheses. “It is this distinguishing feature of civilisation, as distinct from the primitive cultures to which, in spite of appearance, the so-called barbarians of the early Middle Ages do not belong”. Hans-Joachim Diesner (1922-1994) put forward barbarian society as something that mixed with Roman civilisation. These examples show a questioning of traditions that emerged as a result of nineteenth-century Germanist and Romanist models of interpretation.

Not all scholarship agreed with this interpretation. Within Germany, for example, classical historian Joseph Vogt (1895-1986) maintained the position that the Roman Empire’s collapse was of ‘Germanic’ origin. Jean Hubert (1902-1994), Jean Porcher (1892-1966) and W.F. Volbach mix the language of “cataclysmic upheavals” and

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21 Wenskus 1961. Halsall 2007: 14-15 explains that Wenskus’ perspective emerged on account of an attempt to break from traditional German historiography regarding identity formation in the past. Murray 2002 argues that the break was not as significant as initially claimed.
23 Musset 1975: 238.
“transformation”\textsuperscript{26}. This is with a view to explaining what developments in art conveyed about the fifth century.

By the 1980s there had been an increase in the visibility in scholarship of the idea of a common European heritage. Barry Cunliffe (1939-) proffered an economic model where the barbarian was part of a core-periphery relationship with the Roman Empire\textsuperscript{27}. Justine Davis Randers-Pehrson (1910-2004) discussed the ‘Celtic’ and ‘Germanic’ barbarian as an integral part of the Roman Empire in the West, treating the early fifth century to the late seventh century as “a time of turbulence but hardly one of decline and fall”\textsuperscript{28}.

More recently, and more broadly, the ‘Germanic’ barbarian has been cast as transformative. That is, the ‘Germanic’ barbarian is portrayed as a catalyst for change, holding a significant role in moving the West from the Roman Empire to the post-Roman world. The European Science Foundation sponsored project of the 1990s entitled \textit{Transformation of the Roman World} is an example of this point of view\textsuperscript{29}. For instance, in the conclusion to the series volume \textit{Kingdoms of the Empire} the link between the topics considered by the European Science Foundation project and the influence of European heritage is openly recognised\textsuperscript{30}. The introduction to \textit{Strategies of Distinction} casts the \textit{Transformation of the Roman World} project as having for the present-day the same level of significance that Edward Gibbon’s (1737-1794) \textit{Decline and Fall} held for the British Empire. The difference is found in Gibbon asking how the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Hubert, Porcher, and Volbach 1969: xi cf. xiii.
\textsuperscript{27} Cunliffe 1988: 1-11.
\textsuperscript{28} Randers-Pehrson 1983: 3.
\textsuperscript{29} Halsall 2007: 19-20 points out that the term transformation as applied to the Late Antique and Early Medieval period was used initially by Lynn White in 1960s but adapted by the European Science Foundation project \textit{Transformation of the Roman World} so as to include eastern Roman Empire specialists who would otherwise have been excluded from a discussion about the Fall of the Roman Empire.
\textsuperscript{30} Chrysos 1997: 192.
\end{flushleft}
British Empire was to contend with the resurgence of nations whereas the introduction to *Strategies of Distinction* asks how the European Union will contend with nationalism's reappearance\(^{31}\). The barbarian has become a means of understanding the present.

The sample of interpretations and perspectives on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian help to show how Von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather operate in a broad academic context that is well established. The construction of identity in the Antique West and historiographical issues, such as the debate between ‘decline and fall’ and ‘transformation’ perspectives, are topics that characterise the present academic environment. The academic environment in which von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather conduct their work has experienced a noticeable increase in attention over the last 80 years\(^{32}\).

## 2 Rationale for study

Having established an overview, however broad, of the academic context in which scholarship researching the ‘Germanic’ barbarian operates, attention now goes to the rationale behind asking the central research question in the first place. There are two levels to a response to this. The first level focuses on “how” the central research question came to be in the first place. The second level focuses on “why” the question is being asked.

Posing a question about the relationship between a discipline and its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment came from an initial interest in finding out how those that study the ancient past worked within their present-day

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\(^{32}\) Chrysos 1997: 185.
context. Questions that drove the formulation of the central research question was informed by issues concerning the extent to which a historical and archaeological discipline is aware of its own dispositions, beliefs and influences. What underlying issues within the discipline existed? How did individual members of that discipline pursue such issues? To what extent did approaches differ between individual scholars? To what extent were there issues within the discipline that echoed concerns beyond it?

Generally speaking, there are two main reasons for asking how a discipline contends with its intellectual and socio-political environment. It is at this point that the prefacing quote from Bourdieu, situated at the start of this chapter, takes on an increased level of relevance. The first reason for seeking an answer to questions of intellectual and socio-political contexts comes from a genuine interest in how a historical and archaeological discipline functions. The brief overview of the different academic interpretations of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian proffered by scholarship over the last 70 or so years offers a glimpse of the mechanics underpinning the formulation of particular perspectives. Bourdieu refers to this as “reflexive knowledge”, a consequence of which is “epistemological vigilance”\textsuperscript{33}. This forms the basis of the second reason for undertaking a historiographical analysis of four key scholars.

2.1 Questioning how ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

Recent works on the subject of the Germani brought to light a concern regarding the relationship between the broader discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its present-day milieu. In some instances, the focus was on a methodological problem that might be

\textsuperscript{33} Bourdieu 1988: 15-16.
described as a discipline-specific issue. In other instances, there were concerns with the political matters external to the broader discipline.

Research on the Germani raised issues concerning how a discipline might have to traverse its intellectual and socio-political landscape. For example, the very last paragraph of Wolfram’s *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic People* connects the ‘Germanic’ barbarian with recent twentieth-century history and contemporary concerns over the construction of European identity:

The dream of the Reich and the identification with the Germanic peoples have become set pieces in history’s chamber of horrors. Too many people have suffered from them, too many have paid for them with their lives. Europeans today must no longer seek to create identities with backward-looking hopes and vague images. But this does not mean that we should or can afford to forget the past. The “distant mirror” of history, to use Barbara Tuchman’s phrase, always gives insight in to the present, provided we use it wisely. For our topic that means: we must know the Germanic past as well as the history of the empire in order to accept the European continuity in its totality, preserving what is good about it while simultaneously protecting ourselves against becoming victims of its terrible dreams, false beliefs, and horrible deeds. In short: we must do this to stand up to history, and if need be to resist it34.

In the introduction to the *Transformation of the Roman World* volume *Strategies of Distinction*, Pohl forges a link between concerns with modern-day nationalism, political institutions such as the European Union, and studies of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian:

Indeed, the "strategies of distinction" used by early medieval kingdoms became so successful that even modern nationalism used them once again to legitimate nations of a very different kind. Therefore, if one deals with today’s problems of

34 Wolfram 1997: 314.
nationalism, it is not enough to study the history and ideology of the last two centuries. One has to go back to the development of ethnic rhetoric and representation between late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. A lot of comparative study is still needed. Could it be that the way in which modern nationalism claimed moral superiority and a specific root in universal values for each nation goes back to the Roman and Christian foundations of early medieval kingdoms? The "Transformation of the Roman World", in this sense, is not over yet. Two hundred years ago, Edward Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" was discussed as a fundamental contribution to understanding his own time--would the British Empire be able to withstand a new resurgence of nations? Today, we might ask different, though ultimately related, questions. How should the European Union respond to the renewed challenge of nationalism? It might help to realise that neither "universal" nor "ethnic" communities are the "natural" way in which human society has to be organised. Both forms are the results of history, and their interplay goes back to the day when ethnic kingdoms were formed on Roman territory. Maybe the ESF project that has come back to Gibbon's problem at the end of the 20th century will be able to create some resonance beyond the academic circles that have devoted their joint expertise to it35.

In discussing the barbarian's role in history in his book Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, Halsall outlines how the historiography associated with the Germani...

...reflects Europe's strange, almost schizophrenic, attitude to its barbarian past. This is manifest in the way that in popular speech barbarian means a savage, a destroyer of civilized values, yet a fascination with the heroic barbarian exists simultaneously: Conan the Barbarian is the prime example from western popular culture. Similarly, in some historians the end of the western Empire and the entry of the barbarians were believed to constitute a 'Bad Thing', bringing about the end of civilisation and the introduction of a Dark Age. In this way of seeing history, common amongst the French and Italian historians, the movement of non-Romans into the Empire has generally been referred to as 'the

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barbarian invasions’: ‘les invasions barbares’: le invasion barbariche’. On the other hand, especially amongst German historians, these events acquired a more heroic dimension. The movement of Germanic-speaking tribes was a ‘Good Thing’, bringing about the collapse of a decadent and effete Mediterranean society...”36.

These different extracts from the broader corpus on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian posit the range of historiographical and methodological issues that confront scholarship studying the Germani. While they are but a small sample from wider reading undertaken in the initial stages of this dissertation, there is an indication of the type of influences and expectations being brought to bear on studies of the Germani. Wolfram’s concluding comments on the Germanic people of the Roman Empire is a pause for thought regarding the relationship between contemporary identity politics, in this instance contemporary European identity, and the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. Pohl’s linking of the Germani to the European Union’s potential responses to present-day nationalist challenges, even if only rhetorically, raised the question of what themes and issues might now confront the historical and archaeological discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Halsall’s comments were further inspiration for considering a topic area that delves into how a discipline works. This is particularly the case as he makes clear the plurality of interpretations and scholarly traditions.

2.2 Importance of understanding how ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

The terms “reflexive knowledge” and “epistemological vigilance” have been identified as primary reasons for initially posing the question at the heart of this dissertation. The former is a term used by Bourdieu in reference to the product that

emerges when “research comes to study the very realm within which it operates”\textsuperscript{37}. Applied to this present research project, “reflexive knowledge” is that which the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity gains from studying its broader context and the relationship the discipline has with that context.

The upshot of “reflexive knowledge” is the capacity to be epistemologically vigilant. This refers to the capacity to use available knowledge to arrive at an understanding of the practical implications of the position one holds in their given field. In terms of the present research project, this would refer to the awareness one has of his or her own position within the field of scholarship focusing on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. The notion of epistemological vigilance emphasises the importance of shifting attention from just the interests of a discipline to consideration of the impact of the discipline on other fields.

2.2.1 **Reason 1: Reflexive knowledge**

Understanding how German-language scholars who focus on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian approach their subject in the present-day is one reason for undertaking this particular study. The knowledge that is gained from this exercise can be characterised as “reflexive”, as that which emerges from making a break between scholarly and practical knowledge\textsuperscript{38}. Thus, “reflexive knowledge” enables the scholar to understand how the object of their research, in this instance the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, has been constructed. It does this by converting the instruments of analysis, the approaches and methodologies associated with the study of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, into objects of analysis\textsuperscript{39}. Simply put, “reflexive knowledge” identifies the principles of knowledge

\textsuperscript{37} Bourdieu 1988: 15.
\textsuperscript{38} Bourdieu 1988: 1.
\textsuperscript{39} Bourdieu 1988: 7.
production of a given area of study, which in this case comprises the contemporary historical and archaeological approaches to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian within German-language scholarship.

Converting the instruments of analysis into the objects of analysis enables the researcher to reflect on the relationship he or she has with his or her broader context. The scholar can arrive at an understanding of how he or she influences their discipline. This is at the same time as understanding how his or her area of study has impacted his or her own dispositions and perceptions. In short, the scholar can understand how “[he/she] is defined by the position which [he/she] occupies in the space which [his/her] properties have helped to construct”\(^\text{40}\).

This is why it is important not only to know how historians and archaeologists go about their craft, and respond to emergent questions and issues from within and outside their discipline, but also to come to grips with milieu in which they operate. In particular, focusing on the interactions between historians and archaeologists and their intellectual and socio-political environments directs attention to the different relational dynamics within their area of study.

2.2.2 Reason 2: Epistemological vigilance

The second reason for asking the question at the heart of this dissertation comes from an underlying interest in the different ways in which the distant past can be constructed or portrayed. The interpretations proffered earlier in the chapter can serve as examples of the range of depictions. This range of depictions in how the distant past is conveyed leads to a call for epistemological vigilance. Epistemological vigilance refers to being aware of one’s position within an area of study with a view to understanding

\(^{40}\) Bourdieu 1988: 23.
the practical impact that position has on the area of study itself. Thus, to be epistemologically vigilant is to be focused on what the scholar understands his or her position to be in the field of study. Concerning the study of the *Germani*, epistemological vigilance is a catalyst for questions regarding the extent to which historians and archaeologists involved in the study of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian are aware of the milieu in which they are situated. What might this awareness look like? To what extent do historians or archaeologists objectify themselves as they go about their studies of the ‘Germanic’ past?

Interest in the degree to which historians and archaeologists might be epistemologically vigilant originated from wider readings concerning the way in which the past can be constructed. The underlying attraction here was a preoccupation with the relationship between the past and the present, and in particular the extent to which the distant past might be subject to political instrumentalisation. Indeed, there is nothing new about recognising that the historian or archaeologist is influenced by the politics of their time. One need not go beyond the earlier cited negative tones of Piganiol, clearly conveyed at the end of his work *L’Empire chrétien*, to see the extent to which a historian’s political context can affect the depictions that are made. The importance of epistemological vigilance, however, is to be found in helping to identify one’s own locus within the field of study, bring an understanding to what that position means in practical terms and in so doing overcome what Bourdieu refers to as “obstacles to science”.

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41 Halsall 2007: 11.
3 Methodology

There are several ways that the question at the centre of this dissertation could be approached. One might be labelled as a ‘historicist’ approach. One version of this approach might entail establishing a problematic between Germany, Austria and contemporary Europe. Present-day political attitudes to issues of nationalism and national identity, or the desirability of a historically founded transnational identity, would be a part of this. In that instance, this would require research into speeches, policy documents, calls for research funding bids and themes for research sponsored by European funding bodies. It would also require close analysis of the various author’s published works, especially acknowledgments and prefaces, of their scholarly links, and personal politics.

The importance of acknowledgments, prefaces and preambles, however, could be interpreted to be in line with a more ‘deconstructionist’ approach. Bourdieu makes the following observation on their importance when the scholar has become the object of research:

There is nothing more revealing, from this point of view, than the forewords, exordia, preambles or prefaces, which often disguise behind the appearance of a methodologically indispensable methodological premise their more or less skillful attempts to translate into scientific virtues the necessities and above all the limits inherent in a position and a trajectory...

These observations are supported by the forewords, exordia, preambles or prefaces that appear in the case studies. The foreword of von See’s Freiheit und Gemeinschaft outlines methodological connections with previous works such as Die Ideen von 1789

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und die Ideen von 1914 and Barbar Germane Arier. Geuenich’s Nomen et Gens details the rationale for considering the identification of barbarian groups to be a historiographical problem. Pohl’s foreword to Kingdoms of Empire highlights the role of the European Science Foundation. Brather’s foreword to Ethnische Interpretationen details the methodological premise for investigating the place of ethnic identity in the interpretation of the archaeological record.

In addition to careful consideration of forewords, exordia, preambles and prefaces, a ‘deconstructionist’ approach would entail a close reading of the works of the scholars concerned. Here, it would be necessary to look for structural oppositions, aprorias, and ‘repressed others’. There would be a need to look for areas where, in a situation of undecidability, a decision is made on ethical or political grounds and not on the grounds of evidence. This approach might reveal lines of thinking, subconscious areas where a writer continued along “embedded routes” while claiming to push the analysis in a new direction.

In determining a conceptual framework that was a best fit for this dissertation, then, it was felt that approaches of the French philosopher, sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu had the most to offer. Using Bourdieu’s approach reveals the schemata the case studies themselves deploy in their construction of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. It also reveals the influences on the case studies and the degree to which they are aware of such influences. For example, the foreword in von See’s Germanistik und Politik in der Zeit der Nationalsozialismus explains the benefit in reaching an understanding of the interplay between an academic discipline and the

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45 Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 1997: vi.
46 Pohl 1997e: ix.
politics of the 1930s and 1940s through the study of specific individuals. Geuenich's opening statements in *Person und Name* reflect goals of broadening the understanding of self-identification processes in the ‘Germanic’ past, an example of which is his emphasis on what international perspectives can bring to scholarly discussion. Another instance of this is Pohl’s observations about the study of the Early Middle Ages and the influence on the choice of topics pursued by the academy. Brather’s discussions on ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence highlight the limitations of this paradigm and looks to reinvest the analysis in to creating alternative frameworks for interpreting the archaeological record.

What this section of the introduction has been moving towards is how a Bourdieusian approach to the *Germani* might look. There are two guiding principles to consider here. First, drawing on Bourdieu to research on the *Germani* means constructing the object of research. In the case of this dissertation, the object of research is the body of German-language scholarship that studies the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. Bourdieusian conceptual tools such as *Field, Capital and Habitus* are used in the construction process.

The second guiding principle, as applied to German-language scholarship focusing on the *Germani*, is to follow a three-step approach to studying the *Field*. The first step is to map the intellectual and socio-political *Fields* in relation to one another. The second step requires consideration to be given over to the structural topography of the *Fields* themselves, understanding the logic of practice that each has. The final step requires an analysis of the individual scholars within the *Field* to take place.

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49 Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnt 2002: v-vi.
50 Pohl 2002c: 278.
4 The place of Bourdieu’s Habitus, Field, Capital and Theory of Practice in this dissertation

Habitus, Field, Capital and Theory of Practice are Bourdieusian terms that hold an important place in this thesis. They underpin the analysis of the four case studies, providing a conceptual framework around which an answer to the central research question can be structured. Each chapter that examines the case study uses the terms.

There are two reasons for using Bourdieu to frame this research. Firstly, the use of Habitus, Field, Capital and Theory of Practice as analytical tools helps to account for interpretative decisions that might not necessarily be evidentially grounded. Secondly, the use of Bourdieusian guiding principles in a study of the way in which Late Antique and Early Medieval scholarship approaches its material is largely a new approach.

4.1 Habitus

The Habitus is the social environment present around an individual or group and conditions a partiality towards certain perceptions and practices. It is embedded in the individual's or group's sense of self and as a result can move from one context to another. Social experiences are understood in light of past experiences and early experiences retain a particular significance to the identification process. According to Bourdieu, the Habitus is:

...systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively

53 The use of anthropological or sociological insights to approach topics within the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods in this way is not a unique methodology. For example, Olson 2007: 7.
adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them\textsuperscript{54}. There are three traits of the \textit{Habitus} that can be drawn from this definition. Firstly, the \textit{Habitus} is structured by past and present circumstances. Secondly, the \textit{Habitus} is structuring. It shapes one's present and future practices. Thirdly, the \textit{Habitus} is a structure that comprises a system of dispositions that generate perceptions, appreciations and practices. A fourth trait can be added. Namely, the \textit{Habitus} does not act alone. It interacts with one's contextual \textit{Field} and one's position within that \textit{Field}\textsuperscript{55}.

\subsection*{4.2 Field}

Simply put, the Bourdieusian notion of \textit{Field} refers to the space in which interactions, transactions and events take place\textsuperscript{56}. It is used to understand interactions between people, or to explain an event or social phenomenon where it is insufficient to look at what was said, or what happened. Bourdieu defines \textit{Field} as:

\begin{quote}
... a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.)\textsuperscript{57}.
\end{quote}

It is one part of a trio of ‘thinking tools’ used by Bourdieu to understand how individuals engage with particular social spaces and with each other. The other two are \textit{Capital} and \textit{Habitus}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{54} Bourdieu 1988: 72, 1990: 53.  \\
\textsuperscript{55} Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 96-97.  \\
\textsuperscript{56} Bourdieu 2005: 148.  \\
\textsuperscript{57} Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97.
\end{flushleft}
The idea of Field first appeared in 1966 in an article written by Bourdieu entitled “Champ intellectual et projet créateur”58. Discussing differences in views between two French scholars, Roland Barthes and Raymond Picard, the article established the idea of Field as something to which conflict or struggle was inherent. This dimension of Field is lost when the word Bourdieu used, *le champ*, is translated into English. In English, the word “field” conjures up grassy paddocks or meadows, something far from what Bourdieu had in mind when talking about the disputes and debates in which Barthes and Picard were engaged. What the term Field does convey, in English or French, is the idea of a defined area or space in which different interactions will take place.

In this dissertation, the notion of Field is represented by the term in the central research question: “intellectual and socio-political environments”. These environments, or Fields, are treated Chapter 2. Chapter 2 is a history of scholarship concerned with the ‘Germanic’ barbarian and maps the Field. Chapter 2 charts the pluralities that have come to define the broader context in which scholarship finds itself today.

4.3 Capital

On the face of it, the term Capital has monetary or economic connotations. Bourdieu’s use of the term goes beyond this, referring not only to mercantile exchanges but also to cultural and social interactions59. For Bourdieu, Capital can take on four forms: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. As a starting point, Capital could be considered as a synonym for “status” or one’s position within the field of study. It can also be considered to be that which an individual brings to that field of study. It is

58 Bourdieu 1966.
59 Bourdieu 2006: 105-106.
represented most clearly in each case study chapter at those points where a background on the selected author is given.

The four types of Capital are economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Economic Capital is command over economic resources and assets. Social Capital is a categorization of resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support. Cultural Capital refers to those forms of knowledge, skills, education and advantages that a person has which give them a higher status in society. As discussed below, cultural Capital can be further defined into three sub-types. The fourth form of Capital is known as symbolic Capital. This refers to those resources available to an individual on the basis of honour, prestige or recognition and often comes about as a result of the intersection between cultural and social Capital.

Cultural Capital exists in three forms. It can be embodied, objectified or institutionalised. In its embodied state, cultural Capital consists of both the consciously acquired properties of one’s self as well as those received over time from family, culture and traditions. In its objectified form, cultural Capital manifests itself as cultural goods such as pictures, books and dictionaries. In its institutionalised state, cultural Capital entails institutional recognition, most often in the form of academic credentials or qualifications held by an individual.

Capital is a concept that appears prominently in those chapters on the case studies. Each discussion of the case study is deliberately preceded by an overview or profile of that case study. This is to provide an intellectual and social background that can shed some light on the relationship the case study has with studies of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. It also provides the basis for understanding how the broader discipline has

60 Bourdieu 1986: 47.
impacted the individual case study. Academic background and career, qualifications held articles and books published and prizes awarded are examples of the different types of *Capital* that each case study might possess.

## 4.4 Theory of practice

It is important to note from the outset that there is no unified practice theory. Social theorists agree that there are, instead, a number of different significant thinkers who have laid the groundwork for what has now become known as practice theory. Bourdieu’s definition of theories of practice is that they are:

...schemes of perception and thought, extremely general in their application, such as those which divide up the world in accordance with the oppositions between the male and the female, east and west, future and past, top and bottom, right and left, etc., and also, at a deeper level, in the form of bodily postures and stances, ways of standing, sitting, looking, speaking, or walking.

In other words, a *Theory of Practice* seeks to explain how social beings, with their different motives and their different objectives, create and change the world in which they live. It expresses the dialectic between structure and human action working back and forth in a dynamic relationship. In 1984, Bourdieu expressed that the idea of practice was the result of interaction between *Habitus, Field* and *Capital*.

Thus, each case study chapter proffers a *Theory of Practice* for the scholar under study. In terms of its placement within a chapter focusing on one of the chosen scholars, the posited *Theory of Practice* comes after the discussion of the scholar’s *Capital* and *Habitus*. It looks to convey an account of how the specific case study contends with their

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64 Bourdieu 1984.
broader intellectual and socio-political context is explained. Questions that drive the analysis at this point in the dissertation include: how does the selected scholar perceive the academic world in which he operates? To what extent can a scheme of historical or archaeological thinking be traced? What patterns of similarity or dissimilarity are revealed when the theories of practice are juxtaposed with one another?

4.5 Challenges in using Habitus, Field, Capital and Theories of Practice

The central and recurring criticism of using Bourdieusian ideas as conceptual underpinnings in order to understand how a discipline negotiates its intellectual and socio-political environments is that the ideas of Habitus, Field and Capital can lack conceptual clarity and can be determinist. Theory of Practice has also had its fair share of criticisms, centering on the extent to which it is truly effective.

While Habitus, Field and Capital are useful concepts for an analysis of methodological approaches to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, in that they encapsulate the role and importance of the background of the selected case studies, there are some practical challenges that demand attention. The multiple ways in which they can be understood, and deployed, point to a lack of conceptual clarity. Habitus is often, mistakenly, used as a synonym for social background or socialisation. The relational structure is stripped away, leaving Habitus to be used in isolation. Field can present as problematic on account of the fact that there can be simply too many Fields to define thereby weighing down the analysis that takes place. Capital is said to be deterministic, denying individual agency, an issue to which critics of the concept often refer.

Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice has been criticised for its effectiveness. Calhoun made the observation in 1995 that the relevance of practice theory differed from one
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society to another\(^{66}\). He argued that a *Theory of Practice* works well in a traditional, comparatively undifferentiated society where understanding appropriate conduct is widely shared. In a more complex setting of an industrialised, highly differentiated society, a theory of practice does not have as much traction. Its functionality can arguably be perceived as having been folded into other concepts such as *Habitus* or *Field*. Indeed, in extending this line of argument, one can posit that a *Theory of Practice* is isomorphic with the concept of *Field*\(^{67}\).

Such criticisms bring into question the validity of using these concepts in this dissertation. Issues to do with conceptual clarity or determinism might prevent their use. However, Bourdieu was very clear that people were not automatons:

> [they are] not particles subject to mechanical forces, and acting under the constraint of causes: nor are they conscious and knowing subjects a ting with full knowledge of the facts, as champions of rational action theory believe... [they are] active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of principles, of vision and ... schemes of action\(^{68}\).

For the purposes of this dissertation, therefore, the ideas of *Habitus, Field* and *Capital* should be viewed as useful tools for expressing what individual scholars bring with them to studies of the *Germani* as well as accommodating the influences that their wider discipline brings to bear on the scholars themselves.

In practical terms, this means that Bourdieu’s thinking tools of *Habitus, Field* and *Capital* have been drawn upon as scholastic devices, as epistemological and methodological heuristics. They should be perceived as helping the formulation of a

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\(^{66}\) Calhoun 1995.

\(^{67}\) Warde 2004: 8.

\(^{68}\) Bourdieu 1988: 25.
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structure that will help to make sense of the intellectual and socio-political world in which historians and archaeologists studying the Germani live. If this is done, then concerns regarding conceptual clarity or the extent to which the relational dimension of Bourdieu’s concepts are preserved, particularly in relation to maintaining the idea of structures that are both structuring and structured, can be set aside.

5 Selection of scholars to be used: von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather as case studies

This thesis rests on close, critical examination of the research of von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather. Specifically, it is their works on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian that are of interest, forming a core of primary sources. This thesis focuses on how these scholars situate themselves in relation to issues outside their discipline. Each case study has made extensive contributions to discussions concerning ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The common thread that ties the four case studies together is their shared interest in the historiographical challenges associated with the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past and the reflexive practice demonstrated towards the subject of their studies; this reflexivity is an important criterion for their selection in this study. Von See and Geuenich come from a generation of scholarship regarding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity in which reflexive practice is unusual. The younger scholars Pohl and Brather represent a generation of scholarship in which there has been an emergent “self-awareness” within

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69 James 2009: 4ff makes the point that barbarian history as a whole is enormously complicated and that this complexity appears in both archaeological and historical sources. James 1982: 3-4 attributes this to the paradoxical structuring of the barbarian past by the scholars that have studied it. In the case of the Franks, for example, the major sources of Gallic history were edited and published in the German Monumenta Germaniae Historica leaving French scholars in the nineteenth century in two minds as to which perspective to undertake: the view whereby the French were seen as the descendants of the Gallic race or the view that all that is best in French civilisation originates with the Germanic Franks, thereby elevating the Germanic perspective.
the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity; both scholars have been key figures to driving this development.

5.1 Pre-eminence of the case studies in studies of the Germani

Von See’s significance to this study is found in his approach to German intellectual traditions underpinning ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. He demonstrates how these traditions simultaneously used their relationship with surrounding countries and regions and the distant past to inform the development of modern German national identity. For von See, there is no specific period of early German history that provides for a consciousness of national identity, only rich traditions relating to cultural possession and territories70. He examines ancient authors and poets, focusing on the literary character of the “Germanic” by individuals such as Tacitus, the picture of barbarians in ancient cultures and the barbarian cliché in ancient ‘Germanic’ representations. These representations are juxtaposed against the historical picture and traditions of “barbarian” in the Middle Ages71. Von See’s research traces the development of German national identity and the various contributions made by individuals and historical periods72, making note of the difficulty that historians have had when engaging in research to do with the distant ‘Germanic’ past73. Sonderweg, a historiographical theory that posits the inevitability of Nazi Germany, and Vergangenheitsbewältigung, a compound word that means “coming to terms with the past”, are relevant in the framing of von See’s construction of the distant past74.

72 For example, see von See 1970a, 1975, 2001b, 2006.
Geuenich’s interest in the interrelationship between historical, archaeological and philological evidence reconstructs Alamannic society and presents the Alamanni without the line of continuity that traditionally has connected the Alamannic past with the German and European present. His historiographical analysis of this group is important due to the modern predilection for identifying the Alamanni as the tribe that stands as the direct ancestors of the modern Deutschen. Geuenich’s research takes place among broader enquiries into the discipline’s history and the significance of the markers of identity and memory. Issues of the discipline’s history, memory and onomastics have framed his work on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, and of the Alamanni in particular. Geuenich’s research on the Alamanni emphasises the importance of being aware of the scholarship’s history for the benefit of future generations of scholars.

Pohl’s use of contemporary sociological thinking, in the form of ethnic discourse, to study the distant ‘Germanic’ past, makes his inclusion to this study an important one. He recasts the ethnogenesis Traditions kern theory, as posited by Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram, in a contemporary intellectual context. This re-presentation looks at the extent to which ethnic identity is a catalyst for change in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. Ethnic identity is depicted as a part of the political discourse used by the elite and the common individual in the post-Roman kingdoms to make sense of the changing socio-cultural and political realities of the time.

Brather focuses on the intersection of ethnicity and Early Medieval archaeology and the role played by ethnic interpretations within the discipline. This is considered to

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75 Gillett 2006: 242. Olson 2007: 17 describes the ethnogenesis theory of identity formation as a useful model of cultural change, particularly when juxtaposing against more intrusive models of cultural change.
be a central and ongoing issue within prehistorical archaeology. Central to Brather’s work is a disconnection from the historical and archaeological tradition where ‘archaeological cultures’ and ‘ethnic groups’ could be identified with each other. In place of this paradigm, Brather suggests that archaeological finds in north-western Europe can serve as evidence for ‘zones of interaction’ between groups rather than being suggestive of ethnic identity. This is a recognised interpretative framework within Anglophone interpretations of the ‘Germanic’ ancient past, but in the German tradition it is a relatively new reading of the literary and archaeological record. Until recently, the long and stable traditions of research into the ‘Germanic’ counterpart to classical antiquity identified archaeological remains with those ‘tribes’ mentioned in the ancient sources. Brather argues that archaeology must concentrate on questions that are adequate to its sources and that a new paradigm is required for things traditionally interpreted as ‘ethnic’. Brather’s work is aligned with current academic trends and interests in identity and identity’s place in historical and archaeological records but in step with broader trends regarding developing approaches to ethnicity and archaeology.

As an archaeologist, Brather’s inclusion in a dissertation where the majority of case studies are historians appears incongruous. There are two reasons, in addition to that of Brather’s significance regarding ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence, for his inclusion. Firstly, Brather presents an understanding of methodological concerns and challenges facing the German academy. Even Brather’s critics acknowledge this through actively engaging with his methods and questions, as

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76 Brather 2004b: v. A complimentary work to Brather’s, is Grünewald 2001. Part of the Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, this particular work examines the archaeological evidence for the relationship between Germania and the Roman Empire.
well as the future trajectory of the discipline. Secondly, as an archaeologist, Brather is a case study that serves as an indication that methodological concerns regarding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity is not something confined to the examination of literary sources.

5.2 A common thread: shared history and identity formation

Von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather have a common interest in the relationship between shared history and identity formation. It is an underlying theme in their works on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian and not necessarily something that the scholars set out as the purpose of their research. Nevertheless, as a shared interest between the four scholars, it accounts for the scholars being brought together as a set of case studies. Recognising the common interest in the relationship between shared history and identity formation raises two further points. Firstly, it acknowledges the multiple narratives that characterise the socio-political milieu in which the case studies are located. Secondly, it identifies one of the historical pre-occupations of the intellectual traditions and customs underpinning the discipline from which the case studies come.

Von See’s interest in the relationship between shared history and identity formation, via studies of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, can be seen in two ways. The first is in how he considers the different cultural constructions of German identity, particularly from the middle of the nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century. The second is in examining the role of different disciplines, such as Germanistik, Nordistik, Nordische Altertumskunde and Deutsche Altertumskunde, in pulling together the diversity of cultural material that contributes to historical German identity formation.

The relationship between shared history and identity formation is also reflected in Geuenich’s work. This is particularly clear in relation to his work on the Alamanni where, in a general sense, he has sought to present them not as a self-contained or
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cohesive unit that overran a particular geographical region. Rather, they were a group that settled south-west Germany, and its surrounds, in a peaceful and semi-permanent way. In this sense, his depiction of the Alamanni establishes the group as a part of the distant past for multiple geographical areas such as Germany, France and Switzerland, as well as particular regions within these modern-day states. Being a part of different historical narratives leads to questions regarding the impact for the way in which the identity of the Alamanni came about.

Shared history and identity formation are recurrent concepts in Pohl’s work on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. They appear in the context of his treatment of ethnic identity as a means to make sense of changing socio-cultural and political realities in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. His contributions to the Transformation of the Roman World series are examples that come readily to mind to support such a claim but there are other cases in his corpus that can also be considered. In a similar vein to von See and Geuenich, Pohl’s depiction of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian does not relegate the barbarian to one particular geographical zone or region. Rather, the ‘Germanic’ barbarian has a place in multiple historical narratives of regions and nations. Where there is a difference between Pohl and the previous case studies is the emphasis on ethnic identity.

Brather reflects an interest in the relationship between shared history and identity formation when he proposes ‘zones of interaction’ as a possible replacement interpretative paradigm for traditional ethnic interpretations in archaeology. Archaeological finds are not considered as evidence of a specific ‘ethnic’ group but of human interactivity on social and economic axes. The archaeological record becomes

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77 For example, see Geuenich 1997a, 2005.
78 Pohl 2008a, 2011.
the basis for determining past human activity in a particular geographical area without aligning the evidence to any specific group. In this way, archaeological evidence that might traditionally be associated with one specific ‘ethnic’ group can be deployed in such a way that it can be used in support of different narratives from the distant past.

6 Chapter Outline

The central research question to which this dissertation seeks an answer is: how does ‘Germanic’ Antiquity negotiate its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment? The structure for this thesis has been arranged with constructing an answer to this question in mind. Chapter 2 provides an intellectual and socio-political context for the discussion that takes place later in the thesis. Chapters 3-6 are at the heart of this dissertation. They are the chapters in which the case studies are analysed. Following the Bourdieusian approach adopted for this thesis, each of the case study chapters ends with a suggested theory of practice. Chapter 7 forms the conclusion to this thesis.

The intellectual and socio-political environment is established in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 contends with the historical developments within the academic traditions associated with the study of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past. It starts with the northern humanist reception of Tacitus’ *Germania* and ends with the present day, historiographical changes regarding the ancient ‘Germanic’ past. It is, of course, impossible to cover all the material in the space that is available so the approach has been taken to address the key points in the history of the discipline. In essence, it seeks to establish the traditions and conventions from which present day scholarship comes. The broader pluralistic context in which the case studies find themselves is
acknowledged in this chapter and, in the process, it shows the complexity underpinning the intellectual and socio-political environment in which today’s scholars of the ‘Germanic’ past are located.

Chapter 3 looks at the work of Klaus von See. What has emerged from an analysis of his works on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity is that underpinning much of his research is the modern German concept of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or ‘coming to terms with the past’; a post-World War Two expression that emerged in response to Germany’s experiences under National Socialism. Von See considers its application to the academic traditions surrounding the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, acknowledging the past appropriations of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past.

Chapter 4 analyses the work of Dieter Geuenich. Geuenich’s work is framed by a multi-disciplinary, or collaborative, approach. His methodology shows a particular interest in the interrelationship between the historian, the archaeologist and the philologist. This manifests itself in the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and has been framed by issues of the discipline’s history, memory and onomastics. While the rationale for this is to account for the place of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past in the development of German historical thought, the exploration of history, memory and onomastics also shows that identity is a recurrent theme in Geuenich’s works on the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

The work of Walter Pohl is focus of Chapter 5. Pohl’s discussions on ethnic identity in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages take place through the filter of ethnic discourse. It is seen as a means of accounting for the changes that took place at the end of the Roman Empire and contributing to the formation of the successor states
in north-western Europe. The potency of ethnic identity as an agent for change appears to be a constant in Pohl's methodology.

Chapter 6 looks at the work of Sebastian Brather and considers his interdisciplinary approach and the impact that it has had on scholarly discourse within the German academy. His presentation of the idea that archaeological evidence is not indicative of ethnic identity but of interactive zones in which groups engage with one another through various social, cultural, economic and political networks. While this is an acknowledged analytical schema within Anglophone interpretations of literary and archaeological evidence, as far as German tradition is concerned Brather’s approach is a relatively new reading of the source material.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation. Here, the similarities and discontinuities in approaches used by the case studies when studying ‘Germanic’ Antiquity are presented. The purpose of this chapter is not only to see where these points of difference and similarity lie but also answer the research question that sits at the heart of this dissertation.

7 Coda: a short comment on dates, some key terms and German translations

Throughout this thesis, the birth and death dates of scholars have followed their initial reference. The reason for this is to provide a quick context for the reader. While it may not be standard practice to do this, the historiographical nature and methodological focus of this dissertation made following such a convention a necessity.

There are a number of German terms that are used throughout this thesis. *Germanische Alterskunde, Sonderweg* and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are three
examples. Where it is a possible, an English translation has been provided. This has been to assist the reader's understanding of the topic being discussed in plain terms. In some instances, it is more appropriate in the dissertation’s narrative to use the German term and not the English translation. Quoted passages from German works have been translated into English by the author and the German original has been provided in a footnote.
Chapter 2: Defining the intellectual and socio-political environment of the scholarship that studies the ‘Germanic’ barbarian

Historians don’t want to write a history of historians. They are quite happy to plunge endlessly into limitless historical detail. But they themselves don’t want to be counted as part of the limitless historical detail. They don’t want to be apart of the historical order. It’s as if doctors didn’t want to fall ill and die.  

1 Introduction

The above statement opens the first chapter in Bourdieu’s Homo Academicus. It establishes an epistemological problem to do with the difference between practical and scholarly knowledge. Bourdieu’s introduction speaks of the challenges confronting historians who look to disconnect from the ‘insider experience’ of his or her discipline and reconstitute the knowledge that comes as a result of that break. Bourdieu is asking what can be understood of the aims and processes of historians, as distinct from their subjects of investigation.

The task that Bourdieu is proposing entails a degree of reflexivity with which the discipline studying the Germani is well familiar. Wood’s concluding statements in the recently published Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages prioritise the necessity of being aware of the history behind one’s own discipline. This awareness is not only to

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80 Some examples of monographs and articles focused on the historiography underpinning ‘Germanic’ antiquity from the past 10 years include, but are certainly not restricted to: Beck 2004b, 2004c; Bierbrauer 2004a; Brather 2004b, 2007a, 2009; Hakall 2012; Krebs 2011; Pohl 2004b; Pohl and Mehofer 2010; Pohl 2011; Pohl and Heydemann 2013; von See and Zernack 2004; Wood 2008, 2013.
understand what is being done with interpretations of the past but also why the past is, or was, constructed in a particular way\textsuperscript{81}.

The purpose of this chapter is similar: to understand the intellectual and socio-political \textit{Fields} in which the historian and archaeologist researching the \textit{Germani} sit. This chapter gives an overview of the historical and archaeological traditions from which the case studies come. In so doing, this chapter reflects on Bourdieu’s epistemological problem about what can be learnt from the aims and processes of the historian. The discussion is structured chronologically, starting with the rediscovery of Tacitus’ \textit{Germania} in the fifteenth century. The re-appearance of the \textit{Germania} encouraged the development of a set of approaches to ancient texts, and their use, in relation to contemporary political and social issues. These approaches then served as templates for later periods and situations.

2 \textbf{The reappearance of Tacitus’ \textit{Germania} and identifying key themes in the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity}

That’s all – almost. I’ve kept the honey until the end. A certain monk, a friend of mine from some monastery in Germany, sent me a letter in which he writes that he’s found a few volumes of the kind we’re interested in. Among these volumes there’s Julius Frontinus and works of Cornelius Tacitus heretofore unknown to us\textsuperscript{82}.

This was how the Italian humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) re-introduced the world to Tacitus’ \textit{Germania}. Writing to his friend Niccolò Niccoli in Florence in 1425 about his hunt for manuscripts, Bracciolini waited until the very end of his letter to

\textsuperscript{81}Wood 2013: 329.
\textsuperscript{82}Poggio Bracciolini quoted in Krebs 2011: 56.
announce that a monk from Hersfeld Abbey in Germany had approached him about manuscripts written by Tacitus that were in his Abbey's possession. It was, however, not until the 1450s, and as a result of the efforts of Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, that the *Germania* was to move from obscurity into the public eye.

Ecclesiastical concern over the papacy's relationship with fifteenth-century Germany and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 pressed Tacitus' *Germania* into political service. The politicisation of the *Germani* represents the first theme within the present historical overview: the politicisation of ethnic identity. In 1454, while still in the service of Frederick III, Piccolomini addressed the Diet of Frankfurt with the intent of rousing the Germans to assist in a crusade against the Turks who, a year earlier, had taken Constantinople. His speech presented the *Germani* as a defender of Western civilisation and in the process gave the Germans of the time an academic foundation for identifying with the remote past.

Similarly, Neapolitan born humanist Giannantonio Campano (1429-1477) was asked in 1471 by Pope Paul II via Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III to prepare a speech that would convince the Diet of Regensburg to enlist, once more, German military forces for a crusade. Projecting this political situation onto the 'Germanic' past saw the Regensburg address emphasis those parts of the *Germania* that demonstrated how Germany's ancestors were both brave and pious. In doing this,

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83 Krebs 2011: 56.
84 Kelley 1993: 155; Krebs 2011: 80 note the fact that the details of that move, represented by the journey the *Germania* had from Hersfeld Abbey to the Vatican, are vague. The manuscript hunters that were responsible for re-introducing the *Germania* to the world were not deliberately seeking a work by Tacitus on the early Germans. Bracciolini and a rival retriever of antique texts, Enoch of Ascoli (1400-1457), were both in the employ of the Vatican. Schama 1996: 77 and Krebs 2011: 76 explain that Bracciolini was a papal secretary with a passion for manuscript hunting, whereas Enoch had been dispatched to Germany by Pope Nicholas V to collect as many Greek and Latin manuscripts as he possibly could.
85 Krebs 2011: 83.
87 Krebs 2011: 85.
Campano’s speech connected the Germans of his time with the *Germani* of the remote past. The line from ‘Germanic’ to ‘German’ was depicted as continuous, a motif that was to recur throughout the discipline’s history\(^9\).

Twenty years later, under Pope Alexander VI, Germany was presented as a nation with significant, Biblical heritage\(^9\). In his *Commentaries on Various Authors Discussing Antiquities* (1498), Annius of Viertbo (1432-1502) taught the Germans, at a time where there was widespread zeal amongst families and nations in claiming the earliest of origins, that they were descended from Tuisto, proffered by Tacitus as a semi-divine ancestor of the ancient *Germani*, now reconceived as a son of Noah\(^9\). The inclusion of Tuisto into Noah’s family as one of Noah’s sons gave the ‘Germanic’ progenitor biblical lineage\(^9\). It also assigned the *Germani* a degree of historical importance in so far as explaining the diversity in human custom and spread. The Medieval and Early Modern periods used a Biblical model of the Twelve Tribes being descended from Noah’s progeny, which the rendering of Tuisto as one of Noah’s sons achieved. Thus, such a connection between ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and Noah and his family gave the German people of the Renaissance a means to situate themselves historically, in relation to other European peoples\(^9\), a heritage that was both biblical and ancient.

The reappearance of the *Germania* also draws attention to the non-indigenous nature of the text. Firstly, the *Germania* is Graeco-Roman in origin. Written by a Roman,
the *Germania* followed an ethnographic tradition that stemmed from the Hellenistic world \(^94\). Despite this background, the *Germania* was domesticated by German humanists as something particularly German, an idea that was to reappear regularly in the centuries to come. Secondly, the individuals who were responsible for bringing the *Germania* out of obscurity were Italian, not German and were in the employ of the Vatican. Piccolomini, Campano and Annius’ presentations of the *Germania* were fashioned so as to contrast Rome and Germany. In so doing, they placed the alleged ‘barbarism’ of the contemporary Germans at the centre of the discussions stemming from Tacitus’ work\(^95\).

The presentation of ‘Germanic’ barbarism in this manner was a basis for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, from very early on, to be structured around ‘Romanist’ and ‘Germanist’ readings of the past \(^96\). Romanists used textual and archaeological evidence from Roman sources as explanatory models for explaining ‘Germanic’ phenomena. A ‘Romanist’ reading adopts an interpretation of history that places the Roman Empire at its centre. This reading situates Rome as both the centre of civilisation and something that brings civilisation to others. By contrast, ‘Germanists’ use philological and other sources, often derived from Graeco-Roman sources, as explanatory models. A ‘Germanist’ reading of the past places the contributions of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian front and centre. This dichotomy persists in varying forms to this day and can be regarded as another one of the key themes to which this chapter will return regularly.

\(^94\) Rives 1999: 11ff.
\(^95\) Kelley 1993: 155.
\(^96\) Wood 2013: 8. For further detail about these two interpretations of history, see Halsall 1999.
Both ‘Germanists’ and ‘Romanists’ regarded Tacitus *Germania* as an important authority. Romanists regarded Tacitus as evidence for a lack of a written culture amongst the ‘Germanic’ people, a group of people about which precious little was known other than from Tacitus. Indeed, the Romanist tradition stemming from writers such as Piccolomini was to emphasise the cultural inferiority of Germany to Rome. In his *An Account of the Rites, Site, Mores and General Condition of Germany* (1496), Piccolomini ‘barbarised’ Germany’s past to make a categorical distinction with its present. He sought to demonstrate Germany’s inferiority by listing all the things the society of Tacitus’ *Germani* lacked such things as gold, silver, fine fabrics, solid towns and settlements with walls. Piccolomini’s argument was that because of Rome, Germany was in a far better state in the present than in its distant past.

In contrast to this depiction of the ‘Germanic’ past, German humanists, such as Jakob Wimpheling (1450-1528) and Franciscus Irenicus (1494-1553), used the *Germania* in their own historical works to emphasise their ancestors’ positive traits and characteristics. What they may have lacked in cultural and intellectual refinement, the ‘Germanic’ tribes made up for with moral integrity. Wimpheling presented the ‘Germanic’ tribes as courageous in battle, having a reputation that stopped even Alexander the Great from engaging them in war. Irenicus described the ‘Germanic’ people as being known for their humanity, their chastity, loyalty, reliability of their word, and the way they treated strangers.

