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Origin and Antitype: Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany, 1806-1914

A dissertation presented
by
Carla Melanie Heelan
to
The Department of History

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
History

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Origin and Antitype: Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany, 1806-1914

Abstract

This dissertation examines how the nineteenth-century engagement with medieval Europe changed modern Germany. Drawing from archival and printed primary material, I reconstruct how the Middle Ages gained new explanatory relevance as the origins of nineteenth-century German institutions and phenomena. I consider the historical interpretation of the medieval world at its broadest, not limited to scholarly debate, but also as it encompassed fiction, art, architecture, music, social science, law, and politics. Each chapter examines a figure drawn from these fields and each also moves chronologically through the century. I begin with the historian and statesman Barthold Niebuhr, who invoked the German Middle Ages as a source of patriotism and as an alternative to the Roman legal tradition. I next discuss the politician and architectural theorist August Reichensperger, who used the perceived regionalism of the medieval past as a means to resist Prussian centralization. My third chapter focuses on the intersection of historical research and fiction in the work of Victor von Scheffel, before I then turn to the role of the Medieval in Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle. The final chapter of my dissertation treats how assumptions about the medieval world affected the frameworks that early sociologists used.

I argue that nineteenth-century conceptions and uses of the Middle Ages retained mythical or profoundly transhistorical elements, even as historians and philologists made the period more historically legible. Furthermore, the protagonists of my dissertation read nineteenth-century categories and concerns onto the Middle Ages. Their agendas shaped

perceptions of the past, and, more importantly, influenced the structures and norms of the nineteenth century. These five figures fundamentally believed, however, that their distortions accurately depicted the historical record. I attend to this belief, that their portrayals of the past were true, rather than purely opportunistic bids to shape the present. I conclude by exploring how only in the mid twentieth century did medieval historians – specifically, Ernst Kantorowicz – begin to examine the influence of nineteenth-century vocabularies and frameworks on the formation of their field.

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Introduction

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Middle Ages seemed a distant, even disturbing, period of Europe's past. Classical ideals predominated in art, literature, and political theory. Antiquarians such as Johann Winckelmann and Richard Lepsius retrieved ancient artifacts from Greece and Egypt for exhibition in the German states.[1] Winckelmann's panegyrics to the beauty of Greek sculpture popularized an understanding of the classical world that associated it with artistic genius.[2] He interpreted Greek art in context, as the product of a culture that had developed certain political rights not enjoyed in eighteenth-century Central Europe. For his educated readers, ancient Greece represented a reformist cultural ideal.[3] The Roman Empire had a more contested legacy given the collapse of the Republic into dictatorship, and also the territorial ambitions of its leaders in ancient *Germania*. Yet French and German scholars alike

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[1] Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 48-49. Marchand's book is a particularly insightful contribution to a sizable historiography about the relations between modern Germany and ancient Greece, first discussed in Eliza May Butler's, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1935). This "antiquarian reverie" was a European and British phenomenon, as well as a colonial American one. Nor was Greece the only model. Republican Rome proved an equally productive model during the Enlightenment and its fall, first to dictatorship and then to medieval chaos, served as a cautionary tale, famously described in Chapter 49 of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. On the importance of English books in translation for eighteenth-century Germany, especially Gibbon, see Bernhard Fabian, *The English Book in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (London: British Library, 1992). See as well Lionel Gossman's discussion of the relations between Gibbon and Enlightenment in, *The Empire Unpossess'd: An Essay on Gibbon's* Decline and Fall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[2] Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 7-9.

[3] Ibid., 9-10.

had praised the independence and ferocity of the prehistorical Germanic tribes, ever since Italian humanists had rediscovered copies of Tacitus's *Germania* during the fifteenth century.[4] Montesquieu approvingly cited these attributes in *L'esprit des lois* (1748), as did Johann Gottlieb Fichte in a lecture series sixty years later.[5] Eighteenth-century Europeans used these past civilizations as models on which to base their own art, norms, laws, and politics.

After ca. 1750, scholars became increasingly interested in the Middle Ages. They understood the thousand-year period as newly relevant for the study of history, philosophy, literature, philology, and law. This change depended partly on new findings that cast medieval Germany as a favorable, rather than "dark," epoch. At the mid century, Johann Jacob Bodmer discovered manuscripts of high medieval poetry. He published these sources and argued that he had recovered a thirteenth-century Golden Age of German culture and politics, a claim that quickly gained popularity.[6] Researchers also began to emphasize the importance of medieval historical precedent. Justus Möser's detailed local history, *Osnabrückische Geschichte*, further rehabilitated the Middle Ages as a period of investigation, one that revealed the evolution of laws

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[4] On this discovery, and for greater detail about the manuscript transmission of *Germania*, see Ludwig Krapf, *Germanenmythus und Reichsideologie: Frühhumanistische Rezeptionsweisen der taciteischen "Germania"* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979), 4.

[5] Montesquieu, *L'esprit des lois*, trans. and ed. A. Cohler, B. Miller, and H. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), book 28, ch. 2; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. and ed. by Isaac Nakhimovsky, Béla Kapossy, and Keith Tribe (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2013), 104. Even those few historians who studied medieval Europe in an academic setting retained a detached distance from their subject; see Lionel Gossman, *Medievalism and the Ideologies of the Enlightenment: The World and Work of La Curne de Sainte-Palaye* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 151-73.

[6] Peter Reill has recounted this anecdote in, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 208-212.

and customs.[7] For these intellectuals, medieval Germany functioned as the origins of modern structures and practices. In Herder's *Fragmente*, the philosopher insisted that scholars should treat the era as equal to other ancient cultures, as unique as ancient Greece, Egypt, or Rome.[8] By the end of the eighteenth century, early Romantics even declared that the Middle Ages were superior to modern German culture.[9]

During the nineteenth century, interest in the Middle Ages became a broader cultural phenomenon as Germans sustained and developed these eighteenth-century themes. In this dissertation, I examine the relations between medieval history and medievalizing scholarship, politics, operas, novels, and the arts. Figures from all of these fields located the origins of modern institutions and culture in the German Middle Ages, and understood the nineteenth century according to this framework. Their inquiries distorted source materials to reflect modern priorities and concerns, though they would not have understood their propositions as misrepresentations of the historical record. Furthermore, the protagonists of this dissertation created narratives complicated by a tension between historical facts and mythical or transhistorical understandings of the Middle Ages, a confusion that typified nineteenth-century conceptions of medieval Germany. Yet by the fin-de-siècle, many of these medievalizing discourses seemed natural. This dissertation explores how and why the Middle Ages became so important to nineteenth-century Central Europe. I trace transformations in these debates and I

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[7] For a more detailed discussion of this two-volume work, see Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 86-92.

[8] Ibid., 140-41.

[9] Frederick Beiser, "Introduction," in *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xi-xxix.

discuss how interpretations of the Middle Ages changed, who the interpreters were, and why this mattered.

I describe these manifold invocations of the German Middle Ages as "medievalism," a range of concepts and practices engaging with a sometimes historical, often imagined, medieval past. Past uses of the term "medievalism" can be divided into two distinct phases. Its first usage was British. During the nineteenth century, John Ruskin introduced the word to describe medieval architectural styles. "Medievalism" quickly came to refer to the Middle Ages more generally, and also to how the era served as a model for the present. After World War II, academics revived the term in studies that investigated how nineteenth-century scholars had interpreted medieval Europe to explain, or solve, nineteenth-century phenomena.[10] In 1979 Leslie Workman founded a journal, *Studies in Medievalism,* to host newly interdisciplinary examinations of these deployments.

To date, few studies have fulfilled Workman's ambition. Works on the subject have instead remained within the boundaries of either literary or historical studies. Historical scholars of the Middle Ages are by far the most numerous, and dedicated, participants in this endeavor. Medieval historians, especially German ones, have long contributed detailed narratives about the development of their discipline.[11] These studies belong to what I call the internalist school of

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[10] For a more detailed description of the changes in meaning of "medievalism," see Leslie Workman, "Editorial," *Studies in Medievalism* 1 (1979): 1-2.

[11] On nineteenth-century German medieval constitutional scholarship, see especially the first two chapters of Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria*, trans. from the fourth, rev. ed., and introduced by Howard Kaminsky and James van Horn Melton (1942; repr., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). See as well Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, *Die deutsche verfassungsgeschichtliche Forschung im 19. Jahrhundert: Zeitgebundene Fragestellungen und Leitbilder* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1961). Many

historiography, since its practitioners seek to reconstruct earlier scholarship about the Middle Ages so as to better understand their own subject. Their works are rich repositories of how secondary literature on medieval Germany developed and they often contain useful summaries of past debates. These internalist analyses, however, replicated the disciplinary confines of the nineteenth-century academy. Historians from this school refrained from asking what broader repercussions and influences these scholarly controversies had.

During the past thirty years, a more recent generation of medieval scholars has examined their institutional predecessors in order to understand how broader considerations, beyond the academic, affected the formation of their field. This inquiry occurred in two waves, roughly chronological. The first group of these historians challenged the fundamental questions of their specialization. They charged that studies on subjects like constitutionalism and kingship merely perpetuated nineteenth-century research concerns. These scholars argued, moreover, that these topics reflected modern interests rather than an engagement with the medieval world.[12] A second school succeeded this group of skeptics, one that interrogated more broadly how the

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German scholars have also written histories of the institutions dedicated to medieval studies, see the book-length article by Harry Bresslau, "Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae Historica." *Neues Archiv für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 42 (1921): 1-769, as well as Horst Fuhrmann's more recent contribution, *"Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen:" Gelehrtenleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Dargestellt am Beispiel der Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996.

[12] Examples of this insightful literature include, Edward Peters, "More Trouble with Henry: The Historiography of Medieval Germany in the Angloliterate World, 1888-1995," *Central European History* 28 (1995): 47-72; Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, c. 800-1056* (New York: Longman, 1991), 1-17; Lee Patterson, "On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 87-108; John Van Engen, "The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem," *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 519-552; Fred C. Robinson, "Medieval, the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 59 (1984): 745-756; Brian Stock, "The Middle Ages as Subject and Object: Romantic Attitudes and Academic Medievalism," *New Literary History* 5 (1974): 527-547; Sidney R. Packard, "The Teacher and the Textbook: A Challenge from the Medieval Field," *Speculum* 15 (1940): 224-29.

development of medieval studies derived from nineteenth-century priorities, and affected them in turn. Their contributions range from articles on European medievalism in colonial context to the political impact of the revival of medieval plays.[13] Similar trends are evident in medieval literary studies.[14] Scholars have shifted away from internalist critiques of their discipline and now explore instead how their predecessors created the discipline in dialogue with nineteenth-century concerns.

These insightful studies have finally made it possible to ask a wholly new question, namely, how the engagement with medieval Europe changed modern Europe. There is some preliminary work on this subject, particularly in British and French contexts. Historians have uncovered, for example, how academic debates about the Middle Ages influenced nineteenth-century German

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[13] More recently, see Carol Symes, "The Middle Ages between Nationalism and Colonialism," *French Historical Studies* 34 (2011): 37-46; Helen Solterer, *Medieval Roles for Modern Times: Theater and the Battle for the French Republic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Paul Freedman and Gabrielle Spiegel, "Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies," *The American Historial Review* 103 (1998): 677-704; Robin Fleming, "Picturesque History and the Medieval in Nineteenth-Century America," *The American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1061-1094.

[14] On the recovery of medieval literature and fairy tales in historical context, see Christa Kamenetsky, *The Brothers Grimm and their Critics: Folktales and the Quest for Meaning* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992) and also Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 1988). See as well Jan M. Ziolkowski, "Folktales in Medieval Latin Poetry," in *Fairy Tales from Before Fairy Tales. The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful Lies*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 16-64, and his "Foreword" to *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middles Ages*, by Erich Auerbach, translated by Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), ix-xxxix. On this historical context among literary historians, see Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) and *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Though its periodization is later than my project, see also R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, eds., *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

politics and policies.[15] My dissertation similarly includes intellectual genealogies that connect research and governance. Yet I also seek to restore the ubiquity of nineteenth-century German medievalism. Its pervasiveness transcended scholarly study and politics to affect music, art, architecture, fiction, even the German landscape.

I have structured my dissertation by historical figure in order to uncover variations in these debates. Each chapter functions not as a brief biography, but as a way to reveal different dialogues in historical context. I begin with the historian and civil servant Barthold Niebuhr, then turn to the politician and architectural theorist August Reichensperger, and move on to the popular historical novelist Victor von Scheffel. The last two people I discuss are the composer Richard Wagner, and the sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel. Although I have organized this project with five protagonists, I discuss each in conversation with their interlocutors, as well as with each other. My interdisciplinary analysis recovers the moments, and processes, through which an academic interpretation of the Middle Ages influenced its visual representation, as well as the other way round. Although I describe medievalism as a shared intellectual and cultural

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[15] Examples include Otto Gerhard Oexle's many articles on the subject, such as, "The Middle Ages through Modern Eyes: A Historical Problem: The Prothero Lecture" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, 9 (1999): 121-142, "Das Mittelalter und das Unbehagen an der Moderne," in Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus. Studien zu Problemgeschichte der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 137-62, and "Ein politischer Historiker: George von Below (1858-1927)," in *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft um 1900*, ed. Notker Hammerstein (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1988). See also Martin Ruehl, "'In this Time without Emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 187-242. For similarly insightful work in the British colonial context, see Ananya Kabir, "Village Communities and Sacred Groves: Tacitus's *Germania* in British India," paper presented at the Harvard University History and Economics Seminar, The Center for History and Economics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 12, 2011, and Kabir, "Analogy in Translation: Imperial Rome, Medieval England, and British India," in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, edited by Ananya J. Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

horizon, I attend to differences in the portrayal of the Middle Ages. I examine not how medievalism functioned as one coherent, structuring discourse, but rather how its many meanings prevented its containment in one dominant medievalizing narrative.

My dissertation does not focus on the nineteenth-century academic study of the Middle Ages, though this does inform my argument. Medieval historians have already reconstructed many of these debates in their internalist analyses of the discipline. As in other fields of historical study, nineteenth-century German medievalists emphasized two aspects of their work: creating a historical narrative based on facts and publishing new critical editions of medieval sources. Despite this emphasis on source materials, historians had what one commentator has described as only "a thin conceptual apparatus" for their writing.[16] Nineteenth-century historians posited an eternally political subject and they wrote about medieval statesmen and policies with the language of the nineteenth century.[17] Medieval history, like much historical writing, was explicitly political in its purposes, and often directly responded to nineteenth-century debates. As important as medieval political history was the reconstruction of medieval laws and constitutions. Germanist legal historians tried to prove continuities in legal practice between the Middle Ages and the modern age, and where there was none the scholars often advocated for its implementation. In short, medieval historians located the origins of modern institutions and concepts in the German Middle Ages, often unintentionally distorting the record in order to do so. This program also influenced social and economic historians later in the century.

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[16] Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800-1056* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 7.

[17] Ibid., 7-10.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when my dissertation opens, the boundary between historical study and politics was hard to identify. After the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, figures at the intersection of Prussian politics, administration, and scholarly research, such as Barthold Niebuhr, invoked the Middle Ages with increasing frequency as an era of German nationhood. "Germany" was aspirational in this context, more of a utopian project than a political platform. Yet these men hoped to find what many in this dissertation referred to as a "German basic principle," a latent national essence untainted by French influence. As historians have noted, Germans across Central Europe tried to identify the ways in which German culture fundamentally differed from French.[18] At a moment of political and military defeat, many tried to establish a sense of Germanness based on traditions different than those of the dominant European culture.

This recovery entailed a search for origins in the era of German political and cultural supremacy, the Middle Ages. Historians of modern history have long recognized this phenomenon, yet most have devoted only a few sentences to it. A set of assumptions informs the brevity of their treatment. First, many scholars tacitly accept nineteenth-century claims that modern German culture directly derived from medieval precedent, and that this historicizing

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[18] Particularly helpful are Karen Hagemann, *Revisiting Prussia's Wars Against Napoleon: History, Culture and Memory*, trans. by Pamela Selwyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Part I, as is Ute Planert, *Der Mythos von Befreiungskrieg. Frankreichs Krieg und der deutsche Süden. Alltag–Wahrnehmung–Deutung, 1792-1814* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007). See also Mark Hewitson, "Belligerence, Patriotism and Nationalism in the German Public Sphere, 1792-1815," *English Historical Review* 128 (2013): 839-876, as well as Hagemann's briefer treatment, "Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography," *Central European History* 39 (2006): 580-610. German perception of the oppositional nature between French and German culture became a nineteenth-century Central European framework to contrast the two cultures, a conceptual practice that dated to the Napoleonic era and included figures like Germaine de Staël, *De l'allemagne* (1815; repr., Paris: Hachette, 1958).

impulse was “natural.” Moreover, these typically brief glosses have included only one interpretation of the early nineteenth-century usage of the Middle Ages, namely as shorthand for a vague patriotism that responded to French occupation. Yet few aspects of medieval German history necessarily recommended the subject to Prussian elites. Prussia was, after all, an early modern Protestant state; the medieval empire was Catholic. Nonetheless, figures from the Prussian administrative-intellectual milieu overlooked these incompatibilities and posited the medieval state as a political precedent and a military model. Furthermore, as this dissertation explores, certain epochs and figures from the Middle Ages accrued specific political and cultural valences. Carolingians, Ottonians, Salians, Hohenstaufens: rulers from these dynasties communicated different values.

I argue that these political invocations of medieval Germany changed substantially during the nineteenth century. 1848/49 transformed many narratives about the Middle Ages. It is worth stating here that these medievalizing narratives about state authority, before and after 1848, were fundamentally untrue. Historians and statesmen, in the Napoleonic- and *Gründerzeit* alike, believed that they shared their modern categories of kingship, administration, and sovereignty with medieval subjects. This contributes to what I describe as the proximity of the Middle Ages. Many nineteenth-century Germans understood the period through an emphatically modern lens. The two eras resembled each other and seemed familiar, as if five hundred years did not separate them – or, as if that interim period had not disrupted the development of concepts and institutions originating in the Middle Ages. Though my project ends in the early twentieth century, the political aspects of historical study retreat from my argument after the 1870s. As German unification became likely during the 1860s, these medievalizing discourses lost their earlier interpretative flexibility. Historians and politicians transformed them into a teleological narrative

about the inevitability of Prussian unification. This dissertation describes how initially marginal interpretations of the Middle Ages changed and became authoritative.

The implications of the Middle Ages for modern politics were also expressed in art. During the Napoleonic era, philosophers, statesmen, and historians created a rich textual environment that linked patriotism with medieval precedents.[19] Artists portrayed the German Middle Ages similarly in paintings that subtly communicated the nationalist sympathies of their creators.[20] Other tangible forms of cultural medievalism emerged during this period, too. Artists represented a range of medieval themes in paintings, from castles and court scenes to abandoned Gothic ruins.[21] Architects turned to the Middle Ages for inspiration. Even figures now associated with classical revival styles entered a Gothic phase during the last ten years of conflict with France between 1805 and 1815. The great Hohenzollern court architect Friedrich Schinkel considered Gothic architecture the embodiment of both personal emancipation and political freedom during this period. Yet after 1815 he repudiated the style and returned to a classicizing idiom, which he understood to express more clearly an ideal civic community. Thereafter Schinkel incorporated

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[19] See Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann on this robust print culture, "Collaboration, Resistance, and Reform: Experiences and Historiographies of the Napoleonic Wars in Central Europe," *Central European History* 39 (2006): 547-579; Hagemann, "Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics," 596-610; and Hewitson, "Belligerence, Patriotism and Nationalism," 840-66.

[20] Two recent exhibitions in Berlin have thematized this association between early nationalism and medievalizing art, see the exhibition catalogs, *Romantik und Mittelalter: Architektur und Natur in der Malerei nach Schinkel*, ed. Angelika Wesenberg (Berlin: Kunstverlag, 2012) and *Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Geschichte und Poesie*, ed. Hein-Th. Schulz Altcappenberg and Rolf H. Johansen, (Berlin: Kunstverlag, 2012). On the representation of the Middle Ages in literary and intellectual circles, see Frederick Beiser, *Early Political Writings*, introduction, and also Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 264-334.

[21] Wesenberg, *Romantik und Mittelalter*.

Gothic motifs only occasionally and at royal behest.[22] Art and architecture belonged to a set of visual signals that used the Middle Ages to suggest and contest conceptions of German nationhood. Artists deployed their craft to support German independence during these early decades, just as some later used architecture to resist Prussian centralization.

This dissertation focuses on a neglected aspect of nineteenth-century visual culture: costumes. German historians have long emphasized the pageantry of late-century imperial culture and this subject still yields rich insight.[23] The new national festivals after 1871 entailed theatrical components that involved historical reenactment and plays, many of which featured old Germanic dress. I pursue the older nineteenth-century precedents for medieval costuming, dating to Napoleonic Germany. The same patriots who delivered impassioned speeches frequently donned what they believed was medieval Germanic clothing, a practice that continued into the 1830s among well-educated, nationalist young men. I suggest that costumes joined a medievalizing visual repertoire, a repertoire that during the first half of the nineteenth century communicated a political radicalism that existed among an intellectual fringe. My sources include verbal descriptions, sketches, paintings, and, later in the century, photographs.

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[22] John E. Toews includes an insightful discussion of Schinkel's stylistic transformation in, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 120-27 and 140-42.

[23] Nipperdey's articles in the 1960s and 1970s on this subject preempted many arguments from the 1980s about the state-sponsored manufacture of tradition. These essays are collected in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976). Festivals and ceremonies experienced a new vogue in the 1990s and included volumes such as, Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte, eds., *Bürgerliche Feste. Symbolische Formen politischen Handelns im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

I consult an older historiography about the "invention of tradition" as I seek to understand the relations between the political and the visual, and the Middle Ages.[24] In Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's original telling, government officials manufactured public holidays and participatory rituals to create new bonds of loyalty between citizens and the modern state. This invention was fundamentally a statist enterprise to draw together state, nation, and society.[25] My dissertation departs from this framework in that I emphasize instead that many medievalizing practices, although sometimes allied with the state, were not necessarily of the state. Recent work on collective memory has similarly shifted the subject of historical analysis, from the machinery of state propaganda to citizens.[26] My research has adapted contributions to the historiography of memory in two respects. I emphasize scholarly research about the Middle Ages, as well as the popular understanding of medieval Germany. Furthermore, I investigate how conceptions of medieval culture changed in new settings; how a scholarly understanding of the

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[24] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[25] Ibid., ch. 7.

[26] The Egyptologist Jan Assmann has provided helpful theoretical work for collective memory, such as Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-133, as well as his single-author study, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992). Notable contributions to memory in German history include Kevin Cramer, *The Thirty Years' War and German Memory in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, eds., *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and Kosher, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

High Middle Ages shifted when represented in a painting, or in a novel, or at a parade; and, conversely, how these popular invocations affected scholarly work.

Aside from the political and the visual interpretations of the Middle Ages, another important component of my argument addresses how the protagonists of my dissertation endowed the German Middle Ages with certain behavioral norms and moral qualities. Nineteenth-century historians described medieval kingship and administration, often portraying individual monarchs in rich detail. Many of these depictions are genre portraits, for which the authors used traditional tropes and vocabularies to represent rulers' virtues and vices. Yet both historians and novelists often shaped their narratives with a view to present concerns. In periods of military vulnerability during the nineteenth century, scholars emphasized medieval kings as archetypal warriors. The German Middle Ages became a masculine era as a result. This was partly, too, a byproduct of historicism and the medieval subjects that of nineteenth-century research. As scholars focused on medieval states and kings, the Middle Ages became concomitantly male-dominated. This phenomenon was not limited to Germany. Historians and novelists in England, too, emphasized a medieval courtly culture that reinforced modern chivalric codes of conduct for men.[27]

Yet in Germany authors emphasized militarism over manners. I do not suggest that the Middle Ages became a caricature of a rigid, military culture. Quite the contrary; figures across the nineteenth century portrayed medieval Germany as a highly emotional era, but one without the civilizational gloss of modernity. In this instance contrast with the medieval world measured distance and difference, contributing to what theorists have described as "modernity's

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[27] The argument in Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). For a more recent discussion, see Paul Readman, "The Place of the Past in English Culture c.1890-1914," *Past & Present* 186 (2005): 147-200.

consciousness of time."[28] Yet this measurement, and sense of departure from the old, contributed to anxieties regarding progress.[29] Historians, novelists, and sociologists alike described an emotionally healthier world in which feeling was not sublimated through convention, but expressed, even if violently. This narrative of feelings corresponded with older cultural assumptions about the profundity of German culture. I borrow from histories of emotion to argue that these emotional fixations reveal more about nineteenth-century concerns than about a genuinely medieval emotional spectrum.[30] I also suggest that this binary of primitive emotionalism and modern sophistication has had a long afterlife. Late nineteenth-century social scientists developed this focus on behavior and emotions, albeit through the lens of psychology. I

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[28] For a recent multi-author discussion of the term, see the 2011 *American Historical Review* Roundtable, "Historians and the Question of "Modernity."" *AHR* 116 (2011): 631-751. There is an older philosophical literature that debates whether modernity is set apart by a unique temporal self-understanding, which frequently centers on the significance of the Middle Ages. See in particular the collected essays in Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985) and Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity's Consciousness of Time and Its Need for Self-Reassurance" in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1987): 1-22. See also the conversations between Karl Löwith and Hans Blumenberg, Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) and Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1983).

[29] Reinhart Koselleck, "Fortschritt," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1975), 2:351-423. On the British context, see Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[30] For fascinating work on the history of emotions, see Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found*, The Natalie Zemon Davis Annual Lecture Series (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011) and Frevert, "Was haben Gefühle in der Geschichte zu suchen?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009): 183-208, as well as Daniel Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1434* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003) and Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821-45; see also Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). The seminal article for this literature is Peter N. Stearns with Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 813-836.

argue that later interpreters, such as Norbert Elias, borrowed this framework even in the twentieth century. This misplaced fascination with medieval behavioral norms still persists. Charles Taylor has developed a concept in dialogue with Elias's intellectual legacy, the notion of a modern "buffered self," polished through grooming and modes of socialization that Taylor suggests did not exist in past European societies.[31]

One particular institution of medieval research connects the thematic continuities of my argument. During the Restoration after 1815, historians and politicians founded the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*MGH*), Monuments of German History, a series dedicated to publishing critically edited Latin-language sources from the German Middle Ages. The founders of this publication understood the periodization and geography of medieval Germany at its broadest, claiming essentially all of Western and Central Europe as culturally German. I trace the establishment and fortunes of this institution throughout the nineteenth century. This history exposes how German politics affected medieval study, and vice versa. Despite achieving academic prestige, the editorial staff of the *MGH* led a precarious existence before unification. The nationalist research program of the *MGH* depended on a centralized state to guarantee its funding, a state that did not exist for the first five decades of the series. I argue that the *MGH* both anticipated a unified state in its mission and also had to adapt to Germany after its creation.[32] I consulted the *MGH* archive in Munich, as well as its records in the Prussian state

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[31] Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939). On the "buffered self," see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2007), 37-42, 134-42, 300-07.

[32] Historians have long produced rather hagiographical accounts of the institution and the labors of its members, especially of its founders. See Bresslau, "Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae Historica," and Fuhrmann, "*Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen*." See as well M.D. Knowles's more critical account, *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (London and New York: Nelson, 1963), part 3. Unlike my project, these studies do not examine the broader

archive in Berlin. These sites contained material relevant to my project, but they also functioned as archives of medievalism. The records and notes of government officials, and historians and philologists, reveal how they reckoned with the relevance of medieval German history for the nineteenth century. Yet the scholars who worked at the *MGH* continued to believe that their selection of sources for publication presented an accurate portrayal of the Middle Ages, even as they curated the materials based on their academic and political priorities, and, after 1871, those of state officials.