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97 Krebs 2011: 89.  
98 Krebs 2011: 91  
100 Borchardt 1971: 146.
For Wimpfeling, however, the reappearance of the *Germania* also represented an opportunity to envision a common German nation\(^{101}\). This opportunity emerged because of ongoing debate and disagreement with the German satirist, poet and translator Thomas Murner (1475-1537) over his discussions of the identity of Alsatia. In his treatise *Germania* (1501), Wimpfeling defined the geography of Alsatia and asserted that Alsatia was never a part of French rule but always a part of the Roman realm. This was a position that Alsatia had held from the time of Julius Caesar all the way through to Maximilian I\(^{102}\). So similar were the Alsatians to the Romans, according to Wimpfeling, that the latter called the former brothers, or ‘*Germani*’. Murner believed such explanations to be asinine, only leading to further acts of imagination such as casting Charlemagne as German.

Imagining the ‘German-ness’ of the emperor Charlemagne was not a particularly revolutionary step in the writing of distant past at this time\(^{103}\). Wimpfeling, like most of his contemporaries, would have been unable to depict Charlemagne without assigning an anachronistic nationality of some form. Stressing Charlemagne’s background as German would also have the net result of separating German identity from the identity of those nearby, such as France or Italy. Indeed, in *Epitoma Germanicarum rerum* (1505), Wimpfeling extended ‘Germanic’ antiquities as far back as the founding of the city of Trier. This meant, as far as Wimpfeling was concerned that ‘Germanic’ antiquities were older than Roman antiquities: Trier was thought to have been founded some 2000 years before the birth of Christ whereas Rome was only founded in 752BC.

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\(^{102}\) Borchardt 1971: 99.
\(^{103}\) Borchardt 1971: 100.
German humanists saw the reappearance of the *Germania* as separating Germany, both past and present, from the Mediterranean. Statements from individuals such as Valla show an Italian belief in continuation of Italian cultural hegemony over Germany, albeit through language. Texts such as the *Germania*, written in Latin, would have reinforced this belief. As far as German scholars were concerned, however, the *Germania* made the idea of Italian cultural hegemony moot. Here was literary evidence that the Germans possessed, as German humanist Heinrich Bebel (1472-1518) claimed in his oration to Maximilian I in 1501, historians that could record the past of glorious deeds\(^1\). The provision of a documented past, where previously there had been nothing, allowed them to start building the notion of a German nation free from the dominance of Rome\(^2\).

The enthusiasm to see a German past that could claim a legitimate foundation in antiquity, and could compete with the similar claims to Rome made by the Italians, further embedded identity into the historical narratives of the German humanists. In 1505, for example, Wimpeling wrote of the ‘Germanic’ virtues, drawn from the *Germania*, of *prudicitia, liberalitas, integritas, fides, libertas, constantia, fortitudo, ingenium* and *nobilitas*. They were portrayed as national traits for the Germany of his time, being characteristics that were carried over from the ancient past to the present\(^3\). These stood next to other important characteristics drawn from the *Germania* such as autochthony and being attached to liberty.

Celtis’ *Germania generalis*, published around the beginning of the sixteenth century, celebrated the political, military and literary prowess that had been passed on

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\(^1\) Kelley 1993: 158.  
\(^2\) Krebs 2011: 105 explains that Wimpeling’s declaration in 1505 that “we [ie. Germans] may pride ourselves on being descendants of our German ancestors” illustrates the patriotic fervor that characterised such building work.  
\(^3\) Kelley 1993: 159.
to the Germans from their forebears. His work provided a picture of an ideal Germany in which high culture and high morals came together, a comprehensive description of Germany by a German. Germania generalis was born from a determination to show that the so-called ‘barbarian’ Germans were not inferior to the cultivated Italians. Coupled with his edition of Tacitus’ Germania, Germania generalis achieved for Celtis, and his audience, a picture of Germany that had not only embraced the values of ‘Germanic’ tribes but had gone on to enhance the skills that had been passed down through the generations. Furthermore, Celtis was able to provide a missing perspective for the German people. Tacitus’ Germania provided information on the origins of the German people but, as Krebs points out, this was a Roman point of view. Germania generalis redressed this and in the process helped to position Tacitus’ Germania as, in the fifteenth-century eye, Germany’s founding document.

Before the fifteenth century, the Germania was undiscovered. Its transformation into something regarded as a foundational document for German identity makes the ‘rediscovery’ of Tacitus’ ethnographic work a reasonable starting point for a historical overview of the ‘discourses’ that grew up around it. Throughout the narrative underpinning the reappearance of the Germania are important themes. These themes recur regularly enough that they can be considered central to putting together a historical overview of discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. It would make for a hurried conclusion to state that all of the key themes established by the account of the Germania’s reappearance manifest themselves at every turn in the discipline’s history.

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107 Kelley 1993: 158.
110 Krebs 2011: 110.
Collectively, they are useful in shaping one’s understanding of the discipline’s historical narrative. Individually, however, the themes are inconsistent in their appearance.

Overall, there are ten central and individual themes for the discipline’s history. Piccolomini’s actions, in bringing the *Germania* out from obscurity, alongside the efforts of Campano to popularise the remote past, draws attention to the idea of politicisation. It also draws attention to claims of ‘national’ ownership, or domestication, of Tacitus’ work. The *Germania’s* ‘rediscovery’, at a time where there were tensions between the Papacy and Germany, saw debates surface regarding the cultural superiority or inferiority of the Germans to Rome. Wimpfeling’s insistence on the ‘Germanic’ past’s antiquity, and therefore its superiority over Rome, was a part of this debate and a theme in its own right. Being able to assimilate this antiquity into a biblical worldview was also a concern. From a methodological perspective, discussions about the distant past found expression in either ‘Germanist’ or ‘Romanist’ points of view, a dichotomy that is persistent to today. Much of this dichotomy centred on identity. Motifs, such as kinship relations, the extension of ethnic identity to others and regionalism, also pinpointed identity as an underlying concept for the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

In the sections that follow, then, this thesis maps the history of the accounts of the *Germani* across these themes. The purpose of providing a thematic topography of the discipline’s history is to establish the background from which the case studies under examination by this dissertation have come. Some themes, such as the integration of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity into a Lutheran worldview, occur only once or twice in the discipline’s history. Other themes, such as the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy, make more than a simple cameo appearance. There are also occasions where themes link
together, almost becoming synonymous due to overlapping content: the cultural superiority or inferiority of Germany to Rome connects with such ideas as the longevity of Germany’s history.

3 The Reformation, the politicisation of the ‘Germanic’ past and the Lutheran world view

We know scarcely anything about our origin, except what we must use from histories of other nations.\(^{111}\)

Given the central role played by Martin Luther in the Reformation in Germany, it is entirely appropriate to start the section on the ‘Germanic’ past and the Reformation with one of his observations on Germany’s history. Luther’s comment about the absence of anything in the classical record that might illuminate the Germans’ history captures the challenge facing those wishing to understand Germany’s own ‘national’ biography. The interest in Germany’s ancient origins, sparked by the reappearance of Tacitus’ *Germania*, persisted throughout the Reformation. An important part of the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, the Reformation saw German humanists focus on the possibility of a rehabilitation of Germany, a restoration of its honour and freedom and an end to the exploitation of the country by the Roman Catholic Church.\(^{112}\)

Tacitus’ *Germania* remained the principal text and starting point for the development of historical narratives surrounding the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Attesting to the *Germani*’s presence in the history of the Roman Empire, the *Germania* showed that the Germans were as much a culture of great antiquity as the Italians. The cultural

\(^{111}\) Martin Luther quoted in Bradford Smith 2004: 354.

\(^{112}\) Hirschi 2012: 196.
longevity of the Germans is one of five themes that are explored in this section. Also considered are: the politicisation of the past, the ongoing debate regarding cultural superiority or inferiority of Germany to Rome, the assimilation of the ‘Germanic’ past into the Lutheran biblical worldview and the Germanist-Romanist reading of the distant past.

The political character that the ‘Germanic’ past assumed shortly after the ‘rediscovery’ of the *Germania* remained present during the Reformation. In the context of the Reformation, ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was attached to the discourse surrounding the relationship between Germany and the Roman Catholic Church. In his *Rerum Germanicarum libri tres* (1531), for example, Rhenanus endorsed Luther’s appeal to the Emperor and German aristocracy in Germany to disassemble papal authority within German lands. Rhenanus did this through paraphrases and inversions of the celebration of Italian cultural hegemony made by Lorenzo Valla (1409-1457) a century earlier:

> Ours are the victories of the Goths, Vandals and Franks. Ours the glory attached to the kingdoms that these peoples founded in the most illustrious provinces of the Romans, in Italy, and in the queen of cities, Rome herself.

This was a continuation of the arguments put forward by Wimpheling a generation earlier in *Epitoma rerum Germanicarum usque ad nostra tempora* (1505) where Wimpheling looked to rally the Germans of the time to take pride in, and build on, the achievements of the distant past.

114 Beatus Rhenanus quoted in Kelley 1993: 157. The comment by Valla paraphrased by Rhenanus is: “We have lost Rome, we have lost authority, we have lost dominion, not by our own fault but by that of the times, yet we reign still, by this more splendid sovereignty [the Latin language] in a great part of the world. Ours is Italy, ours Gaul, ours Spain, Germany, Pannonian, Dalmatia, Illyricum, and many other lands. For wherever the Roman tongue holds sway, there is the Roman Empire”, Lorenzo Valla quoted in Kelley 1993: 157.
Patriotic, yet philologically thorough and historically cautious, Rhenanus walked a middle line. He sought to retrieve what the sources had said about the distant ‘Germanic’ past and what had been meant\textsuperscript{115}. Rhenanus urged caution with regards to interpreting the ancient past through Tacitus’ \textit{Germania}. His commentary on Tacitus’ \textit{Germania} (1519) looked to establish the identity and location of the peoples mentioned in the text but not make connections with peoples of his own time. For example, he wanted to avoid the error made by others of equating the Suevi with the Schwabians of his time\textsuperscript{116}. This line of thinking was taken to a natural end with the 1531 publication of the three volumes \textit{Res Germanicae} where he separated the \textit{Germanien} from modern Germany. He questioned the view in which regional populations were uncritically held to be the descendants of those tribes discussed in the works of Julius Caesar and Tacitus\textsuperscript{117}.

Ulrich von Hutten’s (1488-1523) dialogue \textit{Arminius}, about the Germanic chieftain of the same name who betrayed Roman forces in AD9 at the Teutoburg Forest, emphasised the idea of freedom. Krebs points out that this was something that would not have been lost on von Hutten’s German readers because…

...German freedom was seen facing serious threats at the turn of the sixteenth century: Turkish forces battled at the gates of Vienna in 1529; the Curia tightened its grasp on German holdings; and the Roman legal code supplanted the time-honored local laws\textsuperscript{118}.

Appropriating images of Arminius from Velleius Paterculus and Tacitus, von Hutten casts Arminius as the embodiment of German national pride, standing up against the

\textsuperscript{116} Schaeffer 1976: 27.
\textsuperscript{117} Krebs 2011: 249.
\textsuperscript{118} Krebs 2011: 120.
political and spiritual tyranny of Rome. Furthermore, von Hutten’s Arminius exemplified religious and moral purity, traits considered to be the basis for the religious reform that was taking place at the time.

Von Hutten's emphasis on the ‘Germanic’ purity of spirit can be interpreted as a development in the Germanist-Romanist interpretations of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Interpretations of the past were now not just drawn from the motivation to show German society and culture at the time as equal or superior to that of the Italians, as had been the case around the time Tacitus’ *Germania* reappeared. Certainly, the question of Germany’s antiquity, in comparison to that of Italy’s, remained but this was now expressed in religious terms. Johannes Aventinus (1477-1534), a Bavarian, humanist, philologist, historian and Catholic, reaffirmed the claims made by Annius of Viterbo: the Germans were direct descendants from the fourth son of Noah, Tuisto. This sense of antiquity pervaded his understanding of German piety as being the purest of spirit. If the Germans were directly descended from Noah, and in Aventinus’ mind there was no question about this fact, then this historically located them further back in time than Rome. Germany therefore was the most authentic in its religious practices and customs.

For German scholars who remained Catholic, the successful folding of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past into an identity that was connected to Rome was at odds with the emerging narratives that emphasised liberty. Johannes Cochlaeus’ (1479-1552) presentation of the distant ‘Germanic’ past was a restatement of the Romanist standpoint, albeit qualified by an interest in Germany’s origins. His edition of
Pomponius Mela’s *Cosmographica* (1512) has an attached description of Germany that gives over a considerable amount of space to the activities of the Goths, Vandals and the Huns. Cochlaeus celebrates Germany’s ancient past at the same time as contrasting the warlike valour of yesteryear with the peaceable achievements of the present. While the past was celebrated, it was also seen to be inferior to the present, and to prevent a regression to that inferior past, Cochlaeus argued that Luther’s theology had to be rejected. Such a stance, however, where allegiance to the Vatican was seen to be more important than being loyal and standing alongside one’s countrymen, implied that Cochlaeus wanted to deny liberty to the German people at a time where liberty was taken so seriously.

This period of time also saw a linguistic change in the Germanist-Romanist points of view. There was a shift from the language of the Romanists to the language of the German volk. That is, histories of the ‘Germanic’ people started to appear in translation, from Latin to German. Aventinus identified the motivation for such a shift, writing that “every folk and nation has its own history in its language and mentality.” German scholars were looking to celebrate their culture’s antiquity in their own language, an example of which is Johann Eberlin von Günzburg’s (1470-1533) German translation of the *Germania* in 1526. Eberlin’s translation looked to commemorate Germany’s “origins, development, notable deeds, and misfortunes”. Simply by providing a German translation of the *Germania*, Eberlin’s translation provided an alternative to the Romanist perspective on history.

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123 Hirschi 2012: 208-209.
The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

The realisation that German identity could be forged without reference to the Vatican, however, was challenged by the fact that the Reformers could not Biblically attest the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. While ‘Germanic’ Antiquity could provide the basis for a historically attested identity that would reveal to the world and the Italians in particular German learnedness, genius and historicity, ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was not Biblically supported\(^{126}\). While it was readily accepted that the cultures of Antiquity had a place in God’s plan, the Germans in the Reformation era wanted to resolve the question of where their nation stood within the eschatological framework inherent in this period’s view of history\(^{127}\). Renaissance and Reformation Germany could celebrate in the omnipresence of the ‘Germanic’ people in the history of the Roman world but they were presented as both hostile and aggressive. The rehabilitation of the ‘Germanic’ people, in line with Reformist perspectives on history, was not going to be as straightforward a task\(^{128}\).

4 The Enlightenment and the ‘Germanic past – liberty, language and politics

When will our public cease to be this three-headed apocalyptic beast, poorly Greek, French and British?\(^{129}\).

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\(^{126}\) Bradford Smith 2004: 352.

\(^{127}\) Bradford Smith 2004: 353.

\(^{128}\) That said, historians did reference the ‘Germanic’ past in a Reformist context. According to Bradford Smith 2004: 366-367, in 1595, Thomas Blebelius (1539-1596) wrote about his own city, Hof, in a Reformist context. His history conformed to Luther’s call to redress the barbarity of the Germans at the same time as responding to why it was that the Germans were slow in adopting Christianity. The original inhabitants of Hof, claimed Blebelius, were the Varisci, “named for the word that among the Germans signified truth” (Blebelius quote in Bradford Smith 2004: 365). Their devotion to the truth preconditioned them to accept Christianity. One of Blebelius’ students went one step further and claimed that Christianity had always been present in Germany’s ancient past but up until the advent of Luther, the teachings of Christ had been twisted and distorted by the Papacy.

\(^{129}\) Herder 1877-1913: I.217.
Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) appeal for the Germans of his time to seek an identity on their own terms is an example of how Germany's experience with the Enlightenment impacted the distant 'Germanic' past. Here was a period of time where the discipline of 'Germanic' Antiquity was faced with a predilection for French culture, on one hand, and an increasing interest in the unique nature of the German nation, on the other. The ideas of liberty and language, manifest in the broader themes of politicisation, popularising the past and the antiquity of the 'Germanic' past are present in this section\textsuperscript{130}.

During the Enlightenment, the 'Germanic' past continued to be idealised and there was a persistence in the belief that the distant past had a place in conceptualisations of the German nation. This was particularly the case amongst academics. Readings of the 'Germanic' past during the Enlightenment also witnessed the start of a northwesterly historiographical shift\textsuperscript{131}. Whereas readings of the distant 'Germanic' past were once entangled in discussions about the superiority or inferiority of Germany to Rome, they gave way to concerns about how Germany related to France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

An example of the continued idealisation of the distant 'Germanic' past can be found in the work of Justus Möser (1720-1794). Möser was a man of political and administrative pre-eminence in the prince-bishopric of Osnabrück. The different roles he played gave his work on various aspects of Osnabrück’s history and society both depth and breadth, making his inclusion regarding the treatment of the 'Germanic' past

\textsuperscript{130} As topics of historical interest, the ideas of liberty and language were around earlier than Herder. Philipp Clüver (1580-1622), for example, struck on the themes of liberty and language in his \textit{Germania antiqua} (1616). Philipp Clüver quoted in Krebs 2011: 156-157: “Germania, as the Romans called it, and which, considering its origin and name in its original language, should be called Teutonia, is the only country in Europe and maybe the universe that was never subjugated...It is still the same aboriginal and indigenous nation which has preserved its independence, its name and its language from its origin to this day”.

\textsuperscript{131} Cf. Leerssen 2006: 111-112.
during the Enlightenment a necessity. One part of Osnabrück’s history and society with which Möser was concerned was the peasant. Möser believed that ordinary landowners, or peasants, were authentic parts of the nation, were to be regarded as a proper subject of historical investigation and had origins that could be traced back to those depictions conveyed by Tacitus. In the spirit of the humanitarian enlightenment and Kant’s ethical rigorism, the human rights and human dignity of the peasant were to be recognised. The peasant was no longer to be society’s slave and beast of burden.

It is from this standpoint that Möser’s politicisation of the ‘Germanic’ past comes. His advocacy for the liberation of the peasantry saw the idea of freedom and property assume a key role in his Osnabrückische Geschichte (1768). The distant past consequently became of primary importance to Möser, being a ‘golden’ age of free German farmers, associated with each other for the purposes of self-government under an elected magistrate. Looking back to the ‘Germanic’ period was a means for Möser to strengthen his argument in support of the liberation of the peasantry. Not only was there an argument based on natural right but the ‘Germanic’ tribes of Tacitus, and their connection with the present, provided a historical justification.

Theories of language development in the eighteenth century influenced the image of the remote ‘Germanic’ past. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s (1646-1716) active contributions to the emerging field of philology cast the ancient ‘Germanic’ past as a

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137 Nolan and Nipperdey 2014: 29.
source of national pride and a justification of cultural equality with, or superiority to, both the Italians and the French. For Leibniz, this was particularly evident through the German language.

I am accustomed to boast to Italians and Frenchmen that we Germans have a peculiar touchstone for thoughts, which is unknown to others; and, when they are eager to know something about this, I tell them that it is our very language; for what can be said in it intelligibly without loaned or unusual words is really something solid; but empty words, with nothing at the back of them, which are only the light froth of idle thoughts, these the pure German language will not accept. Indeed, Leibniz was particularly anxious for the publication of a German etymological dictionary. This dictionary would then demonstrate that the ancient Germans originally inhabited Italy and Greece and, therefore, that these areas owed a great deal to the German language. Leibniz continued the Renaissance tradition of linking the Roman Empire to the Germany of his time via the Holy Roman Empire: “the German nation has priority over all Christian peoples owing to the Holy Roman Empire, whose dignity and rights have been transferred to it and its ruler”.

Leibniz's Collectanea Etymologica helped to support such claims by outlining the development of languages from a so-called Ursprache, or original language, and that German possessed the closest link with this ‘original language’. As a result of German being the closest to the ‘original language’,
according to Leibniz, the origin of the European peoples and languages could be readily situated and the source of European character readily identified.

German jurist Johann Jacob Mascov (1689-1761) extended Leibniz’s research, motivated by the desire for Germans to understand their origins and the origins of their constitution. Mascov stated in the preface to his *Geschichte der Teutschen bis zu Anfang der Fränkischen Monarchie* (1726-37):

My Design is to lay a Foundation, as well as for a general history of Germany, as for those, in particular, of the Countries and Nations appertaining thereto; and to reduce into some Order, whatever is to be found dispers’d in Ancient History of the Origin of the German People, their Habitations, Migrations, Inroads on the Roman Provinces, Civil War; and at the same Time, of their form of Government, Genius, Religion, Manners, Arms etc.

Language was considered important in demonstrating to the Germans of Mascov’s time the historicity of their nation and, in particular, the historical and geographical reach of German expansion and settlement. Alongside literary and legal sources, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, Mascov was able to put together a historical narrative for the German people.

Where Mascov focused on both language and custom as a means to demonstrate the historicity of the German nation, and its constitution, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) focused predominantly on language. Herder was not a historian interested in the last days of late Antiquity or the first days of the Early Middle Ages. Rather, he had an interest in the cultural unity of Germany. For this unity, language was an important consideration because it represented variety and diversity, traits that were in

\[142\] Wood 2013: 55.
\[143\] Mascov quoted in Wood 2013: 56.
\[144\] Wood 2013: 113.
his view central to being human\textsuperscript{145}. These traits positioned Herder's thinking against French influences on culture. Following Herder's train of thought, any nation's cultural output, even if it took the form of oral folksong, was something about which to be proud because it was a manifestation of the nation's presence on the cultural landscape\textsuperscript{146}. To assimilate one's culture with the French was to fail to live up to the dignity of human diversity.

5 Rejection of Napoleonic French Hegemony

In addition to his focus on language as an indicator of Germany's antiquity, Herder's significance to the study of the ancient 'Germanic' past is his part in setting the scene for Romantic nationalism in Europe, and a rejection of French imperial rule in Germany. Herder's focus on language as evidence of both the uniqueness of nations, and the diversity of humanity, provided the basis for a philosophical and historical riposte to Napoleonic French hegemony\textsuperscript{147}. Johann Gottfried Fichte (1762-1814), and Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859) are examples of this philosophical and historical response.

Language continued to hold a primacy as a starting point for the development of historical narratives surrounding the distant 'Germanic' past. Being able to attest to the historical longevity of one's language was a means to show the extent to which the Germans were descended from a culture of great antiquity. The longevity of one's language also enabled scholarship at this time to map what they believed to be the reach of the 'Germanic' people. Thus, not only is the cultural longevity of the Germans

\textsuperscript{145} It was this variation, as far as Herder was concerned, that was valuable: “not any particular cultural or language in its own right, but the existence of alternatives, of differences”, Leerssen 2006: 99.

\textsuperscript{146} Leerssen 2006: 99-100.

\textsuperscript{147} Leerssen 2006: 113.
one of principal themes explored in this section, but so also is the politicisation of the past and the extension of ethnic identity to others.

The French Revolution had initially appealed to the Germans. Leerssen describes the Revolution as having been “greeted with awe and enthusiasm”\footnote{Leerssen 2006: 105.}. German intellectuals saw the Revolution as ushering in a new era of universal liberation. The rise of Napoleon, and his eventual crowning as emperor in 1804, was followed by a period of German revulsion towards the French. The French had turned their backs on the values and ideals espoused by the Revolution\footnote{Moore 2008: xxii.} German intelligentsia once positively predisposed to the values and ideals of the Revolution were now “fervent France haters and anti-revolutionaries”\footnote{Leerssen 2006: 107.}. Johann Gottfried Fichte fell into this category.

Fichte, a German philosopher, at first welcomed the French Revolution and its values\footnote{Moore 2008: xvi.}. Seen as a proponent of the values of liberty and political change, Fichte’s writings secured an invitation to take on a professorship at the University of Jena, which he accepted\footnote{Moore 2008: xvi.}. Fichte was to maintain an evangelistic zeal for the values espoused by the French Revolution but not for the French themselves because, in his mind, the French had forsaken the ideas of 1789. They had submitted to a monarchy that was driven by conquest for its own sake.

For Fichte, this negative view of the French was further supported by a belief in Germany’s language and traditions being uninterrupted over the centuries\footnote{Geary 2002: 24-25; Moore 2008: xxvi.}. As far as he was concerned, it was possible to trace a continuous line from the time of the
'Germanic' barbarian to the present through language and tradition. This set Germany apart from other nations. A traceable and continuous historicity was proof of an integrity that other countries, such as France, lacked\textsuperscript{154}. For Germany, the nation was so deeply grounded historically as an ethnic community that they were able to hold onto their language and customs\textsuperscript{155}. Germany was therefore morally and culturally superior to other nations, such as France, who had been unable to hold onto their language and customs. Whereas the French had adopted a Latinised language, the Germans spoke a language that was derived entirely from Germanic elements\textsuperscript{156}.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were to build on Fichte's prioritisation of language, and the intellectual traditions established by Leibniz and Mascov that connected language and tribal groups of the distant past\textsuperscript{157}. The importance assigned to language by Leibniz and Mascov saw Jacob Grimm, in particular, pursue the study of European languages in a systematic and methodical manner. According to Leerssen, Jacob Grimm's methodology embraced linguistics, literary history and cultural anthropology. This methodology had come about, firstly, as a result of Grimm's agreement with Herder's belief that culture was a nation's historical record\textsuperscript{158}. Secondly, Grimm's methodology developed in response to the position held by German constitutional historian Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779-1861). Grimm's teacher, von Savigny believed that German law had developed historically to be the expression of the German nation's morals, outlook, culture and identity\textsuperscript{159}.

\textsuperscript{155} Fichte Fourth Address: Principal difference between the Germans and other Teutonic peoples in Moore 2008: 58. Fichte Fifth Address: Consequences of the difference that has been advanced in Moore 2008: 60.
\textsuperscript{156} Geary 2002: 25.
\textsuperscript{157} Wood 2013: 170.
\textsuperscript{158} Leerssen 2006: 123.
\textsuperscript{159} Leerssen 2006: 122-123.
Grimm came to believe that historical texts should not be adapted to the reader’s contemporary frame of reference. Rather, the reader should reach out to the text and connect with his or her own ‘pastness’\textsuperscript{160}. Grimm’s call to savour what epic poetry, mythologies and sagas, all born in the past, had to offer the reader came at a time where there was a sense of national awakening throughout Europe.

In our time a great love of folk songs has developed and will also draw attention to the sagas and folk tales which still circulate among the same people and are preserved in some forgotten places. The ever-growing realisation of the true nature of history and poetry has aroused the wish to save from oblivion what previously appeared contemptible, at the very last moment when it still could be collected\textsuperscript{161}.

Language and literature were means to celebrate the authenticity of the past at the same time as being connected to it. The Grimms saw language and literature as a source of unity, particularly in the absence of political unity\textsuperscript{162}. Importantly, it was a unity that could be grounded, by way of connections to German legends, in the works of historians such as Tacitus, Jordanes, Paulus Diaconus, and Gregory of Tours\textsuperscript{163}. The Grimms were able to maintain an emphasis on literary sources that had commenced with the rediscovery of Tacitus in the fifteenth century.

6 The distant ‘Germanic’ past in the context of German unification

May the Walhalla encourage the strength and growth of the German awareness! May all Germans, from whatever tribe they be, always feel that they have a

\textsuperscript{160} Leerssen 2006: 123-124.
\textsuperscript{161} Jacob Grimm quoted in Kohn 1950: 454.
\textsuperscript{162} Seeba 1994: 356.
\textsuperscript{163} Wilhelm Grimm quoted in Wood 2013: 170.
common fatherland, and let each contribute as much as he can to its glorification!\textsuperscript{164}. With these words, in 1842, King Ludwig I of Bavaria opened the Walhalla, a monument that celebrated the 'Eternal Germany'. From antiquity through to Goethe and beyond, the Walhalla celebrated the ideal of a common German consciousness. Ludwig's description of the Walhalla's rallying cry to Germani of different tribes echoed Fichte's \textit{Addresses to the German Nation} where Germany was depicted both historically and geographically, to “the ancient Germanic tribes, from Saxons to Hessians and from Franks to Bavarians”\textsuperscript{165}. At this time, national fervor drove the development of historical narratives surrounding the distant ‘Germanic’ past. The politicisation of the past persists in this section. This is connected with other themes presented in this section: ‘Germanist’ readings of the past, and the themes of regionalism, kinship relations and extending ethnic identity to others.

Ludwig's description of the Walhalla’s opening reveals the importance with which the distant past was held in the lead up to German unification in 1871. The distant ‘Germanic’ past had become a significant point in debates in favour of political unity, proffered as inspiration for intellectuals, writers and artists\textsuperscript{166}. Jacob Grimm’s attempt to justify German claims over Schleswig-Holstein in 1848 at the \textit{Nationalsammlung} comes to mind as an example for both the support of political unification and intellectual inspiration. For Grimm, the resolution of whether or not Schleswig-Holstein should be a part of Germany, as opposed to Denmark, was to be found in the study of language. He argued that Schleswig-Holstein was clearly German

\textsuperscript{164} King Ludwig I of Bavaria quoted in Leerssen 2006: 146.
\textsuperscript{165} Leerssen 2006: 146.
\textsuperscript{166} Leerssen 2006: 146.
because the indigenous language, Jutish, had German elements and not Danish ones.\(^{167}\) This characteristic of the Jutish language was something that could be tracked historically. The distant past held, therefore, both ideological and cultural importance.

There should be little surprise regarding the rationale underpinning Grimm’s response to the question of Schleswig-Holstein’s unification with Germany. The emphasis on language and literature as a means to connect with the past was a tradition of historical thinking adopted from the likes of Herder and von Savigny. The views of Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) had also been important in shaping the intellectual traditions that characterised the position of Grimm and his contemporaries.\(^{168}\) They had created a connection between language and nation that would persist throughout the events that brought about unification in 1871.\(^{169}\)

As a major collection of edited texts that looked to present a systematised inquiry into the German past, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH) continued the tradition of emphasising both language and literature as a means to understand ‘Germanic’ Antiquity.\(^{170}\) Established in light of Napoleon’s dominance of Europe and eastward expansion, the MGH was a scholarly pursuit designed to “energise the love of one’s fatherland through knowledge of its history.”\(^{171}\) The MGH represented a scholarly attempt to capture the German *Volkstum* that nationalist Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852) defined as:

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\(^{167}\) Wood 2013: 170  
\(^{168}\) Leerssen 2006: 179.  
\(^{169}\) “Let me begin with the simple question, What is a people? – and reply with the equally simple answer: A people is the sum total of persons speaking the same language”, Jacob Grimm in Leerssen 2006: 179.  
\(^{170}\) On the subject of the history of the MGH, the following are particularly useful: Fuhrmann 1996; Schmitz 2004.  
\(^{171}\) Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein, founder of the MGH, quoted in Krebs 2011: 187.
[All] that a people has in common, its inherent character, its stirring and living, its regenerative force, its generative ability\textsuperscript{172}.

Under the editorial supervision of vom Stein and, later, historians such as Theodor Mommsen, the MGH would bring literary sources such as the letters of Cassiodorus and the works of Venantius Fortunatus into the fold of German patriotism\textsuperscript{173}.

The MGH is a milestone in the discourses that had formed up around the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. A state-funded research project, its foundation represented an institutional framework for the distant ‘Germanic’ past that was distinct from the intellectual and academic arrangements and structures that had gone before. The ‘national’ endorsement for historical material signified by the MGH meant that a professional career now lay open for many philologists and historians. Previously, such academic interests would have had to be pursued as a hobby\textsuperscript{174}.

German historian Friedrich Kohlrausch (1780-1867) is an example of the connection between language, nation and race made by scholars in the nineteenth century. Bouyed by nationalist sentiment, Kohlrausch wanted people to see the past as something from which they could learn. The ‘Germanic’ past was considered to be a virtuous age, something that individuals could work together to emulate at time where questions of how Germany might be defined were prominent in the minds of intellectuals, politicians and the middle classes\textsuperscript{175}. In light of this idealisation of the Germanic past, those sections on racial purity in Tacitus \textit{Germania} suddenly took on greater significance\textsuperscript{176}.

\textsuperscript{172} Friedrich Ludwig Jahn quoted in Krebs 2011: 187.
\textsuperscript{173} Fuhrmann 1996: 52.
\textsuperscript{174} Leerssen 2006: 191.
\textsuperscript{175} Krebs 2011: 183.
\textsuperscript{176} Tac. Germ. 2, 4.
This increased significance is reflected in Kohlrausch’s *A History of Germany from the Earliest Times to the Present* (1844):

But the opinion of all is unanimous and fixed, and it is confirmed by the confession of the Romans themselves, that our fatherland owes its freedom to this great victory in the Teutoburger forest, and we, the descendants of those races, are indebted to it for the unmixed German blood which flows in our veins, and for the pure German sounds pronounced by our tongue.\(^{177}\)

Appearing in a section on Arminius and the defeat of the Romans in AD9 at the hands of the ‘Germanic’ tribes, language and race are used by Kohlrausch to account for the relevance of what happened in the Teutoburg Forest to the Germans of the nineteenth century. In particular, it was believed that the events of AD9 in the Teutoburg Forest had a place in the national biography of nineteenth-century Germany. Teutoburg had provided the Germans with purity in blood and language, traits that could be used as a justification to bring German territories together into a single whole.

The nationalist sentiment present in the lead up to unification in 1871 saw creative pieces galvanise the German public’s imagination about the distant past Germany might have had. Arndt’s anti-Napoleonic song entitled *Was ist des Deutschland?* is an example. In this song, Arndt made very clear his view that language and land were concepts that moved hand in hand. An excerpt from one verse illustrates this link:

> As far and wide as the German language is heard
> Singing praises of God on high:
> That is where it should be!
> That, bold German, you may call yours.

\(^{177}\) Kohlrausch 1844: 62.
In short, wherever the German language was spoken, there lay Germany. So powerful and influential this equation of language and territory that the elderly Arndt, as a member of the 1848 Nationalversammlung, received an ovation and a vote of thanks from the national parliament for writing that particular song. Felix Dahn (1834-1912) was a scholar in his own right, having written about such topics as the ‘Germanic’ kings in 1861 and Procopius of Caesarea in 1865. An historian with an interest in the Early Middle Ages, Dahn used his academic interest of the period to inform his novel writing. The combination of his academic interest in history saw the publication of Ein Kampf um Rom (1876). This novel has been described as an ideologically motivated prehistory of Germany, the purpose of which was to spread knowledge of ‘Germanic’ history and the achievements therein of the ‘Germanic’ peoples.

7 The consequences of the Great War for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity

Today, we want to come together in a union that will, in this time of need, secure the means of our local archaeology to live, but also call on this archealogy, in turn, to support our poor people in this need of the times. Through common ideal tasks the union will wrap a solid band around many German nationals – no matter how far apart these people might otherwise be.

German philologist and historian, Friedrich Koepp (1860-1944), writing about the establishment the Bundes für heimisches Altertumsforschung in 1920, alludes to the

179 Wood 2013: 193.
180 "Wir wollen uns heute zusammenschließen zu einem Bund, der in dieser Zeit der Not unserer heimischen Altertumsforschung eine Lebensmöglichkeit sichern soll, der aber auch eben diese Altertumsforschung aufrufen will, damit sie ihrerseits unserem armen Volk beistehe in diese Not der Zeit. Durch gemeinse ideale Aufgaben soll sie ein festes Band schlingen um recht viele Volksgenossen - mögen diese auch sonst, nicht nur räumlich, noch so weit getrennt sein“ Friedrich Koepp quoted in Fehr 2010: 310-311.
consequences for the discipline of the end of the Great War in 1918. The discipline assumed for itself responsibilities pertaining to the well-being of the German people, who, at the time, were suffering under the weight of defeat. The responsibilities the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity took saw debates over migrations and settlements move into the political arena. These debates spilled over into broader discussions of what should constitute Germany geopolitically. This period also saw further development of institutional approaches to the archaeological and historical past. The past was further politicised as Germany sought to navigate through its post-World War One context. Also important to consider, thematically, was the development in ‘Germanist’ perspectives on the ancient past following the Germany’s defeat in 1918.

The issue of land remained an important aspect for those engaged in researching the distant ‘Germanic’ past. German philologist turned archaeologist Gustav Kossinna (1858-1931) published Die deutsche Ostmark, ein Heimatboden der Germanen (1919) in an attempt to use “Germanic” archaeology for German political gain. Retitled Das Weichselland, ein uralter Heimatboden der Germanen in later editions, this book was an attempt to influence the outcome of the peace treaty negotiations taking place in Versailles. Specifically, Kossinna was attempting to offer an archaeological justification for Germany holding onto the Danzig corridor, lands that were to be handed over to Poland. His claim, motivated in part by his nationalist feeling towards Germany, was derived from his “settlement archaeology” thesis, most fully detailed in Die Herkunft der Germanen (1911).

Through a blending of ideas from other disciplines to analyse archaeological data, Kossinna’s settlement archaeology thesis argued that cultures could be identified

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181 Mees 2004: 262.
on the basis of material culture traits associated with particular regions and times. Kossinna also argued that it would be possible to identify the ethnic continuity of groups at particular points in their history. Thus, specific groupings such as the Germans or Celts could be identified with specific provinces or geographical areas. It was on the basis of this *Mischargumentation* that Kossinna was able to conclude that the Indo-Europeans had originated not in the Near East but in North Germany and, from there, had moved into Scandinavia.

Prehistoric archaeology held, therefore, a national importance that went beyond the realms of academia and politics. It was seen as a discipline that possessed the methodologies to locate the earliest of civilisations from which the material and social developments of western and northern Europe had ultimately stemmed. In a time of national defeat and depression, in Kossinna’s view, Prehistoric Archaeology spoke to the very heart of Germany as a nation. This was a sentiment expressed in the dedication of the 1921 edition of *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte: eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*:

> To the German people, as a building block in the reconstruction of the externally as well as internally disintegrated fatherland.

Kossinna considered archaeologically attested, prehistoric cultures, such as those that comprised Germany’s distant past, as providing the German people with a means to rebuild their sense of national identity.

Following World War One, there emerged a number of small research institutes. According to Graceffa, it was these institutes that not only kept discussions about the

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186 Kossinna 1921.
The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

gеOGRAPHICAL LIMITS OF Gеrmаny goіng, but ensuгеd that they wеrе hіstоrісаlly and
archеологісаlly іnfrоmed. Оргаnіsаtіоns such as the Іnstіtut fіr gеsсhісhtliche
Lаndeskunde dеr Рhеіnlаndе (Уnіvеrsіtу of Bonn), fоunсеd іn 1920, the
Wіssеnсhаftlісhе Іnstіtut dеr Еlsаs-Lothrіngеr іm Рrеісh (Уnіvеrsіtу of Frаnkfrut),
fоунсеd іn 1921, and thе Аlеmаnnіsсhе Іnstіtut (Уnіvеrsіtу of Frеіbug), fоунсеd іn
1931, wеrе tо bе аbsоrbed іntо thе lаrgеr Wеstdеutсhе Fоrsсhungsgеmеіnсhаft. Thіs
іnstіtutе fосуsеd оn qуеstіоns thаt еmеrgеd durіng thе lаtе nіntеnnеth сеntуrу, sсhаs
Gеrmаnу’s gеоgrаріс lіmіtѕ.

Оrgаnіsаtіоns thаt рrеdаtеd Wоrld Wаr Оnе, sсhаs thе MGH, сontіnuеd tо
develop durіng thіs tіmе. Меthоdоlоgісаllу, thе MGH wаs іnfluеncеd bу thе еffесt оn
thе hіstоrісаl рrоfесsіоn оf Quеllеnkritіk, аt thе еnсеpt оf whаt wаs сonsіdеrеd tо bе rеаl
аnd рrореr hіstоrу – thаt оf hіgh роlіtісs аnd fоrеіgn аffаіrs. Раul Kеrh (1860-1944),
сhаіrmаn оf thе MGH frоm 1915-1935 hеlpеd stееr thе оrgаnіzаtіоn thrоugh thе
Wеіmаr реrіоd. Durіng Kеrh’s tіmе аt thе hеlm, thеrе wеrе gеnuіnе qуеstіоns аbоut
whеrе thе MGH shоuld bе bаsеd, whо іnсоuld fіll thе роsіtіоn оf еdіtоr аnd thе рurроse
аnd dіrесtіоn оf thе оrgаnіzаtіоn аt аs wоlе.

Thе Grеаt Wаr rеvеаlеd а рrеоссuраtіоn wіthіn thе dіsсіplіnе wіth thе cоnсерt
оf rасе. Thе Веlgіаn hіstоrіаn Еnhrі Ріrеnne wаs рарturаllу сrіtісаl оf thіs
рrеоссuраtіоn. Hе rеgаrdеd іt аs а wеаknеss іn Gеrmаn сhаrсоrіа, hаvіng lеd tо thе
Gеrmаns соllесtіng hіstоrісаl mаtеrіаl аs орроsеd tо аnаlуsіng іt. Ріrеnne blеіvеd thаt
thе аррrоасhеs оf Fісhте аnd Hеgеl wеrе rеplасеd bу rаісаl аttіtudеs thаt hаd bееn

188 Fahlbusch 1999: 345, 368.
193 Wood 2013: 234.
influenced by Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882)\textsuperscript{194}. Gobineau believed that European civilisation was what remained of ancient civilisations, and that European civilisation flowed from Greece to Rome and from the Germanic to the present\textsuperscript{195}. Pirenne stated that the preoccupation of German scholarship with race could be seen in their placement of the \textit{Germani} as the departure point for civilisation, as opposed to being an obstacle to the development of civilisation\textsuperscript{196}.

8 ‘Germanic’ Antiquity under National Socialism

If anything is unfolkish, it is this tossing around of old Germanic expressions which neither fit into the present period nor represent anything definite...I had to warn again and again against those \textit{deutschvölkisch} wandering scholars...[who] rave about old Germanic heroism, about dim prehistory, stone axes, spear and shield\textsuperscript{197}.

Despite Hitler’s dislike of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, the interest that had started following the end of World War One, displayed by academic and lay-person alike, not only continued but intensified. Alongside the intensification of interest in ‘Germanicness’ during the post-War and National Socialist period was the depiction of the ‘Germanic’ past as an age of heroism, attractive because of the promise of a return to values that would renew Germany. Throughout the period, there continued an emphasis on race and territory, culminating in the presentation of the German-Aryan.

Thematically, the politicisation of the past at this time is significant. It triggers changes to, and fractures with, previous methodologies associated with the ‘Germanic’ past. The binary paradigm of ‘Germanist’ and ‘Romanist’ readings of the ‘Germanic’ past, \hfill

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\textsuperscript{194} Wood 2013: 232. \\
\textsuperscript{195} von See 1970a: 56ff. \\
\textsuperscript{196} Wood 2013: 234. \\
\textsuperscript{197} Adolf Hitler quoted in Mees 2004: 255.
\end{flushright}
another key theme in the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, is also questioned as a result of National Socialism. How ethnic identity was conceived, at this point, in terms of ‘Germanicness’, and then extended to others is also considered in this section.

‘Germanicness’ did not suddenly appear shortly after the National Socialists assumed power in the 1930s. There was a historical context for it\textsuperscript{198}. In 1887, for example, the positive reception in Germany the works of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) experienced was put down to a shared sense of ‘Germanicness’ between Germany and Scandinavia\textsuperscript{199}. Swiss medievalist Andreas Heusler (1865-1940) saw the heroism found in Nordic epic sagas as something also exemplified in the old ‘Germanic’ past\textsuperscript{200}. Indeed, Heusler’s notion of ‘Germanicness’ was both Nordic and heroic, elements that featured in the National Socialist representations of the distant past. In 1926, Hermann Nollau produced a work entitled \textit{Germanic Resurgence: a work on the Germanic foundations of our culture}.

The intensification of ‘Germanicness’ continued the emphasis on ‘race’ and territory. Race was emphasised because of the commentary offered by Tacitus in chapters 2 and 4 of the \textit{Germania} on the racially unsullied nature of the ancient Germans\textsuperscript{201}. The importance that this period of time placed on ‘race’ is seen in the sales of German race researcher and eugenicist Hans Friedrich Karl Günther’s (1891-1968) book \textit{Racial Ethnography of the German People} (1922). In its first 10 years, 32,000...

\textsuperscript{198} An excellent overview of this is provided in Mees 2004: 258ff.
\textsuperscript{199} Mees 2004: 259.
\textsuperscript{200} Mees 2000: 320, 2004: 259.
\textsuperscript{201} Krebs 2011: 217; Mees 2004: 264. German literary historian and folklorist Professor Hans Naumann (1886-1951) stated: “We believe with [Tacitus] in the indigenousness [of the Germanic race] as well as the race itself with all the anthropological characteristics that [Tacitus] assigns to it” – Hans Naumann quoted in Krebs 2011: 214.
copies were published\textsuperscript{202}. When that text was edited and published as an abridged version, sales increased to 300,000.

The continued focus on territory under the National Socialists also acts as an indicator for the intensification of ‘Germanicness’. The focus on territory came from a belief in areas of intensive ‘Germanic’ settlement. Alsace-Lorraine and Burgundy are good examples. Alsace-Lorraine not only was an area of focus by research by organisations such as the \textit{Wissenschaftliche Institut des Elsäss-Lothringer im Reich an der Universität Frankfurt}, it was an area of archaeological activity during its annexation by Germany in 1940-1944\textsuperscript{203}. The then Professor of Pre- and Proto history at the Reichsuniversität in Strasbourg Joachim Werner (1909-1994) discovered a princely grave in Ittenheim, which gave weight to the interpretation that the area had been originally settled by a ‘Germanic’ people, the Alamans.

In the same way as archaeological evidence in Alsace-Lorraine was considered by the National Socialists as proving the existence of ‘Germanic’ tribes in that region, thereby validating Nazi German claims to the region, the archaeological evidence for ‘Germanic’ tribes in Burgundy was interpreted as evidence to support its inclusion into the Reich\textsuperscript{204}. Hans Zeiss (1895-1944) had already written on Burgundian grave finds in the Rhône Valley before turning his attention, in 1939, to the place of the \textit{Germanen} in Burgundy itself.

\begin{flushright}202 Krebs 2011: 227. \end{flushright}
\begin{flushright}203 Wood 2013: 259. See also Fehr 2001: 381 ff on Hans Zeiss (1895-1944) relating to his work on the Burgundians, which followed a similar line of argument to that regarding the Alamans in the Alsace region. \end{flushright}
\begin{flushright}204 Wood 2013: 258-259. See also Fehr 2001 for further information on Zeiss.\end{flushright}
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The intensification of ‘Germanicness’ under the National Socialists can be seen in the institutes that emerged during the 1930s and 1940s205. In 1934, for example, the Insitut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte was established, and in 1938 Heinrich Himmler founded the Studien Gesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte Deutsches Ahnenerbe. The Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte, also known as the Amt Rosenberg, was often in competition with the Ahnenerbe as both had a concern regarding prehistory and the anthropology. The impact of such institutions on the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was to further emphasise the putative historical and archaeological connections between Germany and Scandinavia, in line with scholarly and political preoccupations with the Aryan. That said, these organisations also provided opportunities for more sober excavations206. The work of Hans Zeiss and Joachim Werner (1909-1994) were supported, for example, by these organisations and Herbert Jankuhn (1905-1990) had a key role in excavations at Haithabu that uncovered material from the Viking Age207.

The end point for this intensification of ‘Germanicness’ was the presentation of the German-Aryan. With the Aryan considered a race of even greater ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, it came to represent the coming together of the cultural German philhellenism and the emergent ‘Germanicness’208. The enthusiasm with which some classicists and Nordic prehistorians approached the Aryan revealed common ground. In 1942, a memorandum written by the Philosophical Faculty at the University of

205 There was much bureaucratic infighting between the different institutions. See Bollmus 1970; Heiber 1966; Kater 1974. For further information about the Ahnenerbe, see Pringle 2006.
206 Wood 2013: 251.
208 Mees 2004: 268. On German philhellenism and its link to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, Marchand 1996: 152-187. Not all scholarship followed National Socialist ideology. Chrysos 1997: 185 refers to those who resisted the tendencies of the Nazi regime. These included: A. Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg, Ernst Stein, Ludwig Schmidt and Wilhelm Enßlin. It should be noted that it was possible to hold racial views about the ancient Germans that placed them as a part of the IndoEuropean or IndoGerman family but disagree with Nazi ideology. One cannot assume that racial views and support for Nazism went hand in hand. That said, according to Wood 2008: 78 Nazi scholars such as Franz Steinbach (1895-1964), Franz Petri (1903-1993), Theodor Mayer (1883-1972) and Otto Höfler (1901-1997) continued their researches after the conclusion of the war.
Tübingen emphasised the place of Greek philology in a racially defined and German dominated Europe:

Increasing Greek lessons in the Württemberg schools are a necessary prerequisite for ... the comprehension of the formation of the Aryan spirit in Greekdom and its continuous, fertile impact on Germandom up to the present day. In the struggle for a racial entity of our own, we cannot dispense with the assistance that Greekdom offers us\textsuperscript{209}.

9 Two Germanies and the call for interdisciplinary approaches to ethnic interpretations of the distant past

If anyone wishes to ascribe what Tacitus ... writes about the Suevi to today's Swabians, he has erred\textsuperscript{210}.

Writing in the early sixteenth century, Beatus Rhenanus’ warning about the application of the distant ‘Germanic’ past to the present encapsulates the attitude of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity following World War Two. In immediate, albeit general, terms, scholarship sought to distance itself from the methodologies that had been pursued during the National Socialist period. This led to an active questioning by scholars about the historiography associated with the distant ‘Germanic’ past. There was also an archaeological disassociation with the culture-history approach. Officially, East Germany anchored its historical tradition associated with ‘Germanic’ Antiquity to Marxism. Unofficially, this often was the exception rather than the rule. In West Germany, historiography connected to the distant ‘Germanic’ past became more cognisant of the multiplicity of historical philosophies and methodologies available for use. Such philosophies and methodologies extended to the use of social and behavioural

\textsuperscript{209} Marchand 1996: 349.
\textsuperscript{210} Beatus Rhenanus quoted in Krebs 2011: 249.
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sciences for historical study. These sociological and anthropological approaches have come to characterise the approaches deployed in today’s study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

“‘Germanist’ and ‘Romanist’ readings of the past” is a key theme at this point in the discipline’s history. This is because the traditional dichotomy is challenged by the emergent call for interdisciplinary approaches. In particular, the rise of ethnicity as a sociological and anthropological approach for the study of people and how they identify themselves becomes prominent. The rise of ethnicity will be discussed later in this chapter as an important piece of contextualisation for the case studies in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. Politicisation continues as a theme at this point of time in the discipline’s history, most evidently in East Germany.

While the East German approach to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian could be described as Marxist\(^{211}\), the adherence to historical materialism in practice was not usually the norm\(^{212}\). There were instances where the study of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past demonstrated its applicability to the interests of Marxist-Leninism. *The Cultural-Historical Legacy of Pre-Capitalist Social Formations and Its Contemporary Significance* is one example that illustrates this point\(^{213}\). The discipline, however, was able to operate with a degree of independence from the state. This was due to individuals such as Wilhelm Unverzagt (1892-1971) and Joachim Hermann (1932-2010). Unverzagt and Hermann were responsible for directing the historical and archaeological disciplines in East Germany. Their interactions with the East German government ensured that those

\(^{211}\) Coblenz 2000: 304-338.

\(^{212}\) Härke and Wolfram 1993.

\(^{213}\) Coblenz 2000: 329.
studying the ‘Germanic’ past could experience a level of independence from state control\textsuperscript{214}.

Interdisciplinary work was pursued more readily in areas such as place-name research, medieval studies and numismatics. Marxist political thought also increased the awareness of theoretical concepts and epistemological models. There were some obstacles: not being able to use traditional terminology, the challenges associated with using geographical names that might infer territorial claims similar to those prior to World War Two and the lack of travel outside of East Germany by scholars\textsuperscript{215}. In general terms, according to German prehistorian Werner Coblenz (1917-1995), there was no tendency or fear that archaeology and history would be used to support Nazi ideas of racial superiority or conquest\textsuperscript{216}: “East German scholars always viewed themselves as good socialists who opposed fascism”\textsuperscript{217}.

In West Germany, it was not until 1961, with Reinhard Wenskus’ (1916-2002) \textit{Stammbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes}, that there was an extensive re-examination of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian\textsuperscript{218}. The ground for this re-examination had been well prepared. Following 1945, the field of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity saw an increasingly refined source-critical approach. The limits of archaeological evidence and method in determining “ethnic units” were understood, despite some of the old ethnic concepts surviving via euphemisms such as “archaeological culture”\textsuperscript{219}.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{214} Coblenz 2000: 316-317.
\textsuperscript{215} Coblenz 2000: 308.
\textsuperscript{216} Coblenz 2000: 309.
\textsuperscript{217} Dow and Lixfeld 1994: xii.
\textsuperscript{219} Veit 1989: 42.
\end{flushright}
Wenskus posited an approach to the study of the barbarian that, drawing down on pre-existing scholarship, flew in the face of conventional ideas\textsuperscript{220}. In essence, his approach removed what Wood describes as “the most dangerous element in the study of the barbarians: biologically-defined race”\textsuperscript{221}. What was put in the place of “biologically-defined race” was a culturally defined model based on the idea of \textit{Traditionskern}. That is, rather than conceptualising ‘Germanic’ ethnicity on bloodlines, Wenskus put forward a model where a group could form around a small nucleus. Furthermore, Wenskus’ model accommodates fluidity in identity formation\textsuperscript{222}. Unlike Nazi scholarship, Wenskus did not see ethnicity as something that was fixed.

Wenskus was not the only German example of scholarship looking to provide a model that would mark an intellectual departure from the approaches to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity that had characterised the 1930s and 1940s\textsuperscript{223}. Scholars from the disciplines of history, linguistics and prehistory looked to avoid the mistakes of the past, by treating their respective sources on their own terms before bringing the conclusions of such a source analysis together to create a theory\textsuperscript{224}. An example of this is Hachmann, Kossack and Kuhn’s book \textit{Völker zwischen Germanen und Kelten. Schriftquellen, Bodenfunde und Namengut zur Geschichte des nördlichen Westdeutschlands um Christi Geburt} (1959)\textsuperscript{225}. Another example is one of Kossinna’s critics, Hans Jürgen Eggers (1906-1975) who promoted geographical, topographical and environmental approaches \textsuperscript{226}. Herbert Jankuhn (1905-1990), explored social and economic

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}220 Wood 2013: 301.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}221 Wood 2008: 79.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}222 Wood 2013: 300.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}223 Wahl 1941; Veit 1989: 42.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}224 Veit 1989: 43.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}225 Hachmann, Kossack, and Kuhn 1962.  \\
\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}226 Härke 1991: 190. See also Brather 2004b: 27.
\end{flushright}
perspectives associated with archaeological evidence. While Wenskus’ work was a crucial intellectual milestone in the development of postwar methodologies relating to ethnic interpretations of the past, his call for interdisciplinarity was one of many at the time. These calls in the 1960s and 1970s for interdisciplinary approaches to the ‘Germanic’ past came at a time when ethnicity, as a sociological and anthropological term, emerged. It is to this term that the present historical overview now turns.

10 Ethnicity

Quite suddenly, with little comment or ceremony, ethnicity is an ubiquitous presence. Even a brief glance through titles of books and monographs over the past few years indicates a steadily accelerating acceptance and application of the terms ‘ethnicity’ and “ethnic” to refer to what was before often subsumed under ‘culture’, ‘cultural’, or ‘tribal’.

Cohen’s comments, from the late 1970s, are applicable to literature on the ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The comments capture the sentiment of the post-war shift that emerged in studies of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian where the discipline moved away from defining the ‘Germanic’ past linguistically and racially. The purpose of this section of the chapter is not to proceed into an extended discussion of ethnicity, and the history behind the term. Rather, the function of this section is to provide a brief overview of a term that has come to play a significant role in contemporary discussions about the distant ‘Germanic’ past. This section examines an important part of the historical overview of the discipline. The call of interdisciplinary approaches to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, as described in the previous section, came at a time when ethnicity as a sociological framework

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227 Jankuhn 1956.
228 Veit 1989: 43.
emerged on the academic world stage. Taking the time to explore, albeit briefly, the concept of ethnicity is an important part in setting the foundation for the consideration of the case studies that appear in the following chapters and in providing relevant background from an academic perspective outside of ‘Germanic’ studies.

As a concept, ethnicity emerged more prominently in the 1960s in response to the dissatisfaction with earlier theories to do with race and culture and as a means to account for the complexity inherent in any human society230. For example, in an anthropological study of the Kachin and Shan of Burma, it was argued that:

...there is no intrinsic reason why the significant frontiers of social systems should always coincide with cultural frontiers... the mere fact that two groups of people are of different cultures does not necessarily imply – as has always been assumed – that they belong to two quite different social systems231.

Such calls for change encouraged the development of intellectual frameworks that would allow for the interrelational nature of human societies and cultures. This was echoed in sociological circles.

Two principal intellectual frameworks emerged. ‘Primordialism’ is a construction of ethnicity, first posited by Edward Shils, that moots ethnicity as an extension of kinship and blood ties232. For Shils, the significance of primordial qualities was to be found not merely as a function of interaction but in the “ineffable significance attributed to ties of blood”233. Clifford Geertz developed these ideas, applying them to larger social groupings234. Where Shils applied the idea of kinship and blood ties to immediate kin relations, Geertz widened the net, stating that the bonds between

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231 Leach 1964 [1954]: 17.
233 Shils 1957: 122.
individuals are the givens of birth. The primordialist perspective centres attention on the strong emotions connected to ethnic and national attachments, and the strength of the cultural symbols involved. It is a perspective that also offers an explanation as to why some ethnic groups last longer regardless as to their general well-being.

In response to the ‘primordial’ approach, the second interpretative framework that materialised was ‘instrumentalism’. Instrumentalism defines ethnicity as individualistic and a...

...somewhat aggressive actor, self-interested, rational, pragmatic and, perhaps, with maximizing orientation as well.

This approach sees ethnicity as situational, behavioural, political and institutional. It is a view that presents ethnicity as something that can be adopted or discarded as any given situation required.

The most influential proponent of this approach is considered to be Frederick Barth (1928– ). Barth’s focused on the constitution of ethnic groups and the boundaries that surround them, an approach that has informed the development of interaction as an alternative, interpretative model for ethnic interpretations in archaeology. The interpretation put forward by Barth departs from the traditional anthropological reasoning of discontinuous cultural variance:

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235 Jones 1997: 68.
236 Spencer 2006: 79.
237 For example, see Hall 1997: 18 and the use of Hutu and Tutsi tribes of Rwanda. Cf. Wilmsen and McAllister 1996: 5.
238 Halsall 2007: 36.
239 Barth 1969b. A. Cohen 1974 extended Barth’s arguments and applies them to the idea that ethnicity is a collectively organised strategy designed to protect economic and political interests of a particular group. This has been a particularly attractive aspect of the instrumentalist approach, to view it in terms of economic and political interest.
that there are aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture, and interconnected differences that distinguish each such discrete culture from all others\textsuperscript{240}.

For Barth, ethnic boundaries such as language barriers or spontaneous enmity existed but so did cultural interaction. Thus, ethnicity is not the result of social or geographical isolation; it is the product of boundary persistence rather than cultural differentiation\textsuperscript{241}.

There have been attempts at reconciling these two interpretations. This reconciliation emerges due to the polarising nature of the theories of ethnicity and the inherent sterility of engaging in debates regarding the validity of one framework over another\textsuperscript{242}. An example of this reconciliation taking place can be found in Anthony D. Smith's 1981 description of ethnicity. Smith presents ethnicity as starting in a primordial way in the distant past and then, over time, especially in response to industrialisation, being transformed into a political tool that was manipulated in the pursuit of economic and political resources\textsuperscript{243}. Thus, ethnicity takes on instrumentalist characteristics. Another example is Jonathan Okamura's coining of the term "situational ethnicity", which was then adapted to the Early Middle Ages by American Medievalist Patrick Geary\textsuperscript{244}.

Perceiving ethnicity as situational helps to move it away from the primordial-instrumentalist dichotomy that has dominated much of the discourse surrounding the concept and pushes the interpretation of ethnicity towards a constructivist approach.

\textsuperscript{240} Barth 1969a: 9.
\textsuperscript{241} Barth 1969a: 11.
\textsuperscript{242} On the polarising nature of ethnic identity theories and the sterility inherent in the arguments over which framework is more valid than the other, see Bentley 1987; Burgess 1978; De Vos 1982 [1975]; Douglass 1988; Keyes 1981; McKay 1982; Meadwell 1989; Scott 1990; Smith 1984; van den Berghe 1978.
\textsuperscript{244} Okamura 1981 cf. Geary 1983.
Constructivism holds ethnicity to be a product of human agency. Rather than taking the ethnic unit for granted and either unraveling its mobilisation or defining it in terms of cultural givens, the starting point should be to treat the ethnic unit as problematic\textsuperscript{245}.

Rather than beginning with given ethnonyms, as empty notions which require filling with economic, political and religious structures, it would be preferable to demonstrate how a term located in time and space acquires progressively a multiplicity of meaning, in sum to establish the genesis of symbols in the realm of ideas\textsuperscript{246}.

Constructivism, therefore, sees ethnicity as a creative and social act where common aspects of a social group such as speech, cultural practice, ecological adaptation and political organisation merge together into a shared identity. Young concludes that the constructivist position places a greater degree of stress on contingency, flux and change of identity than the primordialist-instrumentalist dichotomy would ever concede\textsuperscript{247}.

In the most recent edition of *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1962- ) reflects on the reception of ethnicity as an analytical concept. Following the constructivist approach, Eriksen argues that ethnicity forms a valuable analytical category, particularly in relation to...

...the relationship between culture, identity and social organisation; the relationship between meaning and politics; the multivocality of symbols; processes of social classification; exclusion and marginalisation at the group


\textsuperscript{246} Amselle 1985: 44.

\textsuperscript{247} Young 1994: 79-80. The constructivist approach has found its way into studies of the ‘Germanic’ past. For instance, more recently, and in application to the Early Medieval period, Halsall 2007: 38-42 posited a five point model where ethnicity was presented as situational, performative, cognitive, multi-layered and dynamic.
level; the relationships between action and structure; structure and process; and continuity and change\textsuperscript{248}.

While there is much for which ethnicity can be used, Eriksen states that there is a need to be flexible enough in approaches to abandon the concept the moment it hinders the generation of new understandings.

\section*{11 Conclusion}

At the very beginning of this chapter, the opening statement of Bourdieu’s \textit{Homo Academicus} was used to pose an important, underlying question: what practical knowledge can be learnt about the scholarly knowledge of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity? It is to this question that this chapter now returns, drawing on Walter Goffart’s 1995 note on the extent to which the Nazi period impacted the studies of the early Germans in the process\textsuperscript{249}. The answer is that looking at the history of the discipline of \textit{Germanische Altertumskunde} one sees that scholarship defined the distant ‘Germanic’ past textually, ultimately basing much of its efforts on the musings and observations of a Roman who was writing to the specifics of the Hellenistic ethnographic genre.

Such an answer ties down many of the recurrent, and for that matter “one-off”, themes that appear throughout the history of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The reappearance of Tacitus’ \textit{Germania} in the fifteenth century is the flawed departure point of which Goffart speaks\textsuperscript{250}. A non-indigenous text, the \textit{Germania’s} immediate politicisation during the Renaissance and Reformation encouraged the development of a belief in a continuity that could be traced from the ‘Germanic’ to the ‘German’. Scholars relied upon

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Eriksen 2010: 219.
\item Goffart 1995: 18-19.
\item Goffart 1995: 17.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
arguments to do with the antiquity of historical texts to establish the ancient past of Germany to be both valid and authentic.

From the Enlightenment, language took on a primary role in casting and rendering the ‘Germanic’ past, bolstering arguments associated with cultural superiority through theories of language development. Be it for the purpose of supporting territorial claims, imagining ‘Germanicness’ or enhancing political influence, from the eighteenth century, philology had a central role in creating the ‘Germanic’ past. In the nineteenth century, in the context of broad nationalist feeling across Western Europe, language was not relegated to the insignificant. Indeed, the professionalisation of the discipline of history, combined with the methodical approaches to the past by the likes of Jacob Grimm, would see the place of language in the history of the discipline become more prominent alongside the equally important concept of race.

It was not until after the catastrophe of two world wars that there was a shift away from language and race as central concepts to the discipline’s approach to the distant past. The focus on language and race had carried through from World War One to the end of World War Two. Shortly after the war, sociologists and anthropologists started to speak more readily about ethnicity as terms such as ‘race’ and ‘tribe’ were considered incapable of catering for the complexity that identity discourse had deemed necessary. The post-war environment saw the reconsideration of approaches to *Germanische Altertumskunde*, and the development of different interpretative structures.

It is the intent of the chapters that follow, that in presenting the four case, contemporary reaction of scholarship to the intellectual traditions and conventions that came before will be shown. Whereas this chapter has posed a question about what has
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been learnt about the scholarly knowledge of the discipline, the following chapters look to provide an answer to the question of how the discipline has responded to a philologically established past that has precious little by way of an indigenous historical record and has, more recently, seen the emergence of ethnicity as the basis of an analytical framework.
Figure 1: Professor Klaus von See (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main)

Chapter 3: Klaus von See

...that is, the distance which converts into history, into the past historic, and not forgetting that belonging to the present as news, that is to say, as a universal agency of objects and ideas which can be chronologically past or present but which are effectively a *live* issue, thus practically made present in the moment considered, is what defines the divide between the ‘ever living and ever-burning’ present and the past, ‘dead and buried’ like the social worlds for which it was once still a live issue, new and up to date, active and reactive\(^{251}\).

1 Introduction

Bourdieu’s comments about the role of the present in affecting one’s own historical understanding, presented above, establishes a question to further develop that posed in the previous chapter. In Chapter 2, a historical overview of the discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde* provided an answer to what practical knowledge can be learnt of scholarly knowledge. In this chapter, attention is maintained on what practical knowledge of the scholarship can be learnt but the focus shifts to a specific scholar, Professor Klaus von See (1927-2013). In the previous chapter, the focus was on the traditions that grew up around the various historical and archaeological narratives of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. This overview included the emergence of ethnicity as a framework for the present-day scholarship. Chapter 2 gives the current discussion of von See’s historiography a context from which his own approach to the *Germani* might be understood. The same can be said of the relationship between Chapter 2 and the remaining case studies.

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\(^{251}\) Bourdieu 1988: 34.
Chapter 2 provides a context to understand von See's approach to the *Germani*. The emphasis on Tacitus’ *Germania* by early ‘Germanists’, as presented earlier, is regularly referred to by von See to show the constructed nature of ‘Germanic’ identity. The relationship between the ‘Germanic’ past and the Enlightenment, the ideals of the French Revolution and the rejection of Napoleonic hegemony, outlined in Chapter 2, is explored further by von See in works such as *Die Ideen von 1789 und die Ideen von 1914*. The intensification of ‘Germanicness’ during the 1930s, discussed in the previous chapter, is a point of reference for von See’s focus on the place of the *Germani* and Scandinavia in the intellectual origins of National Socialism.

The question that underpins the analysis of von See’s work is: how has von See in *praxis* made the distant ‘Germanic’ past a present concern? To answer this question, this chapter presents a survey of his work. Starting in 1960, it details a chronological sweep of his scholarship in the field of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Much of his discussion on the ‘Germanic’ past focuses on the discipline’s place in National Socialist Germany, or on the broader intellectual traditions that contributed the creation of Nazi Germany. A Scandinavianist, one who specializes in the study of northern ‘Germanic’ languages, his study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past also incorporates ‘Nordic’ antiquity, demonstrating that the construction of the distant ‘Germanic’ past had much to owe to northern Europe.

Understanding the motivation for von See to trace the development of the intellectual traditions surrounding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, with a particular emphasis on the impact of National Socialism, is a goal of this chapter. At a one level, being a part of the generation that grew up with a conscious memory of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, and educated in a broader environment of *Traditionskritik*, accounts for his
academic interests. On another level, the number of those with a direct memory of the German National Socialist experience is declining. Von See’s work satisfies the need to record the impact of the Nazi period on academia and, specifically, the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity252.

2 Von See: A brief overview

Von See brings a Scandinavistik perspective to historical and archaeological discussions on the subject. His work has demonstrated the extent to which the formation and study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity can be traced to non-Germanic socio-cultural regions. Von See actively contributed to research from the 1960s, continually adding to the scholarly body of work on the ancient Germans, the society in which they lived and the impact they had on the world around them up until his death in August, 2013253.

Born in 1927, von See forms a part of what has been described as the ‘forty-fiver’ generation254. While personal or individual experiences of Nazism were different [as a whole the ‘forty-fivers’ shared the same] existential predicament in 1945: the need to reflect on their cognitive map in view of the bankruptcy of the ideals they had been taught and the criminality of the regime in which they had been socialised255.

252 Gay 2003: 203-204; Olick 1998: 548 provide further, helpful, theoretical background as to why von See’s efforts in recording the impact of academia’s interaction with völkisch and National Socialist ideologies is important and why von See may have elected to focus on this as an area of academic concern when writing about the ‘Germanic’ past. See also the work of Assman 1999 on shifts from communicative to cultural memory which provides another theoretical framework with which von See’s rationale for pursuing the interaction between Germanische Altertumskunde and political ideologies of the early twentieth century can be understood.

253 Zernack 2014.
255 Moses 2007: 57.
The ‘forty-fivers’ were old enough to have experienced the war but young enough to start afresh. They became a generation that undertook significant critiquing of traditions, concerned with how and why National Socialism had come to power in the 1930s. Doctoral and habilitation dissertations became focused on cleansing Germany’s intellectual traditions\textsuperscript{256}.

The identification and exorcising of those intellectual traditions, discourses, ideologies and political languages that had led to Nazi Germany took on the form of explicit criticism or the direct addressing of specific events. By way of an example of explicit criticism, German philosopher and political theorist Herman Lübbe (1926- ) critiqued the “ideas of 1914”\textsuperscript{257}. Lübbe’s contention was that the ideas of 1914 were a successful repudiation of the ideas of 1789 and, in the process, became the basis for the conservatives undermining of the Weimar Republic during the 1920s. Karl Dietrich Bracher (1922- ), Waldemar Besson (1929-1971) and Ernst Wolfgang Böckenförde (1931- ) are instances of scholarship directly addressing events that had a role to play in the rise of National Socialism\textsuperscript{258}. Influenced by his teacher, German Scandinavianist and Medievalist Hans Kuhn (1899-1988), Von See is expressly critical of the intellectual traditions that paved the way for National Socialism\textsuperscript{259}.

Kuhn was to have an influence on von See. Despite having signed the 1933 “Commitment of the Professors at German Universities and Colleges to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi State”, and having been a member of the NSDAP from 1937, Kuhn was negative

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{256} Moses 2007: 66.
\item \textsuperscript{257} Lübbe 1963.
\item \textsuperscript{258} Besson 1959; Böckenförde 1981; Bracher 1955.
\item \textsuperscript{259} For example, see: von See 1975, 2001b.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
towards the ideological treatment of the ‘Germanic’ past during the Nazi era. In this context, Kuhn was involved in particularly vigorous debate with Otto Höfler, something von See was to expand to include the subject of sacral kingship in the 1970s. Von See also followed Kuhn into studies of the Norse epics, such as The Edda, and ‘Germanic’ heroic sagas.

Von See’s first work was published in 1960 and shows his academic background of Germanistik, Skandinavistik and jurisprudence. Von See completed his Habilitation in 1962 at the University of Hamburg. He was appointed in the same year to the position of Professor of ‘Germanic’ philology at Frankfurt University. When he retired in 1995, von See remained involved in research into Scandinavian literature. He was the project leader of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft’s current project on a commentary on the Edda run out of the Goethe Universität in Frankfurt. It provides a commentary that focuses not on just the gods and heroes that appear in the Edda but on the overall design and literary historical milieu of the individual songs of the Edda. The commentary looks at key areas and the problems associated with the tradition, history, substance and overall design and composition of the text, its composition, verse and verse form and its position within the overall historical corpus for its subject area.

Von See passed away on 30 August 2013, shortly before his 86th birthday, in Frankfurt am Main. For fifty years, he worked at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in the area of Philology and Scandinavistik, and was as highly productive and influential in

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260 For example, Kuhn poses the question of what is meant by the term ‘Germanic’ in Hachmann, Kossack, and Kuhn 1962 raising further questions about the uncritical use of romantic representations of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian.
261 von See 1972.
263 To date, the publications on the Edda have been von See, la Farge, Picard, and Heß 1993; von See, la Farge, Picard, Priebe, and Schulz 1997; von See, la Farge, Gerhold, Dusse, Picard, and Schulz 2004; von See, la Farge, Gerhold, Picard, and Schulz 2006; von See, la Farge, Schulz, and Teichert 2009; von See, la Farge, Horst, and Schulz 2012.
his field there as in retirement. In an obituary for de Gruyter press, Zernack described von See’s Œuvre as being characterised by a wide diversity of interests⁵⁶⁴. To all of his interests and subject-areas, von See maintained an impartiality that was considered typical of his work, a style he himself referred to as “forensic” and one that gave the diversity of interests an internal cohesion⁵⁶⁵.

### 3 Establishing the schemata of Skandinavistik and the age of the distant ‘Germanic’ past

The Germanic legal language is not very old. No trail leads back to the pre-Germanic period. Wilhelm Schulze, who examined the phenomenon of natural justice, such as the “cry for help” and “banishment”, and collected examples from all corners of Indogermanica, never got beyond what was more or less random equivalents⁵⁶⁶.

In the opening to his 1964 monograph on legal vocabulary from ‘Nordic’ antiquity, von See makes a clear and distinct reference to one of the central methodological problems for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Despite what scholarship in the past may have wanted of the distant ‘Germanic’ past, there was no real way to make it directly connect the ‘Germanic’ past with the present. In this particular instance, von See was arguing that the ‘Germanic’ legal language was not particularly old, referring to the efforts of German linguist Wilhelm Schulze (1863–1935) and his investigations of aspects of the legal code in the Early and High Middle Ages⁵⁶⁷.

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⁵⁶⁷ von See 1964: 2, n.6.
Von See’s opening introductory comments have much that would become characteristic of his approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past. His comments connect with one of the broad, recurrent themes within the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, the issue of continuity. Specifically, Von See’s focus is the idea of linguistic continuity and the extent to which ‘Nordic’ sources support the formation of legal terminologies. It is not only the issue of continuity that von See responds to here. Von See's discussion about the development of legal terminology also engages with the question of whether or not the ‘Germanic’ tribes had ever formed a single, self-contained community.

The influence of the far north on different cultural artefacts associated with the distant ‘Germanic’ past was a research interest of von See’s from the 1960s. On one level, Das jütische Recht (1960) follows ongoing interest, by the discipline of Germanische Altertumskunde, in Jutland. In the nineteenth century, Jutland had been an area of contention, with Jacob Grimm making philological and historical based claims for Jutland to be a part of Germany. Von See does not make any such claims in Das jütische Recht but recognises the need to offer a translation and commentary of Jutland law. Whereas the previous translation dated from 1819, was based on a Low German rendition from 1592, von See’s edition worked from the Danish.

Von See’s interest in the relationship that ‘Nordic’ antiquity had with the distant ‘Germanic’ past was to continue beyond providing a new translation of provincial Jutland law. In a comprehensive report on the state of research for ‘Germanic’ heroic sagas, von See opens his discussion with the question: what is actually meant by the

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term ‘Germanic’ heroic saga? From this question, von See proceeded to establish a position that countered that held by Otto Höfler, particularly in relation to sacral kingship. In relation to heroic sagas, Höfler maintained that sagas were evidence of ‘Germanic’ continuity. How the Germani came to the heroic saga, what is ‘archetypal’ of heroic sagas and the impact of reconnecting with Romantic ideals when approaching the ‘Germanic’ heroic saga are but three examples of how von See questioned the position that Höfler maintained.

The notion of source criticism and the questioning of previous scholarship that earlier work on ‘Germanic’ heroic sagas highlights is something that is developed further a year later in Germanische Verskunst (1967). In this short monograph, von See offers no new theories on ‘Germanic’ metric or prosody for both Edda and Skaldic poetry. Rather, von See approaches what has gone before with a critical eye. Winfred Lehmann’s The Development of Germanic Verse (1956) is an example of this, coming under fire for what von See considered to be lop-sided conclusions about the relationship between language and literature within the context of ‘Germanic’ poetry and the factors that influenced the development of ‘Germanic’ verse. It is von See’s willingness to engage in source criticism regarding ‘Germanic’ heroic sagas that sees his attention turn to those source issues that have helped to frame the broader academic discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity.

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275 von See 1967: 62ff
4 Recognising and articulating frameworks of conceptual opposites

Since the humanists rediscovered The Germania of Tacitus five hundred years ago, one has known of the *Germani* in science, literature and political journalism.\(^\text{276}\)

The very opening sentence of von See's first work of the 1970s, *Deutsche Germanenideologie* (1970), recognises the important role Tacitus' *Germania* has in shaping the discipline of 'Germanic' Antiquity. Von See's opening comments make a connection to another central problem associated with the study of *Germanische Altertumskunde*: the lack of an indigenous source for the *Germani*. For a short monograph on the historical development of the conventions through which the German academy, from the humanists to the present day, received, interpreted and conveyed the subject of the *Germani*, this is an appropriate starting point.

It is not just the historiographical problem represented by Tacitus that is important to von See. Building on his work from the 1960s, von See's historical thinking merges Tacitus' problem with his previous work on 'Nordic' poetic sources connected with 'Germanic' Antiquity. Von See's work in the 1970s is characterised by a focus on the Scandinavian aspects to the distant 'Germanic' past. It traces the growth of attitudes towards the mythical past in Scandinavia following the discovery of the *Edda* in 1643. This entailed looking at how German Romantics proceeded to take these myths, then particularise and polemicise them in the context of German national identity formation.

4.1 Presenting ‘Nordic’ antiquity and its relationship with the ‘Germanic’ past

The emergence of ‘Nordic’ antiquity in the historical traditions surrounding the *Germani* contribute to the ‘Germanic’ past being portrayed as an antithesis to the Mediterranean world. Von See sees Montesquieu as particularly important here, being responsible for the casting the Roman-*Germani* paradigm as one that was ‘north-south’.

The Roman-*Germani* paradigm in the "Germania" of Tacitus - in a broader sense, Montesquieu's 18th century antithesis of "north" and "south" – provides the model for all the types of stereotypes that emerged from this discussion, from Konrad Celtis to Alfred Rosenberg277.

Historical thinking incorporated ‘Scandinavian’ antiquity with the remote ‘Germanic’ past, a historiographical development that von See refers to as the “Scandinavian Renaissance”.

Von See identifies the rationale behind the “Scandinavian Renaissance” as one of national assertiveness:

The Scandinavian Renaissance is a form of national self-assertion against Roman cultural hegemony in the Age of Humanism and was thereby born entirely from humanistic spirit278.

Scandinavian studies provided scholars with evidence that was independent of Graeco-Roman sources. Scholars that imported the ancient Scandinavian past into their own construction of the ‘Germanic’ past provided the ‘Germanic’ past with a means to be created, and exist, independent of Rome and the Mediterranean. Swedish historian Olaf Rudbeck’s (1630-1702) relocation of Plato’s Atlantis to prehistoric Scandinavia is an


example of this\textsuperscript{279}. Rudbeck's actions enabled prehistoric Scandinavia to be described as the cradle of the oldest human culture\textsuperscript{280}. In turn, this meant that any claim about the Mediterranean being the basis for civilisation and culture on account of age was rendered moot.

An example that von See provides of this type of thinking is the German Johann Augustin Egenolff (1683-1729). Scandinavia informed the ideas behind Egenolff's *Historie der Teutschen Sprache* (1716). This text looked to demonstrate the priority the German language had over Latin, mapping out the descendants of Noah's son Japheth from Russia, to Scandinavia and then southwards. Its course was from north to south. For Egenolff this theory, described by von See as "a concoction made from biblical, late Antique and Norse traditions", not only meant that the German language came from the north but that the language was closely related to the oldest European languages of Celtic or Cimbric. It was close to the Nordic runes and therefore the ancient 'Germanic' past could be brought closer to the ancient past of Scandinavia\textsuperscript{281}. Germany could be shown, through language, to have an antiquity independent to that of Rome and to be directly related to Nordic culture and place.

Further exploration of 'Nordic' antiquity's relationship with the distant 'Germanic' past takes place in *Germanische Heldensage* (1971). The text is concerned with heroic poems such as *The Edda*, the stories of Alboin and Turisind in Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum* as well as the story of Iring in Widukind's *Gesta...*

\textsuperscript{280} von See 1970a: 25.
Saxonum, Beowulf, Waldere, Waltharius, the story of Ingeld and the Hildebrandslied.

Von See’s primary concern is not with critiquing this literature and providing a reconstruction nor is it focused on aesthetic literary criticism. Rather, the principal focus is on the reception of the ideas conveyed by this body of literature by the scholarship in the field. To do this, von See looks at a number of different themes starting with the relationship between the heroic sagas to folk tales, to myth and to historical tradition. A specific example of this can be found in his engagement with Otto Höfler’s (1901-1987) theories on Siegfried and Theoderic\textsuperscript{282}.

Von See questions Höfler’s identification of Arminius with Siegfried based on the fact that Höfler used a dubious methodology. This involved connecting the Cheruscan name to Siegfried through the fact that in old Germanic, Cherusci sounds like the word for “deer”, symbols of which appear in versions of the Siegfried story, such as the Edda\textsuperscript{283}. Von See pointed out the weakness in Höfler’s attempts at identifying Theoderic with Wodan, the starting point for which is a runic inscription in Sweden written some 300 years after Theoderic’s death\textsuperscript{284}. The point that von See makes with both examples is the problematic nature of the Heldensage source material and that much material drawn from the ‘Nordic’ sources by German scholarship is in fact from periods of late date. Indeed, the extent to which Heldensage may have presented embellished material about historical individuals such as Arminius or Theoderic is an important part of von See’s analysis of the ‘Germanic’ past. This is because of their place in German cultural thinking about national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

\textsuperscript{282} von See 1971: 39-47. Von See’s disagreement with Höfler might also be attributed to his connection with Kuhn, who also disagreed with Höfler’s ideas. Von See’s disagreement with Höfler’s interpretation and presentation of sacral kingship, see von See 1972.

\textsuperscript{283} von See 1971: 39.

\textsuperscript{284} von See 1971: 41-42.
Arminius and Theoderic were examples of individuals from the distant ‘Germanic’ past whose idealisation promoted a collective ‘Germanic’ freedom. For instance, von See cites Danish poet Jens Baggesen's (1764-1826) use of Arminius to discuss the impact of the French Revolution while Baggesen was travelling through Germany in 1789:

Nowhere have I felt more free, more as a citizen of the north, more as a brother in the large family of this side of the Alps, as here in this spot in the old Cherusci wood, where the strength of the south bowed to the power of the north. In the memory of Arminius [Hermann], I beheld the birth of the freedom of Europe and followed, with longing look, to its advent in the West. The Anglo-Saxons to Albion, the Franks to Gaul... But on the other side of the Rhine, its light is masked by thunderclouds. It is now doubly bright in France... having brought forth government.

Not only does Baggesen invoke the Montesquieu-esque, North-South antithesis that underpins many a historical description of the ‘Germanic’ past, but Baggesen also makes an active connection between Germania, freedom and enlightened government. The dichotomy that the interplay between the Germania, freedom and enlightened government was to produce becomes an important aspect of von See’s analysis of the intellectual developments behind the discipline of the ‘Germanic’ past. In particular, von See sets the intellectual history of the discipline within the broader historiographical context of Sonderweg or German ‘historical exceptionalism’.

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4.2 1789 and 1914 – the shift away from Western intellectual traditions

The heroicisation of figures such as Arminius is an indication that von See’s writing on the ‘Germanic’ past undertakes a further development in the 1970s, an example of which is the monograph *Die Ideen von 1789* (1975). The monograph is the working out of ideas developed by von See in *Deutsche Germanenideologie*, shifting the focus from the rhetoric that the Germans used to characterise themselves to the intellectual history surrounding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. This is something made clear in the preface to *Die Ideen von 1789*. *Deutsche Germanenideologie* had posited that the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity had adopted a mental structure whereby interpretations of the distant past were subject to dichotomic constructs. *Die Ideen von 1789* continues the argument, with the Franco-Prussian War and the period leading up to World War One as von See’s focus, and völkisch thought his starting point.

In this monograph, von See considers the nineteenth century move by German historical thinking away from Western intellectual traditions. The monograph examines how the celebration of ‘Germanic’ freedom in the political thinking of 1789 became completely disconnected from the original ideas posited by the French Revolution. Notions of democracy in light of the events of 1789 are presented as remote from the form of political thinking that was to become dominant in Wilhelmine Germany.

The outbreak of war in 1914 revealed for the first time, that which the Weimar Republic would be unable to reverse: that German culture had increasingly isolated itself, during the past century, from the intellectual traditions of the West. The so-called “ideas of 1914” are only the final articulation of this gradual alienation and encapsulation process, and the efforts of self-conceptualisation, which find their expression in the propagation of these “ideas”, can only

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286 von See 1975: 5.
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therefore increase the incomprehension in a neutral foreign country, while Germany’s opponents need to do nothing more than to identify with the natural law-Enlightenment democracy that have long since become commonplace elsewhere: with the “ideas of 1789”.

The outbreak of war in 1914, for von See, reveals the extent to which German culture had progressively, albeit gradually, isolated itself from the intellectual and political traditions of the West. By referring to “the ideas of 1789” and “the ideas of 1914”, von See is able to convey the changes that had taken place since the French Revolution. Enlightened thinking may have become commonplace in other countries but in Germany, von See maintains, this was not the case.

What had been preserved in German historical thinking, argues von See, was a binary paradigm that had its origins in the Roman-German dichotomy found in Tacitus’ *Germania*. This was the starting point for *Deutsche Germanenideologie*, and it is the impact of binary opposites such as Tacitus’ Roman-German paradigm that the *Die Ideen von 1789* seeks to explore in further detail. The very title of the monograph indicates such a focus, presenting an overarching oppositional leitmotif: “the ideas of 1789” and “the ideas of 1914”. The closing comments, provided above, sit within a part of the concluding section that documents ideological patterns that von See argues are represented by the “ideas of 1914”. The chauvinist, racist and *völkisch* attitudes that

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evolve into what von See describes as the ideas of 1914 are far removed from the ideas active at the time of the French Revolution.

These closing comments go beyond von See’s discussion about the binary nature of German historical thinking in relation to the ‘Germanic’ past. The conclusion von See reaches has the effect of presenting the intellectual history behind the ‘Germanic’ past within a framework that supports the idea that fascism, in the guise of National Socialism, was a necessity. The ultimate end point for von See’s analysis is the Weimar Republic, and the fact that the transformation of “the ideas of 1789” into the “ideas of 1914” had sowed the seeds for emergence of National Socialism.288

5 National identity, National Socialism and the ‘Germanic’ past

Germans have it hard with the origins of their national past. The oldest texts are not indigenous, stemming from Latin and Greek authors such as Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius. If one seeks an attestation in stone, one mostly has to be content with Celtic and Roman remains... Supplementary efforts are made to unearth authentic Germanic monuments in large parts of Old Norse [literature] – rune stones, texts to do with mythology, to do with heroic sagas, to do with rural customs and way of life – in so doing, one readily ends up ignoring that the Edda and the sagas are not evidence for Germanic antiquity, but to the Scandinavian early and high Middle Ages, written long after Christianisation. As a result, studies of the early Germans are a difficult terrain for historical science, being at the same time and for the same reasons fertile ground for national prejudices, political doctrines and pseudo-religious beliefs...289

289 "Die Deutschen haben es schwer mit den Ursprüngen ihrer nationalen Vergangenheit. Die ältesten Text sind nicht genuin, stammen von lateinischen und griechischen Autoren, von Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus oder Prokopios, und wenn man nach steinernen Zeugen sucht, muss man sich meist mit keltischen und römischen Hinterlassenschaften begnügen... Die genuin germanischen Denkmäler pflegt man sich dazu in
These comments by von See, about the challenges confronting those that study the distant ‘Germanic’ past, first appeared in a 1987 article about Germanenforschung between the wars, and then in the edited collection of papers entitled Barbar, Germane, Arier (1994). The comments are an indication of von See’s continued focus on the historiographical traditions surrounding the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, be those traditions Graeco-Roman or ‘Nordic’, archaeological or historical, or political or apolitical in nature.

The subtitle of Barbar, Germane, Arier is important to note in relation to the trajectory of von See’s thinking about the ‘Germanic’ past, and the purpose of editing a variety of articles and book chapters into a single monograph290. On their own, the papers and book chapters contend with different themes and individuals associated with the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. The opening chapter, for example, considers the development of the image of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian291. Another chapter considers the relationship between völkisch ideology and philology in the 19th and 20th centuries292. Bringing such articles and book chapters together under the subtitle “the search for the identity of the Germans” places the contributions made by the discipline


of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, and other national traditions such as Scandinavistik, into the context of German national identity formation up to 1933.

Placing these contributions into the context of national identity formation highlights the degree of creative and scholarly imagination that underpins national identity discourse. This is an important aspect to von See’s work in the 1990s. Having looked at the significance of “the ideas of 1914” and what they ultimately meant for the Weimar Republic, von See’s consideration of the distant ‘Germanic’ past turns to the extent to which the intellectual traditions underpinning the study of the ‘Germanic’ past contributed to the emergence of National Socialism. This question was initially introduced in Deutsche Germanenideologie and then brought to the forefront of von See’s research interests five years later in Die Ideen von 1789 und die Ideen von 1914. The specific German term for this area of debate is Sonderweg, a term that can be translated as ‘historical exceptionalism’. It is a historiographical theory that seeks an answer to the question of the inevitability of history, and specifically the historical certainty of National Socialism.

5.1 ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and ‘historical exceptionalism’

The clearest point at which von See connects his work with the concept of Sonderweg is in an article from 1987 entitled “Kulturkritik und Germanenforschung zwischen den Weltkriegen”, which reappeared in the edited collection Barbar, Germane, Arier (1994). There is direct reference not only to the Sonderweg debate by name but also one of its variants, Sonderbewusstsein, in the chapter on the critique of cultural tradition.

Whether there was such a thing as German political "exceptionalism" [politischen „Sonderweg“ der Deutschen] – explained by the lack of a bourgeois
revolution and the persistence of pre-industrial elite - has recently been greatly debated. Agreement was quickly reached on the concept of a German "special consciousness" (or "awareness") [deutschen „Sonderbewusstseins“], which is, however, only to say that it appears to be a rather diffuse, difficult to define conglomeration of ideas, growing together over the course of time, only attaining its full political actuality with the trauma of 1914: "the monstrous, truly tragic and yet triumphal isolation of the German character in the world." So then, the pointed attempts to fathom the "causes of the German hatred", to legitimise the political and cultural isolation, and finally, to make the best of a "Germanic revival".

Von See's original observation about Sonderbewusstsein came at a time when the broader German historical academy was involved in the Historikerstreit, or "historians' quarrel". This was an intellectual and political controversy in West Germany about how to interpret the crimes of Nazi Germany. Von See's contribution to the discussions about German 'historical exceptionalism' is to establish the Sonderweg's point of origin to the humanist reception of Tacitus' Germania and the Germanen ideology that emerged from its application to Germany's understanding of itself in relation to the rest of Western Europe.

Von See's discussion of the distant 'Germanic' past during the 1980s and 1990s has a particular focus on establishing National Socialism, or at the very least the ideas that informed National Socialism, within a long-term narrative of German history. His

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294 This issue continues to hold the attention of the academy and broader society. In 1998, for example, the Historikerstreit saw research students demand that the professoriat come clean on the relationship between the academy and the National Socialists.
interpretation of German 'historical exceptionalism' is therefore different from most of the thinking regarding the topic of Sonderweg during the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, the closest German historian to the position held by von See was early medievalist Karl Ferdinand Werner (1924-2008). Werner argued that the narrative of German history was one characterised by Germany’s shift away from its Roman Catholic heritage, the culture and civilisation shared with the rest of western and southern Europe, and on to a fictious barbarian 'Germanic' track of development.

There are different pieces of evidence that von See uses to support an interpretation of German 'historical exceptionalism' that emphasises a ‘Germanic’ developmental track. One example is a 1914 pamphlet entitled “Händler und Helden” the purpose of which was to promote a positive image for the German people, emphasising qualities such as heroism, truth and community. These qualities were considered to be 'Germanic' virtues, albeit derived from Tacitus' Germania, and as such they were supposed to be what distinguished the Germans of the early twentieth century from other people. Another example of the emphasis on the ‘Germanic’ path pursued by German history can be found in discussions on the Nibelungenlied. In this instance, von See explains how there is shift in emphasis from Kriemhild to Siegfried as a dominant figure and national hero prior to World War One. Both were figures in Germanic and Norse legend. Kriemhild was the sister of Burgundian kings Gunther,

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295 Heuser 1990: 419 describes two strands of Sonderweg: "a good history and a bad history. The bad history concerns German authoritarianism, anti-semitism, the Prussian sense of duty and obedience, German imperialism and, the incarnation of all these evils, Adolf Hitler. The good history, is that of the fight for freedom and the acquisition of civil rights by the masses in Germany, leading to the emancipation of the lower classes, increasingly constitutional forms of government, social legislation, trade unions, the Weimar republic and the Federal Republic of Germany". Some other examples of views on German 'historical exceptionalism' contemporaneous with von See’s discussion: Kocka 1982; Möller 1982; Saternus 1988; Weede 1988.

296 Werner 1987: 23.


Gernot and Giselher while Siegfried is a boy of noble lineage the stories of whom always emphasise his strength and courage.

5.2 The interaction between academia and National Socialism

The emphasis on German ‘historical exceptionalism’ opens von See’s discussion to the interaction between academia and National Socialism. An example is the Swiss Germanist Andreas Heusler (1865-1940), whose contribution to the discipline was the creation of the notion of ‘Germanicness’. Despite his rejection of National Socialism, his work was acclaimed by Nazi Germany for the promotion of heroic qualities that were considered distinctly German. This was a result of the Nazi reception of the Nordic sources that formed the basis of Heusler’s conceptualisation of what was considered to be ‘Germanic’. National Socialism appropriated his depiction and made it the means by which the ancient past could be connected to the Nazi present despite Heusler’s reliance on Nordic sources.