Textual sources, such as the *MGH*, constitute the majority of sources that I consulted for this dissertation. These were both archival and printed. Enthusiastic, and also very thorough, German editors have published multi-volume series of collected letters, speeches, histories, philosophies, even poems, for many of the protagonists of my dissertation. I have found these tremendously helpful and I have cited them at length. Private papers, however, still contain unexpected riches, from unpublished notes, to sketches, to newspaper articles from clipping services to which many public figures subscribed. These miscellaneous materials granted insight about the relations between medievalism and nineteenth-century German life. The illustrations from a Rhine trip in Victor von Scheffel's diary allowed me to reconstruct both his passage, and also the structures and ornaments that he deemed worth preserving: castle battlements, heraldry, medieval armor. Visual sources are essential to my argument and I have included examinations of photographs, paintings, and physical structures. Together, these comprise my primary sources.

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cultural impact of this project in Germany and even abroad, especially in France, where it inspired the Abbé Migne's collection of edited medieval manuscripts, the *Patrologia Latina* and the *Patrologia Graeca*. R. Howard Bloch has an account of this project in, *God's Plagiarist: Being an Account of the Fabulous Industry and Irregular Commerce of the Abbé Migne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Yet there is another component of my analysis, in addition to these materials related to my protagonists. I have also interrogated the primary sources of medieval history that these five figures consulted. Much of this was historical, though not used exclusively by historians. Many actors in this project were historicists, in that they hoped to reconstruct the cultural and political horizon of the German Middle Ages. They based their narratives on newly published, critical editions of medieval sources and their methodology comfortably fits within the admittedly broad parameters of historicism.[33] The expansive definition of historicism in my dissertation moves beyond textual sources to consider the material and social phenomena that contributed to a popular nineteenth-century historical consciousness that understood the Middle Ages as cultural patrimony.[34] Nineteenth-century Germans could inhabit it, in clothing; visit it, in ruins and restored castles; see its representations, in museums and on stage; and study it, at school. This physical and emotional proximity, for some, erased the distance that its formal study might have otherwise produced.

My dissertation opens in Napoleonic Prussia with the celebrated statesman and classical historian Barthold Niebuhr (1776-1831). Niebuhr represented a kind of *Sattelzeit* medievalism, for his

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[33] See the seminal text on historicism, Friedrich Meinecke, *Historism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook*, trans. J.E. Anderson, with a foreword by Isaiah Berlin (1936; repr., London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972). For discussions of historicism that take into account recent historiography, see Peter H. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) and Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968). Frederick Beiser's recent treatment of historicism's variants among nineteenth-century scholars is very good: *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), as is John E. Toews's more general study of nineteenth-century historical consciousness, *Becoming Historical*.

[34] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, and Habermas, "Modernity's Consciousness of Time," 1-22.

concerns bridged the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I argue that Niebuhr's interest in the medieval – interests that he shared with colleagues from his intellectual network, including Carl von Savigny (1779-1861) and Karl von und zum Stein (1757-1831) – arose from his academic and political allegiances. Niebuhr hoped to create a unified national history that was framed by the Middle Ages, especially as it emphasized a distinct historical rupture from France, whose culture and traditions Niebuhr repudiated following German defeat. Niebuhr's commitment to a new patriotic history grew from this anti-French sentiment, as well as from an early nationalism specific to the Napoleonic context. I argue that his new-found interest in the Middle Ages also affected his legal scholarship. Niebuhr and his collaborators became interested in the Middle Ages as the moment at which Roman laws and institutions vanished, replaced by German equivalents. They sought to recover this point of origin, an interest that also informed the very founding of the *MGH*, to which they contributed.

My next chapter turns to the influential Rhenish Catholic politician August Reichensperger (1808-1895). He and his brother contributed to the formation of the powerful Center Party in 1870, but I address instead his extensive writing on neo-Gothic architecture, beginning in the 1840s and continuing through the 1860s. Reichensperger's interest in the medieval past differed markedly from Niebuhr's. Reichensperger deployed a medieval imaginary in thoroughly mid nineteenth-century categories, namely confessional politics. Reichensperger reconverted to Catholicism during the later 1830s after reading a popular polemic against the Prussian state. At the same time, he also entered Prussian politics as a representative of Rhenish regional interests against the centralizing power of Berlin. I argue that Reichensperger's identitarian politics relied on an idealized medieval society whose holism he believed was expressed in medieval architecture. The politician and theorist came to see Gothic architecture as a metonymy for the

cohesion of high medieval German society and he modeled his program for modern social and religious renewal on medieval aesthetics. In this chapter, I describe how figures invoked the Middle Ages to very different purposes during the first half of the nineteenth century. Reichensperger, like Niebuhr, believed that medieval Germany would prompt a set of modern allegiances, yet for the Rhenish politician these allegiances were local and religious, not national.

The historical novelist Joseph Victor von Scheffel (1826-1886) similarly idealized the Middle Ages in his writing, yet he portrayed a less overtly politicized national past. I examine how historical fiction existed at the intersection of nineteenth-century historical research and literary realism. This chapter focuses on his novel, *Ekkehard*, so popular that one hundred editions were printed between 1855 and 1900. The text even inspired three musical settings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I discuss in particular the kinds of moral qualities he ascribed to the people of the Middle Ages and how he supported these assertions. Scheffel included recently edited, critical primary sources to support the claims to veracity of his text, even as he ridiculed the dullness of historical narrative. Returning to scholarly history, I analyze the relations between academic and literary research methodologies at the mid century. Scheffel relied predominantly on the *MGH* even though he maintained that fiction better elicited the kind of patriotism that the series purported to inspire. Furthermore, I argue that Scheffel wrote for a national community that did not exist in 1855, when he first published his book. Like the *MGH* as an institution, he became successful, and financially solvent, only after unification and the creation of a national public.

I next discuss Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and the relation between historicism and musical modernism. Wagner's operas sounded like modernity, yet they thematized what at first seemed its opposite, early Germanic myth and medieval history. Wagner's own understanding of the

Middle Ages changed significantly. I contrast two periods of his life, at the early and late stages of his career. In the 1840s, Wagner represented the Middle Ages in his prose and poetic compositions as an era with radical potential and as an alternative model for the nineteenth century, as discussed in chapter one. Only three decades later, he resisted the popular medieval tropes that he had earlier embraced. I suggest that this transformation in his conceptions of medieval Germany anticipated broader shifts in the meaning of the High Middle Ages during the second half of the nineteenth century, when they became associated instead with the German state after unification. I argue that the processes by which this occurred were not immediately apparent. This chapter investigates how the arts, and visual media more generally, affected the meaning of the Middle Ages for sections of the German national public.

The final chapter considers medievalism in the historicization of early sociology. It focuses in particular on the work of Georg Simmel (1858-1918) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) in the broader context of late-century social science. Simmel and his colleagues stressed the contrast between pre-industrial community and modern society as they explored the phenomena of urbanization, industrialization, and alienation in their writing. Trained in legal and economic history, these sociologists often modeled their concepts of community on German medieval social life. In contrast to the increased sophistication of historical reconstruction, these scholars reified generalizations about the organicism of medieval society, translating older understandings of the Middle Ages into the new sciences. They created a civilizational binary in which the German medieval era became the opposite of modernity, in social organization and especially in the kinds of emotions associated with different social structures. When these sociologists invoked the medieval past, they often made visible nineteenth-century social or cultural fissures.

I suggest how conceptions of the Middle Ages informed nineteenth-century pride in, and worries regarding, notions of progress.

This dissertation reexamines the modern German faith in a shared patrimony and an underlying cultural unity. Historical actors deployed the medieval past in order to describe, and even shape, their experiences in the present. I suggest that figures used conceptions of the Middle Ages to affect, and contest, the institutions of German modernity and nationhood. This study traces the emergence of a repertoire of texts, narratives, and images with which modern Germans portrayed the medieval past. I argue that during the nineteenth century the Medieval became a mise-en-scène from which figures drew precedents and vocabulary to fashion the modern world. Describing this as a social imaginary is a more theoretically sophisticated way of characterizing this medieval background, and also the modes in which it influenced structures and institutions.[35] I reconstruct this imaginary by attending to what Dror Wahrman has identified as the resonance of concepts and practices, those robust enough to leave a mark on the "underlying cultural soundbox" and in the historical record.[36] Thus I trace narratives about the Middle Ages, and also medieval figures, noting when the protagonists of my dissertation referred to them, when they changed them, and why. I examine the nature of the growing ubiquity of the Middle Ages in modern Germany, as well as the pathways along which these representations traveled. I analyze medievalism as a shared framework that cannot be reduced to one common

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[35] Helpful discussions of the social imaginary include, Warren Breckman, *The Adventures of the Symbolic: Postmarxism and Radical Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 96-138; Taylor, *Secular Age*, 171-76 and Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); as well as the older article, John B. Thompson, "Ideology and the Social Imaginary: An Appraisal of Castoriadis and Lefort," *Theory and Society* 11 (1982) 659-81.

[36] Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), xv-xvi.

meaning or usage. Historians have neglected medievalism relative to similar -isms, such as orientalism or philhellenism. I suggest that the implicit truth claim in medievalism – that Germans merely uncovered the truth of their cultural patrimony – is the reason for its neglect even today.

Chapter 1. Patriotism, Propaganda, and Reform:

Barthold Niebuhr and the Search for Legal Origins

1. Introduction

In the beginning was not Napoleon, but Charlemagne.[1] In a lecture given during Winter 1807/08, only a year after Napoleon's decisive victories in Central Europe, the historian and Prussian bureaucrat Barthold Niebuhr described Charlemagne's European conquests one thousand years earlier. First the Frankish emperor united the divided Germanic tribes. He granted the conquered peoples equal access to his laws, contingent on their conversion to Christianity, in order to bring them together into a community. Charlemagne next waged war against the Normans, the Lombards, and the Avars, stretching his empire to its "natural boundaries," identified as the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenées. He sent diplomatic envoys to the Byzantine ruler and entered into commercial relations with the Anglo-Saxon kings.[2] Niebuhr emphasized two aspects of Charlemagne's European unification. These were wars of conquest, and Charlemagne's victory was both a military and a spiritual victory. Combined, these inaugurated a new era, "the Germanic age," culminating in Charlemagne's papal coronation on Christmas day, 800 C.E. Charlemagne may have borrowed titles and honorifics from the first Roman empire, but Niebuhr argued that the Frankish kingdom was utterly different from the empire that preceded it, as well

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[1] The opening line is a historiographical allusion to Thomas Nipperdey's well-known summary of early nineteenth-century German history: "In the beginning was Napoleon." *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1983), 1. Niebuhr refers to Charlemagne as "Karl der Große," but I will use Charlemagne throughout in deference to English-language norms.

[2] Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *Karl der Große. Eine Vorlesung*. Gehalten im Winter 1807-08, 13-17.

as from the remnant of that empire in the east. Terminological choices reinforced this message. At the beginning of his lecture Niebuhr noted that he referred to the "so-called" Middle Ages not by that more common term, but as the Germanic age, *das germanische Zeitalter*.[3] In doing so, he signaled a set of ideological allegiances. Charlemagne was a German, not French, ruler; and the age he founded was culturally and geographically German.

This lecture seems an anomaly in the context of Niebuhr's publication record and career. As a scholar of antiquity, he was best known in the English and German academy for his multi-volume legal history, *Roman History*.[4] Despite these accomplishments Niebuhr referred to himself as primarily a businessman and for over two decades worked for the Prussian state in various capacities, acting sometimes reluctantly as a node that connected diverse networks from historicism to statesmanship. He crossed these worlds by talent and by the timing of his birth, and felt comfortable in all, considering himself an economist, historian, geographer, civil servant, professor and diplomat. He was no Jack-of-all-trades, master of none, for many considered him equally talented in all fields. As a subject of historical analysis, he links politicians and academics who were important at the time and also prominent in later accounts of this period.[5] In this chapter, I evaluate Niebuhr as an individual and as a member of these various networks, and for how he conceptualized the German Middle Ages as a scholar and as a government minister. Following Niebuhr's biography, this chapter assumes that medievalism in

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[3] Ibid., 2.

[4] Barthold Niebuhr, *Römische Geschichte*, 2 Vols. (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1811-12). Niebuhr expanded the text into three volumes for an equally popular second edition, *Römische Geschichte*, 3 Vols. 2nd edn. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1828-32).

[5] Niebuhr certainly was not the only figure from this time who fills this function. His close colleagues Wilhelm von Humboldt and Karl Friedrich Eichhorn, for example, similarly united the early nineteenth-century political and academic worlds.

political debate and in early nineteenth-century historical science must be read in tandem to understand either. I discuss Niebuhr in terms of the Medieval not to revise his place as a classicist or as a historicist, but to uncover intellectual genealogies that would otherwise remain hidden: between medievalism and Napoleonic-era nationalism; German medievalism and French Enlightenment thought; and medievalism and legal historicism. I argue that during this period the Medieval could function as an imprecise prompt for patriotism, such as in Niebuhr's character study of Charlemagne, but also as an increasingly refined means to assess the transmission of Roman law to Germany.