Von See argues that Heusler possessed national pride but was detached from nationalist sentiment. Heusler’s rejection of nationalism was contemporaneous with the outbreak of World War One. Heusler was supportive of Germany’s actions against the neutrality of Belgium and he attempted to defend Germany’s position on the matter. That said, Heusler was not uncritical of the war.

...[Heusler] is also one of the 93 signatories of the famous call "to the world of culture" from 10.04.1914, which – translated into ten languages – challenged enemy propaganda about German war guilt and the alleged atrocities in Belgium. On the petition were evocative names such as Lievermann, Reinhardt, Hauptmann, Doerpfeld, Vollser and Wilamowitz; "[it] reads like a who's who of

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299 Two useful articles on this point are: Mees 2000, 2004.
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art and science." At the same time Heusler distanced himself from the uncritical enthusiasm for the war by his fellow professors...301.

Von See demonstrates the need for the careful consideration of the history of a discipline. He makes a distinction between support for one’s nation and the pursuit of scholarly knowledge. One might influence the other but they can manifest themselves separately.

While Heusler rejected National Socialism, von See suggests that any anti-semitism he displayed might be derived from his experiences in Berlin. Alternatively, Heusler's anti-semitism might be on account of his cosmopolitanism having been destroyed by Germany's defeat in World War One and the consequences stemming out of Versailles302. It was not something that was a product of Nazism but of the spirit of the time. Heusler's position by 1937 on National Socialism was clear. It was something “with which I have nothing in common”303. Von See is demonstrating the capacity for an individual to pursue academic research in to an area that was thought to have strong resonance with Nazism but yet not be a part of that political movement. This differentiation forms an important component of his approach to German intellectual history and to the distant past.

One such example is the notion of brotherhood. Von See identifies this as only being alluded to in Tacitus’ Germania, in the context of discussions about the tribes


known as the Chatti and the Harii. Notions of brotherhood, and the virtues of loyalty that it espoused, migrated into German sociological frameworks. From there, the notions of brotherhood were treated as historical fact. Von See argues the notion of 'brotherhood' then moved into place as part of the foundations of German national identity, a shift not helped by the lack of understanding demonstrated by non-German scholarship in relation to those that were discussing the matter:

It is down to the absurdities of scientific work that that the advocates of "ethnic"-Nazi theories, such as Otto Brunner and Otto Höfler, could, since 1945, mutate into pioneers of the sociological method – celebrated abroad as such – and therefore [have] some non-specialist and politically clueless authors still regard the theory of ‘Germanic’ brotherhood as sound fact304.

As a part of his explanation of the development of the conditions that led to the emergence of National Socialism, and with reference to notions of ‘brotherhood’ or ‘confraternity’ drawn from interpretations of Tacitus’ Germania, von See looks at the consequences of this concept being deployed into the political arena. Embracing the perceived ‘Germanic’ tradition of ‘brotherhood’ established circles of influence that sat outside the constitution305. In the process, Germany was further distanced from the democratic approaches to politics and government that had come about in other countries as a result of the influences of the French Revolution.


6 On the ideas that prompted, supported and survived National Socialism

"1789" is – in retrospect from the German perspective – the birth of the parliamentary democracy “class society”, a supranational cosmopolitan idea, whereas the "1914" expression "national community" was itself an organically grown and self-sufficient national body. So much as one will be nothing more than an abstract, a theory, the other one wants to be an experience, a feeling. Certainly the “ideas of 1914” are not spontaneously brought about through the August days of 1914 but they gradually developed over the four generations between the French revolution and the First World War. In 1914 they experienced their first apex, not their conclusion.

These concluding comments from Freiheit und Gemeinschaft (2001) represent von See’s ongoing approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past. They continue, and develop, the views expressed in Die Ideen von 1789 (1975). This includes the depiction of German national identity construction being the product of a mental structuring that transforms objective experiences in to sets of conceptual opposites. His articulation of the issue of Sonderweg or Sonderbewusstsein is not as explicit as in Barbar, Germane, Arier, which focused on providing a treatment of various cultural constructions of German identity, but its presence is felt.


By 2001, von See had started taking the themes of *Barbar, Germane, Arier* further, looking at the history of German national identity construction and the specific individuals involved in that identity construction process. In *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft*, von See zeroes in on how a concept such as ‘freedom’ could be transformed into ‘community’, a term that carried connotations of the individual being subservient to the greater ‘volk’. The title of his work reveals an arranging of German intellectual history around the binary framework of Tacitus’ *Germania*. “Freedom” and “community” are values that were considered to set the ‘Germanic’ tribes apart from those around them, notably the Romans. The reception of the *Germania* following its rediscovery in the fifteenth century saw these values, and others, used to distinguish ‘modern’ Germans from those around them.

6.1 Entrenching the ‘Germanic’ past in German national identity

*Freiheit und Gemeinschaft* offers an explanation of how the ancient past became further entrenched in German expressions of national identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The interpretations of individuals such as Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805-1871) and Felix Dahn (1834-1912) suffice as examples. For Gervinus, Germany’s industrialisation and political modernisation contributed to the disappearance of the idealised, old simplicity and national modesty. Older values, as originally espoused by Tacitus’ *Germania*, such as frugality had been lost with growing manufacturing, railroads and steam plants. For Dahn, the place of the family as the core unit of “folk entity” shares the virtues expressed in the *Germania*.

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308 von See 2001b: 8.
310 von See 2001b: 146-148. Examples of the importance attached to the family in *The Germania* can be found in Tac. Ger. 20-21.
In these, and other, examples, von See presents a nationalist-organic thought process, that is, a mindset that was focused on differentiation on a national basis. In *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft*, von See shows how this was present in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that it was aimed at differentiating Germany from Western Europe\(^{311}\). Aspects that were thought, allegedly or actually, to have originated in the neighbouring region and considered ‘un-German’ were not only areas of contention but were also presented as the foundations for German ideas of society, culture and state: court culture, humanistic education, metropolitan intellectualism, democratic and socialist ideas\(^{312}\). For instance, education was seen as important for the formation of German identity, but not in the form of the classical gymnasium. Wilhlem II proclaimed that: “we should be educating national Germans and not young Greeks or Romans”\(^{313}\).

The push to differentiate Germany from “others” also had a religious dimension, leading to the development of a struggle within Germany regarding the privileging of papal authority, or Ultramontanism\(^{314}\). In an immediate sense, Ultramontanism emerged due to the number of Catholic Germans, particularly clergy, who were finding themselves under the authority of Protestant rulers. Those in this predicament turned to the Vatican as a source of institutional support and spiritual guidance\(^{315}\). At the time, being in a situation where one had divided loyalties was not only seen to be backward,

\(^{311}\) For example von See 2001b: 172-173.
\(^{312}\) von See 2001b: 173.
\(^{314}\) von See 2001b: 14, 144, 158, 167.
\(^{315}\) Williamson 2006: 143.
but it was also considered to be an impediment to the development of a national identity and national culture

Von See argues that the struggle with Ultramontanism, also known at the time as a *Kulturkampf*, is indicative of the ‘Germanic’ idea having been further embedded into the creative processes that surrounded the formation of German national identity. The rediscovery of Tacitus’ *Germania* in the fifteenth century had, at a time where there was growing dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic Church, provided German scholarship with a means to forge an identity that was independent of Rome. Von See not only casts the struggle with Ultramontanism as another manifestation of what happened during the Renaissance and the Reformation but also as an indication of the longevity of the German-Roman paradigm that Germany had been appropriated from Tacitus *Germania*.

### 6.2 Academia and politics: von See’s treatment of Hermann Schneider

The interaction of an academic discipline with politics is a recurring theme in von See’s works. His treatment of Germanist Hermann Schneider (1867-1961) is an example of this. Schneider’s academic career continued successfully after the demise of the Nazi regime and he is an example, for von See, of how it was possible not to support National Socialism yet still be a conservative academic who supported a historically prominent Germany in both the cultural and academic spheres.

An answer to the question about Schneider’s attitude toward National Socialism over the course of history from time to time becomes more difficult. But it...
remains, that Schneider was a staunch opponent of both the Nazi ideology as well as any ideological patronage of science. He wanted to preserve the autonomy of the university, spoke with contempt about the racial Germanomania, the "mania over nativeness", and conveyed in a letter dated 7 April 1935, for his 'Germanic' Antiquity, the solution of "the greatest possible elimination from folklore and prehistory, that of race...".

His discussion about Schneider examines a range of personal correspondence between Schneider and his colleagues and is an exercise in considering the impact of political ideologies on academic disciplines.

There is a complexity here that von See argues should be carefully noted. This is most clearly seen in his response to a review of his book *Germanistik und Politik*, where Schneider forms one of two presented case studies. The rebuttal that von See deploys reflects his belief in the importance of the reflexive history of a discipline and engaging in a differentiated analysis. Being able to keep working in an organisation or institution during the National Socialist period is not, for von See, commensurate with being sympathetic with the cultural and political policies of that regime. Two further examples can be drawn from von See's engagement with the review of *Germanistik und Politik*. The first is a reference to von See's own education. Von See explains that the school he attended from 1937 had a Headmaster who was a member of the NSDAP. The Headmaster actively discouraged one of his students to enlist in the Waffen-SS, enabling...
him to undertake a university education in the future. The second reference is to the actions of Schneider himself. One of the examples von See uses is that of Schneider offering university teaching positions to those students who had ‘absented themselves’ from Nazi ideology.

6.3 Idealisation of homelands and heroes

A collection of articles from 2001, *Ideologie und Philologie* (2006) continues von See’s exploration of the ideas and culture that prompted, supported and survived National Socialism. Ideological representations of the North in the context of searching for a homeland in order to ground cultural identity is the emphasis of the first part of *Ideologie und Philologie* von See. Von See looks at the development of the idea of *Ultima Thule* from its initial reports by Pytheas, through various ancient authors such as Strabo, Pliny and Ammianus Marcellinus to its appropriation via Goethe in *Der Koenig in Thule* and then into the political ideologies prior to the First World War and those of the National Socialists. Von See explores the tradition of the “Thule spirit”, an enthusiasm for a perfect homeland, set apart from the histories of others. He traces the identification of Thule with Atlantis and what the implications of such a geographical relocation meant. Thule was seen for northern Europe what Atlantis was

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328 von See 2006: 56.
to the Mediterranean. Combining the two provided the necessary rhetoric to prove that ‘Germanic’ culture was the oldest culture in the world\textsuperscript{330}.

The way in which symbolic figures such as Siegfried were integrated into the German national psyche is developed more fully in Ideologie und Philologie\textsuperscript{331}. This work takes a multiple of forms, from examining the synthetic composition of the “historical German” to analysing the engagement particular and prominent German scholars had with National Socialism. In relation to discussing Siegfried, von See traces the idea of Siegfried from the Niebelung saga through different guises until his appropriation as a blacksmith in the National Socialist period. Von See also observes that Siegfried takes on many meanings simultaneously, the extent of Siegfried’s instrumentalisation being dependent on the foremost ideology at the time\textsuperscript{332}. Von See concludes that it is not possible to reduce such a complex figure down to one dominating political idea.

7 Conclusion

Von See belongs to a generation whose intellectual concerns were focused on those academic traditions, discourses, ideologies and political languages that led to the advent of National Socialism. This is his Capital, in a Bourdieusian sense, and contributes to formulating an answer to the question asked at the very beginning of this chapter about making the ‘Germanic’ past a present concern. By concentrating on the intellectual and socio-political traditions that have surrounded the discipline of

\textsuperscript{330} von See 2006: 83.
\textsuperscript{331} von See 2006: 119-132.
\textsuperscript{332} von See 2006: 131.
'Germanic' Antiquity, in a manner described by Zernack as “forensic”\textsuperscript{333}, von See exhibits a sense of intellectual \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}, or ‘coming to terms with the past’.

Von See’s focus on the intellectual and socio-political traditions surrounding the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity starts in the 1960s. The focus on Scandinavistik literary and legal traditions, as well as the lack of a direct link through language to the ‘Germanic’ past, establishes two important schemas. These are based on questioning how old the distant ‘Germanic’ past is and the validity of their being a connection from the present to the ancient ‘Germanic past’. In turn, these become central to understanding von See’s dispositions towards the distant ‘Germanic' past, emphasising the extent to which the discipline is interrelated to the notion of ‘Nordic’ antiquity.

Examining how ‘Germanic’ Antiquity relied upon other traditions, such as \textit{Nordische Altertumskunde}, brings von See’s discussion about the ‘Germanic’ past to the importance of Tacitus’ \textit{Germania}. The importance of the \textit{Germania} becomes a recurring aspect of von See’s argument from the 1970s. The non-indigenous nature of the \textit{Germania} is mentioned repeatedly throughout von See's work but this is not what makes the \textit{Germania} a principal concern in von See's studies of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. What makes the \textit{Germania} important is that it left an intellectual framework based on conceptual opposites entrenched in the German understanding of self. The Roman-German dichotomy that was readily accepted and celebrated by those that rediscovered Tacitus’ ethnography in the fifteenth century, promoted the organic thinking about national identity that was to feed into later national intellectual traditions.

\textsuperscript{333} Zernack 2014: 1.
The 1970s also marked a stronger emphasis on discussions about the process that saw German intellectual traditions separate from the intellectual developments taking place throughout the rest of Western Europe. In one sense, this takes von See’s work far from the Skandinavistik starting point of his academic career. However, von See’s structuring of the past casts ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, a concept he posits as informed by the study of the ancient Scandinavian past, as a central part of coming to grips with the intellectual history of Germany. The distance between ‘Nordic’ Antiquity and the intellectual developments that take place in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are not as great as one might initially believe.

The 1980s and 1990s show further development in von See’s presentation of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. The discourse on the creativity and imagination that underpinned national identity rhetoric from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries persists. At the same time as this, there is a greater degree of attention given to the intellectual traditions that contributed to the rise of National Socialism. In addition to considering these traditions, von See considers the impact of National Socialism on academic disciplines such as Germanistik and ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. He was also determined to shift away from what he considered to be approaches to the past that missed the nuances associated with the political ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A simplistic approach, argued von See, would render simplistic results: “It points to how wrong it is to approach the problem with simple alternative questions: “Anti-Semite: yes or no?”, “Nazi sympathizer: yes or no?””\(^3\). The examples of Heusler and Schneider demonstrate ‘coming to terms with the past’ entail

\(^3\) Es zeigt sich hier, wie verfehlt es ist, dem Problem mit simple Alternative-Fragen beikommen zu wollen: „Antisemit, ja oder nein?“, „NS-Sympathisant, ja oder nein?“\(^2\), von See 1994: 278.
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scrutinising individual and particular instances and understanding their historical context in the first instance.

The further von See’s academic career proceeded, the more and more explicit his treatment of National Socialism became. The notion of Vergangenheitsbewältigung was something that had been brewing in von See’s writing since the early 1970s. Directed towards historical traditions and conventions, the concept of ‘coming to terms with the past’ emerged more fully from the mid-1990s. Barbar, Germaine, Arier is the key monograph in this instance. By editing together a collection of papers on the cultural history of German identity formation, an important step is taken in understanding the involvement of German philologists and historians in the rise of National Socialism. This sets the foundation for the future structuring of the distant ‘Germanic’ past as something intellectually based on idea of differentiation.

Scandinavia and ‘the North’ continue to inform von See’s perspective of the distant ‘Germanic’ past at this time. Von See’s research interests in Scandinavistik are important for understanding his approach to the distant past and their place in informing constructions of German national identity. Interpreting von See’s approach to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity as having evolved to be openly engaged in ‘coming to terms with the past’ shows how National Socialist thinking was informed by ideas that stemmed from traditions of historical thought that started with the humanist appropriation of sources such as Tacitus’ Germania through to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century where historical interpretation was influenced by the drive for national unity.

There has been some movement in the definition of ‘coming to terms with the past’. Some interpretations are now applying it to the German experience of
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Von See keeps his focus firmly on academia’s interaction with National Socialist ideologies. His efforts in detailing the response of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity to the National Socialist Weltanschauung is important as it recognises that living memory of the National Socialist period is beginning to fade. It preserves the experiences of one section of German society. Von See’s methodology makes it possible to trace the intellectual history behind the political ideologies of the early twentieth century and to see how the ‘Germanic’ equivalent to classical antiquity was used to serve the state.

This is important because individual or personal historical accounts of Nazi Germany currently stand at the edge of the end of living memory. Within a few years all of the participants in National Socialist Germany will have passed away. Possessing a historiographical account of the intellectual origins of National Socialism, and indeed how that political ideology developed its own representation of the past, in some measure offsets this loss of individual and personal recollections. At the very least, it provides an account of how Nazism influenced intellectual traditions in Germany. As the number of personal recounts of what happened during Nazi Germany diminishes from living memory, understanding how things came to be will form an increasingly important part of the process of ‘coming to terms with the past’.

Von See’s works on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its relationship with politics operate on a second, more fundamental level. His efforts spur thinking on the current reception of the Nazi period. This is due to his willingness to discuss the complexities

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336 Pringle reflects on a similar experience with research into the Ahnenerbe: “…As archival research proceeded, I began tracking down surviving members of the Ahnenerbe, as well as friends, relatives and close colleagues of those who are now dead. I was constantly aware of the ticking clock. Some sources were far too frail or advanced in years to grant interviews; others, small in number, fell seriously ill or died between the first contact call and a second to set an appointment”, Pringle 2006: 9.
337 Hutton 2000: 534.
inherent in the three-way relationship between Nazism, the intellectual traditions that either actively or passively supported it and the academic community that studied the ancient ‘Germanic’ past. Von See’s studies reflect a sense of Unbefangenheit, an attitude of being unencumbered or unhindered by the past. Combined with an increasing historical distance from events, and the desire to see historical experience remembered, contributing to a healthy attitude towards history, one without bitterness, guilt or anxiety. It is working towards this goal that is not only what makes the subject of von See’s corpus a present concern but also define the way in which von See practices history.

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Figure 2: Professor Dieter Geuenich (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Chapter 4: Dieter Geuenich

The competition and conflicts provoked by the transmission of first names provide an opportunity to observe the practical and political functions of these genealogical markers: to appropriate these indices of genealogical position (so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so etc.) which are also emblems, symbolizing the whole symbolic capital accumulated by a lineage, is in a sense to take possession of a title giving special rights over the group's patrimony. The state of the relations of force and authority between contemporary kin determines what the collective history will be; but this symbolic projection of the power relations between competing individuals and groups also plays a part in reinforcing the initial state of affairs by giving those who are in a dominant position the right to profess the veneration of the past which is best suited to legitimate their present interests. To give a new-born child the name of a great forefather is not simply to perform an act of filial piety, but also in a sense to predestine the child thus named to bring the eponymous ancestor "back to life"...

1 Introduction

Bourdieu's observations on the competition and conflicts provoked by the transmission of names come at a point in his Outline of a Theory of Practice where he discusses kin relationships. Specifically, as a result of the discussion of names, and their transmission, Bourdieu questions the anthropological tradition that views kin relationships as objects, rather than forms of practices or as fulfilling a practical function. His discussion on the transmission of names resonates strongly with onomastics, a key aspect of Dieter Geuenich's works. Indeed, it offers a key focus question to frame a historiographical analysis of Geuenich's discussions of the distant
‘Germanic’ past: how has Geuenich used the transmission of names to observe the practical and political functions associated with identity in the distant ‘Germanic’ past? This will frame the discussion of this chapter on Geuenich’s work.

If anyone wishes to ascribe what Tacitus ... writes about the Suevi to today’s Swabians, he has erred341.

The words of Beatus Rhenanus, cited in the later half of Chapter 2, provides a starting point for contextualising Geuenich’s approach to the Germani, and the Alamanni in particular. Geuenich’s approach to the Alamanni is to see them as a group that is discontinuous with the present. In Chapter 2, Rhenanus’ warning about the application of the distant ‘Germanic’ past to the present is depicted as something that captures the sentiment within the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity following World War Two. Geuenich explores what it means to go beyond the ‘Germanist and Romanist’ readings of the past, a key theme within the history of the discipline, as he promotes interdisciplinarity. The political instrumentalisation of ethnic identity, discussed earlier in Chapter 2, is something with which Geuenich’s works contend.

From the start of his academic career, Geuenich has maintained a focus on the science of names, and what studying the science of names can give to the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity with particular attention given to the Alamanni. The breadth of Geuenich’s work has included topics such as Clovis, the Battle of Zülpich, and the general history of the Alamanni342, as well as historiographical issues to do with each of these topic areas. While there is a distinct focus on the Alamanni, there are also wider parameters. Geuenich’s initiation and development of projects such as a database for research on names and groups of people in the Middle Ages in addition to the topic of

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341 Beatus Rhenanus quoted in Krebs 2011: 249.
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commemoration and memorialisation are examples. This introduces the notion of an interdisciplinary or collaborative methodology, a characteristic of his approach to the past. This manifests itself through his interest in onomastics and the writing of Alamannic history. The topic of memorialisation and commemoration, by studying such source material as the so-called confraternity books, is another area where Geuenich’s interdisciplinary or collaborative interest and approach is evident.

This chapter presents a chronological survey of Geuenich’s scholarship. Starting in the 1970s, when Geuenich first starts to contribute to the body of knowledge on the Alamanni, it details the development of his discussion on the Alamannic past and the place of an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of history. Geuenich serves as an example of the interrelationship between the historian, the archaeologist, and the philologist.

2 Geuenich: A Brief Overview

Geuenich has brought an interdisciplinary perspective to discussions on the Alamanni and ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The present work takes interdisciplinary to mean a greater degree of collaboration between disciplines. Geuenich has focused on the importance of the interrelationship between the archaeologist, philologist and historian to the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Geuenich’s approach to the idea of interdisciplinary, therefore, incorporates the issues of the discipline’s history, onomastics and memorialisation. Geuenich continues to add to the scholarly body of work on the ancient Germans, the society in which they lived and the impact they had on the world around them.
Born in 1943 and actively contributing to research since the 1970s, Geuenich studied in Bonn and Münster, graduating in 1972. His first work was published in 1971: „Prümer Personennamen in Überlieferungen von St. Gallen, Reichenau, Remiremont und Prüm“343. This attraction to onomastics was balanced by research into the Alamanni. Geuenich completed his Habilitation in 1981 at the University of Freiburg. Geuenich held the position of Professor of Medieval History from 1983 to 1987 at that university and then worked in the German Historical Institute in Rome before his appointment to the faculty at Duisburg University in 1989. Geuenich initiated several interdisciplinary-focused projects at Duisburg, including the German research organisation project Nomen et Gens in 1992344. The purpose of this project was to collect and analyse personal names and place names from German lands from the third century to the eighth century. The aim of this work was that through a combination of historical and linguistic research, it would be possible to determine much about the identity of individuals from the later Antique or Early Medieval periods.

Interdisciplinarity underpins Geuenich’s approach to the ancient ‘Germanic’ past. One consequence of this is that he has examined the intellectual traditions that contribute to the construction of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity as well as those challenges inherent in such pursuits. His analysis of Clovis and the Battle of Zülpich in AD496 is an example of Geuenich’s consideration of the intellectual traditions underpinning the construction of the past whereby he not only considers how of the Battle of Zülpich has been received over time but also historiographical issues associated with this event such as the contribution to national identity or myth345.

343 Geuenich 1971.
344 Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 1997.
345 Geuenich, Grünewald, and Weitz 1996; Geuenich 1996c, 1996a
The interdisciplinary nature of Geuenich’s work is an attribute common to the work of his contemporaries. Geuenich is generationally a part of the so-called ‘68-ers’, the generation of students who protested against the perceived authoritarianism and hypocrisy of the West German government. This generation of Germans was associated with broad breaks in tradition. There was a movement away from the conservative nature that had characterised student behaviour in the past towards an active questioning of parental silence in relation to the extent of their involvement in the National Socialist period. A focus on interdisciplinary approaches emerged in response to the statist paradigms that had not only dominated German approaches to the past up until that point but were perceived to have led to the rise of National Socialism and to the so-called ‘German Catastrophe’.

The interdisciplinary approach looked to provide an alternative to the historicist orthodoxies of the nineteenth century through a “rational construction of contemporary society and culture”. The writing of political or diplomatic history continued as a topic of interest but this was alongside newer forms of history writing such as social history or gender history. Geuenich’s studies of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past do not engage in the political concerns of the 1960’s intellectual environment but the broad developments in the writing of history from this period of time inform Geuenich’s own perspectives on the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

2.1 Karl Schmid, Bruno Boesch and Rudolf Schützeichel

There is an intellectual context for Geuenich's interdisciplinary approach to the ‘Germanic’ past. This can be found in Karl Schmid (1923-1993), Bruno Boesch (1911-

346 For a definition of the ‘68-er generation’ see Moses 2007: 7-8.
1981) and Rudolf Schützeichel (1927- ), each of whom share academic interests with Geuenich and are significant scholars in the fields in which Geuenich writes. Schmid is particularly noteworthy as it was under Schmid that Geuenich wrote his Habilitationsschrift. Their emphasis on the importance of interdisciplinary methods and the significance they attach to onomastics is a basis for Geuenich’s own approach to studying the distant past. Schmid, Schützeichel and Boesch’s interests in these matters find their way into Geuenich’s works.

Schmid was a German medievalist and a student of Gerd Tellenbach (1903-1999). He obtained his doctorate in 1951 and then completed his habilitation in 1961. His Habilitationsschrift was entitled Geblüt, Herrschaft, Geschlechterbewußtsein. Grundfragen zum Verständnis des Adels im Mittelalter. He was appointed to a teaching position at the University of Freiburg in that year in the field of Medieval and Modern History. From 1963-1965 he was a Fellow of the German Historical Institute in Rome and on his return to Germany in 1965, he was offered a chair in Medieval History at the University of Münster. In 1972, he took on the position of Professor of Medieval History at the University of Freiburg. His research interests were broad350. His interest in topics, such the history of medieval memoria, nobility and gender studies and the southwestern German state history, is reflected in the Festschrift presented to him on the occasion of his 60th birthday351. In 1980 he supervised Geuenich’s Habilitationsschrift entitled Frühmittelalterliche Listen geistlicher Gemeinschaften. Versuch einer prosopographischen, sozialgeschichtlichen und sprachhistorischen Erschließung mit Hilfe der EDV at the University of Freiburg352.
Boesch studied Germanistik and Romanistik in Bern, Basel, Bonn, Berlin and Paris, obtaining his doctorate in Zürich in 1940\textsuperscript{353}. He was awarded the title of Professor in 1948 and he was a Professor at the University of Freiburg from 1964 and he was the university’s Vice-Chancellor from 1968-1970. Boesch’s research interests were the history of the German language and the history of German literature, historical dialectology and onomastics. An example is his edited collection of papers entitled Deutsche Literaturgeschichte\textsuperscript{354}, which takes different periods of history, from the Carolingian period to the present day, and seeks to portray the inner nature and historical significance of the individual periods in terms of the most important works from that period.

Boesch’s interest in onomastics is demonstrated by his involvement in the ‘Neue Förstemann’. This was a revision of the nineteenth-century work by Ernst Förstemann (1822-1906) that discussed Old German people and place names\textsuperscript{355}. His interest in onomastics is reflected in the Festschrift presented to him on the occasion of his 70th birthday by his students, entitled Kleine Schriften zur Namenforschung\textsuperscript{356}. Further examples of these interests can be seen in his establishing workshops and seminars for Alamannic dialectologists and in his role as research manager for the old German confraternity book\textsuperscript{357}. He was also the director of the Institute for Historical Applied Geography and a member of the Historical Commission for the State of Baden-Württemberg and the Institute of German Language. Boesch’s contributions saw him awarded the Great Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

\textsuperscript{353} Lutz 2004.
\textsuperscript{354} Boesch 1946.
\textsuperscript{355} Geuenich 2001a: 83-85.
\textsuperscript{356} Boesch 1981.
\textsuperscript{357} Lutz 2004.
Schützeichel is Emeritus Professor of German Philology and former Director of the Institute for Germanic Studies at the University of Münster. He studied German history and philology at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz and was awarded his doctorate in 1954 followed by his Habilitation in 1960. These were undertaken in ‘Germanic’ philology at the University of Cologne. He has research interests in Old High German. In this area he held a particular interest in the second sound shift, the emergence of the Rhenish linguistic landscape, Middle Rhenish, and the emergence of a the High German written language. He is also has research interests in onomastics. Examples of these can be seen in such works as Die Grundlagen des westlichen Mitteldeutschen358, the ongoing series Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch359 and collections of conference papers like Philologie der ältesten Ortsnamenüberlieferung360 and Ortsnamen als Ausdruck von Kultur und Herrschaft361.

2.2 Impact of Schmid, Boesch and Schützeichel on Geuenich’s work

Schmid, Boesch and Schützeichel had a tripartite impact on Geuenich’s work. The first impact was stressing the importance of interdisciplinarity in approaching history. Schützeichel stressed to Geuenich that the dialogue between the philologist and the historian was essential to progress the knowledge of both disciplines362. Interactivity between the two should be expected rather than contingent on an invitation from the historian to the philologist or the philologist to the historian.

The second impact was emphasising the significance of onomastics in understanding the distant past. An example of this is in Geuenich’s discussion about the

358 Schützeichel 1961.
359 Schützeichel 2012.
361 Schützeichel and Tichy 1980.
‘Neue Förstemann’ and the basis for its failure. Geuenich relates his experiences for working for both Bösch and Schützeichel in 1968. He also relates his experiences of working for Bösch at the University of Freiburg from 1973-81. Geuenich draws out the importance of onomastics that these experiences conveyed. Onomastics is important because of the methodical approach to texts that are often the only available source for a particular historical period.

The third impact of Schmid, Bösch and Schützeichel was the example they constituted for Geuenich to undertake interdisciplinary research into the Alamanni. These impetuses are reflected in Geuenich's works. For example, in Person und Name, Geuenich's contribution to the conference proceedings that he assisted in editing is one of a group of papers that dealt with the detection of ‘Germanic’ anthroponymy. A similar scenario can be seen in Geuenich’s role in editing the collection of conference papers entitled Zur Geschichte der Gleichung. The key questions at the centre of this project focused on the extent to which archaeology, philology and history have been influenced by modern nationalist agenda. The disciplines of archaeology, philology and history are represented in this work.

2.3 Geuenich and interdisciplinary approaches

Geuenich’s utilisation of interdisciplinarity in his analysis of the distant ‘Germanic’ past emerges from an academic context that was beginning to adopt this style of approach from the 1950s. The broad stagnation in the development of archaeological thought that took place following World War Two saw a retreat into

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367 Geuenich 2004b.
positivist interpretations of the ‘Germanic’ past. There is also an indication that there were calls for the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to history within the academic traditions surrounding the distant ‘Germanic’ past prior to the appearance of interdisciplinary thought in the German national historical discourse of the 1960s. Geuenich was well positioned to interpret the distant ‘Germanic’ past through interdisciplinary approaches.

The interdisciplinary approach was heralded as early as 1941. For example, German archaeologist Ernst Wahle called for a stronger source-critical approach when discussing ethnic interpretations of the past368. The notion of using only archaeological sources as a means to engage in ethnic interpretations of the past was considered unfeasible. This was because charging the archaeological sources with the responsibility of providing information about ethnicity and ethnic identity was charging them with a responsibility that went beyond what they could realistically provide.

The problem of taking the archaeological sources beyond the point they could reasonably support in relation to ethnic identity was articulated in the late 1950s and early 1960s. An example from the late 1950s is *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* by German archaeologist Hans Jürgen Eggers369, which proposed a three-stage approach to the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past based on the notions of archaeological thesis, literary antithesis and historical synthesis. In 1961, Wenskus argued for a broader methodological base as he saw Eggers’ approach as impractical370. Hachmann, Kossack and Kuhn echoed this in 1962, suggesting that archaeology, philology and history as

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368 Wahle 1941.
369 Eggers 1959.
370 Wenskus 1961.
disciplines involved in the investigation of the ancient past should first appraise their sources separately before coming together\textsuperscript{371}.

The call for an interdisciplinary approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past continued to broaden in the 1970s, an example of which was the German archaeologist Manfred Eggert (1941- ) who argued for a move away from the positivist interpretations of the past and an active engagement with sociological theory\textsuperscript{372}. Bösch attributed the broadening of interest, in part, to well-funded research in Münster under Karl Schmid\textsuperscript{373}. Concurrently, prosopographical projects were taking place at Bonn under the direction of Eugen Ewig and at Freiburg under the direction of Gerd Tellenbach. Geuenich recalls that the need for co-operation with philologists was urgent in light of the amount of documentary evidence that was available\textsuperscript{374}.

3 Collaboration towards interdisciplinary approaches

While the study of early medieval place names has always been considered an important field of Medieval Studies, and historians and philologists are encouraged repeatedly to engage in fruitful dialogue, and often also intensive collaboration, the same cannot be said for the study of traditional medieval personal names\textsuperscript{375}.

Geuenich’s opening comments to a preliminary philological investigation into early medieval personal names reveals a rationale for his interest in this area. In the 1970s, Geuenich saw a need for a greater degree of collaborative work between historians and

\textsuperscript{371} Hachmann, Kossack, and Kuhn 1962.
\textsuperscript{372} Eggert 1978.
\textsuperscript{373} Geuenich 2001a: 83-85.
\textsuperscript{374} Geuenich 2001a: 85.
\textsuperscript{375} “Während die Erforschung der frühmittelalterlichen Ortsnamen seit jeher als ein wichtiges Arbeitsfeld der Mediävistik gilt und Historiker und Philologen immer wieder zu fruchtbarem Dialog und oft auch zu intensiver Zusammenarbeit anregte, kann dies von der Beschäftigung mit den zahlreich überkommenen frühmittelalterlichen Personennamen nicht in gleichem Maße festgestellt werden”, Geuenich 1976b: 118
philologists on personal names. Geuenich had been inspired to undertake a philological analysis of the names on the confraternity lists from the early Middle Ages.

This set of preliminary observations introduces a source type for which Geuenich has a particular affinity. A confraternity book is a medieval memorial or commemorative book, distinct from a necrology, which it records the names of people who have entered into a relationship with a church or church organisation in some way.

In confraternity books ... there were entered the names of both living and dead members of communities, not only of monks, nuns or canons, but also of those related to them, that is benefactors and male and female “friends”. These communities were often bound to the monastic community which had produced the book by contracts of confraternity (fraternitas, confraternitas)\(^\text{376}\).

As people's names were recorded in a confraternity book, a sense of community was developed, as well as a sense of that community’s history, thereby drawing Geuenich’s analysis of this particular source record into broader discussions about identity and identity formation. Shifting confraternity books into these broader discussions takes place through the discipline of onomastics.

### 3.1 Onomastics

Identity formation was a theme in Geuenich’s work as early as 1976\(^\text{377}\). In this paper to the International Onomastic Sciences Conference, Geuenich examined the extent to which personal names from one group in the Early Middle Ages could be applied to another group\(^\text{378}\). He concluded that names were applied to groups because of an individual’s own ability to engage in self-identification with the behaviours of a

\(^{\text{376}}\) Geuenich 2004a: 140.  
\(^{\text{377}}\) Geuenich 1976b.  
group and to participate in the group consciousness. This was as opposed to basing their membership on biological grounds.\textsuperscript{379}

Geuenich’s conclusions here follow that of Reinhard Wenskus, and echo that of Klaus von See. Wenskus had put forward an approach to the study of the ‘Germanic’ past that removed the notion of biologically defining race, replacing it with a cultural model in which an individual’s identity was determined by the degree of participation around a particular nucleus.\textsuperscript{380} Wenskus argued that the nucleus was the group’s nobility. Geuenich’s connection with Wenskus’ work is explicit\textsuperscript{381} but von See’s is not, although it is important to point out the common degree of regard with which the term “race” is held. In his discussion on Hermann Schneider, discussed in the previous chapter, von See also identified the desire to remove “race” from the study of German prehistory, despite the concept being well entrenched in the discipline.\textsuperscript{382} From an early point in his career, it would appear that Geuenich was building on those traditions of analysis that looked to break with earlier approaches to the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

3.2 Developing a database for the study of medieval individuals and groups

The 1970s also saw the emergence of information technologies in Geuenich’s approach to the distant past.\textsuperscript{383} The idea to create a database that would enable the systematic lemmatisation of Alamannic names was Geuenich’s.\textsuperscript{384} The goal of such a database was to use modern information technology to generate organisational comparative and statistical analysis of medieval personal names.

\begin{itemize}
\item Geuenich 1978: 444.
\item Wenskus 1961. See also Wood 2008: 79.
\item Geuenich 1978: 438 n. 434. Also n.435.
\item von See and Zernack 2004: 57.
\item Geuenich 1976a; Geuenich and Lohr 1978.
\item Kettemann 2008: 127.
\end{itemize}
4 Interdisciplinarity from a historical viewpoint

What is “Alamannic”? History and linguistics, onomastics and folklore, archaeology and legal history will all give an answer to the question. Each discipline has its own objects for the identification of the Alamanni, sources that have emerged, or been documented, through different times.

This introductory question and commentary, from a paper co-written with Hagen Keller (1937–) for a symposium on the Early Middle Ages, marks a further development in Geuenich’s approach to the ‘Germanic’ past. It builds on Geuenich’s break with the traditions that have gone before. Identifying the multiple disciplines that inform the discourse on the ‘Germanic’ past and provide an answer to the question Geuenich and Keller propose, the opening question also draws attention to how these disciplines can collaborate in the study of Germanische Altertumskunde.

The position held by Geuenich and Keller is that the science of history should provide a basis for interdisciplinary conversations about the Alamanni, their language and where they lived. This is because history, according to Geuenich and Keller, has the ability, by virtue of how it works with its sources, to clarify what was meant by the term “Alamannic” at whatever particular period of history was being examined. However, where there is no clear interpretation of the sources, then an interdisciplinary approach could be pursued. Geuenich and Keller’s rationale is that forcing an interpretation, for the sake of obtaining a clear historical picture, will only deprive the

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historian of the opportunity to gain from other disciplines and better understand his or her own sources\(^{387}\).

4.1 ‘Alemannisch’

Language and ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has been a significant issue for historians as early as Johannes Aventinus, in the fifteenth century. Aventinus claimed “every folk and nation has its own history in its language and mentality”\(^{388}\). Aventinus’ claim was motivated by the desire to celebrate the antiquity of Germany in its own language. Herder pursued language as a means to determine the uniqueness of nations, in the context of Napoleonic imperialism. Leibniz’s contributions in the seventeenth century posited that German was the earliest of languages, a conclusion that assigned to the German people of the time the original people of Europe\(^{389}\). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm prioritised language as a means to celebrate the genuine nature of the past alongside promoting connectivity to it.

Geuenich’s response to such tradition on language, and on ‘Alemannisch’ in particular, is to present a historical perspective to the discontinuities in ‘Germanic’ language\(^{390}\). In relation to his work in the 1980s, Geuenich was looking at the extent to which there were continuities in ‘Alemannisch’ from the earliest reports of the language through to the ninth century. Where previous traditions concerning the ‘Germanic’ past looked to language as a means to affirm ethnic identity, Geuenich’s response to such traditions emphasises the problems with such an approach.

\(^{387}\) Geuenich and Keller 1985: 137.
\(^{388}\) Aventinus quoted in Kelley 1993: 161.
\(^{390}\) For example: Geuenich 1988a.
To clarify these problems, Geuenich continues to pursue a historical perspective to language conceptualisation. This is not a new development in Geuenich’s thinking. His work on onomastics in the 1970s saw a similar trend in his approach to matters philological. The importance of historical context to the study of onomastics, for example, features in his preliminary comments on a philological investigation into personal names from the Early Middle Ages. When it comes to the notion of ‘Alemannisch’ as a language, Geuenich adopts a similar approach. Acknowledging that there are complexities inherent to the conceptualisation of the Alamanni, and have been since they first appeared in the historical record, is an important part of Geuenich’s approach for setting the context of wider discussions.

Considering the complexities associated with conceptualising the Alamanni as a group is an approach of Geuenich’s that also extends to the issue of language. In particular, Geuenich is sensitive to retrojections from later periods as to the geographical spread of ‘Alemannisch’. These he considers to be inadmissible approaches to reconstructing ‘Alemannisch’ because the foundations of the retrojections come from the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. ‘Germanic’ place names can assist in the mapping the extent of ‘Alemannisch’ but, argues Geuenich, this is not to say that ‘Germanic’ place names can provide a firm or specific conclusion that can be made about such areas actually being Alamannic.

Geuenich acknowledges that language is an important dimension to Alamannic history. His approach is to bring a historical perspective to the formation of Alemannisch in an attempt to reflect the complexities that are associated with the

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393 Geuenich 1988a: 121. This is a similar point of view expressed in von See 1987a: 343, 1994: 187.
394 Geuenich 1988a: 121.
writing of Alamannic history. This is achieved by Geuenich being willing to incorporate source material that would typically sit outside of his discipline into his account of Alamannic history.

4.2 Memoria

The preparedness of the historian to engage with multiple source types and disciplines when approaching the ‘Germanic’ past is a recurrent theme in Geuenich’s treatment of *memoria*.

*Memoria* refers not to how something is communicated, but to what happens once one has received it, to the interactive process of familiarising – or textualising – which occurs between oneself and others’ words in memory. To understand this interactive process, as Carruthers puts it, Geuenich looks at the regional and supra-regional contacts revealed by the Confraternity Book of St Gall. Taken from a volume on Swabian regional history, this article by Geuenich considers the perceived need for regional history to draw on a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. His discussions about regional and interregional relationships in Alamannic traditions of memory from the Carolingian period suggest the historian must be prepared to engage with a variety of source material. This is when attempting to establish historical context from that which has been traditionally considered evidence for memory traditions. These would include such items as liturgical manuscripts.

Geuenich discusses how different forms of archaeological and literary evidence, such as the confraternity lists from Reichenau Abbey, contribute to a collective memory
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for the Alamanni and become the basis of that group’s documented ancient past. Reichenau Abbey was established around 724 and became an important political, social and religious centre within the Duchy of Alamannia. As the Frankish elite increasingly turned on themselves around 830, the actions of these abbeys in recording genealogies of noble families gradually increased in importance. The Carolingian crisis, as Geuenich describes the events surrounding 830 to be, created an environment where establishing traditions of memory was important. Religious centres such as St. Gall were seen as repositories of collective memory. Henry I the Fowler (876-936) used it to confirm his family background and his vision of his family’s place in the wider community. The listing of names not only assisted in conveying a sense of the historical self in the comings and goings of Carolingian politics but it provided an authoritative documented past that contributed to a perceived missing sense of unity.

Geuenich’s analysis is not just about mechanisms through which memoria functioned but also of a transition from a tradition of non-written memory transmission to a tradition where memory transmission takes place through documents. The context for this is the examination of inter-regional relations that are conveyed in Alamannic traditions of memory. Geuenich’s work in this area addresses the need for a systematic investigation of names as one form of tradition is not any more dominant than the other. Confraternity lists in monasteries suggest a combination of both traditions. A name that appears in two different confraternity books not only represents a possible social or political link between the two sites where those sources reside but it shows the extent to which there has been a geographical diffusion of a non-written tradition.

399 Geuenich 1988b; McKitterick 1997.
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The reputation of the individual is such that they are deserving of mention at both venues\textsuperscript{401}.

5 Addressing the need for a systematic investigation of names

In relation to the giving of names of the migration period, and beyond the early Middle Ages, the state of research is generally in fact characterized by the paradoxical situation where the names of these periods have been, on one hand, by no means put together completely or even investigated systematically, and on the other, the individual name plays a central role in the debate about the group to which their bearers belong\textsuperscript{402}.

These introductory comments from \textit{Nomen et Gens} are indicative of the continued importance Geuenich assigns to prosopographical studies of individual peoples or \textit{gens} and the need for a philological analysis of these names. They are also indicative of Geuenich's presence in the debate over the use of names as evidence for group membership. The comments also represent a coming together of Geuenich's interests: onomastics, the history of the Alamanni, and the historical traditions surrounding this particular people group.

5.1 \textit{Nomen et Gens} project

The \textit{Nomen et Gens} project was the first major forum in which the study of ‘Germanic’ names, the problems associated with such a study and the theme of identity were brought together\textsuperscript{403}. Led by Geuenich, Jörg Jarnut (1942 – ) and Wolfgang Haubrichs (1942 – ), it was funded by the \textit{Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft} in 1992.

\textsuperscript{401} Geuenich 1988b.
\textsuperscript{402} "Der Forschungsstand in bezug auf die Namengebung der Völkerwanderungszeit und darüber hinaus des Frühmittelalters überhaupt ist nämlich durch die paradoxe Situation gekennzeichnet, dass die Namen dieser Epochen einerseits noch keineswegs vollständig zusammengestellt oder gar systematisch untersucht worden sind, andererseits aber der einzelne Name eine zentrale Rolle in der Diskussion darüber spielt, welcher Gruppe sein Träger zuzuordnen ist", Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 1997: VI.
\textsuperscript{403} Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 1997.
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The project combined historical and linguistic research to determine the relationship between personal, group and place names attested in the Late Antique and Early Medieval sources and how names that have not been systematically researched or completely documented are still regarded as important indicators of identity\(^{404}\). The project looked to resolve this by identifying customs, patterns and typologies regarding name-giving, usage and recording as well as to test the claim that changes to how naming systems operated could indicate transitioning from the medieval to the modern period.

Reflecting on the aim of the project, Jörg Jarnut (1941 – ), one of the editors of the project, described it as follows:

[The aims of this project are] Constructing of Corpora including names current in Germanic gentes and regna, establishing criteria for the names as an indication of the group identity of its bearer, analysing the family and social aspects of name-giving, contributing to the research on ethnogenesis during the migration period and the early Middle Ages, and therefore also to the history of early Medieval Europe\(^{405}\).

The motivation for this was twofold. Firstly, the Paris based project *Prosopographica Regnorum orbis latini* had come to a complete halt\(^{406}\). Prosopographical studies of individual peoples, as well as the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, take into account only selected segments of the names borne by people who figure in those projects. More fundamental still is the fact that these compilations lacked any philological analysis of those names.

\(^{406}\) Jarnut 1995: 144.
The second motivation for the *Nomen et Gens* project was to respond to three different issues that regularly confront the historian in this field\(^{407}\). The first issue is the question of whether a Latin name indicated Roman descent and a ‘Germanic’ name indicated ‘Germanic’ descent. The second issue is the assumption that a ‘Germanic’ name was constituted in such a way so as to identify the *gens* of its bearer; whether, because of the way in which a name was formulated, an individual could be identified as a Goth, a Frank or an Alaman. The third issue which contributed to the *Nomen et Gens* project’s development was the need for a comparative approach to the study of names and name-giving\(^{408}\). Fundamental to the project was the collation of material “in order to create a basis for the reliable statements pertaining to the ethnic origin of the bearers of a given name”\(^{409}\). The complete list of names that survive from the periods of the migrations and the Early Middle Ages had not, at that time, been fully brought together.

Graceffa provides an additional insight into the purpose and importance of the *Nomen et Gens* project\(^{410}\). Graceffa highlights the anthroponymic questioning that the project pursued and the connection this created with the theme of *memoria*. In the context of studying Geuenich’s own approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past, this is an important observation because it highlights the extent to which *Nomen et Gens* was a coming together of Geuenich’s own research interests and approaches to history. In pursuing the connection with the theme of *memoria*, the project also engaged in reviewing the intersection between personal names and, to use Graceffa’s term, family consciousness\(^{411}\).