2. Niebuhr and Napoleonic-Era Prussia

A childhood prodigy, Niebuhr left his family home on the shore of the North Sea at eighteen and only a year later was apprenticed as private secretary to the Danish minister of finance.[6] Worldly beyond his early, isolated environment, Niebuhr emerges as a polymath of the *Sattelzeit*, fluent in many languages, committed to independent research, and moving comfortably across national borders.[7] Yet his transition into the Danish civil service began Niebuhr's long career in various government posts. He worked in Denmark for the next ten years before the German reformer Baron Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein poached Niebuhr for the Prussian state. Niebuhr moved to Berlin as a member of the Board of Directors for the Prussian Maritime

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[6] An apocryphal story records that Niebuhr taught himself Spanish and Portuguese from books washed ashore from a shipwreck off the Danish coast. Regardless by age thirty-one Niebuhr claimed that he knew thirty languages. *Lebensnachrichten über Barthold Georg Niebuhr. Aus Briefen desselben und aus Erinnerungen einiger seiner nächsten Freunde*, 3 Vols. (Hamburg: Perthes, 1838), 1:42.

[7] Anthony Grafton, "Polyhistor into *Philolog*: Notes on the Transformation of German Classical Scholarship, 1780-1850," *History of Universities* 3 (1983): 159-92.

Trading Company, only to flee the city eleven days later following Prussia's defeat at Jena. There he began his primary task for the next four years, namely financing reparations to France and avoiding Prussian bankruptcy.

Niebuhr entered the inner circle of state politics, joining the 1807 reform council, the *Immediatkommission*, which functioned as the interim central state authority during Prussia's political crisis. As minister, he drafted proposals for the reorganization of the Prussian government, such as the financial section of Karl August von Hardenberg's *Rigaer Denkschrift* (1807). Niebuhr left government service in 1810, but his commitment to Prussian liberation never wavered, evident in his editorship of a political journal, *Der preußische Correspondent* (1813-15), as well as in his membership in patriotic underground societies, including the *Tugendbund* and the *Gesetzlose Gesellschaft zu Berlin*.[8] He returned to government service in 1816 to replace Wilhelm von Humboldt as the royal ambassador to the Holy See, an improbable posting given his lifelong antipathy to social gatherings, as well as his well-known irascibility. During his time in Rome, Niebuhr oversaw negotiations that resulted in the 1821 papal bull, *De salute animarum*, which reestablished the Catholic Church in Prussia and ensured amicable diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

Niebuhr's politics typified early nineteenth-century reform conservatism. Like many others in the Prussian government, Niebuhr advocated for moderate revisions to the law that combined the social resources of the state with priorities of the German *Aufklärung*; he sought to

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[8] Karen Hagemann, "Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography," *Central European History* 39 (2006): 598-601.

rationalize the bureaucracy while retaining older corporatist governing principles.[9] The reformist milieu to which he belonged hoped to reestablish Prussia as a powerful modern state. The civil servants in the *Immediatkommission* reorganized the executive ministry and the Prussian officer corps, and also oversaw a series of social transformations that included the abolition of serfdom.[10] Although historians have questioned the profundity of these changes, this reformist moment marked a shift in Prussian ministerial politics from aristocratic to more meritocratic participation.[11]

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[9] Peter Hanns Reill, "Barthold Georg Niebuhr and the Enlightenment Tradition," *German Studies Review* 3 (1980): 11. See also Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5, 228. See also Paul Nolte, *Staatsbildung als Gesellschaftsreform: Politische Reformen in Preußen und den süddeutschen Staaten, 1800-1820* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1990) and *Gemeinsgeist und Bürgersinn: Die preußischen Reformen*, ed. Bernd Sösemann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993), esp. 11-24.

[10] This era later figured prominently in the works of Prussian school historians as the beginning of German centralization and administrative modernization, a significant moment on the timeline leading to 1871. This Borussian interpretation has been reiterated more recently in Otto Dann, "Der deutsche Bürger wird Soldat. Zur Entstehung des bürgerlichen Kriegsengagements in Deutschland," in R. Steinweg, ed., *Lehren aus der Geschichte? Historische Friedensforschung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 61-84. On later usages of the Napoleonic Wars, see Mark Hewitson, "Violence and Civilization: Transgression in Modern Wars," in Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Un-Civilizing Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norbert Elias* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 117-56.

[11] Some scholars debate the economic effects of these reforms, whether, for example, the emancipation of the peasants enfranchised the tenured agricultural poor as intended, or ultimately benefitted further a landowning elite. For the former position, see S. A. Eddie, *Freedom's Price: Serfdom, Subjection, and Reform in Prussia, 1648-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 314-15, and on the latter, see T. C. W. Blanning, "Historiographical Review: The Death and Transfiguration of Prussia," *The Historical Journal* 29 (1986): 433-459. Newer analyses of nineteenth-century social transformations consider both Napoleonic and longer traditions of internal Prussian reform. See Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann, "Collaboration, Resistance, and Reform: Experiences and Historiographies of the Napoleonic Wars in Central Europe," *Central European History* 39 (2006): 562 and Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-16.

A younger, talented set of civil servants comprised the *Immediatkommission*, including Friedrich August von Staegemann, Theodor von Schön, Karl vom Stein zum Altenstein, Johann-August Sack, and Niebuhr, who each oversaw a different sector of the administration. Niebuhr was one of the more conservative members of this circle and regularly opposed radical reforms.[12] Despite political differences, a strong sense of patriotic duty informed the actions of the *Immediatkommission*. Like many of the reformers, Niebuhr was not Prussian by birth and yet he worked toward its administrative renewal. "I never expected to find such strength, gravity, loyalty and bonhomie unified [in a people]."[13] Niebuhr included this encomium for the Prussians in a letter to his sister-in-law during his flight from Berlin and from the French. Yet less than a month later, his assessment of the Prussian spirit had changed radically. "The patriotic spirit" that he had seen among the Berliners was only pretense, vanquished by their fear of the French;[14] and Niebuhr claimed the political classes were most craven of all.[15] He saw his project as twofold: to produce legal reforms to strengthen the Prussian state; and somehow to elicit among a broad public the same patriotic feelings that he experienced.[16]

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[12] For example, Niebuhr opposed Hardenberg's plan to introduce universal conscription in 1813, a plan he found too costly and too radical in its egalitarianism, see Gerrit Walther, *Niebuhrs Forschung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), 272. For Niebuhr, a society based on corporate estates, protected by the law, remained both a political ideal and also a concrete model that ensured protection, especially regarding property, for all groups.

[13] To Dore Hensler, 22.10.1806, in *Die Briefe Barthold George Niebuhrs*, 2 Vols., ed. Dietrich Gerhard and William Norvin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1929), 1:354.

[14] To Gibson, 18.11.1806, ibid., 368-69.

[15] To Stein, 4.1.1808, ibid., 431-33.

[16] German historians have long debated whether this sense of Prussian duty was an older patriotism or a new phenomenon that resembled modern nationalism. For the former, see Nicholas Vazsonyi, "Montesquieu, Friedrich Carl von Moser, and the "National Spirit Debate" in Germany, 1765-1767," *German Studies Review* 22 (1999): 225-246 and Ute Planert, "Wann

As historians have noted, this dual mission ensured that his political concerns also informed his scholarly writing. He continued scholarly research and writing while working as a bureaucrat in Denmark and in Prussia. He focused on the constitution and agrarian laws of the Roman Republic, especially the concepts of *Bodenrecht* and *Bodenpolitik*, and also their transmission after imperial decline.[17] In 1810 he pursued these research interests professionally when he was appointed the first professor of history at the new University of Berlin, which had opened earlier that same year. The university was founded to produce well-trained civil servants and the institution belonged to the same set of Napoleonic-era changes to which Niebuhr had contributed.[18] His position there functions as yet another connection between Niebuhr and a range of projects related to Prussian political and educational reform.

Despite Niebuhr's relatively short tenure in a university setting, first in Berlin, later in Bonn, he gained a reputation not only as a Roman historian, but also as a founder of modern German historical science. His lectures on Roman history in 1810 and 1811 were among the most popular at the university and drew unanimous praise from his auditors, such as Karl von Savigny, who

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beginnt der "moderne" deutsche Nationalismus? Plädoyer für eine nationale Sattelzeit," in *Politik der Nation. Deutscher Nationalismus in Krieg und Krisen 1760-1960* Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte *56*, ed. Jörg Echternkamp and Sven Oliver Müller (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002), 25-60. See also Hans-Martin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland: Die deutsche Nation im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). The latter interpretation has had an equally important place in the historiography, see recent works including Mark Hewitson, "Belligerence, Patriotism and Nationalism in the German Public Sphere, 1792-1815," *English Historical Review* 128 (2013): 839-876, Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*, Karen Hagemann, *"Mannlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre:" Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2002), and Katherine B. Aaslestad, *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[17] Reill, "Barthold Georg Niebuhr and the Enlightenment Tradition," 11-14.

[18] Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24-35.

grew to be a close friend and colleague. By the mid century, translations of his work were included in the classical tripos at Cambridge University.[19] Writing in 1911, decades after Niebuhr's renown had peaked, Wilhelm Dilthey credited Niebuhr as heir to Justus Möser and Johann Gottfried Herder, as well as a founding figure of historicism.[20] Niebuhr described his method as an expansive "historical philology" that drew upon wide-ranging criticism to create a complete picture of the Roman Republic. Dilthey later argued that although many late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century intellectuals had begun to transform historical analysis, only Niebuhr recognized this shift and used it to create a grand narrative of Roman history. He insisted that Niebuhr's scholarly work, as well as his life and personal letters, inaugurated the era of German historicism, influencing, among others, Savigny, Theodor Mommsen, August Böckh, Otfried Müller, and Ranke.[21]

This consensus is nowhere to be found in modern historiography. Peter Reill has claimed that Niebuhr was no historicist, but rather the heir of the German Enlightenment. According to Reill, Niebuhr did not seek to reconstruct the historical horizon of the late Roman Republic, instead examining that era in terms of early nineteenth-century German concepts.[22] Niebuhr examined

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[19] Nick O'Brien, "'Something older than law itself': Sir Henry Maine, Niebuhr, and 'the path not chosen,'" *The Journal of Legal History* 26 (2005): 232.

[20] "Anfänge der historischen Weltanschauung Niebuhrs," in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Paul Ritter (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft m. B. H., 1959), 3:268.

[21] "Deutsche Geschichtsschreiber," in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Erich Weniger (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1965), 11:94.

[22] For a brief overview of historicism, see George G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), John Edward Toews, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the Roman corporate state in order to understand how one might construct a polity that is free, stable, and efficient, concerns typically associated with the *Aufklärung*.[23] Alfred Heuss judges Niebuhr more moderately as a transitional figure whose interests shaped later legal scholarship on Rome despite his allegiance to eighteenth-century research programs that would end with him.[24] Notably unhistoricist, too, was Niebuhr's focus on domestic rather than on foreign policy, which came to characterize German historical science in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this chapter, however, I take Frederick Beiser's inclusive definition of historicism, "anyone who contributed substantially to the program of justifying the scientific status of history," and which does not equate it with any particular view about historical method or content.[25] I contend that this capacious usage refocuses attention on how historical actors themselves identified the projects in which they participated. Moreover, this broader definition tacitly acknowledges that the search for the precise chronological origins of historicism can function as a red herring that distracts from broader questions about historical expertise and its political influence.

Niebuhr's political concerns, including patriotism, reform, and education, inflected his historical work. Like many others at the time, Niebuhr hoped to prompt a patriotic Prussian response to French occupation. It remained unclear, to Niebuhr and others, just how this could be done. In his *Addresses to a German Nation* in the Winter of 1808, Fichte advocated for the

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[23] Reill, "Niebuhr and the Enlightenment Tradition," 22.

[24] One example of which was Niebuhr's continued interest in *Ackergesetze*, a scholarly tradition that essentially ended with him. Alfred Heuss, *Barthold Georg Niebuhrs wissenschaftliche Anfänge. Untersuchungen und Mitteilungen über die Kopenhagener Manuscripte und zur europäischen Tradition der* lex agraria *(*loi agraire*)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981), 45.

[25] Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 9.

implementation of Pestalozzi's educational reforms to encourage Germany's spiritual rebirth.[26] His intellectual project had long focused on emancipation and after 1806 he began to argue that educational reform could produce a new meritocratic elite, capable of reshaping society. Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the University of Berlin in 1810 from a similar faith in education's reparative function. During the Wars of 1813-1815, periodicals flickered into and out of existence, reaching print runs unmatched in scale. In these journals authors tried to elevate anti-French sentiment into a more profound sense of loyalty to the state, such as in the newspaper that Niebuhr edited, *Der preußische Correspondent*.[27] German historians have long noted the expansion of nationalist activities during this period and debated whether this signaled older allegiances or the development of new, more modern commitment to the state. For the purposes of this chapter I contend that precisely dating the emergence of nationalism is less important than recognizing that reformers, like Niebuhr, believed that patriotism could be created and fostered, especially through historical reconstruction. By profession and by personal interest, Niebuhr became involved in the attempt to generate a sense of Prussianness, and also to fashion a broader sense of common Germanic values based on a shared medieval past.

3. Patriotic Reform in Eighth- and Nineteenth-Century Germanies

Niebuhr delivered his Charlemagne lecture during this time of existential uncertainty for Prussia. Provisional governments were formed only to be dissolved months later amid heated argument.

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[26] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. and ed. Isaac Nakhimovsky, Béla Kapossy, and Keith Tribe (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing Company, Inc., 2013), 20-43.

[27] Karen Hagemann, "Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography," *Central European History* 39 (2006): 596-99.

In October 1807 Hardenberg resigned in favor of vom Stein, yet both ministries operated on the assumption that the old Prussian state had ended.[28] Threats of Prussian bankruptcy matched geopolitical instability. As a favor to vom Stein, Niebuhr accepted a yearlong commission for Holland, to begin the following March, to negotiate a loan to meet the reparations to France. As he traveled to Berlin from his bureaucratic exile in Riga and Memel, he described the landscapes he passed through in letters to colleagues and commented on the history of the Prussian state.[29] Writing to Altenstein from Bromberg, Niebuhr imagined the medieval Prussian knights riding along the same roads as they swept even into Poland.[30] They had built towns in the Mark and exterminated the original inhabitants. He described the people living there now as *reindeutsch*, as opposed to others who had merely become German, and claimed that he yearned to write about the knights in Prussia, notably absent then from many histories of the state.[31] At the moment of Prussia's collapse, Niebuhr meditated on its origins. He did not locate these origins in Frederick the Great's eighteenth-century campaigns, for he had founded the state that had just nearly ended. Niebuhr selected an older narrative in which soil was won and maintained by violence, a history that had imparted a quality of Germanness to the land and the people that could not be damaged by current events.