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\(^{408}\) Jarnut 1995: 145-146.  
\(^{410}\) Graceffa 2009: 328-329.  
\(^{411}\) Graceffa 2009: 328.
This introduces a second important consequence of the *Nomen et Gens* study. The project highlighted the frequency and the significance of artificial kinship\textsuperscript{412}. Names were not indicative of membership of a group on a national level. Rather, the *Nomen et Gens* project showed how names were markers of membership for much smaller groups. Kinship between people in the Early Middle Ages was a matter of what was constructed on the part of the individual. An analysis of the onomastic corpus, according to Graceffa, shows the value of understanding names, and, in particular, how this can be a valuable method in approaching identity formation in the Early Middle Ages\textsuperscript{413}.

Central to the methodology behind the project was the use of the Duisburg computer database that was, at that time, under the direction of Geuenich. The database provided the raw materials with which the archaeologist, philologist and historian could work to determine the relationship between an individual's name and the wider group from which they purport to come. Thus, Geuenich's contribution to the *Nomen et Gens* project is to provide a context for the name being studied. The context might be a listing of benefactors for a particular monastic community. This would have the effect of positioning the identified individual within the society or community from which the source material comes.

Geuenich questioned the extent to which an individual could be claimed to be Alamannic as such claims were often made by ‘outsiders’ via sources that were either Roman or Frankish\textsuperscript{414}. The next step was to examine that which gave people an Alamannic identity. Geuenich looked at the way in which a family might come to

\textsuperscript{412} Graceffa 2009: 329.
\textsuperscript{413} Graceffa 2009: 329.
identify itself as Alamannic. The lemmatisation of available name lists was a part of this exercise, serving as a basis for investigating the extent to which the sources reflected less linguistic and more emotive reasons behind individual associations and affiliations with the Alamanni over other groups\textsuperscript{415}.

The underlying problem that Geuenich builds upon is that the evidence of personal names in the groups of the Early Middle Ages can be as much derived from academic labelling as it might be genuinely a product of the time\textsuperscript{416}. His approach concentrates on the developmental and transformative processes\textsuperscript{417} such as the study of appellatives\textsuperscript{418}. Variations in names and alliteration are further devices that Geuenich explores with regard to the shift from names being indicators of individual identity to that of group identity\textsuperscript{419}. He queries the extent to which names can reveal family affiliations as a part of this process.

Thus, the \textit{Nomen et Gens} project possesses those interdisciplinary traits that Geuenich seeks to promote within the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. It is a historical study as much as it is specifically a prosopographical one. It is a philological project and an exercise in comparative studies, revealing Geuenich’s interest in the historical traditions surrounding the ‘Germanic’ past. For example, as a collaborative exercise between historians and philologists, the latter performs the function of identifying names whose origins might be doubtful. The former seeks an answer to how much can be learned from a comparative study of personal names about the various groups to which people belonged. Geuenich’s reference to two Alamannic kings from fifth-century Latin sources, one named Gebavult and the other Gibuldus is an example

\textsuperscript{416} Geuenich 1996b: 1724.
\textsuperscript{417} Geuenich 1997b: 40-42.
\textsuperscript{418} Geuenich 1997b: 33.
\textsuperscript{419} Geuenich 1997b: 41-42.
of how this relationship works. A philologist is in a better position to determine whether “Gebavult” is a variant of “Gibuldus” and, therefore, demonstrates that the references in the Latin sources are to one person and not two. The historians' contribution takes the form of gathering and incorporating into the entry for each name particular categories of historical information about the bearer.

5.2 Clovis, the Alamanni and historical traditions

Alongside developing onomastics as an approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past, Geuenich held an active interest in Clovis, the Alamanni and the historical traditions that surrounded them. The mid-1990s saw celebrations marking the 1500th anniversary of the traditionally-accepted date of Clovis’ conversion to Catholicism and his victory over the Alamanni at Zülpich. These anniversary celebrations provided Geuenich with the opportunity to focus on the historical rendering of Clovis and the Alamanni. Through presenting a biography of Clovis, entitled “Chlodwig. Versuch einer Biographie”, Geuenich balances the historiographical issues bound up in the limitations associated with the extant source material for Clovis. Geuenich points out that sixth-century writer Gregory of Tours is one of the principal sources on Clovis but he provides more information on Clovis’ family than on Clovis himself.

The opening two pages of the 1998 edited collection of papers Die Franken und Alemannen bis zur „Schlacht bei Zülpich“ shows the centrality of historical tradition and the history of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity scholarship to Geuenich’s work. There is a methodological continuity from where his work in Chlodwig und die „Schlacht bei Zülpich“ and Die Alamannen concludes. Chlodwig und die „Schlacht bei Zülpich“ was an

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exhibition catalogue focused on Clovis’ victory over the Alamanni and his subsequent conversion to Christianity and Die Alamannen focused more specifically on that particular group. Die Franken und Alemannen had its origins in a colloquium held in Zülpich in September 1996 but its remit was broader than the two previous exhibitions. It looked at the history of the two gentes and how the interaction between the two was not only violent but had also been cast over time as being significant for European history as a whole. Not only was Clovis’ victory at Zülpich considered to be a central topic but 1996 also saw the 1250th anniversary of the so-called “Judgement of Canstatt”.

Bringing the events of Zülpich and Canstatt alongside one another came as a result of open questions about research methodology. The information for these events is both ambiguous and scant. Clovis engaged in a battle with the Alamanni at Tolbiacum in AD496, traditionally sited at the German town of Zülpich. The principal source for Clovis’ victory and the subsequent subjugation of the Alamanni by the Franks is Gregory of Tours, despite the fact that there is a lack of detail regarding the battle itself. Gregory of Tours’ account includes Clovis vowing to convert to Christianity in exchange for victory over the Alamanni. The emphasis in the account is on Clovis’ conversion rather than the battle itself. The detail concerning the so-called “Judgement of Canstatt” is as equally as limited. The Continuations of The Chronicle of Fredegar provides little about this event other than it took place in 746 and that Carloman (706-754) executed Alamannic noblemen for treason. This event put an end to an Alamannic

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426 Gregory Hist. II.30-31. Wood 1994: 42 observes that Gregory was perhaps more interested in creating an image of a catholic king against whom successor could be benchmarked than in creating an accurate account of his reign.
revolt that took place at the time and enabled the Franks to rule over the Duchy of Alamannia for the following century\textsuperscript{428}.

Rather than focusing on the specifics of these two events, both military defeats, attention was given over to matters of historiography. An example of this is the date and location of the Battle of Zülpich. These are details considered to be central to Alamannic history and pertinent to European history as a whole but they are derived from Gregory of Tours, whose critical reporting of the event itself has been called into question\textsuperscript{429}. The nature of the extant literary source material is such that writing about Alamannic history is as much an exercise in discussing specific historical events and individuals as it is about the authors who write about them. It is for such reasons that there is a significant place given over to historical tradition in Geuenich’s works.

6 The importance of historical traditions surrounding the Alamanni

1. Who are the Alamanni?

It may seem strange to the reader when a presentation of the history of the Alamanni begins with such a question. As a rule, one knows the subject on which one wants to write a book. One who writes a history about Baden-Württemberg or a history of the German Empire under the Weimar Republic has a clear and unambiguous temporal and spatial limitation for his subject: in both cases, there is solid data that limits the period to be treated...

... these conditions are not met for a history of the Alamanni: It is uncertain when they started when they - if at all - ended and where in the early days of the boundaries of the territory of the Alamanni, of Alamannia. There is also no clear

\textsuperscript{428} Krusch 1888: Continuations 29; Wallace-Hadrill 1962.
\textsuperscript{429} Geuenich 1998: v.
identification or definition of who the Alamanni were and who they were not, and the structure of society and the political constitution of the Alamannic people are, for the first centuries of its alleged existence, anything but obvious⁴³⁰.

In the introduction to his *Geschichte der Alemannen* (2005), Geuenich explains the challenges associated with studying the distant ‘Germanic’ past, and in particular the history of the Alamanni. For Geuenich, the crux of the problem is that all that would be typically used to identify the people, or the society, about which a history would be written is missing. In Geuenich’s opinion, territorial limits, social structures, and political constitutions are not clearly mapped out in the available source material thereby making the construction of the Alamanni a complicated task.

Consequently, Geuenich reveals a stronger emphasis in his works regarding the historical traditions that surround the Alamanni. For if that which is normally used to identify a people group such as the Alamanni is missing in the literary source material, as Geuenich maintains, then one must be aware of how those absences have been treated by those beyond the historians’ community. Thus, Geuenich’s position can also be a considered a reaction to those traditions or depictions that present the Alamanni as historically unambiguous.

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⁴³⁰ "1. Wer ist die Alemannen?

Es mag auf den Leser befremdlich wirken, wenn eine Darstellung der Geschichte der Alemannen mit einer solchen Frage beginnt. Denn in der Regel kennt man den Gegenstand, über den man ein Buch schreiben möchte. Wer etwa eine Geschichte Baden-Württembergs oder eine Geschichte des Deutschen Reiches in der Weimarer Republik schreibt, dem sind die zeitliche und räumliche Begrenzung seines Themas klar und eindeutig vorgegeben: In beiden Fällen gibt es feste Daten, die den zu behandelnden Zeitraum begrenzen, …

6.1 Depictions of the Alamanni

6.1.1 Die Alamannen Exhibition of 1997/8

Geuenich's contributions to the 2001 exhibition catalogue entitled *Die Alamannen* further show the importance he places on the understanding of scholarly traditions associated with the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Geuenich's contributions consider why the Alamanni are a subject worth studying and the limits that are placed on theoretical interpretations of the Alamanni by the extant historical and archaeological evidence. The concluding chapter of the catalogue is a reminder about the limitations of the historical and archaeological record and a warning about nineteenth-century ethnic appropriations of the terms “Alamanni”, “Alamannic” and “Alamannia”. Geuenich's discussions of the Alamanni or how Roman authors depicted the Alamanni as a group are examples of his interest in articulating the complexities associated with the historiography associated with the study of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian.

6.1.2 Political rendering of the Alamanni from the 1997/8 exhibition catalogue

The catalogue entitled *Die Alamannen* was published to support an exhibition held in 1997-8 in Stuttgart, Augsburg and Zürich to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of Clovis’ victory over the Alamanni in 496/7. The politicisation of the event manifested itself in the form of patronage by the then German Bundespräsident Roman Herzog and his Swiss counterpart, Arnold Koller, the Premier of Baden-Württemberg, Erwin Teufel and the Baden-Württemberg State Minister for Science, Research and Culture Klaus von

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432 Geuenich 2001e.
433 For instance: Geuenich 2001b: 77-78.
Trotha. The degree of political interest in this exhibition was high. Its patrons saw the exhibition as a display of shared history as well as something that contributed to the establishment of regional identities. This sentiment was not unique to the *Die Alamannen* exhibition. In the same year as the *Die Alemannen* exhibition, another, entitled *Die Franken – Wegbereiter Europas*, was held under the patronage of the then then French President Jacques Chirac and the then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Their unity in patronage was a politicisation of the past that saw France and Germany, together, as heirs of the Franks.

Returning, then, to the *Die Alemannen* exhibition, the Federal President of Germany at the time, Roman Herzog, was the first to portray the exhibition in this light: “...the exhibition offers a vivid insight into an era of Central European history.” The Swiss President, Arnold Koller, also echoed this sentiment in the first paragraph of his opening remarks by referring to the assistance the exhibition would give to people’s historical understanding of their shared history:

The people who visit the exhibition or make use of this companion book, are connected to history of a region that includes most of southern Germany and northern Switzerland, illustrated impressively through the most recent research results.

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437 “…die Ausstellung einen lebendigen Einblick in eine Epoche der mitteleuropäischen Geschichte…”, Herzog 2001: 10.
438 „Den Menschen, die die Ausstellung besuchen oder dieses Begleitbuch zur Hand nehmen, werden historische Wurzeln einer Region, die den Großteil Süddeutschlands und der Nordschweiz umfasst, anhand neuester Forschungsergebnisse eindrücklich veranschaulicht“, Koller 2001: 11.
This is closely aligned with the remarks of Klaus von Trotha, the Baden-Württemberg Minister for Science, Research and the Arts, who portrayed the exhibition as helping to show the historical roots shared between countries within the region \(^{439}\).

The introductory statements frame the exhibition in the context of a political agenda that seeks a shared culture. Herzog’s description of the Alamanni as a common historical denominator for parts of Germany, Austria and Switzerland is clear:

Even today, the Alamannic speaking and cultural world brings together, across state boundaries, parts of Germany, Switzerland and Austria \(^{440}\).

Koller’s final statement in his introductory remarks depicts the Alamanni as something that can be seen as a basis for improving, neighbourly relations between countries due to ‘ancestral’ languages and customs \(^{441}\). The Premier of Baden-Württemberg, Erwin Teufel, appears to be more circumspect in marrying the ancient past with the present. His opening observations direct attention to the possibility of deriving a shared culture from a historically attested people but he does not make as active a link between the past and the present as the other patrons of the exhibition do \(^{442}\).

The propagation of cultural solidarity applies to the Die Alamannen exhibition in the same way as it did for Chlodwig und die „Schlacht bei Zülpich“. Herzog hints at it by deliberately setting the context of the exhibition as contemporary Europe as in the conclusion of his opening comments \(^{443}\). This is followed by Klaus von Trotha, who states:


\(^{441}\) Koller 2001: 11.

\(^{442}\) Teufel 2001: 12.

\(^{443}\) Herzog 2001: 10.
In a time when the subject of the common history of our country and its integration into the European environment is of utmost relevance, the major regional exhibition "The Alamanni" constitutes another milestone for the processing of our common past in Baden-Württemberg.

German history is depicted as both common with and integrated into European history. It not holds a place in the broader sweep of European history but also a part in the construction of local or regional identity. The Alamanni are depicted as historically relevant to the state of Baden-Württemberg.

6.1.3 Geuenich’s response to the political rendering of the Alamanni

Geuenich, at a number of points in the *Die Alamannen* catalogue and other works, addresses the complexities associated with the evidence for the Alamanni at this time. Reference to these complexities takes the form of consistent questioning over the Alamanni’s identity, their history and the historical traditions that have emerged around them. For example, Geuenich’s article entitled “Ein junges Volk macht Geschichte: Herkunft und Landnahme der Alamannen” details the development of the meaning of the term Alamanni. Geuenich’s later discussions about the interaction between the Franks and the Alamanni are framed by a focus on the depiction of the Alamanni by the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus. For Geuenich, the different ways in which Ammianus refers to the Alamanni, such as a regna or gentes, serves to show the lack of a straightforward definition regarding the identity of the Alamanni.

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446 Geuenich 2001c: 144.
This concern is not unique to Geuenich’s articles in the Die Alamannen text. Geuenich explains that because it is unclear when the Alamanni ‘began’, what their territory was, and who they were or were not, the history of the Alamanni is more a subject concerned with source tradition447. This is explained in his 1997, and the subsequent 2005 reprint of, Geschichte der Alemannen448. Erwin Teufel’s opening comments about the Die Alamannen exhibition shares a similar sentiment:

The French call Germany "Allemagne", "Alemannia" in Spanish. Who were the Alamanni, these Germanic clans who in the 3rd Century settled in the area between the Rhine, Main and Upper Danube and was the name our neighbours was to give to all of Germany?449

Geuenich’s contributions in the same books and exhibition catalogues serve as a reminder that there are historiographical and methodological considerations that test the veracity of those political claims that set up the distant past as possessing a role in contemporary politics. The study of these historiographical and methodological traditions is seen as a valid exercise in its own right.

For Geuenich, maintaining an interdisciplinary focus is therefore vital. Collaboration between different historiographical and methodological traditions helps to ground one's appreciation of different depictions of the Alamanni in academic rigour and not political rhetoric. That that the Alamanni are historically obvious in their origin, social structure and political constitution is a flawed notion and one that Geuenich emphasises as such through the interdisciplinary focus of his work.

448 Geuenich 1997a, 2005.
6.2 Maintaining the interdisciplinary focus

The call for interdisciplinarity can be found in the edited collection of papers *Person und Name*450. A continuance of *Nomen et Gens* that maintains an interdisciplinary focus, *Person und Name* addresses the historical and philological problems associated with the conception and compilation of a dictionary of proper names. Characteristic of Geuenich’s approach to onomastics since the commencement of the *Nomen et Gens* project has been the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to the ancient past. *Person und Name*451 is an example that shows how attention to the study of the development of names and what could be learnt about the familial, ethnic or social identity of their carriers has fostered an increase in the field’s interdisciplinarity. A greater level of co-operation between disciplines such as archaeology, philology and history appeared452.

Geuenich is an editor of the collection of papers entitled *Zur Geschichte der Gleichung „germanisch-deutsch“*453. This is another example of Geuenich’s interest in the development of historical thought relating to the ‘Germanic’ past. Both the collection of papers and the conference upon which it was based was perceived by Geuenich as a medium through which the discipline could consider the value of being aware of the traditions that have informed it and the form that they have assumed in the present day454.

So it is quite necessary and useful to identify aberrations in historical research and history as such – not in the smart-alecky attitude of youth, but to give validity to those accomplished in the science of history and to provide new
research with a reliable foundation. In this way, the science of history, which is rarely allowed to discover new sources comes to new insights – as opposed to archeology which makes new discoveries every day, so to speak\textsuperscript{455}.

Geuenich casts the study of \textit{Germanische Altertumskunde} as a discipline whose central pillar is an awareness of historical tradition and thought. His approach provides the newer generation of scholarship with a strong foundation upon which to base their work. It is also a scholarly environment positive towards new research and capable of responding to any of the socio-political demands framed by the concerns of contemporary Germany and Europe.

These concerns are investigated further in \textit{Name und Gesellschaft im Frühmittelalter}\textsuperscript{456}. \textit{Name und Gesellschaft} brought together the masses of personal names to be found in documentary records of ‘Germanic’ successor kingdoms to the Roman West, such as charters, chronicles and \textit{vitae}, dated from the third to the eighth centuries. This assembly followed a colloquium held in Mulheim almost ten years after the \textit{Nomen et Gens} conference in Düsseldorf. Geuenich estimated that, by October 2004, there had been 56,000 names entered into a computer database from over 2000 different sources and for over 16,000 different people\textsuperscript{457}.

The central question framing \textit{Name und Gesellschaft} was to do with the extent to which personal names indicated ethnic identity among the early ‘Germanic’ peoples of the Western Roman Empire. In their paper “Möglichkeiten der statistischen Auswertung der im Projekt erfassten Personennamen”, Geuenich and Matthias Böck

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\textsuperscript{455} „Es ist also durchaus erforderlich und sinnvoll, Irrwege der Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung als solche aufzuzeigen – nicht in besserwissersiche Attitude der später Geborenen, sondern um den inzwischen erzielten Forschungen in der Geschichtswissenschaft Geltung zu verschaffen und um neueren Forschungen ein verläßliches Fundament zu geben. Auf diese Weise kann auch die Geschichtswissenschaft, der es – im Gegensatz etwa zur Archäologie, die sozusagen täglich neue Funde macht – nur selten vergönnt ist, neue Quellen zu entdecken, zu neuen Erkenntnissen gelangen“, Geuenich 2004 b: xii-xiii.

\textsuperscript{456} Geuenich and Runde 2006.

\textsuperscript{457} Geuenich and Runde 2006: 336.
focused on ways in which the information contained in the computer database could be used. The first suggestion was to use the data as a means to present the scholar with an opportunity to see family relationships on the basis of shared name elements as they appeared on two eighth-century Bavarian charters. The second suggestion was to trace the development or evolution of these elements over time and geographical region through listing and cross-referencing all the different spellings of the different parts of a given name in one place.

Where *Nomen et Gens* was more focused on ‘Germanic’ names and appellatives, *Name und Gesellschaft* provided the opportunity for the interdisciplinarity of onomastics to be further explored. An example of this is Heinrich Beck’s contribution, which discussed the widespread use of second or characterising names in early Scandinavian society. Beck examined the ambiguity surrounding whether the use of characterising names was an inherited tradition from the Scandinavian past or whether it was a more recent innovation by using evidence found on runic inscriptions and bracteates.

### 7 Conclusion

Geuenich’s approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past, and the Alamanni in particular, starts with, and remains, centred on onomastics. The opening statement to this chapter, from Bourdieu, echoes what Geuenich values in onomastics and what the study of names from the medieval period can offer the broader discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde*. Geuenich’s study of names provides the philologist,
archaeologist and historian of the ‘Germanic’ past with an understanding of how names work and how they interact with one another.

The intersection of common and proper nouns brings Geuenich’s discussion to the debate about ‘Germanic’ identity. His study of names shows the constructed nature of individual and group identities. From the 1970s, Geuenich acknowledged that names showed choices of individuals to participate in group activities and behaviours in a manner to be considered a member of that group. Geuenich builds on this break from tradition, reinforcing his analysis with a focus on the discontinuities in ‘Germanic’ language. For example, the *Nomen et Gens* project in which he was involved, and indeed the project volumes to which he contributed, highlighted the assumptions associated with names and what such assumptions can show. In the process of examining the intersection between common and proper nouns, Geuenich establishes a position on the extent to which personal names are indicative of ethnic identity. His view is that names will not affirm one’s ethnic identity in the distant ‘Germanic’ past, as ethnic identity is a social construct and can never really be determined. Rather, names will assist in understanding group membership and how internal group structures come to be.

Geuenich’s study, then, of the development internal group structures, and particularly power structures, within people groups in the Early Middle Ages is evidenced by a number of recurring discussion points. The use of confraternity books as a source of names and groups in the Early Middle Ages by Geuenich, on one level, should hardly be a surprise. Their very nature is such that they are natural sources of interest for onomasticists. On a different level, however, the confraternity books have come to be used as a means to understand the relationships between groups in the medieval period and the influence that such groups exuded.
The influence of groups on those around them and on themselves is also something that Geuenich is able to track through his onomastic approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Bourdieu’s comments make reference to the fact that the authority in a name is such that it has a symbolic power, an influence that can affect the way in which history is shaped. The confraternity books are presented as evidence that highlights this because, in many instances, these texts are what is available by way of a documented past. There is a need however, states Geuenich, to approach these texts with an interdisciplinary method.

Interdisciplinarity is a constant theme in all of Geuenich’s works. It is also the area where the most development in Geuenich’s historical thinking takes place. In the 1970s, Geuenich’s approach to the past was very much oriented around onomastics. The notion of interdisciplinary thinking is developed in relation to personal names. For instance, the development of the Duisburg research database on names in the medieval period combines onomastics and uses of information technology. While information technology is a tool to assist the study of the distant past, Geuenich’s work in this area combined a traditional discipline with the methodologies associated with online databases.

In the late 1990s, the Alamanni appeared in different museum exhibitions and catalogues, proceeded by the political rhetoric of politicians who spoke of the Alamanni’s place in both regional and European consciousnesses. The interpretation of what entails regional or European consciousness is without specific definition but the impact of the rhetoric casts the Alamanni in a different light to that of a people group from the Antique or Early Medieval periods. Geuenich’s emphasis on interdisciplinary
approaches to the Alamanni seeks to set depictions of the Alamanni in the context of academic rigour as opposed to political agenda.

By the 2000s, interdisciplinary thinking is more broadly applied to the distant ‘Germanic’ past. For example, Geuenich's recent work has engaged more closely with the historiography surrounding the distant ‘Germanic’ past. He has promoted the interdisciplinary nature of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity to show the extensiveness of the discipline, to emphasise the complexities inherent in it, and to show what influences there are that have a part to play in shaping the history of groups such as the Alamanni. *Zur Geschichte der Gleichung „germanisch-deutsch“* focuses on the term ‘Germanic’ and its evolution. The interdisciplinary approach is reflected in the introductory statements discussing the subject from an archaeological, philological and historical point of view.

Thus, Geuenich’s perspective on the distant ‘Germanic’ past is the product of mixed argumentation. His emphasis on interdisciplinarity is not something born out of an invasion of post-modern thinking into the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. It is the result of Geuenich adhering to the belief that rigorous examination of historical and archaeological data in their own terms is crucial. This is where Geuenich’s approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past, and the Alamanni in particular, can be situated.

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461 For a parallel observation that *Mischargumentation* should not be confused with post-modern analysis, see Halsall 2012: 31.
Figure 3: Professor Walter Pohl (Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Universität Wien)
Chapter 5: Walter Pohl

The previously dominant disciplines, philology, literary history and even philosophy, whose intellectual foundations are threatened by their new rivals, disciplines like linguistics, semiology, anthropology, or even sociology, find that the social foundations of their academic existence are also under siege from the criticisms welling up on all sides, usually in the name of the social sciences and on the initiative of teachers from these disciplines, against the archaic nature of their contents and their pedagogical structures. This double criticism frequently awakens touching reactions of traditionalist conservatism in those professors who did not have the instinct and boldness to recycle themselves in time... 462.

1 Introduction

At the centre of Bourdieu’s comment are the notions of academic change and academic adaptability. His is a cautionary observation, noting how older and more dominant disciplines such as philology, literary history and philosophy have been questioned by rival disciplines at a fundamental level. Specifically, the very individuals who constitute membership of the younger generation of scholar within the philological, literary historical or philosophical disciplines are those that Bourdieu identifies as having questioned the very foundations upon which their so-called dominant disciplines are based. Theirs is a break with tradition and convention, a rupture from what is traditionally defined as their discipline and the guiding philosophies of their discipline’s existence brought on by their capital and dispositions.

It is here that Walter Pohl’s scholarship on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian can be situated. Continuing the break in tradition presented by those that have gone before

him, Pohl is a distinguished scholar who has made significant contributions to understanding the complexities associated with ethnic identity, and identity formation, in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. His contributions cover an extensive scope, ranging from content-specific analysis to a focus on methodological and historiographical concerns regarding source traditions and interpretative frameworks behind barbarian history.

Pohl’s contributions have a historical context. The post-1945 environment detailed in Chapter 2 provides a setting within which to understand Pohl’s approach to the *Germani*. The traditional dichotomy of ‘Germanist’ and ‘Romanist’ readings of the available literary evidence, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a recurring motif in Pohl’s work. It forms the basis of that from which Pohl wishes to move away. The response to the call for interdisciplinary approaches, as seen in Wenskus’ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, is a key part of Pohl’s views on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian and it is built upon later in this chapter. In place of the traditional binary presentation of the literary evidence that the ‘Germanist’ and ‘Romanist’ approaches represent, Pohl looks to ethnicity, as outlined in Chapter 2, as an important discourse for identity politics in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods.

This chapter chronologically presents Pohl’s historical thinking about the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, taking the start of Pohl’s academic career in the 1980s as a starting point. The chapter considers Pohl’s part in expressing the idea of *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory, initially posited by Wenskus and then Wolfram, in more contemporary, sociological terms. Pohl is less concerned with the distinctions between groups and more focused on how ethnicity served as a point of connectivity with the changes of the Late Antique West and Early Middle Ages. For Pohl, ethnicity is
a means to explain change, particularly as socio-political and cultural realities of the Roman West evolved and groups changed how they viewed themselves.

2 Pohl: A Brief Overview

Pohl has made a significant contribution to the study of the barbarian past. His research interests have extended across topics such as the formation of ‘European’ peoples after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the publication of medieval diplomatic texts and the resumption of the Regesta Imperii series\textsuperscript{463}. Born in 1953 and actively contributing to research since the 1980s, Pohl continues to add to the scholarly body of work on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, the societies that formed its basis, the impact they had on the world of the early Middle Ages and current constructions of individual and group identity.

Pohl attended University of Vienna from 1971, where his initial area of study was Economics. He changed his area of study to History and English and completed his Masters degree in History in 1981, obtaining his doctorate three years later under the supervision of Herwig Wolfram. Pohl’s connection with Wolfram continued the following year where he was employed as a research assistant in a project concerned with new directions in Early Middle Ages research\textsuperscript{464}. He also completed his Habilitationsschrift, published in 1988 as Die Awaren\textsuperscript{465}, which led to employment as a researcher at the Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung, a part of the Austrian Academy of Science. In 1990-1991 he participated in the research project “The

\textsuperscript{463} C. Spinei and Hrihan 2008.
\textsuperscript{464} C. Spinei and Hrihan 2008.
\textsuperscript{465} Pohl 1988.
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historical ethnography of the Lombards” co-ordinated by Herwig Wolfram. Pohl’s profile within the Austrian Academy of Sciences increased from 1993. For example, in 1998, he was appointed as the director the Forschungsstelle für Geschichte des Mittelalters der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Pohl completed a second Habilitationsschrift entitled Werkstätte der Erinnerung – Montecassino und die Gestaltung der langobardischen Vergangenheit in 2001. He was appointed to the post of Director of the Kommission when it became the Institut für Mittelalterforschung in 2004. Pohl’s appointment to the position of Professor for the History of the Middle Ages and of Historical Sciences at the University of Vienna was made in 2006, directly succeeding his own supervisor, Herwig Wolfram.

While the level of research activity in which Pohl has been involved is diverse, his primary interest is ethnicity as it manifests itself in the Early Middle Ages. The place of ethnicity in identity discourse, and the consequences that ethnicity has for the historical narrative surrounding the barbarian past are important foundations for understanding Pohl’s research. His research into barbarians is not restricted to literary sources, as shown by a recent edited collection of papers on the archaeology of identity.

Pohl has had a distinguished career. He has received several important awards and holding a number of important positions within the discipline. In 1989 he received the Böhlau Award of the Austrian Academy of Science. In 1993, he was actively involved in the European Science Foundation’s Transformation of the Roman World project as both a member of the steering committee and team leader for the Imperium, gentes et

466 C. Spinei and Hriban 2008: 11.
469 Pohl and Mehofer 2010.
regna group. He was appointed as an expert advisor of the Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde in 1996 and made a member of the Scientific Board of the Centre for Medieval Studies for the Czech Academy for Science in Prague two years later in 1998. Pohl was a member of the Commission for the Coordination of the Tabula Imperii Byzantini project and was the Austrian representative in the Standing Committee for the Humanities of the European Science Foundation in 2002. He was also a member of the editorial committee of the Regesta Imperii project of the Academy of Science in Mainz during this year. He was co-editor of the Brill Studies in the Early Middle Ages and of the Millenium magazine in 2004. Pohl was also not only elected as a full member of the Austrian Academia of Sciences but he was also awarded the prestigious Wittgenstein Prize. An award that is given out to only one researcher per year, this enabled Pohl to establish and manage a five-year project entitled “Ethnische Identitäten im frühmittelalterlichen Europa”\(^\text{470}\). This project concluded in 2010.

3 The influence of Wenskus and Wolfram on Pohl’s thinking

Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram form an important part of Pohl’s academic genealogy\(^\text{471}\). Their idea is that group identity comes from a group of military elites who are responsible for the symbols, myths and historical memories and for their transmission from one generation to the next.

3.1 The influence of Wenskus

One of the major academic foundations of Pohl’s interpretation of the barbarian past is to be found in Reinhard Wenskus’ 1961 volume Stammesbildung und

\(^{470}\) Pohl 2010.

Verfassung472. This text traces the emergence and passing of ethnic groups and associations in Europe from the prehistoric period through to the Early Middle Ages473. Wenskus assigns a principal role in the daily activities of the different groups to politics: "Nothing better can highlight the importance of political ideas in the historical process than the destruction of the Roman Empire"474. Wenskus saw tribal identity determined by the domain of a small tradition-bearing core of nobles closely connected to the king. Kingship lay at the heart of tradition and embodied the gens. His work looked to present and test this theory in relation to 'Germanic' tribes475. It was an attempt to redirect the attention of German scholarship focused on the Stamm and ethnicity to the new theories informing German history after 1945. Pohl explains how Wenskus’ 1961 Stammesbildung und Verfassung was a new approach to studying ethnic phenomena at the same time as being connected to earlier traditions and conventions associated with the field476. Wenskus’ reliance on the German sociologist and anthropologist Wilhelm Mühlmann (1904-1988) in relation to the concept of Ethnos, Traditions kern theory, Wir-Bewußtsein and Abstammungsgemeinschaft is an example477.

Pohl also uses Wenskus to highlight the extent to which today's dialogue surrounding ethnic identification in the Antique West today differs from that of the 1960s/70s when Wenskus first posited Traditions kern theory478. Pohl identifies four

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472 Wenskus 1961. A critical overview of Wenskus’ place within academic discussions to do with group identity formation in the Early Middle Ages, see Murray 2002 and Gillett 2007: 243-246.
474 "Nichts kann die Bedeutung politischer Ideen im Geschichtsprozeß besser beleuchten als die Zertrümmerung des römischen Reiches…", Wenskus 1961: 1.
475 The ideas of Wenskus should not be treated as unique. According to Murray 2002: 53, 67, Wenskus’ ideas were similar to that of the English scholar Hector Munro Chadwick who wrote The Origins of the English Nation. The themes and concerns in that book are similar to that of Stammesbildung und Verfassung. A useful summary of the Traditions kern theory, and its development under Wolfram, appears in James 2009: 106-108.
478 Pohl 2002b: 224, 238-239.
reasons why Wenskus’ position is untenable today\textsuperscript{479}. Firstly, the concept of \textit{Stamm} only existed in the Late Antique period as, according to Pohl, a linguistic abstraction. Secondly, the notion of \textit{Traditionskern} theory is elitist. Thirdly, Wenskus’ predilection for \textit{Geistesgeschichte}, a German philosophical concept that can only vaguely be rendered in English by the term ‘history of ideas’ which allowed a subjective definition of ethnicity but implied that the ideology of \textit{Gentilismus} was an almost metaphysical force of change. Fourthly, Wenskus’ analysis relies on the perception of Roman-Germanic dichotomy and a Germanic interpretation of the history of \textit{Stammesbildung}. Pohl makes the point that Wenskus’ place in the history of ethnogenesis theory is not under debate. The focus of discussion on ethnic identity formation should be on where the debate is currently situated and not on developments that took place in the 1960s.

The last way in which Wenskus appears in Pohl’s works is in the context of discussing Wenskus’ own importance in the field. Wenskus provides the means to give form to specific elements of tradition passed on from one generation to the next as well as providing a framework for others who study ethnic identity in the Early Middle Ages\textsuperscript{480}. Wenskus’ work is seen to be fundamental for these reasons\textsuperscript{481}. His model of ethnic interpretations of the past is considered by Pohl to be central in either extending the theories of others or acting as a starting point for further discussions on the topic. In discussing the issue of names and how they relate to the conveyance of identity in the Early Middle Ages in “Identität und Widerpsruch”, Pohl makes the observation that:

\begin{itemize}
\item Pohl 2002b: 224-225.
\item For example, Pohl 2005: 556.
\end{itemize}
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The people’s name is always shared memory. Of course, this memory is itself not as ahistorical, as codified and from the interpretative authority of a "traditionskern" monopoly as suggested by the model of Wenskus 482.

This brings Pohl to highlight the abstractions and subjectivities in Wenskus’ approach at the same time as maintaining a hold on the impact that Wenskus has had on understanding identity formation within the ‘Germanic’ past. Pohl continues his focus on the relationship between identity politics and communities in the Early Middle Ages. This is presented via the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu 483. Bourdieu provides Pohl with terminology that accommodates some of the subtleties associated with ethnic identity formation. In his introduction to The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages, Pohl uses Bourdieu’s notion of ‘symbolic capital’ in his analysis of the relationship between communities and power, and the symbolic power and status of the king in particular 484. Bourdieu’s Practical Reason is cited regularly throughout “Telling the Difference” 485 and his description of ethnic identity as a relational process is central. To generalise from this that Bourdieu takes the place of Wenskus in Pohl’s thinking about identification processes would be a step too far.

Wenskus is an important part of Pohl’s thinking on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. His approach provides Pohl with a foundation for his own methodology. The idea that a group’s identity is determined by a small tradition-bearing core of nobles closely connected to the king is recast with more modern terminology, reflecting developments in the academic discourse relating to ethnic interpretations of the past. Wenskus is not

483 Murray 2002: 40.
484 Pohl 2003a: 12.
the only important foundation for Pohl's thinking. What Herwig Wolfram does with Wenskus’ approach is an important consideration.

A comment at this point is required regarding the adoption of Wenskus’ framework by Austrian scholarship. While the scarcity of historical research into the early Middle Ages in Germany in the 1960s meant that Wenskus’ interpretation of the ‘Germanic’ people had little immediate impact there, it was a model readily adopted by Austrian scholarship. Wood suggests Austria’s Habsburg heritage may have contributed to the championing of Wenskus’ interpretative model. This was because the Habsburg heritage encompassed a sensitivity to the political power inherent to ethnicity. As a multi-ethnic polity, in the nineteenth century the Austro-Hungarian Empire had experienced numerous ethnic groups within the Empire attempting to leverage nationalist feelings in favour of their independence. Ethnicity was being mobilised politically. The notion of an interpretative model, such as Traditions kern, that emphasised the politically constructed nature of ethnic identity resonated with Austria’s historical perspective.

3.2 The influence of Wolfram

Herwig Wolfram is the second significant influence on the work of Pohl and his ethnic interpretation of the past. Wolfram’s History of the Goths is critical in relation to the theory of a core group of nobles being responsible for the transmission of identity. Since it was first published in 1979 in German there have been several further editions, including a translation into English, Spanish and other languages. It covers Gothic history from earliest times, through the Migration Period, to the fall of the

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486 Wood 2013: 301.
487 Wood 2013: 302.
'Ostrogothic' kingdom in Italy (c. 550) and the 'Visigothic' kingdom in southern Gaul (c. 500). *History of the Goths* looks at the Gothic ethnogenesis on Roman soil, portraying the Goths as the product of several ethnogeneses. They are depicted as polyethnic in character and are not portrayed as a single, homogenous group. The Goths are not as historically discontinuous as this might suggest and the influence of Wenskus should not be ignored as Wolfram still invokes the idea of *Traditionskern*. Wolfram depicts the Goths as a historically discontinuous group but one in which a thread of continuity can be found through those who are considered responsible for the shaping of tribal consciousness. In this instance, it is the aristocratic families. Wolfram’s *History of the Goths* is, therefore, not a history of the Gothic people but of a tradition that contributed to ‘being Gothic’.

One of the ways in which Pohl uses Wolfram is to show that the thinking about Gothic identity formation, and ethnic identity formation as a whole in the Early Middle Ages, has progressed. It is no longer bound by the paradigm of *Germanische Altertumskunde*. Pohl refers to such a development in the article “Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung”. Pohl refers to the way in which Wolfram has developed the complexity of tradition and myth. On the surface of the relationship between the two there are disjunctures but underneath there is continuity in the transmission of tradition. Elite groups may change on account of the wider group’s polyethnicity but their use of tradition to transmit group identity remains constant:

Small, high status groups, as could be shown, propagated this sense of belonging and its symbolic forms of expression throughout larger communities, and

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490 Murray 1989: 530.  
492 Pohl 2002b: 224.  
legitimised rulership and norms of behaviour by myths and claims to ancient tradition\textsuperscript{494}.

Rhetorically invoked, ethnographic ideology contributes to group identity\textsuperscript{495}.

The models of Wenskus and Wolfram are important in Pohl's thinking, particularly in relation to how Pohl expresses concern about the use of the ancient past in contemporary identity formations. Wenskus' \textit{Traditionskern} model focused on the central political elite as responsible for the symbolic capital underwriting group identities. His perspective was that it was not possible to determine identity from grouped archaeological finds any more than it was possible to reconstruct cultures from language groups was a reaction to the culture history theory put forward by Gustaf Kossinna. The impact of political affiliations and the discourse related to the identification of groups in the literary record, in conjunction with related archaeological material, informed a group's sense of identity. Pohl sees aspects of this model as flawed but his re-presentation of it via sociological methodologies suggests an acceptance of the influence central political elite can have on the discourse and therefore the wider population.

Wolfram appears in Pohl's works in the context of discussing the importance of identity formation in the Early Middle Ages. According to Pohl, Wolfram's analysis is considered critical in understanding changes that took place in the political discourse of Ostrogothic Italy\textsuperscript{496}. Wolfram's approach is considered to be the next methodological step from Wenskus not only because it highlights the unreliable nature of the \textit{Traditionskern} model\textsuperscript{497} but also because the approach seeks to explain why groups

\textsuperscript{494} Pohl 1998c: 21.
\textsuperscript{495} Pohl 2005: 556-557.
\textsuperscript{496} Pohl 1999b: 140.
\textsuperscript{497} Pohl 2002b: 231.
think and act in relation to their own identity. Wolfram took Wenskus' ideas and applied them to the problem of ethnic identity in the antique world, demonstrating how ethnic identity was not an immutably biological idea or a concept that was linked to genetic descent. It was something contingent on the acceptance of the identity ideology projected on to the individual and the community by the ruling elite. Pohl’s critique and use of Wenskus and Wolfram shows the extent of a political elite’s influence on identity formation and how the rallying of cultural capital is an artificial process. Pohl frames this influence on identity formation and the rallying of cultural capital in terms of ethnic discourse.

4 Establishing the idea of ethnic discourse

My father, the khagan, went off with seventeen men. Having heard the news that [he] was marching off, those who were in the towns went up mountains and those who were on mountains came down [from there]; thus they gathered and numbered seventy men. Due to the fact that Heaven granted strength, the soldiers of my father, the khagan, were like wolves, and his enemies were like sheep. Having gone on campaigns forward and backward, he gathered together and collected men; and they all numbered seven hundred men. After they had numbered seven hundred men, [my father, the khagan] organized and ordered the people who had lost their state and their khagan, the people who had turned slaves and servants, the people who had lost the Turkic institutions, in accordance with the rules of my ancestors.

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498 Pohl 1999b: 140.
499 This is point of view is expressed for the first time in Wenskus 1961.
This eighth-century, Turkic inscription is used as an example of the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis model. The inscription is cited in Pohl's *Die Awaren* (1988), in which he set out to write a history of the Avars using the methodological and theoretical frameworks of Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram. This is an interdisciplinary method and focus for research that combines history, ethnography, linguistics, and archaeology.

Pohl's assessment of this particular source shows a relationship between the emergence of a new group of people and the core ruler and institutions that created it. For example, in 576, the Turkic ruler Turxath reprimands Valentine, the East Roman emissary, for the East Romans’ harbouring of fugitive Avars who had previously been his subjects\(^{501}\). The Avars are identified as such by a central authority, in this instance Turxath. The idea that the ethnic identification comes from the efforts of a core group of individuals manifests itself throughout Pohl's works in a variety of ways. There is a direct role to be played in some cases by the elite of the group in question in the construction of their community. The traditions or conventions of the past that created the community could also be used to empower it. An example of this can be found in Pohl's discussions of the elements used by the Avar Khaganate in the creation of Avar community. The Avar leadership used symbolic language to facilitate imperial ambition\(^{502}\). Pohl's method emphasises the constructed nature of Avar identity.

The constructed nature of Avar identity is re-emphasied when Pohl considers the demise of the Avars. On one level, their disappearance from the historical record is posited to be the result of Avar leadership, in the 790s, being more comfortable with the

\(^{502}\) Pohl 1997a: 93.
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notion of Frankish rule than their own independence. Pohl suggests that the Avar nobility suffered from a sense of fatigue in maintaining their identity and so were content to be absorbed into other bodies politic. It was not just political entities into which Avar identity merged. On another level, Pohl also argues that Avar identity changed because of social interactions and intermingling between the Avar people and their neighbours.

5 Developing ethnic discourse

When and where did distinctions matter? Rather than simply reflecting on a world of consistent ethnic diversity, they are traces of a complex communication about communities on the periphery of the ancient, and later Christian, world. What were the cognitive and political strategies that made use of and created distinct ethnic identities? How diffused were clear notions of ethnic identity inside and outside the communities in question? Which criteria were most commonly used to distinguish between ethnic groups, and what forms of social cohesion did they put into the foreground?

The notion of ethnic discourse, to which the above statement refers, is a recurring idea throughout the 1990s. In his studies of the Avars in the 1980s, Pohl’s analysis of the barbarian utilised an interdisciplinary method that combined history, ethnography, linguistics and archaeology. The above excerpt from Pohl’s seminal paper on ethnic identity, “Strategies of Distinction” (1998), shows a degree of evolution in Pohl’s approach. From a focus on identity as the product of the activities of a group’s elite in the 1980s, by the end of the 1990s Pohl had built his approach to the barbarian on a broader interdisciplinary base, combining a historical perspective with sociological

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analysis. The *Traditionskern* model was now couched in terms of ethnic discourse. Ethnic discourse opened to Pohl the cognitive and political strategies behind identity formation and the degree to which ethnic identity was understood within and outside of the Late Antique and Early Medieval groups.

5.1 Academic context for ethnic discourse

Pohl’s presentation of ethnic discourse is a step away from focusing on the objective and subjective features of ethnicity. His approach renders ethnicity as a means by which the various groups geographically located in the Antique West could contend with the changes and challenges associated with the West Roman world becoming the so-called barbarian successor states. Pohl also presents ethnicity as a means through which present day scholarship concerned with the ‘transformation of the Roman world’ can understand the nature of the changes that took place and the impact that they had on the West Roman world.

Pohl’s claim that ethnicity in Late Antiquity was something that assisted people contend with widespread change has an academic context. Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* provides Pohl with a starting point. Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* suggested a perspective for the collapse of the Roman Empire that became the point of reference for ongoing discussion about the topic almost immediately after his work was published in the eighteenth century. The paradigm of ‘decline and fall’ is, for Pohl, integral to a wider interpretative debate against which he can juxtapose his own analysis of ethnic identity’s role in the changes confronting the Roman Empire in the West.

Since Edward Gibbon, more than 200 years ago, wrote his monumental *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, the degree of disruption or gradual change at the
end of antiquity has been debated. Did Rome fall, or was it only transformed? Was the Empire destroyed by barbarians, or was its decay inevitable for internal reasons? Even today, terminology gives an idea how differently this process can be conceived. What, in German, is known as *Völkerwanderung*, the Great Migration, is called *les invasions barbares*, the barbarian invasions in French. An age of romantic projections and national sentiments roughly from Napoleon to Hitler, re-enacted the drama of a clash between northern barbarians and Roman civilisation, with very contradictory evaluations on both sides of the Rhine and the Alps: noble savages who rejuvenate a decadent Empire; or brutal primitives who devastate civilised countries\textsuperscript{506}.

The increasing presence of the barbarian in the Roman West is symptomatic, for Gibbon, of the moral decay he believed to be at the centre of the collapse of the Empire\textsuperscript{507}. Gibbon depicts the moral fortitude of the barbarian, in chapters nine and ten of *Decline and Fall*, as superior to that displayed by the Romans. This leads to successful invasions across the frontier that emboldens the barbarian to the point where groups such as the Alamanni set up their banners in sight of Rome itself in the disorder that followed the death of Decius\textsuperscript{508}.

While the importance of the barbarian is something shared between Gibbon and Pohl, Pohl uses the barbarian differently, depicting the barbarian as causal. He applies the idea of transformation found in Lynn White’s *Transformation of the Roman World* to promote the barbarian as causal rather than as an embodiment of the repercussions of Roman apathy toward their civic duties\textsuperscript{509}. White’s collection of essays offers a model of interpretation that serves as another example of academic context for the idea that ethnicity can bring about change\textsuperscript{510}. White is significant to Pohl through the

\textsuperscript{506} Pohl 1997d: 1, 2002c: 276-277.
\textsuperscript{507} For example, Gibbon 1995: 1.230, 233.510, 513, 514.
\textsuperscript{508} Gibbon 1995: 1.272.
\textsuperscript{509} For example, Gibbon 1995: 1.273.
\textsuperscript{510} White 1966.
introduction of pluralism to discussions surrounding the substance of Gibbon's history and the implications that pluralist values have on historical interpretation; “Specifically, how does our pluralism, our anthropology, affect our view of what happened to the later Roman Empire?"\(^{511}\).

The primary impact is found in the adoption of ‘transformation’ as an alternative paradigm to that of ‘fall’.

What we have learnt to see as the end of antiquity and the beginning of the middle ages is not simply due to the fall of an Empire. Long-term developments in fields like the division of labour, long-distance trade, the distribution of agrarian surplus, urban administration, education and mentalities may have contributed more to the changes in question than was at stake on the famous battlefields at Adrianople, the Catalaunian Fields, Vouillé or the Busta Gallorum. It was again from a predominantly social-economic perspective that Lynn T. White, in the 1960s, proposed the formula that successfully replaced Gibbon’s “Decline and Fall” as a new paradigm: “The Transformation of the Roman World”\(^{512}\).

White offers two explanations as to how this comes about: detribalisation, or cultural diffusion and interaction, and democratisation. These processes emphasise the notion of cultural revitalisation in light of Roman political disintegration in the West and stress the role of the common person in history. Pohl perceives a confluence that creates an academic context in which ethnicity can act as an interpretative framework for understanding historical change. This is a crucial part of understanding what ethnic discourse entails.

\(^{511}\) White 1966: 295.  
5.2 Defining ethnic discourse

Ethnic discourse is considered to be all the utterances or texts, verbal and non-verbal practices and rites that have meaning and effect on ethnic identity, barbarians and the distant past\(^{513}\). The specific meaning of these texts or utterances changes depends on the theoretical system into which they are deployed\(^{514}\). Pohl’s conception and use of ethnic discourse as an interpretative framework for the distant barbarian past has been informed by the work of Foucault\(^{515}\), who sees discourse as a practice that systematically forms the object about which it speaks\(^{516}\). A discourse does not exist in a vacuum but is in constant conflict with other discourses and other social practices, particularly in relation to questions of truth and authority. For Foucault it is not a matter of seeing which of these discourses is ultimately more valid or ‘real’, despite its level of familiarity, but how it is that one discourse has become more dominant, the way in which its nature is constantly changing and the fact that its origins can be traced to certain key shifts in history.

Pohl’s work alludes to ethnic discourse being incapable of existing in isolation from other discourses and social conventions in the Antique West\(^{517}\). Pohl makes the following observation:

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\(^{513}\) Ethnic discourse first appears in Pohl’s work in Pohl 1998c: 19.

\(^{514}\) Connolly 1993: 10-44. For instance, empiricists and positivists argue that discourses are primarily instrumental devices that can foster common perceptions and understandings for particular purposes. The realist framework stresses the underlying or contextual material resources that make discourses possible. Sociological frameworks look at discourse as something that stresses human meaning and understanding in coming to grips with the social world. It is something that comes from the interactions of human agents that reproduce and change social relationships. Post-structuralist approaches extend the work of the sociologists by arguing that the social structures that appear in society are incomplete, inherently ambiguous and are contingent systems of meaning.

\(^{515}\) For example, Pohl 2003a: 2, 13.

\(^{516}\) Foucault 1972: 49.

\(^{517}\) The notion that ethnicity exists as a discourse in response to other discourses surrounding it is articulated in Geary 1983, who in turn is drawing on the ideas of Barth.
The written sources have preserved a great number of ethnic names that become concrete when political events or cultural expressions are recorded in connection with one of them\(^\text{518}\).

Political and cultural discourses interact with ethnic discourse. Pohl’s reference here is to the fact that the interaction between ethnic discourse and other discourses can manifest itself in the form of names. Events or expressions obtain validity or significance having used the labeling afforded to them by ethnic names. Thus, for Pohl, ethnic discourse is a discernible, systematic conceptualisation of ethnicity in the extant source material. Ethnic discourse is derived from either a template based on the classical ethnographic tradition or from a period of time where there were significant shifts or changes in the socio-political landscape\(^\text{519}\).

It was during the 1990s that much of Pohl’s thinking about the ‘Germanic’ past and ethnic discourse was published. The various developments of ethnic discourse can be tracked in his contributions to the *Transformation of the Roman World* project\(^\text{520}\). This five-year project founded on the suggestion of Dutch scholar Carlos van Regteren Altena, and sponsored by the European Science Foundation, centred on the impact of the ‘Germanic’ migrations, economic developments and urbanisation\(^\text{521}\). The project was, in many ways, a reconsideration of Pirenne’s thesis that the collapse of the West was brought about in the eighth century by the rise of Islam\(^\text{522}\). It was hoped that the interdisciplinary and international nature of the project team would broaden the discussion regarding the changes that took place in the Late Antique and Early Medieval

\(^{518}\) Pohl 1998b: 22.

\(^{519}\) Pohl 1999a, 1999b.


\(^{521}\) Wood 1997: 217.

\(^{522}\) Wood 1997: 217-218. Although, it should be noted that, after lengthy preliminary discussions, the decision was made to that the period from “the third to the ninth centuries should form the centre of the project, and, with considerable regret, that resources and time meant that the focus should be on western Europe, although the early Byzantine and Islamic East should be used as points of comparison”, Wood 1997: 217.
periods by rising above national perspectives and traditions. Indeed, Wood reports that where the project has been most effective has not been in offering a new coherent interpretation of the period. Rather, the project has emphasised the complexity of the period and...

...in realising the complexity of our material, and the need to understand what each piece of that material represents: whose centre, whose periphery, whose memory, whose past present is being represented, and why?

Pohl’s thinking about ethnicity, in the 1990s, and ethnicity’s place in the Early Middle Ages, takes place against this academic context and contributes to a means to understand ‘Germanic’ society.

5.3 Ethnic discourse and understanding ‘Germanic’ society

Pohl’s work in the 1990s also addressed the relationship between ethnic ethnic discourse and ‘Germanic’ society. How and under what conditions ethnicity in the distant ‘Germanic’ past came to be important in considerations of ‘Germanic’ society frame Pohl’s research. Pohl treats the subject of ethnicity in the Antique West as a politically constructed and complex discursive formation. Pohl’s studies takes the notion of ethnic discourse into the ‘Germanic’ world rather than looking at the accuracy of ethnographic texts like Tacitus or Isidore of Seville or reflecting on the consistency of ethnic diversity. For Pohl, the primary concern is how and why multifarious verbal and non-verbal practices and rituals are constituted and provide an understanding of ‘Germanic’ society.

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523 An indication of the range of scholars involved in the project is provided by the fact that ninety-two scholars from eighteen countries participated at the second plenary conference, and that Ancient, Medieval and Byzantine historians, Art historians, archaeologists, codicologists, paleographers and philologists have all been involved. The names, addresses and interests of participants are recorded in a Who's Who of the programme. The project has, therefore, been firmly multi-and interdisciplinary as well as international”, Wood 1997: 218.


525 For example, see: Pohl 1998c: 69.
Pohl identifies four traditional indicators used by ancient literary sources to describe an individual’s ethnicity. These are presented as part of the ‘ancient world’ discourse on ethnicity. In the process, they explain how the barbarian world conveyed in the literary record was a Graeco-Roman construction and not something derived from barbarian sources. The indicators to which Pohl refers are: language, arms and fighting, costume and dress, hairstyles and body signs. Pohl sees language as determining stereotypes but nothing specific. Pohl identifies arms and fighting as the second traditional marker for distinguishing one barbarian group from another, albeit a marker applied by those from outside of the group. Costumes and dress were a means to identify barbarians but really only provide an insight into how the Graeco-Roman world determined specific ethnic distinctions to be. Hairstyles and body signs are traditional signs of ethnic identity. The Suebic knot or the Lombard beards are examples of outward displays of identity used by Graeco-Roman sources as determinants of barbarian ethnic identity.

These ‘external’ determinants of barbarian identity, that is, those indicators applied to a group by those from outside that group, highlight the constructed nature of ethnicity. Thus, ethnicity is a social construct, which begs the question of how a group might use it in relation to defining itself. This brings Pohl to posit the idea of ethnic discourse, which sees ethnicity leveraged in such a way as to provide the group’s elite with a degree of control over those they ruled. This was because the ethnic discourse pursued by the elite provided a way by which barbarians could define themselves, as well as be defined by others, in an environment where social, cultural and political

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527 Pohl 1998c: 27.
528 Pohl 1998c: 37-38. The francisca, for example, is used by Pohl as an illustration of the pitfalls in using weapons as markers of ethnic identity. Also, Halsall 2007: 466ff.
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foundations were in a state of regular flux. For example, Pohl posits that complex communities such as the Frankish kingdoms could not have come together without ethnicity as a social cohesive. Ethnicity, and its accompanying discourse, provided a sense of belonging and identity that political structures on their own could not. Pohl’s concept ethnic discourse develops the original ideas of the Traditionskern thesis, maintaining onus of responsibility for identity creation with a core group of elite who are situated at the centre of the society of which they are a part.

5.4 Sociological thinking about ethnicity and Pohl’s scholarship in the 1990s

A development of the Traditionskern thesis, rather than simply a verbatim restatement of the positions held by Wenskus and Wolfram, Pohl’s presentation of ethnic discourse explicitly connects with current sociological thinking on identity formation. The ‘myth of ethnic polity’ is put forward as a reflection of Traditionskern ethnogenesis whereby the elite of a group are responsible for the transmission of symbols, myths and historical memories that create group cohesion and legitimise political authority. The connection with sociological thinking and concepts is expressed at different points throughout Pohl’s scholarship in the 1990s.

One of the earliest points where there is an explicit connection in the 1990s with sociological thinking is in 1994. In “Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung”, Pohl presents the work of Reinhard Wenksus, with the help of the terminology of Anthony D. Smith:

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529 Pohl 1998c
530 Pohl 2003a: 11.
531 For example, see Pohl 1994: 21, 1998b: 16. By any other phrase, ethnic discourse could be referred to as ‘invented tradition’ in the sense of that conveyed by Hobsbawn and Ranger. They see three overlapping types of invented tradition, each of which resonate with Pohl’s approach to ethnicity in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. (a) those establishing or symbolising social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, (b) those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority, and (c) those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour”, Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983: 9.
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The tradition, in the sense of Reinhard Wenskus (or the mythomoteur, as A.D. Smith describes it) is only a part of it – likewise, Romans also produced rich texts to explain the meaning, scope and origin of the gentes. Smith’s vocabulary is used to label traditions associated with ethnicity such as primordialism. Mythomoteur is considered by Pohl to be a suitable modern sociological concept to describe the creative processes behind Late Antique and Early Middle Ages ethnic identification. They also depict ethnicity as constructed in nature. Smith’s approach to the question of ethnicity and antiquity are recurring in Pohl’s works at this time, particularly in relation to pulling discussions away from focusing on ethnicity’s subjective or objective traits.

The influence of sociological thinking on Pohl’s approach to ethnicity in the Antique West has the effect of pulling discussions away from definitional debates over ethnicity’s subjective or objective features. The theoretical framework to support this is derived from a number of different sources. The notion that ethnicity was a historical process was initially posited by the Russian anthropologist Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff (1887-1939). Shirokogoroff’s interpretation of ethnicity was that it stabilised and developed strong group consciousness along ethnic lines over time. Alongside this interpretation of ethnicity is the argument put forward by British sociologist Anthony D. Smith who states that ethnic identity is forged over a long period of time and has roots in antiquity. The theoretical frameworks of Barth and Eriksen

establish a vocabulary by which ethnicity in the ancient world can be portrayed in practical terms as a negotiated classification\textsuperscript{536}.

Barth’s thinking in relation to ethnic boundaries and how they are constantly under negotiation by the parties involved in the differentiation process provides Pohl with a further point of reference for the notion of ethnic discourse\textsuperscript{537}. Just as ethnic discourse cannot exist in isolation, so too must ethnic groups exist in an interconnected state, engaged in a continual process of inclusion and exclusion. This is a perspective shared by Pohl and applied to the works of ancient literary sources. His use of Tacitus’ attention to ethnic distinction in “Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity” highlights the use of markers such as outward appearance, the \textit{habitut corporum}, culture, customs, habits and religion, language and weapons as indicative of a historically perceptible process that sought to include or exclude from different groups\textsuperscript{538}.

Such discussions also have the effect of pulling ethnicity away from assumptions to do with notions of biological immutability. An example of Pohl reiterating this position can be found in “Social Language, Identities and Control of Discourse”\textsuperscript{539}. Pohl’s analysis of changing identities through changes in discourse is contingent on Averil Cameron’s work on notions of discourse and power. Where Cameron asks the question “why do people act as they do – and why do they think as they do?”, Pohl applies such thinking to the questions surrounding “\textit{Imperium, gentes et regna}”\textsuperscript{540}: “Why do people

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{536} Barth 1969b; Eriksen 1993 in Pohl 1999c: 20.
\item \textsuperscript{537} Barth 1969b.
\item \textsuperscript{538} Pohl 1998c: 18.
\item \textsuperscript{539} Pohl 1999b.
\item \textsuperscript{540} Pohl 1999b: 127, 140.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
cease to think in terms of *imperium* and start to think in terms of *gentes et regna*? Why do they act accordingly?²⁴¹. It is human action or agency that creates identity.

This echoes Geary’s proposition that ethnic identity is a ‘situational construct’, a conceptualisation of ethnic identity used by Pohl²⁴². The notion of ethnicity being a ‘situational construct’ came from historians making the assumption that:

...ethnicity was an objective category which should be amenable to precise determination. In contrast, this present paper suggests that early medieval ethnicity should be viewed as a subjective process by which individuals and groups identified themselves or others within specific situations and for specific purposes²⁴³.

Ethnic labels are applied on account of an individual’s reaction to the environment or circumstances in which they find themselves.

Pohl uses the account of Gilakios’ death in Procopius to illustrate the ease with which even an incorrect ‘ethnic label’ can be assigned to an individual²⁴⁴. In this particular instance, Gilakios, the commander of an Armenian detachment of soldiers, was captured by a group of Goths. The Goths challenged Gilakios but being unable to speak Gothic, Latin or Greek, his only response was to repeat his name and his rank, *strategos*. The Goths interpreted Gilakios’ inability to speak in a language that they could understand as an indication that he was part of the enemy and, as a result, executed him. Pohl identifies that language is used as a sign for identity, in addition to the situation in Gilakios found himself²⁴⁵. Captured by soldiers, finding himself a part of

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²⁴¹ Pohl 1999b: 140.
²⁴³ Geary 1983: 16.
²⁴⁵ Pohl 1999b: 129, 131. Of this particular situation, Pohl observes that: “It is, moreover, quite extraordinary that in this specific case, language is shown to function as a sign of identity. Theoretically, this is what many authors assume (for instance, Isidore of Seville). But we rarely hear that language actually served as a distinction, as in this case, between friend and foe”, Pohl 1999b: 129.
a military situation, Gilakios decided to identify himself as a strategos, as opposed to a Roman, Greek or Armenian.

The re-presentation of the Traditionskern thesis persists in Pohl’s throughout the 1990s. The elite of a group are responsible for the transmission of symbols, myths and historical memories that create group cohesion and legitimise political authority. The persistence of this perspective continues into the 2000s. Sociology provides Pohl with the necessary academic vocabulary and terminology to show the constructed nature of identity in the Early Medieval period as well as making sense of the new or unknown.

6 Persistence of ethnic discourse

Origin myths and ethnic memories (mythemoteurs, in Smith’s terminology) had a similar function whether they were ‘invented traditions’ (for instance, the Trojan origin of the Franks) or contained ‘pre-ethnographic’ elements presumably based on oral traditions (the case of the Goths or the Lombards). They were in many respects constructs and fictions, but not in the sense that they remained enclosed in a purely literary universe: they contributed to the construction of identities...546.

The elements described here by Pohl provided a basis for making sense of something new or something unknown. The example Pohl draws upon to make this clear is Julius Caesar’s initial encounters with the Germani when he first arrived in Gaul. Caesar took the name of a regional group and applied it in order to make sense of a larger and more heterogeneous territorial unit that existed east of the Rhine547. The term Germani went beyond being a literary tool and developed into being a primary ethnic categorisation by the Romans of the barbarians in northern Europe. It has had an impact on

546 Pohl 2003a: 3-4.
contemporary understanding as illustrated in the preface of Patrick Geary's book *Before France and Germany*: “The Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius”\(^548\). According to Geary, in making sense of 'the other', Rome not only created it but also maintained its existence.

In his opening comments to *The Construction of Communities* (2003), Pohl makes the observation that constructs and fictions in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods had important roles to play in identity formation. Two key phrases in this excerpt from Pohl's introduction require attention: ‘mythomoteurs’ and ‘invented traditions’. Both are phrases from key sociological thinkers on the question of identity formation and they act as indicators regarding the direction of Pohl's research\(^549\).

Ethnic discourse has remained an important part of Pohl’s approach to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. It has enabled him to re-present Wenskus’ and Wolfram's *Traditionskern* models with particular sociological points of reference, such as “mythomoteur” and “invented traditions”. A mythomoteur is a constitutive myth that gives an ethnic group its sense of purpose\(^550\). An invented tradition “includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner with a brief and dateable period...”\(^551\). In both instances, sociology provides Pohl with a technical vocabulary to describe in precise terms what ethnic discourse creates.

In the case of Francia and Lombardy, terminology such as integration and social memory are used:

\(^{548}\) Geary 1988: vi.
\(^{550}\) Smith 1986: 229 n.229.
\(^{551}\) Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 1.
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The shaping of identities in the new kingdoms required no less than the gradual integration of the vast majority of the population into a new ethnic identity, until the core of Frankish Gaul (or the whole of it) had become Francia, and the heartland of Lombard Italy, Lombardy. This process was accompanied, from generation to generation, by a careful reconstruction of social memory552.

Sociology provides Pohl with the means to describe the human activity that is implicit in such examples. According to Pohl, this makes the transformation of the Roman world contingent on human interaction rather than on natural forces alone553.

6.1 **Persistence of sociology in Pohl’s approach**

The idea of ethnic discourse remains central to Pohl’s discussions about ethnic identity and the ‘Germanic’ past. The sociological thinking of Benedict Anderson, Hobsbawm and Smith has therefore remained relevant, assisting the understanding the role ethnic discourse had in the creation of communities in the Early Middle Ages 554. The arguments posited by Anderson and Hobsbawm555 are considered to be the opposite of the views held by Smith556. The so-called ‘constructivist’ approach of Anderson and Hobsbawm suggests that nations are considered to be imagined communities who came into existence in the modern period due to invented traditions. This sits at odds with Smith’s ‘ethnosymbolic’ approach that depicts the nation as the product of a process that started in pre-modern times and perceives ethnicity as a sociocultural and symbolic phenomenon557. Pohl achieves the fusion of the two

557 An excellent overview of this particular line of argument can be found in Smith 2004.
standpoints by conceding that the essential components for ethnic identity were constructs and fictions\textsuperscript{558}.

Focusing on ethnic identity as both ‘construct’ and ‘fiction’ shows a degree of intellectual flexibility in Pohl’s approach towards extant literary and archaeological source material regarding identity formation. Pohl argues that he has relaxed the structure and immutable nature of the \textit{Traditionskern} model that has been put forward by its earlier proponents, presenting a more inclusive model that accommodates the complexities of current interpretations of ethnicity.

“I regard it as plausible that pre-ethnographic, non-Roman traditions played some part in the creation of identity of the new peoples that dominated in the post-Roman kingdoms, but this assumption is not at all essential to the understanding of ethnic processes. Whether invented or only partly invented, such traditions could play an analogous role: the world in which the barbarians had settled on Roman soil presented high risks, challenges, and problems of adaptation; narratives could give a meaning to this difficult situation”\textsuperscript{559}.

Here, ethnicity is an invented tradition for individuals or groups, and used to negotiate challenges that confronted the antique world, and in particular those found at the end of Roman authority in the West.

Pohl’s invocation of historical and sociological theorists means he is able to recast the theories of Wenskus and Wolfram in a more contemporary mould. Contemporary sociological theory is deployed in full, or in part, in support of the idea that the ruling elite held the primary role in the development of group identity. Pohl’s presentation of the ideas of Wenskus and Wolfram finds voice through the combined theories of Anderson, Hobsbawm, Smith and Geary. Pohl uses the approach of

\textsuperscript{558} Pohl 2003a: 4.
\textsuperscript{559} Pohl 2002b: 233.
Anderson, Hobsbawm, Smith and Geary to account for historiographical issues associated with the idea that group identity formation originates with the nobility. He also uses the combined approaches to account for the fact that modern sociological and historical theory about ethnic identity formation does not readily specify someone responsible for the actual act of identity creation.

6.2 Anderson

Pohl draws on Anderson’s theory of the nation being an imagined community in the introduction to the *Construction of Communities*. Pohl uses Anderson in this instance as an example of a theory of community construction. This is to set the context for an examination of how the development of groups in the Early Middle Ages took place, or at least, was conveyed to the present day. Anderson’s theory of imagined communities resonates with Pohl’s idea of the ruling elite being central to the identity formation process within the Late Antique or Early Medieval period. This is because Anderson’s claim that nations are largely imagined communities opens up the question of who is responsible for the creative act that establishes them in the first place. Pohl states that the ruling elite fills this space. Anderson’s notion of imagined communities provides Pohl with a sociological framework within which to ground his interpretation of ethnic identity being created by the ruling elite.

6.3 Hobsbawm

Pohl looks to Hobsbawm’s theories as articulated in the edited volume *The Invention of Tradition*, where Hobsbawm examines how traditions are not only created
but how they are sustained. The impact of these traditions on the depiction of the past is also a consideration.

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitably historic past.

The notion of invention and the role of particular elements within the invention process resonate with Pohl’s ideas of the ruling elite being central to identity formation processes in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods.

6.4 Smith

There are two primary contributions to Pohl’s approach to ethnicity and the past from Anthony D Smith; The Ethnic Origins of Nations and The Nation in History. There are different parts of these two texts that Pohl relies upon to support the perspective that ethnic identity bring about change and that change is brought about the ruling elite who are responsible for the ethnic identification that underpins the group over which they reign. Smith’s concept of a mythomoteur is significant in Pohl’s vocabulary. Smith defines a mythomoteur as “the constitutive myth of ethnic polity”, the mechanism through which a group’s myths and symbols, their historical memories and central values are transmitted from one generation to the next to ensure the ongoing unity of that group.

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561 Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.
6.5 Geary

Patrick Geary’s “Ethnicity as a situational construct”, Before France and Germany, Phantoms of Remembrance, and Origins of Nations make regular appearances in Pohl’s discussions about ethnicity. In “Ethnicity as a situational construct”, Geary proposes that ethnicity is “a subjective process by which individuals and groups identified themselves or others within specific situations and for specific purposes”. Of particular note for Pohl’s understanding of ethnicity is Geary’s presentation of ethnic consciousness as having evolved in political contexts and being perceived and moulded by interest in lordship, an example of which is how ethnic identity is created in light of this is seen in Pohl’s “Conceptions of Ethnicity”. Pohl uses Before France and Germany in this instance in the context of highlighting the influence of Rome on barbarian identity. The Germani, according to Geary, contrasts to the identifying labels of Alamanni and Franci, because, he believes, these labels were formulated by the people to whom they were applied.

The Germani was a label coined by Caesar, irrespective of its geographical, political or cultural accuracy. In seeking to understand how people actually remember and how the structures of the past are preserved, reorganised and recalled, Phantoms of Remembrance informs Pohl’s cognitive framework with which he approaches social memory and the influences that surround it. The purpose of Myth of Nations is to arrive at a new understanding of the formative period of European identity that was the first millennium because of the way traditions surrounding
identity formation at this time have been appropriated in recent history\textsuperscript{571}. *Myth of Nations* is deployed to balance Smith’s arguments to do with ethnosymbolism and notions of immutability of the sociocultural and symbolic fields upon which Smith’s interpretations of ethnic identity formation rely\textsuperscript{572}. It is also used in reference to discussions about the transformation of barbarian groups from “people by blood to ‘people by constitution’ after the Roman model”\textsuperscript{573}.

### 6.6 Validating ethnicity as a change agent

Pohl validates the idea that ethnicity brings about change and provides individuals or groups with the means to come to grips with change through his analysis of the Avars. Two examples that support this are Pohl’s revision of his 1984 dissertation and an article from the *Transformation of the Roman World*. Both possess a focus on the relationship between *gentes* and *regna*. A comparative approach is used in both instances. *Die Awaren* rests on arguments that are derived from a comparative history of the nomadic peoples of central Asia and early-medieval Europe. The article from the *Transformation of the Roman World* sits in a context that goes beyond ‘Germanic’ peoples such as Anglo-Saxons, Bavarians, Burgundians, Franks, Lombards, Ostrogoths, Vandals, and Visigoths. The volume included those with the West and East Roman tradition such as Byzantium and Late Antique Spain and also with non-‘Germanic’ peoples such as the Celts, Huns and Avars as well as the Islamic kingdoms in early medieval Spain\textsuperscript{574}.

\textsuperscript{571} Geary 2002: 13. Hutchinson 2005: 645 describes the purpose of the book as demonstrating that the “task of the historian is to re-educate policy elites of the true character of the classical past so that they can reject the disastrous simplications of populist xenophobes”.

\textsuperscript{572} Pohl 2003a: 3.

\textsuperscript{573} Pohl 2003a: 13.

\textsuperscript{574} Goetz 2003: 11.
Pohl presents the Avars in *Die Awaren* and *Regna and Gentes* as an alternative non-‘Germanic’ group of the Late Antique and Early Medieval Ages that demonstrates the extent to which ethnicity can be considered as something that brings about change.\(^{575}\) It offers the Avars as a point of comparison with the emergence of the successor states in the Early Medieval West. It also leads to questioning the dichotomy of “Roman-barbarian” or “Roman-Germanic”.

Most of the kingdoms discussed in this volume had their centres in former Roman provinces, and followed the Roman model to some extent, although it may be disputed in every instance what was Roman and what was “barbarian” about them; or, more fundamentally: Is the opposition between “Roman” and “barbarian” (or “Germanic”) an adequate way to describe these kingdoms?\(^{576}\) The theories of how groups came into being in the post-Roman era are applied to the Avars. The connection between Avar identity and the Avar political elite is of particular interest to Pohl. His interpretation is that one could not exist without the other.\(^{577}\)

The *Traditionskern* model of identity formation is applied to the Avars although it is couched in the sociological theory of others such as Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998).\(^{578}\) Luhmann states that power is communication regulated by codes. The literary evidence for communication amongst the Avars is small and a conclusion regarding its effectiveness is based on the literary creations of authors such as Menander and Theophylact. The result of this is that Pohl sees artefacts and rituals as a part of the code

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575 The Avars is not the only alternative non-Germanic people that Pohl uses to validate the idea that ethnic identity brings about change. For example, see Pohl 1985, 1995 for discussion about the ethnogenesis of the Croats.

576 Pohl 2003d.


578 Luhmann 1975.
of communication “in which power and identity were constantly re-negotiated within the Avar khaganate and towards outsiders”579.

The discourse used by the Avar ruling elite is comparable to that which has been identified as used by the elite of the ‘Germanic’ tribes. The Avar elite contributed to the development of Avar identity. Pohl cites an eighth-century Turkic inscription found in the Orkhon that refers to “the direct relationship between a new people and its institutions, between gens, ruler and kingdom (or khaganate) could hardly be made clearer”580. The ruling elite validated their authority by invoking ancient institutions of a bygone era. The approach of using the ancient past to support claims of legitimacy is applied to ‘Germanic’ tribes and the determination of group leadership to collect and hold the gens together581. Pohl argues that the processes that brought and held the ‘Germanic’ groups together were similar, if not identical, to that which brought the Avars together. For Pohl, this confirms the model’s validity. It is also demonstrative of the significance of tradition in the process of ethnic identity formation generally and the need to be aware of it.

6.7 Politics and the historian

Pohl sees a political role for the historian to play as well. This is not, as he laments some historians have done, the advocating of nationalist feeling. It is to act as a counterweight to any political mobilisation of the ethnic past that might occur. Demonstrating the complexity in ethnicity and ethnic identity as it appears in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods one such strategy through which Pohl’s objective might be achieved.

This sentiment is continued where discussion emerges about the history’s influence on the depiction of frontiers and borders in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. Pohl states in his conclusion to the *Transformation of the Roman World* volume, entitled *Transformation of Frontiers: From Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*:

The post-war generation perceived of the Roman limes as a kind of ‘Iron Curtain’, a “moral frontier” where civilisation had to be defended against barbarianism. The influential work of E.N. Luttwak on the “Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire” was written from a cold war perspective by someone who would become a fervent support of Reaganism. The fall of the Soviet Union and of the Warsaw Pact in 1989/91, and the progress of European integration (the Schengen Treaty), obviously encouraged a subtler view of late Roman and early medieval frontiers.

It can be no coincidence that in the nineties, the old paradigm of national frontiers projected into the past was fundamentally challenged... In Pohl’s mind, the influence or impact had by the present concerns of contemporary Europe on studies of ethnicity and ethnic identity in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods is explicit.

There is a relationship between the context of the present day scholar, the time in which they write and the subject or focus of their work. For Pohl, the fall of the Soviet Union and of the Warsaw Pact in 1989/91 and the drive for European integration via accords, such as the Schengen Treaty, have had an effect on the depiction of those frontiers mapped out by Roman military authority. According to Pohl, the end of the Cold War brought complexity not only to the context in which frontiers are analysed by

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582 Pohl 2000: 249.
people looking at their changing nature in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods but also in their role in the process of ethnic identification.

This relationship is referred to later in Pohl’s article “The Politics of Change: Reflections on the Transformation of the Roman World”. This reflective paper was written after the Transformation of the Roman World project had concluded. In it Pohl speculates on the influence present socio-political contexts has had on the intellectual environment surrounding ethnicity and nationalism. He states:

Rather, I often find myself asking questions like: why do we try to deconstruct Late Antique frontiers at a moment when the Maastricht and Schengen treaties aim at reducing contemporary frontiers in Europe? Why are Austrian medievalists especially concerned with refuting nationalist views of ethnicity? Has ethnic cleansing and CNN coverage of mass migrations shifted our perception of early medieval migrations towards a more catastrophic vision? It would be worth discussing the impact of the Balkan wars on studies of Late Antiquity. One thing that is remarkable about the Balkans is how absolutely contrary judgments can be based on the same, albeit very patchy evidence. Bosnia provides a striking example of how arbitrary, and controversial, ethnicity can be: the Serbs claimed that the Muslim Bosnians were Serbs, whereas the Bosnians claimed that the Bosnian Serbs were Bosnians. On the basis of the Balkan wars, one might come to the conclusions that ethnic identities and prejudices are more powerful than we assume, and that even decades of anti-nationalist propaganda cannot contain them. However, nationalism clearly had to be actively promoted to gain momentum, not least (sadly enough) by historians and intellectuals and of course by politicians and military leaders. In Late Antiquity, however, there is little to suggest that ethnicity was at the root of armed conflict. There is hardly any evidence in Procopius’ account of the Gothic war that would make it seem to be fuelled by ethnic conflict, and a bitter twenty years’ war would be the perfect occasion for all sorts of uncontrollable ethnic hatreds to surface if they were there. Clearly, that was a war between professionals who respected each other, and despised civilians on both sides.
And one of the propaganda moves on Byzantine side was to commission a laudatory History of the Goths, written by Jordanes and cast directly after Theoderic's dynastic propaganda\textsuperscript{583}.

Here, Pohl makes an explicit connection between contemporary Europe and studies of Late Antiquity. There is a coming together of political and intellectual contexts. The purported resurgence of interest in frontier studies occurring concurrently with contemporary political treaties such as Maastricht and Schengen is a convergence of present-day European political interests with those who are keen for its integration with the intellectual contexts of those who study the construction of communities in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. Pohl sees a distinct role for the historian in this situation. One such role is to balance the perception of early medieval migrations that might come about as a result of the media’s influence.

7 Conclusion

The quote from Bourdieu at the opening of this chapter alludes to changes that have taken place in dominant disciplines, such as history. Those within the discipline often instigate these changes. This is the case with Pohl and the ethnic discourse. Contributing to research in the area of the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods since the 1980s, his focus has been predominantly on issues of identity and, in particular, the place of ethnicity in identity formation processes of the early Middle Ages. He has developed the idea of ethnic discourse from his initial work on the Avars to something that draws on an interdisciplinary approach. This chapter has had a particular focus on the chronological development of the methodology behind his

\textsuperscript{583} Pohl 2002c: 278.
treatment of ethnic identity in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, with a view to showing Pohl’s own dispositions on the subject.

Key to understanding the development of Pohl’s own dispositions regarding ethnic identity in the Early Medieval period is the influence of historians and sociologists. Wenskus and Wolfram are of an influence Pohl’s approach to ethnic identity in the Antique West. This is in addition to contemporary sociological theorists such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony D. Smith. The Traditionskern model that is presented by Wenskus and, with modification, Wolfram is a starting point for Pohl. This is where Anderson, Hobsbawm and Smith are significant. They are invoked by Pohl in his discussions about ethnic identity formation. Sociological theory provides Pohl with the means to upgrade and re-present the theories of Wenskus and Wolfram so that they engage with contemporary approaches to ethnicity and ethnic identity. This addresses methodological concerns associated with what Wenskus presented in *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*. The result of Pohl’s approach is to depict ethnic identity as the product of coming to terms with new social and political realities of the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods.

Central to understanding Pohl’s method is the notion of ethnic discourse. Ethnic discourse refers to those utterances and texts that create ethnic identity. His use of ethnic discourse presents ethnic identity as a politically charged enterprise. Its political operationalisation in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods means that Pohl is able to depict ethnic identity as a means through which people grasped the new social and political world in which they lived. This is particularly in relation to the creation and maintenance of the post-Roman kingdoms in the Antique West. Pohl draws on modern historical and sociological theory regarding the creation of communities and
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sees key terms such as ‘invented tradition’ and ‘mythomoteur’ as tools that clarify the political influences on ethnic identity formation. Ethnic discourse is the language that contributes to identity. The utterances or texts are social constructs that are used by those creating the constitutive myth underpinning the identity.

Pohl’s methodology centres on the notion that ethnic identity is not something that is biologically immutable. Social and cultural dynamics intersecting with one another during the self-identification process makes ethnic identity a ‘situational construct’ whose form is constantly in flux. Human interaction and activity supports the idea that the very reality of groups in the Late Antique and Early Medieval worlds has to be created, and then maintained, by the very people who are looking to use it to describe themselves and the world in which they lived.

Pohl believes this is, at least in part, the result of efforts of the ruling elite and draws on theorists such as Anderson, Hobsbawm, Smith and Geary to make the point. Anderson and Hobsbawm provide Pohl with a broad conceptual foundation upon which to build his interpretation: the notion that a community is largely an imagined or invented entity. Smith emphasises how a group’s myths and symbols, their historical memories and central values are transmitted from one generation to the next to ensure the ongoing unity of that group. The nature of a community, ethnic or otherwise, is accounted for between the works of these three scholars. The complexity is emphasised through the use of Geary. What is missing between the four points of view offered by these scholars is a clear indication as to who is responsible for the imaginary act or the invention of the community and who is responsible for ensuring its ongoing survival from one generation to the next. For Pohl, that responsibility lies with the ruling elite.
Figure 4: Professor Sebastian Brather (Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Universität Freiburg)

Chapter 6: Sebastian Brather

In this case the researcher is constantly faced with an alternative: either to introduce classifications which are most or less artificial or even arbitrary (or, at the very least, always liable to be denounced as such), or to bracket out hierarchies which, even if they do not exist in an official, public, objectified state, are constantly at issue and operative in the very constitution of objectivity.\footnote{Bourdieu 1988: 9.}

1 Introduction

Bourdieu’s commentary on the schemata that emerges as a result of the coding process through which an academic makes sense of the world around them is, in many senses, something that sits at the centre of Sebastian Brather’s scholarship. In addition to making important contributions to the study of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, since the 1990s Brather has encouraged a greater awareness of the historical and archaeological traditions surrounding the discipline. An important consideration of this encouragement is the desire to create a more nuanced perspective on ethnic identity formation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages is necessary. While classifications or schemata for Late Antique or Early Medieval ethnicity might be unilateral or arbitrary in their application, Brather is keen to ensure that historian and archaeologist do not stretch their sources beyond that which they can support.

Brather’s research has a historical perspective. With goals broadly similar to that of Pohl, as discussed in the previous chapter, Brather seeks a new reading of ‘Germanic’ barbarian history. Brather’s call for new perspectives on ethnic interpretations of the archaeological evidence is heralded in Chapter 2 where, at the end of World War Two,
the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity looked for change in the approaches that had traditionally dominated the discipline. Disassociation with the culture-history approach is an important part of the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The same can be said of raising questions to do with the limits of archaeological evidence, what that evidence can genuinely tell scholarship about a group’s identity, and the place of ethnicity as an interpretative framework for the distant ‘Germanic’ past. These are themes that are discussed above in Chapter 2 and on which Brather’s own approaches build.

Crucial works for understanding Brather and his approaches are *Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie* and *Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter*. A collection of Brather’s articles on ethnicity and ethnic identity found in Victor Spinei and Alexander Rubei’s book *Sebastian Brather: Archaeology and Identity – Central and East Central Europe in the Earlier Middle Ages* is also significant as it brings together, in one volume, Brather’s works on ethnicity and ethnic identity without any critical comment on methodology. These publications present a core group of works from which a clear understanding of Brather’s methodology can be taken.

The combination of these texts also allows for the creation of a tripartite grouping of Brather’s texts. The first set of texts examines ethnic identity in the context of *Forschungsgeschichte* or the history of research. The second grouping of texts form the basis of Brather’s investigations into ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages or *Frühmittelalter*. The third part of Brather’s research into ethnic identity is the High

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585 Brather 2004b.
586 Brather 2008c.
587 V. Spinei and Rubel 2008.
588 V. Spinei and Rubel 2008.
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and Late Middle Ages. While these divisions are unilateral, they are a convenient way of approaching the content of Brather’s work.

Additionally, the core group of Brather’s works shows the development of his interpretation of archaeological finds in north-western Europe, primarily seen as evidence for ‘zones of interaction’ between groups rather than evidence for ethnic identity itself. A recognised analytical framework within Anglophone archaeological traditions generally, in the German tradition ‘zones of interaction’ is a relatively new reading of the literary and archaeological evidence. Until recently, the long traditions of research into the ‘Germanic’ Antiquity identified archaeological remains with those ‘tribes’ mentioned in the ancient sources. What shall be demonstrated in this chapter is that Brather disconnects from this historical and archaeological tradition, breaking with the interpretive framework dominant within the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. For Brather, archaeology must concentrate on questions that are adequate to its sources, and in the process develop a new paradigm for archaeological finds traditionally interpreted as ‘ethnic’. Brather deploys the idea of ‘zones of interaction’ as a new and interdisciplinary approach to interpreting material remains.

2 Sebastian Brather: A Brief Overview

Brather has made numerous and significant research contributions to a range of important topics focusing on the early history of archaeology and medieval archaeology. His research extends from what grave findings show in relation to social structures and groups in Early Medieval societies to the settlement, economy and society of the Western Slavs. Brather has contributed to research on monasteries and

591 For example, Hawkes 1954.
settlement history in the Late Middle Ages. Born in 1964, Brather has contributed to research since 1990. He continues to add to the scholarly body of work on ethnicity in the Antique West. His approach to ethnicity in the ancient past centres on alternatives to the culture-history framework dominant within the German archaeological academy.

Brather studied prehistory and early history, history and anthropology from 1986-1991 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. He was a research associate at the Institute of Prehistory and Early History at the same institution from 1993-1997. Brather was awarded his doctorate in 1995 for a dissertation entitled *Feldberger Keramik und frühe Slaven. Studien zur nordwestslawischen Keramik der Karolingerzeit* and the following year he was presented with the *Deutsche Archäologische Institut* travel scholarship.

From 1997-2002, Brather took on the role of researcher at the Albert-Ludwigs Universität in Freiburg. During this time, he was part of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* project called *Identitäten und Alteritäten. Die Funktion von Alterität für die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Identität*. Brather was responsible in this project for a sub-project headed *Ethnische Einheiten im frühgeschichtlichen Europa. Archäologische Forschung und ihre politische Instrumentalisierung*. His *Habilitationsschrift* entitled *Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie. Geschichte, Grundlagen und Alternativen* was completed in 2002 and it was published by de Gruyter in 2004 as a part of the series *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde Ergänzungsbände* 592.

Brather was appointed to his current position as Director of the *Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters* and as *Professor für*

592 Brather 2004b.
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frühgeschichtliche Archäologie und Archäologie des Mittelalters in 2006. This took place after his appointment as Heisenberg Fellow with the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for two years from 2004. He was also, during this time, a Visiting Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Wien.

Brather’s contributions to the German and international academic world have been characterised not only by their importance but also by the interpretations that they offer and the methodological clarity and certainty with which they speak. This research activity has been taking place since 1990593. While Brather has displayed a considerable range of research interests, his discussions regarding ethnic interpretations of archaeology have helped to consolidate his position as a pre-eminent scholar in the German academy.

3 The influence of Heiko Steuer

The work of Heiko Steuer provides an important context for understanding Brather’s studies. Steuer’s focus on the capabilities of archaeological sources is the basis for Brather’s own methodology and his interests in the study of the scholarship of the distant past and of methodological matters have also found their way into Brather’s work.

Steuer’s interest in the methodology and historiography of the discipline itself is reflected in his publication list from around 1979594. The notion of applying a structural-historical approach to archaeology finds voice in 1982 in a book entitled

593 V. Spinei and Rubel 2008: 12-13 suggest several monographs by Brather as significant: Brather 1996a, 2001a, 2004b. They also suggest several collected papers: Brather, Bücker, and Hoepel 1999b; Brather and Kratzke 2005b; Brather 2008a.
594 Steuer 1979.
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*Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa*[^595]. This work raised the validity of archaeological sources addressing particular questions in relation identity and the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods is raised here and builds on work published in 1979. Steuer considered interpretative possibilities in relation to problems associated with the distribution of weapons, and other artefacts, as evidence for a loyalty system in prehistoric or early historic source material in 1992[^596].

Of particular interest to Steuer is the field of *Sozialgeschichte*, an area of historical research that concentrates on the development of social structure in groups and classes from the past. *Sozialgeschichte* addresses in the interaction of these groups with other social processes and it also deals with the significance of these groups, their size and their location. It is an area of history that has, until as recently as the 1970s, been neglected in Germany due to the traditional emphasis in scholarship on the actions of the state. Steuer explores *Sozialgeschichte* in terms of challenges to research questions or areas of research concern[^597]. The *Festschrift* for Steuer’s 60th birthday reflects such interests[^598].

Steuer also has an interest in the history of the ‘Germanic’ archaeology. This is evidenced by discussions on the ‘life and times’ of Herbert Jankuhn[^599]. Jankuhn was an archaeologist, who, in 1940 was appointed to the position of head of the *Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft das Ahnenerbe*’s archaeology and excavation department. The *Ahnenerbe* was a National Socialist think tank that promoted itself as a study society for intellectual ancient history, and research into the cultural and anthropological history

[^595]: Steuer 1982.
[^598]: Brather 1999a.
of the Aryan race. Jankuhn became one of Germany's leading archaeology scholars after the Second World War.

Steuer's focus on Jankuhn is indicative of an interest in the history of the discipline as well recognising the importance of the extent to which politics can influence the academy as a whole. In his closing comments in *Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, Steuer states:

> A fundamental issue is the question of the continuity of scientific work, methodological approaches and issues in the 20th century and its relationship to the political or rather state presence in the times of two world wars and in the different political systems from the Empire to the Weimar republic, the Third Reich to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and through to the reunified Germany600.

Historical awareness of one's discipline, particularly in the face of political influences, is evaluated as of the upmost importance. The relationship that methodology has with the political system of the time or the state presence in the academy in general amounts to a significant and recurrent theme in the study of the distant, 'Germanic' past.

Brather's works reflect and build on these concerns by promoting the necessity for an awareness of the history behind the discipline through discussions about the methodology associated with, and the developments in historical and archaeological traditions central to, the study of 'Germanic' Antiquity. For example:

> Since 1990, major changes have occurred. The previous funding, especially of the large Academy-Institutes, has been called into question. In the (former)

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German Democratic Republic, the Academy was completely dissolved, while those in Warsaw, Prague and Bratislava / Nitra continued to remain centres of research. Ideological barriers have been eliminated, so that new research concepts and changing ideas about historical development (from a younger generation of scientists) can be developed and represented. At the same time, the shift of research interest is due to stronger involvement in international research...601.

Brather refers to the significant changes that have taken place in academic organisations and institutions since the close of the Cold War: the change in funding structures since 1990 or the absorption of the former East Germany academy into the newly reunified Germany602.

Brather has developed themes that have formed a portion of Steuer’s own academic career. Changing approaches to archaeological interpretative frameworks by suggesting ‘zones of interaction’, an awareness of the history of (‘Germanic’) archaeology and the increased interest in ethnic identity as it manifests itself in the remote past have been pursued by Brather. In this sense, there is continuity from Steuer to Brather.

4 Positioning Brather’s work in relation to ‘zones of interaction’

...archaeology must concentrate on questions adequate to its sources – there are questions of social structure, economic history and history of culture. We need alternative explanations, a new paradigm, for things traditionally interpreted as

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602 Two papers that cover the impact of this absorption process are: Coblenz 2000; Jacobs 2000.
‘ethnic’ groups, because this can be only one (and not the only) possible explanation\textsuperscript{603}.

Brather’s work on approaches to ethnicity in the ancient past centres on alternatives to the culture-history framework dominant within the German archaeological academy. The wider contemporary political applications of the culture-history approach, and the implications for the writing of history, have motivated Brather to seek a different approach to ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence. Looking to realign the use of the archaeological sources Brather wants them to speak for themselves, a goal that echoes concerns over previous politicisations of the ‘Germanic’ archaeological record. For Brather, this approach means that the sources do not show archaeological cultures but instead they speak to concepts of interaction, integration and acculturation. His approach places him in opposition to methodologies dominant in the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity.

The notion of ‘zones of interaction’ as an approach for ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence is relatively new within the German academy. It marks a break from the culture-history archaeology paradigm that has been present in studies of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past since the nineteenth century\textsuperscript{604}. Gustaf Kossinna, discussed above in Chapter 2, had a significant part in the instigation and continuation of this model. This provides an understanding of how ‘zones of interaction’ act as both a development of and an alternative to the culture-history approach to ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence.