Worse still than Prussian instability was the worry that Prussians had gotten what they deserved. In a letter to Stein from Berlin, Niebuhr reported a widespread cowardliness among

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[28] Gray, "The Stein Ministry of 1808," 14.

[29] Now Klaipeda, Lithuania.

[30] Now Bydgoszcz, Poland.

[31] He singles out Baczko's seven-volume *Geschichte Preußens* in particular. This *longue durée* of Prussian statehood came to be emphasized in the narratives of later Prussian-school historians, such as Treitschke. To Altensten, 4.12.1807, *Die Briefe Niebuhrs*, 1:427-29.

Prussian elites. They encouraged the king to further political debasement, even suggesting that Prussia should cease to be an independent state and join the Rhine Confederation.[32] He found this sentiment among Prussian intellectuals as well and, in his disgust, distanced himself from Germany. He wrote, "the Germans are a wretched people," obsequious and craven.[33] During the chaos of this period, censorship laws had grown difficult to enforce and relatively candid debates took place in journals, newspapers, public lectures, and sermons.[34] The publicist Ernst Moritz Arndt printed his lengthy treatise, *The Spirit of the Age*, in a similar spirit of patriotic criticism. He lamented that he did not know to whom he addressed his writing for there was no united German public, a theme he continued elsewhere.[35] In Fichte's 1808 lecture series, he claimed that although militarily defeated, Germany could fashion itself into Europe's liberator through the promotion of humane – German – values.[36] The Napoleonic era was a garrulous period in Prussian, and German, history. Rumors flew: about Prussian debt; French aggression; and about the constantly shifting alliances between European powers. Germans discussed this instability in print, in person, and in formal debate. There was a slippage, too, in genre, whereby sermons became political speeches, and political speeches assumed the spiritual qualities of sermons. Some historians have seen in these vigorous exchanges not Prussia's collapse, but the

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[32] To Stein, 4.1.1808, ibid., 432.

[33] To Altenstein, 28.11.1807, ibid., 427. Niebuhr wrote this in response to two anti-Prussian articles published in the *Göttinger Anzeigen*, A. W. Rehberg's piece, "Über die Staatsverwaltung deutscher Länder," and an anonymous (H. Bardeleben) article, "Preußens Zukunft. An das Vaterland."

[34] Hewitson, "The German Public Sphere," 850-51, 855.

[35] Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Geist der Zeit* (Altona, 1806).

[36] Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, xxiv.

reinvigoration of its public.[37] These conversations across all forms of media were a participatory enterprise for civic renewal, functioning as an intellectual space that negotiated French political domination. In print and in recitation Fichte's speeches were a means to resist French hegemony, just as Niebuhr's were, too.

Niebuhr socialized with Fichte, but in private letters criticized him for speaking too much and writing too little. Yet Niebuhr's lecture on Charlemagne obliquely thematized the same concerns that informed the writings of his contemporaries. The main question he addressed his paper was, "How did Charlemagne become the founder of the new Germanic age?"[38] In short, this transformation entailed a two-part conquest: a geographical and a cultural one. Niebuhr used "world" and "age" interchangeably in this lecture, it was a place and also an era, attached to the great figure that summoned it into being. He emphasized the difficulty of this task, using terminology of gloom and germination to describe Charlemagne's predecessors. For centuries the Germanic tribes "developed in darkness" before breaking out during the end of Roman Empire.[39] Even Charlemagne's dynastic predecessors "were suspended as luminous figures in the darkness of the beginning of the Germanic era."[40] Niebuhr emphasized the violence and difficulty of the Frankish state's emergence – "through savage deceit and violence" – using "darkness" again to describe the condition from which it arose.[41] Charlemagne, however, had somehow affected the interior as well, changing medieval hearts and minds, to produce "the new

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[37] Hewitson, "The German Public Sphere," 855.

[38] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 11-12.

[39] Ibid., 2.

[40] Ibid., 7.

[41] Ibid., 8.

Germanic world." In this emphasis on the interior, Niebuhr echoed the patriotic and emotional language of his time that affirmed the need to renew the inner life of the Germans.

The simplest answer Niebuhr provided was that Charlemagne founded the Germanic age through military campaigns. War inaugurated his rule and was more or less unremitting throughout his reign, just as it was for many Germans between 1792 and 1815. The Carolingian ruler began in Central Europe, where the Roman Empire had been weakest, and conquered the Saxons, the Wends, the Sorbs, the Bohemians, the Lombards, and the Bavarians. He enlarged his territory within Europe and brought all the Germanic tribes, from France, Germany, and Italy, into one state.[42] Niebuhr infused a sense of predestination into this story of conquest. Charlemagne fulfilled a promise of Germanic unification that had existed ever since the tribes settled in Europe. These wars of conquest brought them into "a Germanic body politic," *ein germanischer Staatskörper*, the fulfillment of which was Charlemagne's coronation as western emperor.[43] The Carolingian empire extended to Western Europe, too, where the ruler reestablished control and "spread once more the Germanic name over the territory,"[44] even reestablishing a commercial relationship with Britain.[45] Yet Niebuhr described the very ground, or *Boden*, of Central Europe as fundamentally German even before its political unification.[46] His kingdom encompassed not Germanic land or territory, but soil, an imprecise term that suggests a kind of ownership or possession that pre-dated formal territorial claims.

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[42] Ibid., 14.

[43] Ibid., 12.

[44] Ibid., 14.

[45] Ibid., 15.

[46] Ibid., 8.

There is a sense in the text that Charlemagne fulfilled a destiny shaped by earlier generations. His predecessors, too, had tried to consolidate their power and this expansionary drive becomes a hallmark of the age. Niebuhr repeatedly used the word *Streben*, or striving, to describe this Carolingian dynamic. Arthur Lovejoy long ago identified the concept as one of the "ruling ideas" of the Romantic movement, the primacy of striving or of cumulatively becoming.[47] As Lovejoy noted, this "striving without terminus" applied to individuals and also to the state. This drive explained the higher purpose of Carolingian warfare: to establish the complete Germanic association of states, *der gesammte germanische Staatenverein*.[48] Despite its medieval backdrop, Niebuhr articulated this logic of conquest in a fundamentally modern, or Romantic, vocabulary. His eighth century was not superstitious or unknowable, but familiar.

Niebuhr described the positive aspects of these wars of conquest, even though his nineteenth-century audience had recently experienced the negative effects of French warfare.[49] German total war, however, was markedly different. Although Charlemagne witnessed constant battle during his reign, Niebuhr interpreted eighth-century Europe as essentially a time of peace, for "in the figure of Charlemagne, the new Europe was for the first time one."[50] He was not only king, but emperor of "Germanic Christendom," crowned against his will "with the ancient title of Roman

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[47] Arthur Lovejoy, "The meaning of Romanticism for the historian of ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2 (1941): 257-78.

[48] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 12.

[49] On the Napoleonic Wars as total wars, see Paul Fregosi, *Dreams of Empire: Napoleon and the First World War, 1792-1815* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007), Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), and *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775-1815*, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[50] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 15-16.

world ruler."[51] Niebuhr emphasized the kingdom's legitimacy through conquest, ritual and historical precedent. These combined to separate German Europe from its neighbor, Byzantium, and from its historically subordinate role as a collection of Roman provinces, and to become "an independent political creation."[52]

A sense of predestination continued to inform this characterization, reinforced by a messianic vocabulary. Charlemagne did not merely unite these peoples; with him, a centuries-old longing for unification was fulfilled. Niebuhr repeated verbs of completion and consummation, especially *vollenden* and *vollbringen*: "After four hundred years of preparation, what Theodorich had pursued, though unaware of his goal, was completed."[53] Charlemagne's deeds were not only the accomplishments of a genius, but also the culmination of a long-planned project. The long sections dedicated to describing Carolingian warfare were doubtless a phenomenon that Niebuhr's audience could relate to, yet the perspective was reversed. Rather than listen to French victory after French victory, they heard about German victory after German victory in Carolingian Europe. As if to draw in his audience, Niebuhr emphasized not the alienating qualities of medieval Europe, but the familiar. Charlemagne's empire was characterized by war, Christianity, and trade, which the emperor brought even deep into the Slavs and Latvians, and these disparate territories were drawn together into Christian civic communities.[54] This speech modeled a vision for the future of Prussia, based on a common past. Yet Niebuhr described a

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[51] Ibid., 16-17.

[52] Ibid., 17.

[53] Ibid., 18.

[54] Ibid., 18.

medieval world onto which he projected the categories and concerns of nineteenth-century Central Europe, such as the concept of a civil society.

Charlemagne represented not only the abstract benefit of unification, but also more tangible goods. Niebuhr described the territorial reach of the empire and argued that it transcended mere occupation: it was also an education.[55] The importance of this distinction would not have been lost of his audience in Winter 1808. Niebuhr's Prussian auditors had experienced French military conquest and he asked them to imagine the very thing that he, and other patriots, were advocating against – to stop resisting the enemy and to assume their identity. Ultimately, Charlemagne accomplished what the French could not: a territorial victory, and also a victory over the medieval inner life. Niebuhr dwelled on Carolingian reeducation, the eighth-century cultural revolution that transformed diverse European groups into Germanic subjects. According to Niebuhr, the cultural unity of medieval society was the spiritual corollary to the new Germanic body politic.

Over and over, Niebuhr emphasized that Charlemagne's wars of conquest entailed conversion, or often reconversion, to Christianity: "He tied together, externally and internally, the community of the German world through the ligatures of the state, such as religion."[56] Christian missionaries used these communal ties to overcome vast geographical differences between Welds and Norse, east and west. Arms plus religion were the tools to gain territory and souls. Niebuhr argued that "the interior principle" of conquest was what made the age truly Germanic, for it lent Charlemagne's empire its unified character, that of Catholic Christendom.[57]

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[55] Ibid., 5.

[56] Ibid., 13.

[57] Ibid., 19.

It was a militaristic age, but it was also a cultural one. The church, too, was oriented to this task: "the whole primary culture of the Germanic people rested in the lap of the church…all religion houses were institutions dedicated to the people's education [or *Volksbildung*]."[58] Yet eight- and ninth-century sources do not use the Latin equivalent of the German word for education, *Bildung*, to describe these changes. Charlemagne's cultural program was described almost exclusively as a *renovatio*, a renewal, usually translated into English as "Renaissance."[59] Niebuhr rendered it instead as a *Bildung*, a term that resonated among Prussians, for, during the French occupation, education was perceived as both a less politicized sphere and also as the means to reestablish modern Prussia. Once again, Niebuhr used whatever rhetorical means possible to establish the familiarity and immediacy of the first "Germanic era."

Yet Niebuhr, a relatively secular Protestant, did not intend to advocate for the restorative powers of Catholicism. In private papers, he revealed himself no friend of Catholicism, feeling, for example, a sense of disappointment when ministerial changes in England produced a government more sympathetic to the Catholic minority.[60] He doubted the role of a religion that asked for loyalty beyond the state and he also did not see any benefit in a bi-religious state. These allegiances are noticeable in his speech and he ensured that no one would mistake his historical analysis for Catholic advocacy. Markedly absent from his lecture is a strong, centralizing pope. Instead, the pope faced multiple threats, from heretics, from pagans, from

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[58] Ibid., 23.

[59] A foundational text in this tradition is Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen, 1969). More recent examples in this tradition include Rosamond McKitterick, *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1994) and McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[60] To Gibson, 16.6.1807, in *Die Briefe Barthold Niebuhrs*, 396.

invasion. Niebuhr cast him as a secondary figure to Charlemagne's protagonist. The pope acted as a perpetual supplicant asking for protection, which the emperor readily granted. Niebuhr included the detail that Charlemagne was such an effective advocate for the church that his biographer described him as "the bishop of bishops."[61] Even Charlemagne's coronation ultimately underscored the weakness of the papacy. At this moment, the German church and state became one, not under the terms of the weak and injured pope who crowned him, but rather because Charlemagne's works had guaranteed the religious nature of the Germanic age.[62] Though Charlemagne presided over Christendom, he had made the pope redundant. Niebuhr credited him with ultimate power, "no aspect of education flourished in this period, whose source was not at least minorly traceable to his efforts."[63] Charlemagne not only dominated the church, he ensured that the church's power was used for his purposes. Its institutions became sites of medieval education only because he made this possible through reform.

Quite possibly this period appealed to Niebuhr – among many reasons – because of its historically weak papacy. During the high and late Middle Ages the Vatican wielded enough power that it could manipulate European geopolitics. During the early Middle Ages, by contrast, Niebuhr argued that the ruler was the motor of historical change. Charlemagne founded the Germanic age and guaranteed its cultural revolution. A mystical quality inhered to this great ruler, too. He acted as the embodiment of all his accomplishments, "he was one with his works…he was not just the founder, he was also the representative and symbol of the Germanic

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[61] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 23.

[62] Ibid., 23.

[63] Ibid., 23.

era, and carried within him the potentiality for everything that he realized."[64] Niebuhr exaggerated a vocabulary of predestination to transform Charlemagne into a messianic figure. Charlemagne brought all earlier impulses towards unification to fruition, completing the tasks of previous generations. "In this way, a new political and cultural world sprang from Charlemagne's spirit…he completed the plans to which the development of history led; his individual expansionist drive had operated in the service of a higher one. The Germanic world was united through him…he was father and creator, or *Schöpfer*, of the Germanic era."[65] By the midpoint of his lecture, Niebuhr's argument verged on bluntness: Charlemagne was a political and cultural messiah for the German people who founded a German state and a German religion, preempting both a secular and religious unification – an imperial Luther.

An almost superhuman figure, Charlemagne initiated projects of reform and cultural renewal that entailed the centralization of his empire. Charlemagne recognized that institutions of the church could act as a means "for the education of the people."[66] His method to ensure its success would have resonated among early nineteenth-century Germans: standardization. He improved the liturgy and all similar texts that reached a lay audience; he founded choir schools at Metz and Soissons, and expanded church song; and he "held the ecclesiastical state to its duties."[67] These projects were designed to reach as many people as possible in order to complete the Germanic revolution. Reform reached the arts as well and Charlemagne funded great architectural projects at Ingelheim and Aachen, which were the marvel of the era. These buildings "were symbols of

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[64] Ibid., 29.

[65] Ibid., 29.

[66] Ibid., 21.

[67] Ibid., 21.

the great new creation that he called into being from the ruins of the fallen antique world."[68] Niebuhr took care to emphasize that although Charlemagne borrowed skilled craftsmen from Rome, their creations were as original as his geopolitical reorganization of Europe: "from Rome he had artists and artisans come and he acquainted the Germans with the flowers of the classical spirit, without importing the vapidity and weakness of the later Romans."[69] Niebuhr's description resembled the experiences of his audience, who also lived in the physical and figurative ruins of a past world, and whose leaders were searching for a new creation. In the eighth century as in the nineteenth, so his argument went, educational reform led to spiritual renewal and a new sense of unity.

4. Medieval Masculinity as a Modern Model

Niebuhr repeatedly invoked Charlemagne's physical form as metonymy for the era. He embodied the ambitions of preceding generations "and his form reflected not only his age, but the ages to come."[70] This description included a meditation on the nature of kingship, but equally important was its emphasis on physicality. Charlemagne was hearty and strong, the result of outdoor sports, including hunting, riding and swimming. He had large, expressive eyes in a jolly face, which "heralded him as the archetype of a powerful age, full of manly yet jovial virtue."[71] His was a disciplined physical prowess and Niebuhr claimed that he also represented the ideal of an autocrat, so perfectly did he match his age: "His body was the reflection of an equally healthy

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[68] Ibid., 26.

[69] Ibid., 24.

[70] Ibid., 11.

[71] Ibid., 30.

and strong soul."[72] Charlemagne disdained foppery and dressed in "the simple Frankish dress," only donning "Roman" garb twice in his life, both times at the bidding of the pope.[73] Just as Niebuhr described what a "Germanic age" could be, he also posited what a truly Germanic person might appear like, in physical and dispositional qualities. The medieval Germanic soul was definitively male and emphatically militaristic. Niebuhr supported this argument with medieval sources, crediting a ninth-century medieval source with an accurate description of Charlemagne and summarizing it at length. The idea of medieval eyewitness brings a kind of veracity to his account that once more emphasized the familiar qualities of the early Middle Ages, as if to suggest that its culture of record-keeping was similar to that in modern Germany.

Niebuhr enumerated aspects of Charlemagne's character both public and private. Charlemagne was not a bloodthirsty general, for he also knew how to maintain power: "how to heal, not just to conquer; also to rule and, through the qualities that ornamented him as a person, he understood how to win hearts."[74] Niebuhr argued that Charlemagne's equal endowments of ferocity and mildness guaranteed his success as a ruler.[75] He ascribed the consistency with which he demonstrated this balance to the same "interior principle" that guaranteed the empire's unity and ultimate uniformity. Charlemagne personally supervised the education of his children and monitored the household economy, for no detail was too small for him at home, just as he oversaw affairs of the empire.[76] In his deeds, body, and character, Niebuhr identified the same

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[72] Ibid., 52.

[73] Ibid., 45-46.

[74] Ibid., 34-35.

[75] Ibid., 35-37.

[76] Ibid., 46.

principle that unified his realm: "this expansionist spirit of antiquity was in him mixed with the interior one of Christianity. Charlemagne, who battled and acted for Christianity, was also filled with a true religious spirit, and this, welling up from the deepest core of his nature, ruled over his other emotions, just as the whole internal *Bildung* of the Germanic age streamed from this source."[77] Charlemagne did not possess unfamiliar values that might have alienated his audience. He was not superstitious or irrational, common slurs against the medieval world, but rather recognizable. Warlike but domestic, proudly Germanic but also reformist; his character functioned as a model for early nineteenth-century behavior, combining new Germanic domesticity with medieval martial values, "a true Germanic man and prince," a representative of "the common Germanic national character."[78]

A clearer understanding of how early nineteenth-century Germans perceived Charlemagne, as well as the Middle Ages more generally, gradually emerges. For Niebuhr's audience in Winter 1808, Charlemagne represented a range of purportedly Germanic masculine ideals that Prussian movers and doers feared no longer existed. The Carolingian ruler anticipated behavioral norms that had become standard by the end of the Napoleonic era. As Chris Clark has asserted, Prussian conscription, introduced in 1813, reimagined the Prussian nation in increasingly masculine and patriarchal terms.[79] Militarism and patriotism became intertwined, implicitly gendering both the nation and citizenship. Karen Hagemann has noted a similar phenomenon in Vienna, whereby a new martial masculinity, developed in the context of local militias, became a defining element in

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[77] Ibid., 37.

[78] Ibid., 29-30.

[79] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 377; on conscription, 361-62.

devotion to Austria, as well as in male self-image.[80] Niebuhr's Charlemagne embodied widespread desires for a new militaristic German, even though Niebuhr framed this as a return to older values.

This idea of return served not only to cloak the modern; it was also intended to prompt an emotional response. Historians have largely been content to define patriotism relationally, as a diluted or benign version of nationalism, a function of primal emotions more natural than its extremer counterpart. Glenda Sluga has emphasized emotional components of early nineteenth-century patriotism. She argues that patriotism was figured during this period as a political sentiment that could be fostered through historical narrative and directed against French influence. Germaine de Staël, like Niebuhr, located the source for German "masculine enthusiasm" in the Middle Ages.[81] De Staël began writing *De l'allemagne* in the same year as Niebuhr's lectures, though she did not publish it before 1813, slowed by French censors. Sluga argues that the book historicized the political emotionality of patriotism and located its origins in the Middle Ages when a militaristic male ethos developed.[82] Similarly, the very first emphases in Niebuhr's speech were Charlemagne's victories and his personal strength. The Carolingian emperor was both behavioral model and emotional prompt to awaken the patriotism of his Prussian audience in 1808.

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[80] Karen Hagemann, ""Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!" Patriotism and Masculinity in Texts of the "Political Romantics" Written during Austria's Anti-Napoleonic War," *German Studies Review* 29 (2006): 41-62.

[81] Glenda Sluga, "Passions, Patriotism and Nationalism, and Germaine de Staël," *Nations and Nationalism* 15 (2009): 312.

[82] Ibid., 299 and 312.

Niebuhr emphasized the congruence between Charlemagne's outer deeds and his inner world, and repeated that the former would not be possible without the latter. Niebuhr did not interrogate medieval sources better to understand what a Carolingian "inner world" might have been like. He granted to his historical figure a decidedly modern subjectivity, and his focus on "the interior principle" is perhaps the most presentist moment in a lecture filled with anachronism. *Pace* Niebuhr, Charlemagne unified the medieval world according to his inner drive. This supposed tale of medieval origins is really a tale about the limitless potential of a new Romantic interiority dating to the late eighteenth century.[83] This was no medieval ruler, but rather a modern self-positing subject.

Charlemagne's simultaneously medieval and modern qualities grant insight into a trend dating to the early nineteenth century. Niebuhr's comments about Charlemagne's "simple Frankish dress" likely elicited nods of agreement from his audience. During the Napoleonic period in Germany, painters renowned and obscure increasingly included medieval landscapes and themes. Karl Friedrich Schinkel had a short-lived Gothic phase, as did Johann Friedrich Overbeck and other Nazarene school painters. Minor artists too numerous to list painted medieval castles, cathedrals, tournaments, adventures. Even German landscape became explicitly

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[83] A brief overview of this subject includes, M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), Charles Tayler, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1989), 185-390, Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), and Jerrold E. Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Part IV.

historicized at this time and many critics read a latent political message in their themes.[84] Architectural monumentality was not the only coded signal for patriotism in these works. Often dwarfed by Gothic buildings were figures paused in contemplation or arrested in action. These anonymous persons were clad in *Tracht* and this clothing became a sartorial correlate to an exclusively Germanic history and space. Like Niebuhr's Charlemagne, these bodies were clothed in medieval costume yet their elusiveness communicated the same profound, and implicitly modern, inner world. By the time of the infamous Wartburg incident in 1817, it seemed obvious that the young radical nationalists would wear archaizing clothing to signal their political commitments. Passionate students continued the trend into the 1820s.[85] When Caspar David Friedrich completed "Two Men Contemplating the Moon" in 1819, its obvious nationalist sympathies, communicated through clothing, caused a minor scandal.[86] Charlemagne joined a growing body of literature and art that established the relevance of the Middle Ages as a potential source for the renewal of patriotism.[87]

Niebuhr's description of Charlemagne's character is drawn largely from one source, Einhard's *Vita Karoli magni*. As the German scholar doubtless knew, Einhard modeled his imperial biography on *The Life of the Caesars*, written by Suetonius during the first and second

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[84] Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) 72.

[85] Steven Michael Press, "False Fire: The Wartburg Book-Burning of 1817," *Central European History* 42 (2009): 633, and John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path toward Dialectical Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 103-105.

[86] Koerner, *Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*, 281.

[87] By 1833 the surfeit of medievalizing art and literature led Heinrich Heine to decry what he called *Rittertümelei*, or, "der mittelalterliche Trödel, *Die romantische Schule*, ed. Helga Weidmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006), 136.

centuries. Early medieval scribal culture perpetuated the Roman canon and imitated it in its original works, even continuing the tradition of Roman prose rhythm, *cursus*, which often functioned as a kind of authorial signature in supposedly anonymous texts.[88] Einhard replicated much of Suetonius's *Life of Augustus* for his text on Charlemagne, particularly the emphasis on personal habits, moderation, and the accord between public and private persona. Yet Niebuhr had multiple medieval biographies from which to choose. He decided to base his lecture on a source that humanized the emperor and emphasized his most Germanic qualities. Towards the end of his paper, Niebuhr asked his audience to gauge whether Edward Gibbon's much harsher evaluation had any merit at all: "We can judge for ourselves whether Gibbon's claim is true: Charlemagne was great, but in the way that the ruins of Palmyra have been made more impressive by contrast with the surrounding wilderness."[89] Niebuhr's answer, of course, was a resounding no: his half-Germanic, half-Roman Charlemagne was of his age and also transcended it to become a character study for early nineteenth-century Germany.

Niebuhr based his medieval world on an expansionist Germanic empire that assimilated different Germanic tribes and peoples into a mono-religious body politic in which all enjoyed equality before the law. Yet this era was short-lived. Within eighty-seven years, none of Charlemagne's descendants ruled over his realm, a failure that Niebuhr attributed to a

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[88] On the medieval *cursus*, see Terence O. Tunberg, "Prose Styles and *Cursus*," in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996). Also helpful are Tore Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975) and Gudrun Lindholm, *Studien zum mittellateinischen Prosarhythmus: Seine Entwicklung und sein Abklingen in der Briefliteratur Italiens* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963).

[89] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 48.

combination of weak descendants, natural disaster, and invasion,[90] and especially "dissolution by unworthy progeny."[91] He argued that in order to refound "a new Germanic Europe" along the lines of the earlier empire, redrawing borders or installing a leader would not suffice. Charlemagne had demonstrated the importance of "fostering a tendency to unification, to complete an interior transformation."[92] Yet the Carolingian dynasty symbolized not merely the emergence of new medieval powerbrokers; together with the slow dissolution of the former Roman Empire in the East, it also represented a new world order. These events initiated an era, "in which the tightly or loosely consolidated states contended for the constitution of the great European *Völkerstaat*, and whose lapse likewise heralds a great far-ranging crisis in our own significant days."[93]

The Charlemagne lecture served as a model in which the Middle Ages demonstrated the political importance of a principle, and warned how easily this principle could be lost and its benefits squandered. Niebuhr wove together disparate strands from Romantic patriotism to create a portrait of a familiar and inspirational Middle Ages.[94] He joined a growing body of authors, painters, and poets engaged in similar projects that thematized the medieval period for presentist ends. The medieval period functioned as an emotional prompt that was at its core associated with

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[90] Ibid., 53-54.

[91] Ibid., 56.

[92] Ibid., 52-53.

[93] Ibid., 57-58.

[94] Thomas Nipperdey has defined romantic nationalism as a nationalism based on the idea of a common culture, "In Search of Identity: Romantic Nationalism, its Intellectual, Political and Social Background," in *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, ed. J. C. Eade ([Canberra?]: Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, 1983), 1-15.

politics and masculinity. Yet this was also the last time that Niebuhr engaged so directly in this kind of propaganda. The conclusion of his lecture indicated the future of Niebuhr's medievalism: legal transmission and scholarship.

5. Texts and Transmission: The Legal Origins of Germany

Law was the means of assimilating different European tribes into the Carolingian empire.[95] Constitutional change or adaptation was the means by which Niebuhr assessed the profundity of historical change. The radical alterations of the eighth- and ninth-century Mediterranean, "ended the first phase of European history, and began the second, in which the more or less consolidated states struggled for the constitution of the great European ethnic state [*Völkerstaat*], and whose end likewise announces itself through the great, and ever worsening, crisis in our own important era."[96] The Germanic era marked the end of the classical world and the beginning of modern European history.