The idea of ‘zones of interaction’ is not, in itself, particularly new despite the fact that it is a concept whose application to the archaeology of the Early Middle Ages is a

\textsuperscript{603} Brather 2002a: 150.
\textsuperscript{604} Noted in Brather 2002a: 149, this approach to material remains is still present today. For further information, see: Harris 1994; MacNairn 1980.
reasonably recent methodological development. English prehistorian and archaeologist Christopher Hawkes (1905-1992) in an article in 1954 provides a starting point to consider the evolution of the ‘zones of interaction’ approach\(^\text{605}\). Hawkes seeks to address the interface between the archaeological methodology of working in a ‘text-free’ environment and the human activity to which archaeological remains attest\(^\text{606}\). The upshot is to bring attention to what archaeological method can make of its source material.

This focus originated from the nature of cognitive behaviour characteristic to archaeology\(^\text{607}\). Archaeology operates in a ‘text-free’ mode of reasoning thereby making it possible for an archaeologist to not even reference the historical record. This intellectual environment in which archaeologists operate is referred to by Hawkes as being completely anterior to historical-textual evidence\(^\text{608}\). This informs the notion of ‘zones of interaction’ because the environment to which Hawkes mentions raises questions regarding the extent to which archaeological source material can be interpreted when looking at social and cultural occurrences of ethnic identification.

The ante-historic context for archaeological analytical behaviours serves as a reminder of the challenges associated with attempts to identify ethnicity in archaeological remains. It also serves as a reminder of the difficulties in using only material remains to go from comparison and analysis of observed phenomena to the human activity that once produced them. Brather’s approach underscores why it is necessary to have an alternative to the culture-historical archaeology\(^\text{609}\). Cunliffe’s

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\(^\text{607}\) Hawkes 1954: 161-162.

\(^\text{608}\) Hawkes 1954: 161.

\(^\text{609}\) Brather 2002a: 174-175, 2004b: 348-349.
monograph *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* provides an economic application in a classical antiquity context of this core-periphery model\textsuperscript{610}. The notion of ‘zones of interaction’ presented by Brather is slightly broader. It reaches out to add cultural and social interpretations to this and applying it to the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods\textsuperscript{611}.

‘Zones of interaction’ is a relatively new way of thinking for the German academy. It has been present within Anglophone archaeological scholarship for some time. In recent years some aspects of the German academy have recognised that there is an issue with the interpretation of evidence offered by the culture-history approach. This recognition has come about, predominantly because of Brather’s *Ethnische Interpretationen*, and the approach to ethnicity that it details. The acknowledgement that there is an issue has come from both archaeological and sociological quarters in Anglophone scholarship.

5 The development of Brather’s approach to ethnicity and ‘Germanic’ Antiquity

The relevance and emphasis of ethnic issues in archaeological research was evidently less in the primary scientific interest, but rather in the contemporary worlds of imagination and the associated political “instrumentalisation” of appropriate statements. The identification of early peoples in archaeological material has contributed to the construction of national identities in the modern world\textsuperscript{612}.

\textsuperscript{610} Cunliffe 1988.
\textsuperscript{611} For example, Brather 2004b.
\textsuperscript{612} “Die Relevanz und Emphase ethnischer Fragestellungen in der archäologischen Forschung lag offenbar weniger im primär wissenschaftlichen Interesse, sondern in den zeitgenössischen Vorstellungswelten und der damit verbundenen politischen „Instrumentalisierbarkeit“ entsprechender Aussagen. Die
For Brather, a primary motivation for the development of a new paradigm regarding ethnic identity and archaeology is political instrumentalisation. Brather seeks an alternate explanatory model for interpretations of archaeological material that seek to use identity as their base. Chapter 2 and 3 of *Ethnische Interpretationen* are particularly relevant to discussing ethnic identity as a social construct, a further reason in Brather’s mind for there to be a greater appreciation of what has come to inform the idea of ethnic identity over time. These concepts are shown to be invented categories or systems through which social analysis can take place.

Brather’s call for an alternative view to ethnic interpretations in ‘Germanic’ prehistory emerged in the 1990s. At this point, he questioned the validity of archaeologically attesting ethnic identity and looked for an alternative to the culture-history approach. Brather’s reflexivity on the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity brought the problems with ethnic interpretations of material remains into focus. He draws attention to the complexities associated with attempting to trace ethnic identities in the archaeological record. The historical-political appropriation of the discipline was a particular interest. Brather’s approach mirrors that of Heiko Steuer’s in that he does not cease to ask questions of archaeological sources. Brather looks to ensure that if archaeological sources are to be deployed in support of ethnic identities then they are actually capable of meeting the expectations associated with that support.

Brather’s critical approach to ethnicity and archaeology first emerges in 1996. There is some argument to be made that his view was flagged as early as 1993 with an article that focused on the problems associated with the distribution of Slavic

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613 For example, the concluding paragraph to Chapter 2 in *Ethnische Interpretationen* is also explored in a case study using the Franks in *Brather 2007a*.

614 This is in step with the trends outlined in *Trigger 1989*. 

cereamics but these problems are more clearly articulated in an article entitled “Germanische, slawische und deutsche Sachkulture des Mittlealters – Probleme ethnischer Interpretation”. Brather not only considered the role filled by archaeologists in society’s understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and antiquity but he also gave attention to the complications within the relationship. Brather examines the long tradition of ethnic interpretation associated with Prehistoric Archaeology and considers the problems that are inherent in the key analytical terms ‘Germanic’, ‘Slavic’ and ‘German’. Brather does this in order to understand the impact that political motivations stemming from the nationalist fervour of the nineteenth century had on understanding these vocabularies and their place in the historical and archaeological discourse.

Attention to methodological issues carried over to discussions about the dirham coin hoard finds in Europe. Alongside on-going discussions regarding the issues of approach to ethnicity and material remains is introduced the paradigm of economics and cross-regional contacts. Brather’s methodology from an early point, then, incorporated economic and cultural factors. About the dirham coin hoards, Brather concluded that a combination of economic and cultural factors were more likely to account for regional differences in the archaeological record than ethnic differences.

The notion of economics and cross-regional contacts is developed more fully in the article “Frühmittelalterliche Dirham-Schatz- und –Einzelfunde im südlichen Ostseeraum”. This looks at the beginnings of the weight money economy of the West Slavs. Brather also looks at the circulation of the dirham in the context of cross-regional

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616 Brather 1996a.
618 Brather 1999a.
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contact, and in particular the case in relation to exchanges that took place in the Baltic region. The dirham is evidence that is easier to situate both geographically and temporally in comparison to its western European counterpart. This article was one of twenty-nine papers offered as a part of a Festschrift for Heiko Steuer and the papers covered Steuer’s main research interests 619. The title of the work, Archäologie als Sozialgeschichte. Studien zu Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im frühgeschichtlichen Mitteleuropa, reflected what was central to Steuer’s approach such as treating archaeology as social history as a means to explore and describe the evolution of social structure in groups, classes, community classes or classes in the past620. As an approach Sozialgeschichte also looks at the size, location and significance of these groups and deals with interactions between individual structural elements and the history of social processes.

This is commensurate with the view put forward in 1999 in an article entitled “Einwandergruppen oder Regionalentwicklung”621. In this paper, Brather considered the archaeological evidence for settlement between the Elbe and the Oder. The question at the centre of this article was the extent to which the archaeological evidence suggested immigration or favoured regional development. Brather argued that those ethnic groups that might be revealed through the archaeological evidence for settlement would not be homogenous as the political entities that might be seen as having a unifying influence lacked stability, regularly changing in composition622.

The legitimacy of traditional terminologies and paradigms, the doubt vis-à-vis the capability of archaeological sources to support the ethnic identification and the
deliberation over what possible models might actually replace those being critiqued find a congregate voice from 2000. In an article entitled “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”, Brather emphasised the flexible and situational nature of identity. The connection between Brather’s approach to Prehistoric Archaeology and Socio-Anthropology is made clear. Central concepts of ‘people’, ‘race’, ‘language’ and ‘culture’ are not seen as sharply bounded entities and are not allowed to dictate the presence of ahistorical and unchanging ethnic groups, as in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Brather’s approach allows for a dynamic interpretation of the past that accommodates the elasticity of identity.

Brather’s approach to the Early Medieval period extends to the High and Late Middle Ages. In “„Gründungsstädte“ oder Ausbau slawischer Siedlungen?”, Brather argues that the relationship between the ‘Slavs’ and ‘Germans’ in settlements east of the Elbe might be reflected in the archaeological finds and discoveries but this is not the case when it comes to identifying specific ethnic groups. The methodological problems with archaeology acting alone in determining identity should provide cause for directing scholarly attention towards more structural interpretations of the evidence. Interpreting evidence in the context of examining settlements in the east is explored more fully in "Grubenhäuser in Ostmitteleuropa. Frühmittelalterliche "Hauslandschaften: oder slawische Einwanderung?". In this article, Brather looks at whether or not pit houses or sunken huts in Eastern Middle Europe are indicative of settlement and some form of urban landscape or whether they are evidence for migration. He combines archaeological method with other disciplines such as onomastics, historiography and historical geography. This draws a more complex and

623 Brather 2000b.
624 Brather 2001c.
inclusive portrait of late medieval socio-cultural history and one that steers away from notions of homogenous regional groups\textsuperscript{625}.

Understanding the history of a discipline is a recurrent theme in 2001 for Brather's works on archaeology and ethnicity. He reviews the history of ‘Slavic’ archaeology and the historical context in which ‘Slavic’ antiquity emerged\textsuperscript{626}. This is achieved through a comparison with the experiences of the scholars of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity whereby both ‘Germanic’ and ‘Slavic’ archaeology underwent significant developments in the nationalistic zeal characteristic of the nineteenth century. Many of these developments were reactions to Romantic quests for national ancestors that sought to inform emergent national identities. The focus on the history of the discipline also highlights the extent of the politicisation that the disciplines experienced, raising questions about how future inquiries about the topic are to be made. Brather’s account of Wilhelm Unverzagt and his depiction of the Slavs is an example of incorporating the history of the discipline into archaeological analysis\textsuperscript{627}. Brather looks at the contributions of Unverzagt to the study of the ancient ‘Germanic’ past in this paper. For Brather the political environment under which Unverzagt conducted his research shows why it is important to understand the history of the discipline.

The future trajectory of the discipline motivates Brather’s ongoing involvement in the academic discourse surrounding archaeology and ethnicity. Brather contributed in 2002 to a collection of edited papers on barbarian identity\textsuperscript{628}. The need for a dynamic interpretation of the past that accommodates the elasticity of identity is made clear in

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{625} Brather 2000b. This fits in with previous discussions about interdisciplinarity. P. L. Kohl and Fawcett 1995; P. L. Kohl 1998; Ucko 1995.
  \item \textsuperscript{626} Brather 2001d.
  \item \textsuperscript{627} Brather 2001e. A good introductory article on Unverzagt and his impact on the academy can be found in Coblenz 2000: 307ff.
  \item \textsuperscript{628} Brather 2002a.
\end{itemize}
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this work on the Alamanni. Brather tests the extent to which it is possible to discern ethnic identity through the archaeological record by treating the Alamanni as a case study for the investigation of ethnic identity as a construction of archaeology. His conclusion is that any pursuit of ethnic identity through the material remains is fundamentally a political or national one.

Language and vocabulary are indicators that support this claim due to their place in the history of archaeology. Brather states that the issue of identity in the archaeological material is an important task of archaeology but the reason why there are methodological questions being directed towards the discipline is due to the national aspirations of countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Anthropological terminology such as culture, ‘race’ and language were conceived of, and related to, in nationally specific ways and they were construed as internally homogenous. Further complications with archaeology’s contributions to identity are shown when Brather reveals how the collective identities that emerge from such interactions are flexible, changing in response to common beliefs in common origins, traditions and language. Brather argues that this flexibility is especially clear when one group attempts to distinguish itself from those around it. Using symbolic features of common origins, traditions and language is one way of achieving this but there are complications on account of the fact that archaeology identifies such signs only in exceptional circumstances.

The complications associated with symbolic uses of beliefs in common origin, traditions and language reflect the extent to which there are problems associated with
constructing early medieval identity from archaeological sources\textsuperscript{630}. Brather addressed the methodological problems associated with recreating early medieval identity from archaeological sources in 2003\textsuperscript{631}. The tendency of postprocessual archaeology to assign meaning to signs and symbols associated with archaeological finds and discoveries has motivated Brather’s investigation into what alternative methodological options exist\textsuperscript{632}.

Interactivity becomes the centre of Brather’s methodological attention in 2004. Two articles that act as evidence for this look at the settlement of the Slavs, east of the Elbe and the development of the term \textit{Frühdeutsch} in the High and Late Middle Ages, respectively\textsuperscript{633}. In the first case, Brather investigates the claims that several different groups of Slavs invaded East Central Europe in the sixth century and that it has been possible to observe cultural characteristics that point to eastern Slavic ‘homelands’. In light of dendrochronology, new theoretical approaches and re-evaluation of documentary evidence, such an approach is determined to be too simplistic. Brather concludes that there is no distinct and homogenous Slavic ‘culture’ in East Central Europe – rather, many acts of self-definition, interaction and exchange with neighbouring regions exist and it is this interaction that is significant in the Early and High Middle Ages. In relation to the evolution of \textit{Frühdeutsch}, Brather examines the validity of the term as reported in the archaeology of the early Late and High Middle Ages, the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Brather looks at the political, social, cultural and economic influences that have come to inform its evolution in addition to its historical development.

\textsuperscript{630} Brather 2003a.
\textsuperscript{631} Brather 2003a, 2003b.
\textsuperscript{632} A recent discussion on the role of interpretative archaeology can be found in Hodder 1991.
\textsuperscript{633} Brather 2004b, 2004a.
These, and Brather’s previous contributions to the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, have a focus on the role played by archaeology in society’s understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and antiquity and a focus on the complications that exist within that relationship\textsuperscript{634}. They also provide a foundation for the significant monograph *Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie* which calls for an alternative to ethnic interpretations within ‘Germanic’ prehistory\textsuperscript{635}.

*Ethnische Interpretationen* stems from a wider project that was funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* entitled *Identitäten und Alteritäten. Die Funktion von Alterität für die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Identitäten*\textsuperscript{636}. Brather’s involvement in this project was through the University of Freiburg’s associated project entitled *Ethnische Einheiten im frühgeschichtlichen Europa*\textsuperscript{637}. *Ethnische Interpretationen* builds on this research to seek a fundamental re-orientation in the culture-history approach of identifying particular artefacts and material cultures with ‘tribes’ and then using those artefacts to chart the groups historically. This is achieved through looking at the alternatives offered by understanding cultural, economic and social interpretations of the archaeological record. Cultural and material exchange that speaks to notions of integration, interaction and acculturation form the basis of the counter-culture historical method outlined in this work\textsuperscript{638}.

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\textsuperscript{634} For example: Brather 1996b, 2000b, 2001f, 2001g, 2002a.

\textsuperscript{635} Brather 2004b.

\textsuperscript{636} SFB541 »Identitäten und Alteritäten. Die Funktion von Alterität für die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Identitäten«.

\textsuperscript{637} SFB541 Teilprojektes C4 »Ethnische Einheiten im frühgeschichtlichen Europa. Archäologische Forschung und ihre politische Instrumentalisierung«.

\textsuperscript{638} While this is unique in its engagement with ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, Brather’s contributions to the discourse on the culture-history approaches are part of an ongoing tradition of discussion. Shennan 1989 is one example of the scholarly critique of culture-history methodology, focussing on the fundamental question: what can be legitimately inferred about the social groups that produced the material culture objects that are the primary evidence of archaeology? Also: Gillett 2002; Hodder 1991; Jones 1997.
Brather observes the relationship between the contemporary historian, the archaeologist, linguist and the anthropologist\(^{639}\). For Brather, an interdisciplinary approach is required to avoid any further disconnect between current prehistoric archaeological approaches in Germany and new concepts of ethnicity that now emphasise the interaction between identity and alterity\(^{640}\). His methodology is to consider, initially, the history behind the discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde*, demonstrating how the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity stems predominantly from political concerns. To balance this there is a need for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to its historical and archaeological sources\(^{641}\). Brather’s approach examines the place of central concepts such as “folk”, “race”, “culture” and “language” as well as “collective identity”, “ethnic identity” and “cultural memory”. This examination has two effects. Firstly, it highlights the contested nature of the central concepts upon which the discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde* relies when matching archaeological material with geographical space\(^{642}\). Secondly, it establishes the basis for creating an alternative to the culture-history framework.

*Ethnische Interpretationen* then proceeds to consider the more common, traditional approaches to ethnicity made by the discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde*. Brather proposes that the starting point of the more traditional approach is an identified archaeological culture or *ethnos*. One can go back in time from...
this point along cultural continuities or traditions to the ethnogenesis of the group in question. In moving forward, cultural relations manifest themselves in the idea of migrations ending with the description of “foreigners” or heterogeneous populations. Brather uses each of these points to reinforce the idea of complexity.

Brather’s incorporation of anthropological and sociological frameworks is a bid to create a more interdisciplinary methodology and in the process accommodate the notion of complexity. The impact of his work is a realistic utilisation of the archaeological sources that not only acknowledges the character of the material and what it can provide but also entails cultural, economic and social interpretations. The diversity in interpretative frameworks allows Brather’s approach to pose questions about the very plausibility of ethnicity in archaeology, something the discipline of Germanische Altertumskunde has only recently been prepared to do.

5.1 The impact of Ethnische Interpretationen im frühgeschichtliche Archäologie

The impact of Ethnische Interpretationen on Brather’s own historical and archaeological thinking is significant. This is apparent in 2005 where his contributions to the study of the ‘Germanic’ past, and to archaeology more generally, intersect with studies of ethnicity. Across the three major thematic concentrations of his research, the history of the discipline, the Early Middle Ages and the Late and High Middle Ages, Brather’s interrogation of archaeology’s suitability to show ethnic identity in its sources is made clear.


644 Brather 2004b: 323.


646 Brather 2004b: 40.

Brather looks at methodological issues in two of several papers edited together into the interdisciplinary volume *Auf dem Weg zum Slavica-Germanica Konzept*. In “Germanen, Slawen, Deutsche. Themen, Methoden und Konzepte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie seit 1800” Brather considers the development of the terms ‘Germanen’, ‘Slawen’ and ‘Deutsche’ and the how they affected the way in which the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity behaved. Brather concluded that there are latent dangers associated with the way in which different modern circumstances or situations can project onto the ancient past.

Socio-anthropological approaches contribute to Brather questioning archaeological methodology. The interactivity between Roman and barbarian cultures has an effect on the ability of scholarship to accurately pinpoint a clear-cut historical moment where there is exchange between the two different worlds. The archaeological evidence is viewed as reflecting cultural, economic and social situations and relations while the literary sources are regarded as being responsible for describing political and ethnic developments.

Such observations stem from Brather’s critique that archaeological source material is not necessarily robust enough to support constructs of ethnic identity. How this practically plays out in practice is the focus of a paper that can be categorised under the title “Late and High Middle Ages”. Brather examines how there were changes in settlement patterns and structures east of the Elbe in “Hochmittelalterliche Siedlungsentwicklung und ethnische Identitäten” and demonstrates that his approach is not limited to the Early Middle Ages. Brather concluded that the changes in settlement patterns were no different from those experienced elsewhere and the

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648 Brather 2005a, 2005b  
649 Brather 2005c.
sources provided a good understanding of the structural changes felt at the time. Questions of method continue to form the basis for Brather’s research in 2007, such as in the case of Brather’s examination of the Franks. The legitimacy of the Franks as a political and ethnic unit is considered in the context of depicting archaeology as a demonstrative of the same subjectivity with which ethnicity should be upheld.

_Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter_, published in 2008, came from a symposium organised in 2005 at University of Freiburg that had the purpose of encouraging “an intensive exchange” among scholars belonging to different traditions of research on the early Middle Ages. The hope was to build a bridge between the continental tradition of thorough “antiquarian analysis” and the theoretical models from the English-speaking archaeological world in order to evaluate what was achieved by previous research and to formulate new perspectives for the archaeological research in an international environment. Many of the published papers illustrate the orientations of archaeological research during what Brather declares to be a time of paradigm change in the historical and archaeological study of groups and identities. The change is characterised by a move away from the questions of the origins and the attempts to strictly separate Germanic and Romance populations towards research where ethnic groups are not the basic form of social organization, research into social change, and into the building and perception of new political and social structures.

This is considered in two other works from 2008. Brather considers how mentalities and identities have become so pertinent to the central questions of archaeology. This is especially in light of the findings that can be associated with grave goods and coin hoards, key types of evidence used by Brather in his paper. The
bearing of mentalities and identities that can be derived from such evidence on discussions on the past has been to identify people, culture and societies as proper areas of research. Brather suggests that evidence such as settlements are equally important because they were determined by economic requirements as well as by culturally formed ideas. The diversity in archaeological material is not the only thing that is important in understanding the ideas that informed culture and identity. Brather cautions that while pictorial representations, symbols and even decorations can be interpreted as reflective of ideologies, archaeological finds cannot provide detail without texts from the past. There is the methodological problem whereby ideas that are valued today might result in archaeology assigning importance to characteristics that were not of fundamental intellectual importance at the time. “Kleidung, Grab und Identität in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter” is an example of the change in approach that Brather called for in Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. The article considers the role of clothing and graves in the determination of identity. Brather argues that these sources point to social standing, rather than specific identity, and the literary sources must be consulted in conjunction with material remains to provide the most accurate conclusion.

5.2 ‘Zones of interaction’ in practice in Brather’s work

It is the use of archaeological source material, and the proposition that archaeological remains are not a means by which cultural identity can be affirmed, that sits at the centre of the ‘zones of interaction’ paradigm. It posits that there is a place for archaeological remains in the identity construction process but the role is not a primary one. Artefacts serve as an indication as to the degree of interaction between cultures

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653 Brather 2008b: 89.
and not as a foundation for contemporary mythomoteurs. The notion of ‘zones of interaction’ takes into account the complexities associated with assigning identity to people for whom the only means of engaging in dialogue is through the material remains they have left behind.

One of the principal reactions to culture-history archaeology that is proffered by the ‘zones of interaction’ model is the calling to account the extent to which archaeological sources can be used. It is not considered possible to specifically assign an ethnic identity to an individual based on the artefacts found with the human remains in the context of studying ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and ethnic identity. There are two reasons for this, the first of which is the general consensus that identity, and ethnic identity in particular, is considered to be a social construct. The second reason is that to assign ethnic identity to human remains based on the artefacts that are found with those remains is an identification process reliant on assumption.

5.2.1 The place of social constructivism

An acknowledgement that has remained constant in Brather’s research since 1996 is the recognition of the place of social constructivism. Brather points out the problem with using categories of analysis such as ‘Germanic’ and ‘Slavic’ when discussing the long traditions that are associated with the study of material culture in the Early Middle Ages in “‘Germanische’, ‘slawische’ und ‘deutsche’ Sachkulture des Mittlealters – Probleme ethnischer Interpretation”.

654 Brather 1996b.
Archaeological cultures are fundamentally a construct of archaeology. They never appeared in prehistory and do not return to former realities but reflect the Zeitgeist of the environment of each commentator. Brather argues that the very cultures that form the basis for an ethnic category are inventions. These inventions reveal more about the spirit of the time from which the scholar comes than the actual culture that the physical evidence is said to reflect.

A similar position is reiterated in “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukt der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”, where Brather makes the constructed nature of ethnic identity clear:

...a special case of collective identities. Ethnic groups define themselves by their faith in common origin and history of common customs and traditions, to local religious beliefs and common ancestry. “Ethnic identity” is therefore a “commonly held belief”, that is, a subjectively defined schematisation. The relied-upon cultural characteristics appear, from this standpoint, no longer to be defined as objective but as more or less consciously chosen by members of the group.

Ethnic identity is a subjectively defined phenomenon. The form that it takes is contingent on individual social actors and the specific characteristics they choose to emphasise as signposts for their identification with the group in which they find themselves.

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656 Brather 2000b.

657 “Ethnische Identitäten sind...ein Sonderfall kollektiver Identitäten. Ethische Gruppe definieren sich selbst über den Glauben an gemeinsame Herkunft und Geschichte, an gemeinsame Sitten und Bräuche, an die gemeinsam gesprochene Sprache, an das nur hier geltende Recht, an die hiesigen religiösen Vorstellungen und an die gemeinsame Abstammung. „Ethnische Identitäten“ ist also ein „Gemeinsamkeitsgläubigen, d.h. eine subjektiv geglaubte Schematisierung. Die herangezogenen „kulturellen“ Merkmale erscheinen in dieser Perspektive nicht mehr als objektiv vorgegeben, sondern als von den Gruppenmitgliedern mehr oder weniger bewusst ausgewählt”, Brather 1996b: 163.
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In the article “‘Germanische’, ‘slawische’ und ‘deutsche’ Sachkulture des Mittlealters”, this complexity is increased. Where “‘Germanische’, ‘slawische’ und ‘deutsche’ Sachkulture” refers to the fact that ethnicity can be a construct created by the analyst, “Ethnische Identitäten” makes clear that there is an additional problem associated with the fact that the starting point of ethnic identity will be found with the very people who are seeking to label themselves so as to exhibit a difference from those around them.

The case of the Alamanni stands as a good example of Brather working towards how ethnic interpretations in ‘Germanic’ Antiquity might be presented, if at all. The Alamanni represent for Brather the challenges related with using material culture as a basis for ethnic identity as they are not easily detected in the archaeological record. Brather concedes that there are regional idiosyncrasies within the south-western Germany, the area historically inhabited by the Alamanni but this regional differentiation should not be mistaken for something that is specifically Alamannic.

Brather takes the opportunity to use the Alamanni in his discussions as a reiteration of the social and political constructivism that permeates archaeological cultures. This creates an environment that is conducive to looking for a different way to examining material remains and what they reveal to scholarship of identity. Brather avoids depicting archaeological cultures, such as the Alamanni, as a social reality. He also does not present archaeological cultures as a structuring of archaeological material. Brather follows the work of David L. Clarke (1937-1976) and takes up a

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659 Brather 2002a: 161-163. An example of Brather’s exploration of ethnic identity as a political construct, see Brather 2003a.
‘polythetic’ model as the basis for his approach. Homogeneity of culture is not possible because of the divergent relations between groups that the polythetic model conveys. This steers analysis of material culture from talking in concrete terms about identity and allows the depiction of ethnic groups as being held together by belief in common culture and in common descent to be seen not only as a social construct but as reason for their being an alternative to the culture-history model of archaeology.

Brather moves towards a new paradigm for ‘ethnic’ interpretations of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity because of the belief that the convention of deriving an individual’s ethnic identity from those material remains found in and amongst the goods that are buried with them, or left behind, is a determination based on conjecture. There is an assumption made that ethnic identity is both tangible and distinct. Brather’s assessment of Volker Bierbrauer’s account of “Die Dame von Ficarolo” demonstrates how and why Brather considers linking definitive historical narrative to material remains to be speculative and is subsequently critical of the approach. In “Die Dame von Ficarolo”, Bierbrauer reconstructs the life-story of a woman buried in Italy from her grave goods. According to Bierbrauer, “Die Dame” was born and grew up in the Carpathian basin and she was either a Gepid or an Ostrogoth. The brooch and belt buckle with which she was buried identifies her as coming from the mid fifth century. Similarly, the pin with which she was buried can provide specific details of how she ended up in northern Italy. For Bierbrauer, the pin indicates that she went to the south-western Alamannian area near Bâle and in 496/506 fled to northern Italy where she subsequently died and was buried. While this is a reasonable narrative to create from the available archaeological evidence, Brather poses an important question: why could this woman not have been

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born in Italy and assembled her costume there? To Brather, the mistake is to assume an individual bears a 'national costume', from birth to death.

Fundamental to Brather’s evaluation of Bierbrauer’s interpretation is a question of limits. Brather focuses on the extent that archaeology can offer the tools to differentiate between groups to the point where the identity of an individual from the remote past is indubitable. There are a number of instances where this appears in Brather’s works. An example can be found in his examination of the distribution of different types of Alamannic Bügelfibeln from the early sixth century. Brather poses a set of questions that have the effect of raising doubt about what they can actually support in relation to identity.

Do the brooches indicate members of the Alemannian elite who have fled or been banished into Burgundy, Noricum and northern Italy; or do they only show contacts across the Alps?

Brather sets up what the typical conclusion might be according to the culture-history model. He then shows how the evidence upon which the assumptions are made can be transformed to support something as equally as valid. In this case, the brooches support the interpretation that Alamannic elite migrated, for whatever reason, to other parts of north-western Europe. Equally attractive and valid as an interpretation is the notion that the archaeological evidence does not support any signs of ethnic identity but suggests social interaction.

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662 Brather 2002a: 158, James 2008: 105 provides similar doubts and bases his arguments on similar arguments. In responding to a position taken by Cardiff University based archaeologist John Hines that stipulated that the wearing of particular brooches were an indication of ethnic identity, James stated “I do not find it easy myself to see how we can say, when a woman wears a type of brooch manufactured locally, as worn by her family and neighbours, perhaps the only type of brooch readily available to her, that she is making a ‘purposeful assertion’ of ethnicity”.

A similar set of questions have been levelled at conclusions directed towards interpretations of cemeteries. Brather suggests how open-ended the archaeological record can leave questions of burial when examining Schretzheim, near Dillingen, in Baden-Württemberg. At this site, arguments to do with identity fall into orbit around whether or not the buried persons are of Thuringian origin. Brather suggests that there are two ways of looking at the archaeological sites: “Did the buried individual come from Thuringia or do we see just relations?”663. The form of question that is posited by Brather suggests that a concrete ethnic identity is not possible to obtain and so there is a need to consider a different form of approach.

Brather puts forward yet another way in which ethnic interpretations of evidence can be made in a paper entitled “Acculturation and Ethnogenesis along the frontier”664. Traditional methods propose that ethnic identity can be determined from material remains that are left behind. Interactivity, or contact between groups, is excluded. Brather argues that material remains show intensive contact between peoples, especially in the case between Romans and the ‘Germanic’ tribes. This develops in a different way to the literary discourse that exists in parallel.

By the mid-400s, at the latest, the traditional dichotomy of Romans vs Germans has lost its meaning. The contrast between Romans and barbarians remained a theme of literary discourse but on the ground developments have moved into a different direction. A ‘frontier culture’ had meanwhile appeared in the peripheral region of northern Gaul and along the Rhine. The dissolving imperial
power compelled the elites of the Empire to look for new forms of power representation. By now, regional and local societies were the only basis and audience available for status demonstration\textsuperscript{665}.

Rather than viewing material remains as indicative of discernible and concrete ethnic identities, Brather is suggesting something different. The archaeological record shows social change within different geographical areas without extending so far as to say that this is representative of specific ethnic change. Brather’s approach focuses ‘Germanic’ archaeology on questions that are adequate to its sources.

### 5.2.2 Focusing ‘Germanic’ archaeology on questions adequate to its sources

Much of Brather’s method focuses ‘Germanic’ archaeology on questions that are adequate to its sources, reacting to the tendency in culture-history archaeology to expect too much of material remains and that material remains support propositions for which they are not suited. Such sentiment is reflected in the work of Heiko Steuer whose own approach to the archaeological evidence was to constantly ask whether it was capable of answering the questions that historians and archaeologists alike were asking\textsuperscript{666}.

Steuer’s approach to ethnic identity and the archaeological record has always been with reference to the adequacy of available source material. This is made particularly clear in the “Forward” of a \textit{Festschrift} for Steuer on the occasion of his 60\textsuperscript{th} birthday in 1999. Steuer is described as “never tiring” from asking whether or not the archaeological sources are adequate for the research questions that are being pursued\textsuperscript{667}. Brather’s assessment of Steuer’s motivations suggests that the rationale for

\textsuperscript{665} Brather 2005a: 171.

\textsuperscript{666} Brather, Bücker, and Hoeper 1999b.

\textsuperscript{667} Brather, Bücker, and Hoeper 1999a.
this is not only securing the credibility of the ‘Germanic’ archaeological discipline but also to ensure that scholastically there is accuracy and integrity.

Steuer’s attitude has informed Brather’s methodology, which has a focus on challenges relating to the application of ethnic paradigms to archaeological material. The notion of adequacy is recurrent. In an article entitled “‘Gründungsstädte’ oder Ausbau slawischer Siedlungen? Die Aussagekraft der hochmittelalterlichen Bodenfunde zum Verhältnis von Slawen und Deutschen”, Brather cautions against the use of archaeological finds by themselves to determine the relationship between “Slavs” and “Germans” in urban environments in the 12th and 13th centuries.

…using archaeological techniques alone is not reliable. Although the corpus of archaeological finds entails cultural traditions of both groups, it cannot infer “ethnic groups”. To put it another way, answers are being demanded of archaeological sources that they cannot give. Archaeology must critically test the possible conclusions from its unique sources and push to centre stage, before any structural history, adequate analysis. Phases of urban development, relocation and changes to urban footprints, economic integration and relation to surrounding areas can be customised with archaeological sources. Therefore, the question of the mutual relationships between the Slavs and the Germans is wrong, if more than structural developments are to be pursued with the help of archaeological sources 668.

For Brather, not only is archaeology demanding too much of its source material but the source material is in reality better suited to structural history topics such as urban

development or urban economic integration in to the town’s surrounding area. Other disciplines such as onomastics, historiography and historical geography can help to provide a fuller picture of the early middle ages and of urban development in particular. The focus of Brather's analysis in this instance might be “Slavic” populations in medieval towns but he applies his approach to a wider context. The issue for Brather is not one of how the archaeological connects with ‘ethnic groups’ but whether or not these archaeological finds and ‘ethnic groups’ can be identified with one another.

The degree to which archaeological finds and ‘ethnic groups’ can be associated with each other is at the centre of Brather's thinking when it comes to discussing the Alamanni in the archaeological record. Brather makes it clear that ‘ethnic identity’ is beyond the reach of archaeology. There are a number of practical issues that Brather raises as a part of his analysis to support this statement. For example:

Ethnic identity as a belief in common culture and common descent selects one or more particular symbols to signal social boundaries. How can archaeology identify these symbolic signs? How does one move from a supposed symbol to its ideological background? The “context made the difference” – but we cannot begin with the symbol, then develop the context and in the end identify the ethnic symbol; this would be a circular argument.

Brather’s approach does not just emphasise the constructed nature of ethnic identity but also the fact that ethnic identity has been derived from belief in common descent or common culture and this runs against the essence of archaeology as a discipline. Archaeology is focused on physical evidence but when it comes to ethnic identity it believes it can reasonably access the cognition of the social and political actors whose only clue to their existence is the physical remains they have left behind. An example

\[\text{Brather 2002a: 176.}\]
\[\text{Brather 2002a: 160. In relation to the comment about context making the difference, see Pohl 1998c: 20.}\]
that is used to illustrate this is gold and silver brooches from the Merovingian period. Brather depicts these not as markers of ethnic identity but of social significance within the society\textsuperscript{671}.

Re-positioning the role of archaeology in this way is a part of the process of ensuring that archaeology does not overstretch itself when it comes to working with its sources. Brather examined questions of relevance and adequacy to the example of the Franks in 2007 in a case study similar to that of the Alamanni, which contributed to a redefining of the role of archaeology in discussions about ethnic identity in the remote past. Brather suggests that archaeology helps to underscore the subjective nature of ethnicity rather than arguing that there is no place for archaeology in discussions about ethnic identity as it appears in the remote past\textsuperscript{672}.

The revision of archaeology’s role in relation to the formation of ethnic groups is not a move by Brather to discount archaeology as a valid discipline for the exploration of identities from the past. In reconsidering dynamic regions of economy and transport, circles of marriage, cultural or production areas, spaces of sepultures and techniques, structural connections between and within regions or groups is allowing analysis to go beyond ethnicity as a category of analysis. Economic, social and cultural structures are not only just important aspects for the study of the past but they are entities to which archaeology has ready access\textsuperscript{673}. Brather’s methodology suggests these structural interpretations as alternate explanations to ethnic behaviours but it also warns archaeologists that seeking ethnic identity in material remains is fundamentally flawed because ethnic identity is a modern construct.

\textsuperscript{671} Brather 2002a: 160.
\textsuperscript{672} Brather 2007a.
\textsuperscript{673} Brather 2002a: 164.
5.3 Reactions to Brather’s ‘zones of interaction’ view: Volker Bierbrauer and Florin Curta

Volker Bierbrauer (1943-) and Florin Curta (1965-) have both taken issue with Brather’s approach. Bierbrauer’s objections are most clearly articulated in “Zur ethnischen Interpretation in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”674 and stems from the fact that Brather’s volume is one of the rare occasions that the culture-history model has been questioned. Bierbrauer’s reaction to Brather’s interpretations is also based on his belief that Brather’s approach is fundamentally flawed and that Brather has not considered the ramifications of his interpretative approach for the discipline as a whole. Curta has made several critiques of Brather’s approach675. Having an objection to what he sees as Brather’s functionalist approach to boundaries between groups, Curta believes that Brather’s Ethnische Interpretationen and the model that it posits is not as innovative as initially believed.

At this point it is important to note that the purpose of the discussion on the perspectives of Bierbrauer and Curta is not to engage with the perspectives themselves but to outline their parameters. Outlining the parameters of Bierbrauer’s and Curta’s points of view and their interaction with Brather’s thesis helps to understand how Brather’s views have been received and what it is that Brather is hoping to achieve.

5.3.1 Volker Bierbrauer

Volker Bierbrauer is an eminent German prehistorian and archaeologist who is critical of Brather’s approach to the ethnic interpretation of archaeological evidence. Bierbrauer rejects the Mischargumentation of Brather’s interpretation, ignoring the
ultimate conclusion of Brather’s work that ethnic identities cannot emerge from the archaeological data on their own. Instead, archaeological evidence, according to Bierbrauer, allows for the identification of people or culture groups\(^{676}\). The Goths are an example, considered to be readily visible in the archaeological record\(^{677}\). Bierbrauer states that Germanic speaking Franks could be not only seen in the archaeological record but also distinguished from the indigenous Gallo-Roman population on account of the fact that Germanic graves held grave goods whereas Gallo-Roman graves did not. These two groups are considered by Bierbrauer to be two different ethnic groups belonging to two opposing ‘cultural models’ but both clearly evident within the burial data\(^{678}\).

The first of Bierbrauer’s criticisms is that Brather’s approach is not built on concrete foundations and there has been too much reliance on Anglo-Saxon scholarship that is faulty\(^{679}\). Furthermore, Brather has relied on scholarship that is too theoretical and, in some instances, not familiar enough with the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Curta has observed that Bierbrauer’s issue with Brather’s discussion on ethnic interpretation is that he starts with theory and moves back to towards the data, as opposed to the other way around. Brather’s discussion of the archaeological identification of the *Germani* in *Ethnische Interpretation* is cited as an example of the methodological issues Bierbrauer has with Brather\(^{680}\). For example, Bierbrauer criticises Brather for replacing traditional approaches to ethnic interpretation with one

\(^{676}\) Bierbrauer 1996 cf. Halsall 2012: 31
\(^{677}\) Bierbrauer 1994.
\(^{678}\) Fehr 2002: 179.
that is largely theoretical. Brather is criticised for operating an interpretative approach that is from the “top down” as opposed to from the “bottom up”. In Bierbrauer’s opinion emphasises the use of archaeological evidence, and is ultimately more helpful in relation to a professional understanding of what the evidence is conveying.

The second line of criticism that Bierbrauer has with Brather’s approach to ethnic interpretation of archaeological evidence is that he has not considered the ramifications of his approach. There are three issues that form a part of this criticism. The first relates to the consequences for understanding the subject as an historical discipline. Bierbrauer’s concern is that Brather’s conclusions will lead to some form of ‘devaluation’ of prehistory and archaeology as a scientific discipline. Here, Bierbrauer is addressing the implications of Brather’s critique, which portrays the discipline as not only being solely focused on ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence but unable to resolve problems of identity under the current methodologies in the future. The third issue that falls under the concern Bierbrauer holds regarding Brather’s approach is that it will see the discipline abandon all its historical work as well as withdrawing from any historical dialogue with other disciplines.

A specific example Bierbrauer uses to illustrate this is a paper offered to a conference on the Lombards in 2001. In an article entitled “The Lombards: Sovereignty and Identity”, Bierbrauer suggests that following Brather’s approach would not allow for the presentation of his paper on the Lombards because the Lombards would have to be presented in inverted commas or quotes. Historians’ attention would be drawn to

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681 Bierbrauer 2004a: 46, 49.
682 Bierbrauer 2004a: 49.
683 Bierbrauer 2004a: 47.
why this was the case. Bierbrauer contends that seeking a neutral name for the Lombards would further raise questions amongst historians. He concludes that if the use of tribal names were considered taboo then the gap between historian and archaeologist would widen. The effects of any interdisciplinary effort would be lost because historian and archaeologist would be unable to converse 685.

5.3.2 Florin Curta

Across three key articles, Curta questions Brather’s methodology and the conclusions that are reached when following what Brather puts forward 686. There are two fundamental aspects to Curta’s critique of Brather. Firstly, Curta believes that Brather’s view accords with instrumentalist views that are currently dominant within sociology and anthropology. Secondly, in the process of aligning his views with instrumentalist interpretations of ethnicity, Brather does not provide a sound alternative to the culture-history approach.

Curta argues that the ideas being put forward in *Ethnische Interpretation* are not as revolutionary or as revisionary as an initial consideration might think 687. He points to an absence of a non-conventional definition of ethnicity and ethnic identity as evidence 688. *Ethnische Interpretation* is missing key scholarship on ethnicity such as Frederik Barth and G. Carter Bentley 689. This raises a question over the validity of his approach, particularly in light of Brather’s claim that ethnicity is a complex

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687 Curta 2006: 91, 93-94.
688 Curta 2006: 92.
689 Curta 2006: 92. Although, Brather 2004b: 671 would suggest that Barth 1969b at least informed his perspective.
representation of the complete culture and not a matter of objective traits, a claim that would be assisted by a closer analysis of Barth and Bentley\textsuperscript{690}.

Curta sees Brather’s argument as flawed rather than revolutionary or revisionary in approach. It does not achieve what it sets out to do. It reinforces the culture-history paradigm that it looks to refute. Brather’s reaction to the analysis of grave goods by Swiss archaeologist Frank Siegmund (1956-) and the subsequent rejection of any link between Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and ethnicity is evidence for Curta of Brather supporting the culture-history model, as opposed to contesting it\textsuperscript{691}.

Siegmund concluded that daily activities were crucial in establishing ethnic boundaries after an extensive survey of the spread of weapons, pottery and glass vessels on both sides of the early medieval frontiers between the Franks and the Alamanni in 1998 and 2000\textsuperscript{692}. He observed that there were more swords in burial assemblages in the Alamannic region than there was in the Frankish region. Conversely, axes and spearheads appeared to be more prolific in Frankish territory. At the very least, the majority of vessels found there were either wheel-made pots or glass beakers. Half of all the pots deposited in Alamannic graves were handmade. From the nature and extent of the dispersal of goods, which Siegmund posits is a practical demonstration or outworking of Alamannic and Frankish \textit{Habitus}, Siegmund concluded that an ethnic boundary contributing to a discernible ethnic identity existed and was maintained throughout the fifth to seventh centuries.

It is this position with which Brather disagrees because he sees no discernible ethnic identity. Rather, for Brather, Siegmund’s analysis is suggestive of two \textit{Habitus}.


that are at variance with one another. It is this divergence in interpretation that is indicative, for Curta, of Brather unintentionally agreeing with the cultural-history model that Brather himself is at pains to refute. Curta states that this is because removing ethnicity from the identification process leads to the conclusion that the Alamanni and the Franks were different without actually realising it\textsuperscript{693}. Brather refrains from such a position, however. The determination that something is either Alamannic or Frankish comes from the archaeologist who is looking at the material remains. To quote Pohl on the issue: “to make ethnicity happen, it is not enough just to be different”\textsuperscript{694}. Human agency in the process must be considered, a perspective that is well addressed in Brather’s approach.

Curta questions Brather’s functionalist approach to the identification of boundaries between groups\textsuperscript{695}. Curta suggests that Brather presents archaeological artefacts as things that are not specifically made to transmit representations of the past. Their function comes from their response to particular economic or social demands\textsuperscript{696}. There is also the metaphorical role that material remains can fulfil, something Curta points out is missing in Brather’s discussions. Curta uses Brather’s reaction to Siegmund’s thesis as an example. Following the line of argument proffered by Heinrich Härke (1949 – ), Curta states:

Somebody buried with an axe in a cemetery in the Frankish zone or with a handmade pot in the Alamannic zone may not at all have been a Frank or an Alaman, respectively. In this case, mortuary dress and grave goods operate as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{693} Curta 2007: 169.
\item \textsuperscript{694} Pohl 1998c: 21-22.
\item \textsuperscript{695} Curta 2007: 178.
\item \textsuperscript{696} Curta 2007: 178.
\end{itemize}
'metaphors’. Those were items that symbolized events in the life of the deceased, and were used by mourners as a means of memory and remembrance. Remembrance is an example of human action and it is the ignoring of human agency in the ethnic identification process that sits at the centre of Curta’s fourth line of criticism of Brather's approach. This is because Curta perceives physical remains as “residues of human actions, ideas and events with human import, which archaeologists can decode, read and analyse.” Curta sees Brather's analysis operating the wrong way around. Rather than seeing material remains as a phenotypic articulation of a preformed identity, Brather should view the material remains as an active element in the negotiation processes inherent in ethnic identity formation.

Bierbraurer and Curta provide excellent examples of scholarly responses to Brather’s work on ethnic interpretations in ‘Germanic’ archaeology. The purpose of observing the interaction between Bierbrauer, Curta and Brather is not to participate in the debates that the interaction generates but to show how such views have been received. For instance, where Brather looks to reposition ‘Germanic’ archaeology’s framework away from the culture-history approach, Curta seeks to preserve the notion that archaeological artefacts can be understood to be intentional identity markers. The debate between the three scholars shows that Brather’s perspective has not been universally agreed upon nor has it been developed in isolation. What is shown clearly is how different historical strata of scholarship come into contact.

6 Conclusion

Bourdieu’s discussion about the academic structuring that takes place across a topic has a strong resonance with the work of Sebastian Brather. Bourdieu’s observations in *Homo Academicus* highlight the fact that the different schemata that are used by academics in their respective disciplines are arbitrary. Bourdieu goes on and state that even if there were attempts by scholarship to avoid such unilateralism, the hierarchies of knowledge that are created as a result end up competing with those that already exist. So it is with Brather that in his scholarship he seeks a shift in approach to how evidence in his own discipline is interpreted. Brather’s work focuses on the validity on the ethnic classifications of archaeological evidence regarded as orthodox, until only recently, in the area of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity.

For Brather, an ethnic classification is similar to terms such as “culture” and “language” in that they are simply categories of analysis that bring with them different demands on the archaeological record to which they are applied.

“Archaeological cultures”, “Language” and “populations” are scientific classifications to order the source material and make interpretation of source material accessible. The classifications stretch within the limits of a continuum, the range of which depends on characteristics used and taken in to account. It is the projection of the modern nation-state on pre-historic circumstances, which can expect the congruence of ethnic, cultural, social and political conditions. But not even the modern state has been able to achieve internal homogeneity. It might be out of principle that the homogeneous conditions are not expected for prehistory\(^\text{700}\).