Niebuhr singled out only two indications of this transition: geopolitical crisis and alterations to the law. The importance of the latter could not have been lost on his audience, who had witnessed tremendous change during the previous five years. In 1805 had Napoleon defeated the Holy Roman Empire – symbolically, Charlemagne's empire – and dissolved the supranational constitution that regulated its many parts. French treaties redrew Central European territories and created new legal entities, such as the Confederation of the Rhine, governed by the French civil

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[95] Niebuhr, "Karl der Große," 13, 57.

[96] Ibid., 58.

code that replaced local collections of laws and traditions.[97] Niebuhr's claim that a radical shift in law indicated historical rupture would have appeared obvious to his Prussian audience, whose own constitution remained in doubt.

Interest in law and legal precedent continued unbroken across Niebuhr's writing and despite his different careers. Local constitutions had guided even the actions he took as finance minister while still in Copenhagen. Niebuhr believed that recovering ancient law regarding rural rental contracts and ownership was not a sign of economic regression, but rather an imperative of modern economics.[98] Niebuhr's unpublished work, "On the History of the Seigneuries of the Roman State," similarly focused on the agrarian constitution of ancient Rome, particularly as it safeguarded peasants' privileges. At issue was the Roman *ager publicus*, the rural commune. This short manuscript was essentially a history of the concept of the ownership of land, examined through laws governing the rural *Verpachtung*, or lease, of lands.[99] Niebuhr tried to distinguish leased from owned land, ultimately granting the incompatibility of tenancy and ownership according to the Roman constitution: "The lessee is only in possession of a right to the use of the land, but not in the possession of the soil itself.[100] He ended this early research paper with a meditation on transformations to Roman law in Italy during the early Middle Ages,

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[97] T.C.W. Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany: Occupation and Resistance in the Rhineland, 1792-1802* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), ch. 5.

[98] Walther, *Niebuhrs Forschung*, 147.

[99] Heuss, *Niebuhrs wissenschaftliche Anfänge,* 78.

[100] Ibid., 59.

tracing historical misinterpretations that eventually produced entirely new property relations in the Italian confederacy.[101]

Niebuhr renewed these research interests in his lectures on Roman history in Berlin in 1810, and again at Bonn in the 1820s. Both lecture series focused on the peasantry and the protections they enjoyed regarding access to the land, especially vis-à-vis the aristocracy, whom Niebuhr framed as the natural enemy of the peasants. In its rapacious attempts to seize land the aristocracy reconfigured conceptions of ownership and relations between social groups, eventually leading to the fall of Rome. At stake in all his writing were legal notions of property and ownership, particularly as they evolved throughout Roman history, and were transmitted into medieval Europe.

Niebuhr's lectures from 1810 revealed an important shift in how he understood the Middle Ages. He originally intended his *Roman History* to begin with the mythic origins of the city and end after its fall. As he described it in a letter to his friend Ludwig Nicolovius, the series was to open during Italy's oldest period and end only when the last traces of the old Roman constitution perished in the institutions of the Middle Ages.[102] Although his lectures and published history stopped just before the Punic Wars, he retained the same vision of the proper periodization for his project. In the introduction to his 1810 lecture class, he described it with a circadian metaphor, from the night of antiquity to the following night, when antiquity's monuments fell into ruin.[103] He no longer identified this "second night" as "the Germanic era," but merely as *das*

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[101] Ibid., 61.

[102] Ibid., 298.

[103] Barthold Georg Niebuhr, "Einleitung zu den Vorlesungen über die Römische Geschichte. 1810," in *Kleine historische und philologische Schriften* (Bonn: Eduard Weber, 1838), 85.

Mittelalter. The semantic shift between his earlier, propagandistic speech and this scholarly publication, two years later, suggests a change in function for the Middle Ages. In 1808, the medieval period was important as a site of patriotic sentiment and so its signifier was "Germanic," to emphasize its meaning for the Prussian audience. Two years later, its significance was its transitional nature as an intermediate age between the Romans and modernity. Niebuhr's methodology remained largely the same. He claimed that for his lectures he had critically read a broad range of written texts in order to determine the Roman constitution more accurately, particularly as it developed over time. He took special care to emphasize that he read the sources not in terms of their explicit meaning, but rather for what their authors did not say outright.

Absent the planned third volume, Niebuhr's clearest evaluation of the Middle Ages in terms of legal history lies in the printed introduction to his lectures on Roman history. There he called attention to the sincerity of medieval veneration for ancient Rome. These historical actors did not recognize the differences that separated them from the classical world, and "so they saw in the empire of their era an unchanged continuation of the previous empire of the Caesars."[104] Their ignorance acted as a kind of protection, for they did not, or could not, understand that continuity in terminology did not guarantee continuity in meaning. Rome's laws remained the greatest advantage it gave to its imperial provinces, although the adoption of its institutions and language were a guarantee that early Germanic culture was lost.[105] Despite these losses, Niebuhr insisted that the Germanic tribes ultimately benefitted from their involvement with Rome, gaining not

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[104] Ibid., 90-91.

[105] Ibid., 100.

only a new law code, but also political and religious unity. Even with these advantages, Niebuhr noted, "we only with great difficulty ceased being Barbarians."[106]

Many others shared Niebuhr's interest in the intermingling of Roman and Germanic law. This debate, though not new, gained in significance during the early nineteenth century and the University of Berlin became its intellectual center. The law professor Karl Friedrich Eichhorn examined the German hometown as a blend of Roman and German institutions.[107] Wilhelm von Humboldt coined the term "historical sense" in advocating for the historical interpretation of law.[108] Perhaps no one, however, is more closely associated with the demise of natural law in Germany than Niebuhr's friend Karl von Savigny. In all his publications he argued against a legal rationalism that transcended historical context and local origin.[109] An early work, *The Law of Possession* (1803), explored the difference between the legal concepts of property and possession, a distinction he dated to ancient Rome. His magisterial *History of Roman Law in the Middle Ages*, begun in 1805 and published in six volume between 1815 and 1831, defended the retention of Roman law as an integral part of the German *Volksgeist*, for it had been assimilated and internalized by early Germanic conquerors. Savigny reframed how contemporaries understood the Roman legal inheritance. No longer a foreign import, Germans had assimilated

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[106] Ibid., 101.

[107] Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 260.

[108] Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 216.

[109] Ibid., 216.

Roman institutions and Germanized them in the process, becoming integral to German life and culture.[110] No law based on abstract legal principles could equal them.

Savigny and Niebuhr considered themselves engaged in the same project. Savigny sat in on Niebuhr's lectures at the new university and in Savigny's letters and publications he praised Niebuhr's comparative approach to Roman law, even crediting his colleague in the introduction to *History of Roman Law in the Middle Ages*.[111] When Niebuhr moved to Italy as the new Prussian ambassador to the Holy See, he kept Savigny informed of his archival discoveries, particularly as they related to the constitutions of medieval states and their relations with Rome.[112]

This conversation grew in intensity and range of participants during the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. The most contentious, and public, of these arguments was the Codification Controversy between Savigny and a legal scholar at Heidelberg, Anton Friedrich Justus Thibaut, that took place from 1814-15.[113] Thibaut insisted that Germany needed a national

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[110] Ibid., 242.

[111] To Friedrich Creuzer, 7.4.1811: "*Niebuhrs Vorlesungen werden gedruckt, und darauf können Sie sich freuen. Er ist ein herrlicher Mensch, vontiefem Gemüth, großer Gelehrsamkeit, und von einem schaffenden Geist, in welchem stets Sinn und Wissen als lebendiges Ganze sich durchdringen. Darum denn steht ihm auch sein Wissen, weil es kein todtes Wissen ist, stets zu Gebot, und es ist herrlich zu sehen, wie unter seinen Händen jeder Punkt der Verfassung durch Parallelen und Contraste aus den griechischen Verfassungen, wie aus denen des Mittelalters immer klarer und bestimmter wird. Sein Talent zur Combination ist groß, und bey den frappantesten und überraschendsten Resultaten muß man sich gestehen, daß nicht die Freude an diesem Glanz und dieser Neuheit, sondern ein edler, einfacher Wahrheitssinn allesin Bewegung sezt*." *Friedrich Karl v. Savigny. II: Professorenjahre in Berlin 1810–1842*, ed. Adolf Stoll (Berlin: Carl Heymanns Verlag, 1929), 66. See also Savigny, *Geschichte des römischen Rechts im Mittelalter* (Heidelberg: Mohr & Zimmer, 1815), 1:13.

[112] O'Brien, "Sir Henry Maine, Niebuhr," 238-39.

[113] The Historical School counted among its proponent Savigny, Hugo, Niebuhr and the Grimms, among others, and with Thibaut, Hegel, as well as the great jurist Anselm von Feuerbach.

law code to unite the disparate Central European states and to rid foreign influence from the constitution. As Savigny pointed out in his spirited rebuttal, this new civil code would therefore have to be based on "rational" natural law, rather than the thousand-year precedent of Roman law in Germany. He accused Thibaut of being a radical *Aufklärer*; worse, he warned that Thibaut's proposition would actually have an effect opposite to the one he intended. Law was the product of the people's customs and precedent, so to erase it would be to deracinate Germany rather than to unite it.[114] Savigny himself christened his method as the "historical school" in a journal he co-founded in 1815 with Eichhorn, the *Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Rechtswissenschaft*.[115] As he put it, "this is the question at its most general: what are the relations between past and present, or between becoming and being?"[116]

By the late 1830s, the debate had been decided for the historical school, yet this consensus was lost in the following decade with the emergence of a Germanist School of legal scholarship. Codification gained new resonance during the second half of the century and the Germanists, represented notably by Heinrich Brunner and Otto Gierke, believed that a national law code should be based on medieval Germanic law.[117] Legal transmission during the Middle Ages was once more at stake during a time of national ferment. Yet often lost in existing analyses is the basic point that no matter the ideological divisions between the Germanists and the Romanists,

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[114] Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 237-241 and Michael John, *Politics and the Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Origins of the Civil Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 18-19.

[115] Karl Friedrich von Savigny, "Über den Zweck dieser Zeitschrift," *Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Rechtswissenschaft* 1 (1815): 1.

[116] Ibid., 2-3.

[117] John, *Origins of the Civil Code*, 23, 108-113.

both schools agreed that the medieval period was essential to their arguments. The importance of the German Middle Ages for law continued undiminished during the nineteenth century precisely because of these questions of transmission and transformation that first came to public attention during the Napoleonic period.

Niebuhr's most important contribution to the Historical School was his interest in the rural commune as the eventual source of private property. In its original state, the *ager publicus* denoted Roman *Boden*, communally held. Patricians essentially stole public land and, by doing so, created the Roman concept of private property. This historical transformation functioned as an important rebuttal to natural law scholars who claimed that private property was a natural legal category independent from any context. Niebuhr proved that the opposite was in fact true. *Boden* pre-dated the law and so access to it was historically conditioned. In later editions of *The Right of Possession*, Savigny acknowledged an intellectual debt to Niebuhr. The first edition of his work had been slightly conjectural, but Niebuhr's research differentiating ancient Roman right of use from ownership substantiated Savigny's argument about possession. For both Niebuhr and Savigny the change in ownership of the *ager publicus*, moreover, was the necessary precondition for the emergence of feudalism. Tracing the Roman concept of landownership into the Middle Ages would reveal the ideational origins, and logic, of feudalism.

The newly identified importance of the Middle Ages as a period of legal transition galvanized interest in medieval manuscript transmission in order to trace this process more precisely. Already in 1814 Savigny wrote to Jacob Grimm about the need for institutional backing for this project. "I want to found a society for the research of German history. You and your brother would make splendid secretaries. I am begging you, mull the idea over and see

whether you know any more interested souls."[118] Over the next two years, Savigny convinced literary luminaries and figures from the *Immediatkommission* to join the project. His *Society for the Research of German History* became in 1819 the *Society for the Study of Older German History*. This society organized contributions to the *Monumenta Germaniae historica* (*MGH*), a series dedicated to publishing new, critical editions of medieval manuscripts, the first volume of which appeared in 1826.

A fear of loss animated this enterprise from the beginning. The members of the society worried that the French army had already destroyed many manuscripts during the chaos of the first decade of the century. These worries were not unfounded. The French army requisitioned provisions and tools from the provinces it passed through and sent to Paris anything valuable but of no immediate use.[119] Yet the founders of the *MGH* had grander ambitions for the series than the merely preservationist. The first document of the society's file at the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz* is a letter addressed to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Count Friedrich von Schuckman, dated 31 May 1816. It speaks of Germanic history, existential threat, and the historical sciences. Its authors called for the creation of "a German history," "a history of the fatherland," that would heal the geopolitical and spiritual fractures from the early years of the century. They anticipated that the series would begin with Charlemagne and the Carolingian

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[118] To Jacob Grimm, 8.11.1814, *Savigny: Professorenjahre in Berlin*, 159-60.

[119] From Cologne alone, the army took the Rubens Crucifixion from St. Peter's, as well as nineteen crates of manuscripts and a collection of Roman and medieval weapons. See Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany*, 110. This fear of loss was endemic to the period. For the German context, see Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), ch. 2. Many French, too, had a similar preservationist spirit, see Christopher M. Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir and the Musée des monuments français during the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 12 (1981): 200-22.

world, the epitome of unified German power. The series was intended above all as a monument to German cultural and political unity and so its founders noted that they would likely stop before the Reformation, in order to avoid the memory of German conflict.[120]

The signatories of this initial letter read as a list of the most important members of the *Immediatkommission* and of the historical school: Altenstein, Ancillon, Eichhorn, Niebuhr, Rühs, Savigny, Stägemann, and Süvern. The founding of the *MGH* is often interpreted as the conjoining of Napoleonic-era Romantic nationalism and the critical method. Yet what this section suggests is that the series was not only an early historicist enterprise, but also a research program born from the guiding interests, too, of the Historical School of Law. They envisioned the *MGH* as an authoritative collection of medieval sources, unparalleled among European nations, and they emphasized that the series would print all available legal sources to produce a testament of German constitutional unification.