\(^{700}\) “Archäologen Kulturen”, “Sprache” und “Populationen” sind wissenschaftliche Klassifikationen, um das Quellenmaterial zu ordnen und einer Interpretation zugänglich zu machen. Sie ziehen innerhalb eines Kontinuums Grenzen, die von der Auswahl der jeweils herangezogenen und berücksichtigten Merkmale abhängen. Es ist die Projektion des modernen Nationalstaats auf frühgeschichtliche Verhältnisse, die die Kongruenz ethnischer, kultureller, sozialer und politischer Verhältnisse erwartet. Doch nicht einmal
They also bring demands to the archaeologist using them, an obligation to ensure that the evidence is not stretched beyond that which it can bear. Hence the example of the nation-state, whose search for homogeneity with prehistory ranks as a constant concern for the archaeological fraternity.

Brather has presented methodological problems associated with the relationship between archaeology and ethnic identity from as early as 1993. This focus on method-related challenges has framed Brather’s presentation of an alternate interpretation of material remains as indicative of ethnic identity. The adequacy of available sources to support the construction of specific identities is central to Brather’s approach, which questions the suitability of traditional, culture-history approaches that believe it is possible to perceive ethnic identity in the archaeological record. This approach was most clearly annunciated in 2004 in *Ethnische Interpretationen*. As Brather’s own interpretation of what was practically feasible with the physical remains developed from the initial discussion of methodological challenges associated with ceramic distributions, anthropological and sociological frameworks have experienced a steady inclusivity in an effort to create an interdisciplinary method.

Brather has argued for the inclusion of socio-anthropological frameworks when dealing with physical remains throughout his work and it is in *Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter* in 2008 that a principal concentration of this standpoint is seen. This is a time of paradigm change and Brather argues that there is a need for archaeology as a discipline to interpret material remains differently. Material remains should not be viewed as indicative of a readily defined ethnic identity. The archaeological discipline

modernene Staatsgewalt hat Homogenität im Innern zu erreichen vermocht. Für die Frühgeschichte dürfen deshalb schon aus grundsätzlichen Erwägungen heraus keine homogenen Verhältnisse erwartet werden.”,
should also not be considered academically isolated on the count of cultural differences or linguistic hindrance. Brather suggests that the archaeological record should go beyond attempting to prove ethnic identity and focus on the analysis of social change and the creation and preservation of political and social structures. Brather’s method assumes a realistic utilisation of the archaeological sources and an acknowledgment of the character of the material and, therefore, what it can provide.

Brather’s approach has been shaped by disciplinary methodologies outside Germanische Altertumskunde at the same time as directing research to the issues associated with the discipline. Developments in archaeological theory and practice have been used by Brather to explore issues of identity in the Early Medieval period. Brather supports the use of interpretative frameworks such as ‘zones of interaction’ with the rider that the sources upon which such interpretations are based are able to support the conclusions that are being made. The notion of ‘zones of interaction’ marks a break from the dominant culture-history approach that has come to characterise the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity but there are also broader political considerations whose presence in Brather’s work is indicative of an interest in how the distant ‘Germanic’ past is used and the current trajectory of the discipline as a whole.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

In choosing to study the social world in which are involved, we are obliged to confront, in dramatized form as it were, a certain number of fundamental epistemological problems, all related to the question of the difference between practical knowledge and scholarly knowledge, and particularly to the special difficulties involved first in breaking with inside experience and then in reconstituting the knowledge which has been obtained by means of this break701.

1 Introduction

This dissertation examined how the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment. It has rested on close, critical examination of the research of Klaus von See, Dieter Geuenich, Walter Pohl and Sebastian Brather. Their works on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian formed a core of primary sources to answer the question: how has ‘Germanic’ Antiquity negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment?

The historiographical emphasis of this question draws attention to how von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather have depicted the Germani. Chapter 2 provided a historical overview of the environment in which the four case studies are situated. This established a context for how the four case studies narrated the ‘Germanic’ past and presented a background for the historical traditions from which the four case studies have come. Chapter 3 focused on the late Klaus von See and his approaches to the ‘Germanic’ past, framed by the notion of Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Chapter 4 detailed the interdisciplinary methodology of Dieter Geuenich. Chapter 5 explored the

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contributions of Walter Pohl and his use of modern sociological thinking to present the idea of ethnic discourse. Chapter 6 studied the work of Sebastian Brather and the emergence of ‘zones of interaction’ as an alternative paradigm for the more traditional culture-history model in archaeology.

The analysis of these case studies drew on the Bourdieusian principles of Field, Capital and Habitus. These principles formed the central underpinnings of this dissertation’s methodology, focusing attention on the question of the relationship between the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its broader context. Field refers to the social space in which interactions, transactions and events occurred. Capital can be considered to be that which an individual brings to a field of study. Habitus is the structure that comprises of a system of dispositions that generate perceptions, appreciations and practices.

Chapter 2 presented the Field from which the present day discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity emerged. The Capital of each case study was presented as a “brief overview” of the scholar under examination, which detailed some of the educational background of the case study and the influences that affected each of the case studies. Discussion about the Habitus of the case study then followed with the schemata or structures by which von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather approach the ‘Germanic’ past being revealed in the process.

The following section will revisit the conclusions from the historical overview provided by Chapter 2 and the analysis of each case study provided by Chapters 3-6. After the re-presentation of the conclusions, the overarching research question will be applied to the individual case studies. The third section of this chapter will then consider specifically how the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its
intellectual and socio-political environment. One of the recurrent themes in this dissertation has been the interaction between historical and archaeological disciplines and politics. The fourth section of this chapter will present this particular theme. Prior to some concluding comments, this conclusion will offer some possible trajectories for future research.

2 Conclusions from each chapter

2.1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the historical traditions from which the four case studies have come. By providing a history, this chapter detailed the Field, in a Bourdieusian sense, in which the discipline now finds itself. That is, Chapter 2 presented the development of the space in which academic and socio-political interactions, transactions and events that defined the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity took place. While this was a chronological overview, this chapter focused on a number of the discipline’s central themes and how they presented themselves throughout the discipline’s history. These themes crystallised in the examination of the rediscovery of Tacitus’ Germania.

2.1.1 Key themes in the history of the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity

As the historical overview progressed, it was clear that these themes had shaped the way in which the discipline had developed. The rediscovery of the Tacitus’ Germania in the Renaissance brought politicisation and popularisation into the study of the Germani. The efforts of Piccolomini and Campano, for instance, in using the Germani as a tool in fifteenth-Germany to rally support for the Crusades are examples. Annius of
The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

Viertho helped to popularise the Germani amongst the nobility of his time because the Germani provided the nobility with an antique heritage.

During the Renaissance, there were tensions between the Papacy and Germany. These tensions resulted in debates regarding the cultural superiority or inferiority of the Germans to Rome, the antiquity of the ‘Germanic’ past, and claims of ‘national’ ownership, or domestication, of Tacitus’ work. The work of Piccolomini, Campano and Annius were cast so as to contrast Rome and Germany. Piccolomini, for instance, ‘barbarised’ Germany’s past to categorically differentiate it from the present by detailing all the things the society of Tacitus’ Germania lacked. German scholars of the time, such as Wimpheling, argued that what the ‘Germanic’ tribes may have lacked in cultural and intellectual sophistication, they made up for in moral veracity.

During the Reformation, concern over the ability to integrate the Germani into a Biblical worldview pervaded studies of the ‘Germanic’ past. The Germania situated the ‘Germanic’ people as historically attested, however, the Germani were not Biblically supported in the same way. Cultures of antiquity, it was believed, had a place in God’s plan but the ‘Germanic’ barbarian appeared to sit outside of the eschatological structure inherent in this period’s view of history.

Discussions about the distant past found expression in either ‘Romanist’ or ‘Germanist’ points of view, a dichotomy that is persistent to today. In the Renaissance, Tacitus’ Germania was highly regarded by ‘Romanists’ and ‘Germanists’ but it was used in different ways. Piccolomini regarded the Germania as evidence of German cultural inferiority. Wimpheling and Irenicus used the Germania to emphasise their ancestors’ positive traits and characteristics. The Reformation saw this dichotomy expressed in religious terms. Arminius, for example, was seen as an exemplar of religious and moral
purity, traits considered to be the basis of the religious reforms taking place at the time. During the Enlightenment period, the Germanist-Romanist dichotomy, once entangled in discussions about the superiority or inferiority of Germany to Rome, gave way to concerns about how Germany related to France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Leibniz's contributions to the emerging field of philology cast the ‘Germanic’ past as a justification for cultural equality with, or even superiority to, France.

Language was an important theme in the discipline’s history, first prominent during the Enlightenment. Theories of language development in the eighteenth century, in particular the contributions of Leibniz, Mascov and Herder, influenced the depiction of the remote ‘Germanic’ past. For them, language proved a nation's antiquity and provided a way to cultivate a sense of national unity. Johann Fichte and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm continued this view of the importance of language in the nineteenth century. Institutions such as the MGH, with an emphasis on language and literature, provided an official framework for the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. From the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, language continued to play an important part in scholarly understandings and depictions of the past.

The ideas of liberty, territory and race also surfaced in the scholarship. Language connected the distant ‘Germanic’ past with the idea of liberty. In the eighteenth century, Herder saw language as an indicator of Germany’s antiquity and uniqueness, as well as for the diversity of nations more generally. Fichte went so far as to see language as proof of an integrity lacked by countries other than Germany. In one sense, liberty has always been a part of the history of the discipline. The Renaissance and Reformation periods of the discipline’s history were characterised by debates centred on Germany being independent from the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The eighteenth
century and theories of language development saw the rejection of the values of the French Revolution and Napoleonic hegemony, bringing the notion of liberty more distinctly to the fore.

Language was also linked with the concepts of territory and race. Language was used as a means to account for the legitimacy behind German claims, in the nineteenth century, to territories such as the province of Schleswig-Holstein. Arndt’s anti-Napoleonic song *Was ist Deutschland?* illustrates how language and land were connected. Wherever the German language was spoken, there lay Germany. Scholarship in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also saw language and race as closely connected. Kohlrausch’s description of the Germans of his time being descended in blood and language from those who defeated the Romans in AD9 is an example of this.

After a discussion about the place of Wenskus’ *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* in *Germanische Altertumskunde*’s history, the overview of the discipline’s development continued but with a shift in focus to ethnicity. The concept of ethnicity was first used in academic literature around the same time as the first of von See’s contributions to the wider body of research on the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. An explanation of ethnicity’s appearance was required in order to set out the wider academic context that has come to have bearing on ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The four case study chapters picked up the discipline’s historical narrative from the point of departure represented by the shift in the chapter’s focus to ethnicity. From this point of view, the concluding section of Chapter 2 provides a portrait of broader, yet emerging, academic context for the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity, and for the case study analysis that followed.
2.1.2 Interaction of the key themes with the case studies

A number of the key themes from the history of the discipline were carried over to the works of the case studies and had an impact on the way in which each of the four scholars have approached the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Not all the themes from Chapter 2 appeared in the works of the four case studies. The themes were treated as a starting point for analysing the methodology of the case studies.

Three major themes from the history of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity emerged in the works of von See. The ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy is the first that appears. Von See’s analysis of the distant ‘Germanic’ past, and the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ paradigm encompasses a *Scandinavistik* perspective. His incorporation of a ‘Nordic’ standpoint connects his studies of the ‘Germanic’ past into the wider cultural discourse of politicisation, which is the second theme. This is seen in von See’s examination of the intellectual origins of National Socialism, an ideology that regarded ‘Nordic’ Antiquity highly. His discussions about the impact of National Socialism on the discipline of the ‘Germanic’ past itself and how both the ‘Nordic’ and ‘Germanic’ pasts were folded into the Nazi worldview are examples.

Throughout his discussion about the *Germani*, von See engages with the notion of identity. His collection of articles *Barbar, Germane, Arier* (1994), for instance, documents the search German search for national identity. It asks what were the cultural constructions of German identity composed roughly between 1850 and 1945. It also poses the role disciplines such as *Germanistik, Nordistik, Nordische Altertumskunde* and German history played in bringing the necessary cultural material together for that identity construction to take place. In 2001, in *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft*, von See wrote about the processes behind German ethnic identity formation from 1789-1914.
Through his focus on onomastics, Geuenich’s research on the Alamanni incorporates the theme of language. What the science of names can reveal about an individual’s or group’s identity is central to Geuenich’s work. While Geuenich prioritises onomastics as an approach for examining the ‘Germanic’ past, his methodology represents a break from the previous traditions surrounding the use of linguistics in determining identity. In this sense, Geuenich’s work reflects ongoing questions about the validity of the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ paradigm. His is a call for collaboration in the writing of barbarian history between the archaeologist, philologist and historian. Geuenich builds on the break in methodology that coincides with the end of World War Two.

Similar to von See, Geuenich’s discussions take place with an emphasis on identity. The discipline of onomastics is a prime example. The Nomen et Gens project combined historical and linguistic research to determine the relationship between personal, group and place names attested in the Late Antique and Early Medieval sources and how names that have not been systematically researched or completely documented are still regarded as important indicators of identity.\(^{702}\) Geuenich’s approach to the Alamanni also reveals an interest in identity formation processes; particularly as the Alamanni are a people whose origins, according to Geuenich, are not completely known. Thus, Geuenich’s discussions about identity are also discussions about historiographical traditions. The place of Clovis in the history of the Alamanni is an example of this.

Pohl’s work engages with the key themes of the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy, interdisciplinarity and politicisation. The ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ reading of

barbarian history is one of those key themes. In particular, in a similar manner to Geuenich, Pohl has expressed a desire to move away from the binary paradigm that is represented by the ‘Germanist’-'Romanist' dichotomy. His call for an interdisciplinary approach is set in the re-presentation of the Traditionskern approach of Wenskus and Wolfram. The theme of politicisation is also present in Pohl's works. In particular, the presence of the European Union and the contemporary political discourse that surrounds that particular transnational political entity can be identified at a number of points. This will be discussed later in this conclusion.

Pohl has taken a particular interest in the construction and use of identity in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods. A significant part of his work centres on the concept of ethnic discourse, those utterances or texts, verbal and non-verbal practices and rites that have meaning and effect on ethnic identity, barbarians and the distant past. His work in the Transformation of the Roman World series is an example of where this concept is explored. In his influential article “Strategies of Distinction” (1998), Pohl asks how identities were used both cognitively and politically. He examines the extent to which identity was a clearly defined notion yet used by the political elite in maintaining group cohesiveness. In 2010, Pohl edited a collection of papers together focusing on the question: Can archaeological finds and findings provide information on identities from the past?

The sentiment expressed by the question at the heart of Pohl’s 2010 edited collection of papers is one shared by Brather. His Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (2004) questions the use of ethnicity as a category of analysis and therefore the ability to pursue identities in the ‘Germanic’ past through

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703 Pohl 2010:
704 Pohl and Mehofer 2010.
archaeological sources alone. Brather’s interest in identity is one that first emerged in the early 1990s, with papers focusing on the problems associated with interpreting Slavic ceramics distribution as indicators of identity\textsuperscript{705}.

Brather’s work expresses a desire to replace the binary paradigm that has been in place as an analytical framework since discourses surrounding the ‘Germanic’ past began following the rediscovering of Tacitus’ *Germania* is particularly evident. The constructed nature of ethnicity has Brather questioning the culture-history approach to archaeology and the way in which archaeological sources are used within that analytical framework.

2.1.3 Discipline’s self-definition

The interaction of the key themes with the case studies provides an indication as to how the discipline defines itself today. Some of the traditional themes whose origins might be found as early as the rediscovery of Tacitus’ *Germania* continue to shape the discipline. Each of the four case studies, in individual ways, foreground critical approaches to key themes, and so display a self-aware reflexivity that characterises part, at least, of their discipline in current times. This has seen, in some of the case studies, a predilection for a multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary approach to the distant ‘Germanic’ past.

The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity sees itself as continuing, yet re-presenting, some of the traditional themes that have been present since discourses surrounding the distant ‘Germanic’ past first in the fifteenth century. The theme of politicisation, and its effect, is a prime example and presents itself in different ways. The works of von See on the ‘Germanic’ past devote considerable length to the interaction between the historian

\textsuperscript{705} Brather 1993.
and political ideologies such as National Socialism. Furthermore, von See explores how the politicisation of a discipline at a particular point in a society's history relates to broader historiographical debate. His comments about *Sonderweg* and *Sonderbewußtsein* are examples of this. Pohl's statements about how scholarly interest becomes aligned with contemporary political discourse, in relation to the European Union, suggests that the politicisation process is something that is initiated from within the discipline.

There is also a degree of reflexivity in relation to the discipline's approach to its practice. What has been observed is the emphasis made by the present-day discipline on the history of the discipline as a major consideration in its own right. Von See is an example of this. In looking at the impact of National Socialism on an academic discipline, he shows the importance of an academic discipline being aware of how interpretations of the past can play out in the world beyond academia. Brather's work on ethnic interpretations of archaeology is directly critical of archaeological practice. Brather's work questions the extent to which an archaeologist can legitimately use archaeological source material to determine ethnic identity in the Late Antique or Early Medieval periods.

The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity sees itself as moving beyond the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy and is seeking to redefine itself along multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary lines. Pohl and Brather are good examples to illustrate this point. Pohl's approach to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian transcends the traditional dichotomy. It seeks to account for how socio-political realities of the Roman West evolved and how groups changed the way they viewed themselves. Brather's use of

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'zones of interaction' is a shift from the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ interpretation of evidence. It establishes a far more nuanced and complex reading of archaeological evidence that incorporates social and economic frameworks.

2.2 Chapter 3: Klaus von See

2.2.1 Focus of the chapter on von See

This chapter was the first of the four case studies and presented a chronological survey of the work with attention centred on the discipline's place in National Socialist Germany. The chapter also considered von See's treatment of the broader intellectual traditions that contributed to the creation of Nazi Germany. Von See's specialisation of *Scandinavistik* incorporated 'Nordic' Antiquity into his discussions about the 'Germanic' past, demonstrating that the construction of the distant 'Germanic' past had much to owe to northern Europe.

Understanding the motivation for von See to trace the development of the intellectual traditions surrounding 'Germanic' Antiquity, with a particular emphasis on the impact of National Socialism, was a goal of this chapter. Von See belonged to a generation whose intellectual concerns were focused on those academic traditions, discourses, ideologies and political languages that led to the advent of National Socialism. This generational context contributes to formulating an answer to the question about making the 'Germanic' past a present concern. By concentrating on the intellectual and socio-political traditions that have surrounded the discipline of 'Germanic' Antiquity, in a manner described by Zernack as “forensic”708, von See

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exhibits a sense of intellectual *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or ‘coming to terms with the past’.

### 2.2.2 Von See’s negotiation of the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment

Von See questions how old the distant ‘Germanic’ past can be considered to be and the validity of there being a connection from the present to the ancient ‘Germanic’ past. Navigating through the intellectual and socio-political environment, von See emphasises the extent to which the discipline relates to the notion of ‘Nordic’ Antiquity. Von See’s emphasis on the reliance of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity on *Nordische Altertumskunde* highlights the constructed nature of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity itself. Von See’s approach to the ‘Germanic’ past demonstrates a desire to engage openly with the intellectual traditions that informed National Socialist. These traditions started with the humanist appropriation of sources such the *Germania* and went through to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century when historical interpretation was influenced by the drive for national unity.

Von See negotiates the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment by giving attention to the relationship between National Socialism and the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Intellectual traditions that contributed to the rise of National Socialism and the impact of National Socialism on academic disciplines such as *Germanistik* and ‘Germanic’ Antiquity are placed at the centre of von See’s approach. In this way, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or ‘coming to terms with the past’ frames Von See’s approach. Directed towards historical traditions and conventions, the concept of ‘coming to terms with the past’ emerges more fully from the mid-1990s. *Barbar, Germaine, Arier* is the key monograph in this instance. By editing together a collection of
papers on the cultural history of German identity formation, an important step is taken in understanding the involvement of German philologists and historians in the rise of National Socialism. Von See's navigation of the historical terrain associated with *Germanische Altertumskunde* preserves the experiences of one section of German society, as living memory of the National Socialist period is now beginning to fade. Von See’s methodology makes it possible to trace the intellectual history behind the political ideologies of the early twentieth century and to see how ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was used to serve the state.

2.3  Chapter 4: Dieter Geuenich

2.3.1  Focus of the chapter on Geuenich

The focus of the chapter on Dieter Geuenich is on the use of onomastics to observe the practical and political functions associated with identity in the distant ‘Germanic’ past. Geuenich’s work in the field of onomastics has maintained attention on the Alamanni and in the process has shown the Alamanni to be discontinuous with the present. The chapter presents a chronological survey of Geuenich’s scholarship and explores how Geuenich goes beyond the ‘Germanist and Romanist’ readings of the past, a key theme within the history of the discipline, as he promotes interdisciplinarity.

2.3.2  Geuenich’s negotiation of the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment

Geuenich's negotiation of the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment starts with, and remains, centred on onomastics. Geuenich values what the study of names from the medieval period can offer the broader discipline of *Germanische Altertumskunde*. His study of names provides the philologist, archaeologist
and historian of the ‘Germanic’ past with an understanding of how names work and how they interact with one another. The intersection of common and proper nouns brings Geuenich’s discussion to the debate about ‘Germanic’ identity. From the 1970s, Geuenich acknowledged that names showed choices of individuals to participate in group activities and behaviours in a manner to be considered a member of that group. Geuenich builds on this break from tradition, reinforcing his analysis with a focus on the discontinuities in ‘Germanic’ language. Geuenich’s work with common and proper nouns established that names will not affirm one’s ethnic identity in the distant ‘Germanic’ past, as ethnic identity is a social construct and can never really be determined. Rather, names will assist in understanding group membership and how internal group structures come to be.

Collaboration, which has been expressed in relation to Geuenich’s work as “interdisciplinarity”, is a constant theme in all of Geuenich’s works and it is the third way that Geuenich navigates through the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment. It is an approach that develops over the course of Geuenich’s academic career. Following on from the Nomen et Gens project, Person und Name⁷⁰⁹ is an example that shows how attention to the study of the development of names and what could be learnt about the familial, ethnic or social identity of their carriers has encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration. A greater level of co-operation between disciplines such as archaeology, philology and history appeared⁷¹⁰.

⁷⁰⁹ Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 2002.
2.4 Chapter 5: Walter Pohl

2.4.1 Focus of the chapter on Pohl

The chapter on Walter Pohl starts with a reference to the break in historiographical tradition that appears at the end of World War 2. The historical overview provided by Chapter 2 helped to set the historical context of Pohl's thinking in relation to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. Similarly, it set an intellectual framework, found in the traditional ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy, against which the analysis of Pohl’s approach could react. This reaction is the idea of ethnic discourse to the early medieval period and its peoples.

The chapter on Pohl chronologically presented Pohl's historical thinking about the ‘Germanic’ barbarian, taking Pohl's entry onto the academic landscape in the 1980s as a starting point. The chapter considered Pohl’s part in expressing the idea of Traditions Kern ethnogenesis theory, initially posited by Wenskus and Wolfram, in more contemporary, sociological terms. Pohl is less concerned with the distinctions between groups and more focused on how ethnicity served as a point of connectivity with the changes of the Late Antique West and Early Middle Ages. For Pohl, ethnicity is a means to explain change, particularly as socio-political and cultural realities of the Roman West evolved and groups changed how they viewed themselves.

2.4.2 Pohl’s negotiation of the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment

Pohl negotiates the discipline's intellectual and socio-political environment by pursuing an interdisciplinary approach to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. The first of two principle ways in which he has achieved this is through building upon the work of Wenskus and Wolfram, but setting them in a broader Historical and Sociological theoretical framework of scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and
Anthony D. Smith. Sociological theory provides Pohl with the means to upgrade and represent the theories of Wenskus and Wolfram so that they engage with contemporary approaches to ethnicity and ethnic identity. This addresses methodological concerns associated with what Wenskus presented in *Stammbildung und Verfassung*. The result of Pohl's approach is to depict ethnic identity as the product of coming to terms with new social and political realities of the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods.

The second way through which Pohl uses an interdisciplinary method to navigate through the discipline's intellectual and socio-political environment is through the use of ethnic discourse. Ethnic identity is not something that is biologically immutable. Social and cultural dynamics intersecting with one another during the self-identification process makes ethnic identity a 'situational construct' whose form is constantly in flux. Human interaction and activity supports the idea that the very reality of groups in the Late Antique and Early Medieval worlds has to be created, and then maintained, by the very people who are looking to use it to describe themselves and the world in which they lived.

Ethnic discourse is therefore those utterances and texts that create ethnic identity. Pohl's use of ethnic discourse presents ethnic identity as a politically charged enterprise. His use of ethnic discourse is interdisciplinary in nature because Pohl draws on the works of modern historical and sociological theorists regarding the creation of communities. Anderson and Hobsbawm provide Pohl with a broad conceptual foundation upon which to build his interpretation: the notion that a community is largely an imagined or invented entity. Smith emphasises how a group's myths and symbols, their historical memories and central values are transmitted from one generation to the next to ensure the ongoing unity of that group.
2.5 Chapter 6: Sebastian Brather

2.5.1 Focus of the chapter on Brather

The chapter on Brather focused on how he has encouraged a greater awareness of the historical and archaeological traditions surrounding the discipline. He has been calling for a more nuanced perspective on ethnic identity formation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The chapter showed that Brather is keen to decouple ethnic interpretations of archaeological sources from the traditional culture-history approach and ensure that historians and archaeologists do not stretch their sources beyond that which they can support.

2.5.2 Brather’s negotiation of the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment

Brather negotiates the discipline’s intellectual and socio-political environment in three main ways. First, Brather actively seeks a different approach from what has gone before. Significantly, Brather draws on ideas that are external to the discipline of Germanische Altertumskunde. This is represented by the idea of ‘zones of interaction’. A recognised analytical framework within Anglophone archaeological traditions generally, in the German tradition ‘zones of interaction’ is a relatively new reading of the literary and archaeological evidence. Until recently, the long traditions of research into the ‘Germanic’ Antiquity identified archaeological remains with those ‘tribes’ mentioned in the ancient sources.

The second way Brather has navigated through the intellectual and socio-political environment of the distant ‘Germanic’ past is by questioning the validity of

\[711\] For example, Hawkes 1954.
ethnic classifications of archaeological evidence. For Brather, an ethnic classification is similar to terms such as "culture" and "language" in that they are simply categories of analysis that bring with them different demands on the archaeological record to which they are applied. They also bring demands to the archaeologist using them, an obligation to be mindful that ethnicity is not a category that is reflected in the nature of archaeological evidence.

The final way Brather moves through the discipline’s environment is by including socio-anthropological frameworks into the analysis of material remains. Material remains should not be viewed as indicative of a readily defined ethnic identity. The archaeological discipline should also not be considered academically isolated due to cultural differences or linguistic hindrance. Brather suggests that archaeological methodology should go beyond attempting to prove ethnic identity and focus on the analysis of social change and the creation and preservation of political and social structures. His method assumes a realistic utilisation of the archaeological sources and an acknowledgment of the character of the material and, therefore, what it can provide.

Brather’s approach has been shaped by disciplinary methodologies outside *Germanische Altertumskunde* at the same time as directing research to the issues associated with the discipline. Developments in archaeological theory and practice have been used by Brather to explore issues of identity in the Early Medieval period. Brather supports the use of interpretative frameworks such as ‘zones of interaction’ with the rider that the sources upon which such interpretations are based are able to support the conclusions that are being made. The notion of ‘zones of interaction’ marks a break from the dominant culture-history approach that has come to characterise the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity.
2.6 Comparing and contrasting the approaches of the case studies

2.6.1 Differences

The primary difference between each case study is their approach to the ‘Germanic’ past. Von See approached the field of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity as a scholar trained in Scandinavistik; he was therefore conscious of the degree to which content in ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was imported from what was essentially another cultural group, in historical terms, and a parallel but separate academic field. His approach was also tempered by an active interest in the intellectual origins of National Socialism, which was a function of his generation, coming to intellectual maturity in the immediate post-World War Two period. Von See is most concerned with explicitly discussing fundamental elements of his discipline and its recent scholarship in terms of recent “real world” issues.

Geuenich’s primary focus was onomastics. His approach to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity was through the transmission of names and, predominantly, through the history of the Alamanni. Of the four case studies, Geuenich is the most inward looking. While his interest in bringing onomastics, history and philology together may appear to have an outward focus, Geuenich’s collaborative approaches to the distant ‘Germanic’ past are grounded within Germanische Altertumskunde. His predominant focus on the Alamanni is also an aspect of his work that sets him apart from the other case studies. Where the other case studies might consider a range of people groups from Late Antiquity, Geuenich’s works have a particular emphasis on the Alamannic barbarian.

Pohl’s presented the ‘Germanic’ barbarian around the idea of ethnic discourse, in many respects as a continuation of the work of Wenskus and Wolfram. Pohl widely borrows concepts and models from other fields. Approaches to do with national identity
formation embedded in the works of Anderson, Hobsbawm and Smith, for example, inform Pohl’s thinking. Smith’s concept of a mythomoteur, for instance, is significant in Pohl’s vocabulary as it provides a means to describe the creative processes behind Late Antique and Early Middle Ages ethnic identification. It is the mechanism through which a group’s myths and symbols, their historical memories and central values are transmitted from one generation to the next to ensure the ongoing unity of that group.

Brather’s approach to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity is framed by an approach that is best described as ‘zones of interaction’. Looking to break from the traditional culture-history model, Brather posits an approach that comes from outside the discipline at the same time as advocating for a more careful use of archaeological sources. Brather explicitly critiques both the historical development and methodologies of his field. Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (2004) is the most definitive example of such a critique. Another example is Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter (2008), which looks to build a bridge between the continental tradition of thorough “antiquarian analysis” and the theoretical models from the English-speaking archaeological world. This was in order to evaluate what was achieved by previous research and to formulate new perspectives for the archaeological research in an international environment.

2.6.2 Similarities

There are a number of points of similarity in the approaches of the case studies. Each case study discusses the influence of, or is influenced by, disciplines or methodologies that sit outside of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. Von See’s emphasis on Scandinavistik and ‘Nordic’ Antiquity as a reference point for his own discussions about the distant ‘Germanic’ past serves as an example of this. The same can be said for
Geuenich's drawing in of different methodologies or approaches to assist with the formation of a narrative of Alamannic history. Pohl's development of ethnic discourse relies on the terminologies and concepts of theorists such as Anderson, Hobsbawm and Smith, scholars who are not a part of the discipline of 'Germanic' Antiquity. Brather use of the 'zones of interaction' is symptomatic of external influences being brought to bear on the discipline itself.

The second point of similarity is to be found in their reactions to traditional approaches or themes. Von See's focus on the impact of politics on the academic traditions and customs of 'Germanic' Antiquity illustrates this point. Geuenich's reaction to more traditional approaches to the distant past is to call for a more collaborative or interdisciplinary approach to the 'Germanic' barbarian. Pohl's response to traditional approaches to the distant past is to develop them and present them in a more contemporary setting. Brather's reaction to the culture-history approach to archaeology questions the ethnic categorisation of physical remains.

The final point of similarity between the four case studies is the emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to the past. Von See's use of Scandinavian literature, such as epic sagas, as different way of approaching the current source material is one example. At the centre of Geuenich's own methodology, alongside onomastics, is a multidisciplinary approach. Pohl's incorporation of sociological frameworks, as represented by theorists such as Anderson and Smith, comes with his research as a historian. Brather's emphasis on interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches to the past comes through a desire to be academically rigorous and to establish a paradigm that can replace the older, more traditional, culture-history approach.
2.6.3 Importance of these differences and similarities

The differences and similarities between the case studies offer insight into the state of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity scholarship. The discipline has moved beyond the traditional paradigms and approaches, some of which concentrated on one dominant goal in society. Nineteenth-century scholarship, for example, focused on the construction of national identities. Moving away from a singular goal or function has enabled the discipline to engage in self-reflection in terms of the historical development of its methodology or in relation to its role in society. This has seen, in some instances, not just the production of historical knowledge about the ‘Germanic’ barbarian but also the use of that knowledge to critique autonomously society at large.

The discipline in its present milieu has demonstrated a willingness to embrace other methodologies, either internally or externally sourced, to enhance the academic discourse surrounding the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. This has resulted in an acknowledgement, at the very least, of the constructed and contested nature of ethnic identity. This has not precluded the study of how individuals construed themselves in relation to larger social groups. The exercise of studying how people in the Late Antique and Early Medieval periods understood themselves in relation to the world around them continues to be pursued. The deployment of different perspectives, methodologies and paradigms has allowed for a greater understanding of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian and the source material fundamental to the development of the historical discourse associated with Germanische Altertumskunde.
3 ‘Germanic’ Antiquity’s negotiation of its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment

The previous sections of this chapter have outlined what the dissertation has discussed. There has been a restatement of the conclusions of Chapters 2-6 and a discussion of what these conclusions mean in light of the key research question for this dissertation. The previous section has also compared and contrasted the approaches of von See, Geuenich, Pohl and Brather. This section of the present chapter looks to build on this and provide an answer to how ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment.

3.1 Definition along interdisciplinary lines

‘Germanic’ Antiquity has negotiated its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment by defining itself along interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary lines. This is not to argue, to borrow Halsall’s observation, that the discipline has experienced an incursion of some sort of “new fangled” postmodernism. Rather what is noted, through the case studies, is the application of academic rigour. Von See’s integration of ‘Nordic’ Antiquity in to discussion of the Germani is an example of this. He demonstrates that Germanische Altertumskunde relies on other disciplines such as Scandinvistik. The construction of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian since the rediscovery of Tacitus’ Germania was greatly influenced by what scholars could incorporate from northern Europe. Geuenich’s calls for collaboration between the different facets of Germanische Altertumskunde, such as history, philology and archaeology in order to maximise what can be learnt of the Alamanni from the records of names that are

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available. Following the lead of Wenskus and Wolfram, Pohl incorporates sociological perspectives into his rendering of the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. Brather’s interest in interdisciplinarity comes from the fact that he seeks an alternative to the culture-history approach to the distant past.

Such steps would be keeping pace with the direction the discipline has been heading in since the end of World War Two. In many respects the discipline is building on where it found itself after the Second World War, developing its methodological response to an environment that was calling for collaboration between approaches to the past. The emergence of ethnicity, and the discipline’s subsequent engagement with this term, has encouraged this increased interdisciplinary approach. Ethnicity has provided a framework to consider identity more as a construct, socially or politically created, rather than something solely contingent on biology.

3.2 Recognising ethnicity as a social construct

There has been a recognition that ethnicity is a social construct. This is a break from the historical perspective in which ethnic identity was something that could be biologically determined. From Geuenich, Pohl and Brather comes the point of view that ethnicity is something socially, or culturally, determined. While it may be something that commences in a ‘primordial’ setting as per Shils and Geertz’s conceptualisation, these case studies see ethnicity as situational, behavioural, political and institutional. This is a view that presents ethnicity as something that can be adopted or discarded as any given situation requires it.

This resonates with Geuenich’s depiction of the Alamanni. He sees the very label “Alamanni” as something that has emerged due to different traditions, such as history,
linguistics, onomastics, folklore, archaeology and legal history. Geuenich recognised the socially constructed nature of ethnic identity early in his career. In 1976, for example, he concluded that names were applied to groups because of an individual’s own ability to engage in self-identification with the behaviours of a group and to participate in that group consciousness.

Pohl’s approach to ethnicity is also indicative of his regard for it as a social construct and not something that is biologically defined. In presenting the idea of ethnic discourse, Pohl renders any notion of a biologically determined ethnicity as moot. This is because ethnicity is an exercise in power by the ruling elite. Ethnicity is a tool to be rallied when looking to promote unity amongst a group of people.

Brather’s analysis of the distant ‘Germanic’ past assigns ethnicity to an important role. It forms the basis of his critique of the culture-history approach and, in the process, helps to highlight the constructed nature of identity. Ethnicity is relevant to the study of the distant ‘Germanic’ past because its frameworks highlight the problems with stretching archaeological sources beyond that which they can reasonably demonstrate.

3.3 Positioning the discipline in terms of wider academic contexts

The discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has broken away from the ‘Germanist’-‘Romanist’ dichotomy. This has been central to the way in which the ‘Germanic’ barbarian has been conveyed. The case studies share a common trait in that they have each positioned the discipline in their research into the context of wider disciplines. Von See set his discussions within the wider framework of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or ‘coming to terms with the past’. Geuenich draws together different sub-disciplines of Germanische Altertumskunde, such as onomastics and the topic of memorialisation and

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commemoration. Pohl has drawn on socio-anthropological ideas. Brather bases his ideas regarding ethnic interpretations of archaeological evidence on the post-processualism that emerged in the 1970s.

4 Politics and the historian

An underlying theme present throughout this dissertation is politics. The interaction between politics and the historical discourses surrounding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity first emerged following the rediscovery of Tacitus’ Germania. The reappearance of Tacitus’ text was at a time of growing dischord between the Catholic Church and the Germans of that time. The Church used Tacitus to illustrate the inferiority of the Germans, while scholars of German regions saw in Tacitus’ Germania as an ancient text that made reference to them independently of Rome. The Germania was taken as Germany’s own.

From an early point in the discipline's own history, ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has been exposed to political operationalisation. This was to continue in the following centuries. For example, Piccolomini used the distant ‘Germanic’ past to rally support for the Crusades. During the Enlightenment the ‘Germanic’ past was utilised as a means to counter the dominance of French culture. In the 1920s and 1930s, National Socialism saw the ‘Germanic’ past as a means to emphasis German antiquity and purity. In more recent literature the European Union has had a role in historical thinking the ‘Germanic barbarian.

4.1 The presence of the European Union

Several of the authors discuss the significance of their field of research in terms of current developments in “the European project”, broadly invoking the global idea of
pan-European identity and unity without defining with which aspect of the “the European project” they see themselves engaging. Rather, the presence of the European Union is indicated by references to the treaties that have helped to define it, such as the Maastricht Treaty, or by politicians talking about the development of a “European consciousness”. Geuenich and Pohl do not present a definition of the European Union. Their use of the European Union in their discussions and observations are made in the context of highlighting the broad significance that contemporary politics can have on a historical discipline.

One of the recurring themes in Geuenich’s work is the complexity associated with identifying the Alamanni. They are a people whose origins are unclear, whose territory is uncertain. For Geuenich, the history of the Alamanni has to be a history of the historical traditions that have emerged around them in order to balance the political operationalisation that the Alamanni have experienced. In various exhibitions established to help celebrate the 1500th anniversary of Clovis’ victory over the Alamanni in 496/7, politicians from Germany and Switzerland made comment in the forewords of the exhibition catalogues. They rendered the Alamanni as the basis for a shared history between the state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany and Switzerland. In one exhibition catalogue, the former German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, made a direct reference to the place of the Alamanni in creating a common European consciousness:

The exhibition “Clovis and the Battle of Zülpich: History and Myth”, and the accompanying events contributes to the spreading and strengthening of a sense of European history and European consciousness, which is in my opinion, vital to the unification of Europe.

Without such a consciousness, without a sense of how Europe developed, we lack an understanding of the historical achievement of the processes of European unification. The occupation with the history of our continent leads us clearly to how important the conservation of our cultural heritage is for the future of Europe.

Not only are the Alamanni rendered in such a way so as to have a place in the construction of Europe, according to the above extract, they also have a place in the maintenance of European unity.

Pohl’s work in the late 1990s/early 2000s with the *Transformation of the Roman World* project is an example of the impact on a historical discipline that contemporary politics can have. As discussed in Chapter 5 above, Pohl sees the historian as having a political role, as someone whose function not only contends with reporting on the past but also defends the past from misuse and abuse. To fulfill this, the historian must be informed and so, subsequently, Pohl posits that approaches to the study of frontiers in the Roman West were fundamentally challenged at the same time as the fall of the USSR, the Warsaw Pact and the progress of the Schengen integration treaty. This relationship is not without historical precedent. As an example, Pohl uses E.N. Luttwak’s *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, which was written during the Cold War and, as a monograph on the Roman Empire, reflects a sign of the times in which it was written.

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715 “Mit der Ausstellung „Chlodwig und die Schlacht bei Zülpich: Geschichte und Mythos“ und den begleitenden Veranstaltungen wird ein Beitrag zur Verbreitung und Festigung eines europäischen Geschichtsbewußtseins geleistet, das nach meiner Überzeugung eine unerläßliche Voraussetzung für die Einigung Europas ist.

Furthermore, in his introduction to *Strategies of Distinction* (1998), Pohl makes a direct reference to the European Union. Extrapolating the relevance of Early Medieval ethnic communities to the European Union from the question at the heart of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Pohl reveals the value he places on the role of the historian in the present day. The historian can present a broader perspective on phenomena that are affecting society. In the case of nationalism, Pohl states that it “might help to realise that neither “universal” nor “ethnic” communities are the “natural” way in which human society has to be organised”.

### 4.2 The notion of “coming to terms with the past”

Klaus von See’s approach to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity confronts the interaction of academia with National Socialism. This emerged in von See’s work prior to German reunification but since 1990 there has been a stronger emphasis on the themes of Vergangenheitsbewältigung or ‘coming to terms with the past’. The historical development of German national identity, as opposed to those fields of study, such as Scandinavistik or Nordistik, with which von See is traditionally associated, became more prominent in von See’s work. The topics of Scandinavistik or Nordistik surfaced early in von See’s academic career but the prominence of ‘coming to terms with the past’ and the historical formation of German national identity has become stronger. This increased presence of ‘coming to terms with the past’ has been in reaction to the need to account for the fact that the number of those with a direct memory of the German National Socialist experience is in decline. Von See is not just satisfying a need to record the Nazi period as it impacted on the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. What is in the

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balance is the diffusion of information about how politics engaged with the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and the rendition of that interaction into national memory\textsuperscript{719}.

The process of ‘coming to terms with the past’ entails understanding the development or evolution of historical thought underpinning disciplines such as Germanistik and Germanische Altertumskunde. Von See traces the intellectual history of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and how it is affected by its historical context. There is no homogeneity but “many special traditions” each with their own diverse backgrounds, history and representations\textsuperscript{720}. Von See’s interest in the historical development of the discipline initially appears in Deutsche Germanenideologie\textsuperscript{721}, which establishes change in the academic traditions surrounding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity as a regular topic. This is apparent in Die Ideen von 1789, Barbar, Germane, Arier and Freiheit und Gemeinschaft where change in academic traditions is discussed with a view to understanding the intellectual contributions to the environment in which National Socialism emerged.

4.3 Developing future directions for research

As it applies to the distant ‘Germanic’ past, the theme of “politics and the historian” is a feasible area for future research. The presence of the European Union throughout Pohl’s discussions on the Germani and von See’s discussion of the ‘Germanic’ past, framed by Vergangenheitsbewältigung, establishes possible starting points.

\textsuperscript{719} Gay 2003: 204.
\textsuperscript{720} von See 2001b: 7.
\textsuperscript{721} von See 1970a: 9-10.
4.3.1 The impact of Europe on the scholarly traditions surrounding ‘Germanic’ Antiquity

References in Pohl’s work from the 1990s and the political rhetoric surrounding the Alamanni, presented in various archaeological exhibition catalogues, indicate the worth in exploring the relationship between contemporary Europe and the current scholarly approaches to ‘Germanic’ Antiquity. The definition of contemporary Europe would be an area that such a project would need to nuance. The different visions for Europe would need to be incorporated into such a project. For example, while an emphasis might be on the relationship between contemporary Europe and the present-day German scholarship on the ‘Germanic’ past, other understandings of Europe would need to be considered. These might include the Belgian, French, English and Italian hopes for Europe. The fact that groups, such as the Alamanni, have a geographical reach that goes beyond the limits of the European Union reinforces the need for precision in how Europe might be referred to and deployed as a frame of reference.

The relationship between institutions and academia would be another important consideration for this possible future research project. The tension between academic organisations and funding institutions, and the role of different arms of the European Union such as the European Science Foundation are areas that would be integral to such a discussion. As a part of that investigation, research into speeches, policy documents, calls for research funding bids and the themes for research sponsored by European funding bodies would need to take place.

722 For example, see: Pohl 2000: 249, 2002c: 278.
4.3.2 The impact of the DDR on ‘Germanic’ antique scholarship

A second possible direction for research to proceed following this study is to examine the impact of East Germany on ‘Germanic’ antique scholarship. Coblenz’s and Härke’s presentation of the connection between ‘Germanic’ Antiquity and historical materialism being akin to an ersatz relationship, where the adherence to Marxist interpretations was the norm in theory and not in practice, is one departure point. In what has been recognised as one of the most surveilled societies in modern times, such a relationship raises the question of how the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity navigated the expectations the East German government had of its academic institutions.

Coblenz’s own experiences under the East German government, referred to in Chapter 2, bring a personal or individual dimension to this question. One possible direction the research could take, in a similar fashion to the present dissertation, is to examine the contributions to the historical and archaeological narrative of the ‘Germanic’ past of key individual scholars within East Germany. Wilhelm Unverzagt and Joachim Hermann are two examples, alongside Werner Coblenz, that would make for good case studies.

The interaction between politics and the historian has been a recurrent theme in this dissertation, albeit not its main focus. For Geuenich and Pohl, the presence of the European Union as well a push for identity at a regional level and a state level has been of particular interest. There is scope for further investigation in this area. Related to the theme of politics and the historian is the idea of ‘coming to terms with the past’. Von See has pursued this in his discussions about the Nazification of academic disciplines, as

For example, see: Coblenz 2000: 304-338; Härke and Wolfram 1993.
well as the way in which a political ideology was intellectually conceived. With there being a drift to conceptualising ‘coming to terms with the past’ as something applicable to life experienced under the East German government\textsuperscript{725}, further research into the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity in the DDR is feasible.

5 Concluding Comments

In negotiating its contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment, the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has developed a ‘forensic’ approach to the distant past. That is, the discipline of ‘Germanic’ Antiquity has become more aware of its own practice and what the implications of such awareness can bring. This has not been at the expense of studying the history or archaeology behind the ‘Germanic’ barbarian. The case studies have, for example, continued to contribute actively to the broader body of knowledge relating to the barbarian in the Early Medieval period. There continues to be, as Pohl points out...

...a devotion to the technicalities of text editions and source criticism, representing an expertise and sophistication essential for the preparation of working tools and research infrastructures for the study of Medieval History\textsuperscript{726}. In parallel to such endeavours, there are other approaches to the ‘Germanic’ barbarian; post-modern text critique, social and economic history based upon quantitative or sociological methods, regional studies with transdisciplinary standpoints.

This study has also shown that there currently exists a degree of unique thinking around the subject of the distant ‘Germanic’ past. There is a willingness to push beyond

\textsuperscript{725} Ther 2003: 48 is an example of assuming \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung} is something that is to be applied to the German experience under the former GDR. More generally, see: Huyssen 1992: 66; Olick 1998: 558; Silbermann 1987; Verbeeck 1996.

\textsuperscript{726} Pohl 2008b: 3.
traditional paradigms and approaches, building on the methodologies of the discipline's history: “We now think much more about the history of our disciplines and the political undercurrents involved”\textsuperscript{727}. A sense of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance, as initially referred to in Chapter 1, is promoted as a result of this. So too is there an encouragement of historical and archaeological narratives constructed cognisant of the complexities and nuances that are associated with the study of \textit{Germanische Altertumskunde}.
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