Niebuhr's most famous archival discovery occurred early on his trip to Rome. In the Veronese library he discovered a fifth-century palimpsest written in uncial. Niebuhr first misidentified the document as an excerpt from Ulpian and transcribed it for Savigny. Savigny, perhaps a more exacting scholar, realized that it was the original work of the great Roman legal scholar Gaius's legal textbook, the *Institutionum commentarii*.[121] Niebuhr's discovery confirmed the importance of the Middle Ages for the transmission of Roman law. Medieval scribes not only transcribed legal codes to preserve them; their very scribal practices ensured that no parchment was ever wasted. The discovery of Gaius belonged to a new wave of textual archeology, such as the research for the *MGH*, and even led to the revival of the very word "palimpsest" as a

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[120] GStPK, I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI. Nr. 1 [Teil 1] Bd. 1, Nr. 303a, 1-14.

[121] Ibid., 154, 232-236.

temporal metaphor.[122] The Middle Ages functioned not only as the murky night into which the Roman Empire fell, nor as the unexamined site of "natural" patriotic emotion. During the Napoleonic Era, and as a result of Niebuhr's work, it became the site of the contested origins of the German constitution.

6. Conclusion

These early nineteenth-century questions about property and ownership produced long intellectual lineages. In *The German Ideology* (1845-46), Marx identified three historically conditioned forms of ownership, tribal, classical, and feudal. He wrote, "If antiquity started out from the town and its little territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country."[123] The mode of production in feudal society depended on the privately held estate. Marx cites the very sources that Niebuhr used to make his argument about the evolution of private property from the communally held *ager publicus*. Elsewhere in his writings, Marx cites Niebuhr more explicitly by name. Niebuhr and Savigny's conclusions regarding the Roman origins of private property, and its transformations during the Middle Ages, still held. They became the foundations on which Marx theorized about feudal ownership, even despite his more general resistance to the Historical School of Law.[124]

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[122] On the significance of BGN's discoverey, see L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 174-77. For a discussion of the use of "palimpsest," see P. Hills, ed., *David Jones: Artist and Poet* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 56, n. 4.

[123] Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (1846; repr., New York: Norton, 1978), 151-53.

[124] Norman Levine, "The German Historical School of Law and the Origins of Historical Materialism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 431-51.

The Middle Ages gained new importance at the beginning of the nineteenth century, not only as a vague source of patriotism. Scholars explored, with growing precision, how the period was articulated from the classical world, particularly in terms of legal notions of property and ownership. Academics turned to this era as they sought to understand their own legal history, even as law codes faced destruction from Napoleon and from internal reform. Yet Marx offers insight into later genealogies still dependent on this interpretation and suggests how academic disputes continued to influence German law and philosophy. The rural commune attracted great interest even as it seemed increasingly anachronistic in a century of intensifying market forces. German scholars developed competing theories of its origins. August Freiherr von Haxthausen, for example, advocated for the traditional corporative agrarian constitution into the 1840s. Later that decade, he argued that German communal landowning was actually a Russian institution, a vestige of the pre-historical *mir* that had spread into Europe.[125] When Marx located the Middle Ages in the countryside, he unwittingly revealed the political and economic significance assumed by the figure of the peasant during the nineteenth century. He was no longer the protagonist of a pastoral idyll but rather the object of modernizing forces. Medieval history became the means by which the peasant's remaining legal privileges and protections were contested.

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, this instrumental use of the Middle Ages was common. The Medieval worked, too, as a historical tool to justify Central Europe's hodgepodge of inherited constitutions and to provide a counterargument to proponents of natural law. These particular functions of medievalism had eighteenth-century precedents in the works

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[125] T.K. Dennison and A.W. Carus, "The Invention of the Russian Rural Commune: Haxthausen and the Evidence," *The Historical Journal* 46 (2003): 568-69.

of Johann Gottfried Herder and Justus Möser, among others, but they assumed greater importance in the legal disarray of the early nineteenth century.[126] This argument allows us to recontextualize the discussions about patriotism, or even nationalism, that dominate the historiography of this period. Newly *völkisch* and often xenophobic speeches and publications certainly exhibited intensified political allegiances. As scholars have noted, however, this was a largely urban phenomenon. New interpretations of Roman and medieval law, by contrast, had applications that would affect much larger swathes of the population.

The overlapping networks of patriots and scholars shed light on how both interests reinforced each other at the same time that it reveals how these two searches for origins worked in tandem, even though the Medieval worked differently in each context. In Niebuhr's Charlemagne lecture, the medieval became a prompt that relied on an emotional response to the German past in order to produce a new kind of masculine citizen. Though a not a Prussian himself, Niebuhr used the German past to spark a more passionately engaged present. This was a fairly vague medievalism based on a presentist interpretation of medieval sources. At the same time, Niebuhr researched legal history with more precision and this latter program had greater impact.

Niebuhr's emphasis on transmission belonged to a larger early nineteenth-century trend. Italian librarians felt that their history was under threat from German historians, ready to reinterpret all Roman history through a Germanic lens.[127] Giacomo Leopardi, noticing the enthusiastic work of German philologists, ended a poem with an ironic commentary on the new

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[126] Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 63-166 and Walker, *German Home Towns*, 3-5, 176-81.

[127] Alpita de Jong, "Joast Halbertsma, Jacob Grimm, and Count Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni: Nineteenth-century Sensitivities Concerning a Gothic Bible Translation," *Studies in Medievalism* 14 (2005): 51-80.

historical trend: "One thing however is certain – the whole world is of German origin."[128] First Wilhelm von Humboldt, then Niebuhr, pursued this research program during their diplomatic posts to the Vatican. From the vague and inchoate search for the emotional origins of the Germanic age, politicians and scholars turned instead to the more concrete sources of modern law. The Historical School of Law may have split into Romanist and Germanist factions, but both relied on the insight that arguments about legal transmission and assimilation depended on the Middle Ages. This revelation shaped not only entire research institutions, but also the very framework of constitutional debate in Germany that came to a formal end only in 1896 with the new German Civil Code.

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century the Medieval was a flexible concept and was put to many uses. Niebuhr and his colleagues envisioned the Middle Ages as a capacious and inclusive period for all Germans. He presented Charlemagne as a militaristic, masculine ideal with broad appeal that would unify Germans across Central Europe regardless of state boundaries. The founders of the *MGH* similarly wielded the medieval period as a source of cultural cohesion and they excluded religious sources in order to avoid potential conflicts among the readership of the series. Niebuhr presented research into Germany's legal origins as a contribution to a shared cultural past. The protagonist of the next chapter, August Reichensperger, deployed the Middle Ages in a fundamentally different way, even though only a generation separated him from the figures of this chapter. Reichensperger understood medieval Germany as a Catholic era of local government and he advanced this interpretation as a means to resist centralizing policies from Berlin. His writing on the Middle Ages shifts the focus of

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[128] Ibid., 76.

analysis from the subjects that interested Niebuhr – politics and law – to the realms of medieval society and culture.

Chapter 2. The Gothic State: August Reichensperger and the Aesthetics of Particularism

1. Introduction

The Cologne cathedral dominates the skyline of the city, just as it did during the nineteenth century. When a visitor arrives by train, she disembarks at the central station, directly adjacent to this colossal house of worship. The main exit from the station leads directly to the cathedral and it is the first building all tourists see. These two structures, train depot and *Dom*, suggest a historical narrative of German development, from medieval craftsmanship to modern industrial and technological might. Yet appearances are deceiving. Despite its weathered facade, the cathedral was completed at roughly the same time as the train station. The first *Bahnhof* opened on 5 December 1859, on the same day as the new Cathedral Bridge, which linked the station to the opposite banks of Rhine via tracks that ran through the medieval city wall abutting the cathedral. The construction of the cathedral finished only in 1880, ten years before the station expanded to accommodate Cologne's growing population.[1] During the nineteenth century two sets of architects and two sets of workers built these monuments at the same time, side by side. The train station required workers prepared for heavy labor; the completion of the cathedral needed construction workers and craftsmen able to sculpt stone for the intricate Gothic façade of

[1] Between 1849 and 1890, Cologne's population grew from 94,789 to 281,681. See Heinrich Silbergleit, ed., *Preußens Städte: 100jährigen Jubiläum der Städteordnung vom 19. November 1808* (Berlin: Carl Heymanns), 3, and Kaiserliches statisches Amt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* 15 (1894): 7.

the building. Both structures are products of nineteenth-century processes of modernization, however dissimilar they appear.[2]

August Reichensperger, a politician and architectural theorist from the Rhineland, was one of the cathedral's most vehement defenders and continually lobbied Berlin for construction funds and labor. Born in 1808, Reichensperger witnessed profound changes in the appearance and makeup of Cologne. His platform as a politician addressed this transformation: rapid industrialization; knowledge of traditional crafts; and the fate of a regional cultural patrimony, evident in structures. He developed a utopian program for modern life based on a revival of medieval forms and society. Yet his ambitions mark a departure from the conceptions of the Medieval in chapter one. Whereas Niebuhr and his colleagues used the Middle Ages to unite Germans, regardless of locality, Reichensperger deployed a vision of the medieval Rhineland to resist centralizing pressures from Berlin. No longer an appeal to consensus politics, the Medieval became a means to posit a historical understanding of regionalism. Reichensperger tried to revitalize what he argued were Rhenish medieval practices. He focused in particular on the cathedral and the kind of society that initially produced it: a religious brotherhood of artisans that functioned as a closed social, economic, and ethical community. Strikingly, Reichensperger did not hope to arrest all changes of industrialization, but rather to provide an alternative vision for it.

Born in Koblenz to a Catholic father and Protestant mother,[3] Reichensperger passed most of his life in the Middle Rhine, between Koblenz and Cologne. During this time the region changed

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[2] On the completion of the cathedral, see Thomas Nipperdey, "Der Kölner Dom als Nationaldenkmal," in Nipperdey, *Nachdenken über die deutsche Geschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1986), 156-71.

dramatically. At the time of his birth, the French controlled Koblenz as part of the *Département de Rhin-et-Moselle*. His father, Franz Joseph Reichensperger, worked in the French bureaucracy, eventually becoming the general secretary for the prefecture.[4] The socioeconomic and religious composition of the Rhineland distinguished it from many other German states during the early- to mid-nineteenth century. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic governments introduced the French civil code, dissolving inherited aristocratic and religious privileges. This legal rationalization abolished guilds and other formal professional organizations. These associations were never as prevalent in the Rhineland as in other German states, but the changes were significant enough to create what one historian has described as "a thoroughly bourgeois social order," with a disproportionately high percentage of craftsmen, as well as small manufacturers, vintners, and peasants.[5]

During the first half of the nineteenth century, rapid political change was the norm. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna divided the French Rhineland between Prussia, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Bavaria. The Kingdom of Prussia assumed political control of the middle and lower Rhine, and the Protestant Hohenzollern monarchy ruled over a region with a majority Catholic population. 3.65 million people lived in the Rhineland at the midcentury, of whom three-eighths were Protestant, around five-eights Catholic, and close to 1.5 percent Jewish. The newly Prussian

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[3] August Reichensperger later in life described his father as a "Napoleonic Catholic," by which he meant that his father was Catholic largely in name only. Cited in Ludwig Pastor, *August Reichensperger 1808-1895. Sein Leben und sein Wirken auf dem Gebiet der Politik, der Kunst und der Wissenschaft* (Freiburg i./Br.: Herder, 1899), I:6.

[4] Dr. Helmut Pröβler, Udo Liessem and Hans-Josef Schmidt, *August Reichensperger (1808-1895) und die Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Koblenz: Stadt Koblenz, 1985), 4-6.

[5] Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 33.

section of the Rhine included Protestant enclaves on the north left bank and in the Nahe river valley, whereas the area around Cologne, as well as the left bank more generally, identified overwhelmingly as Catholic.[6] The Rhineland's confessional demographics matched its economic diversity, both of which informed many of the concerns that Reichensperger addressed in writing and in speeches during his long career.

Reichensperger traveled extensively throughout England and the Continent, but never lived outside of the Rhineland after his university years, which he spent studying law in Berlin, Bonn, and Heidelberg.[7] He felt deep antipathy toward the Prussian capital even as a student, describing the Berliners themselves as "a stiff and cardboard-like, crazy people."[8] Local politics influenced his professional development and also his transformation from a young liberal student, reading Saint-Simonian periodicals, to a politician increasing concerned with Catholic political and religious interests.[9] Raised in a relatively unobservant home, Reichensperger reconverted to Catholicism during the late 1830s after the *Kölner Wirren* in 1837 and, in particular, after reading Joseph Görres's influential polemic, *Athanasius*, published in January the next year.[10]

The Cologne Affair was formative for Reichensperger, as for many German Catholics. It began as a controversy regarding interconfessional marriage. The archbishop of Cologne, Clemens August von Droste zu Vischering, declared that he would follow the Vatican and

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[6] Ibid., 44. See also footnote 60, p. 45.

[7] Prößler et al., *August Reichensperger*, 13-24. Reichensperger passed 1827-1828 in Bonn, 1828-1829 in Heidelberg, and the winter semester of 1829-1830 in Berlin.

[8] Pastor, *August Reichensperger*, 23.

[9] Pastor, *August Reichensperger*, 24.

[10] Pastor, *August Reichensperger*, 75-86.

condemn Protestant-Catholic marriage. In doing so he ignored Prussian laws permitting intermarriage, since the Prussian legal tradition defined marriage as a civil contract rather than a religious one. In November 1837 the Prussian military arrested Droste zu Vischering, in response to which Rhenish Catholics rallied in support, protesting the actions of the Prussian government. Many historians regard this event as the first expression of modern German politicized Catholicism, one that predated the great religious revivals of the 1850s and 1860s.[11]

After 1837 Reichensperger devoted his career to defending the interests of the Rhineland against the centralizing pressures of Berlin. He later described the effect of reading *Athanasius*, which framed the Cologne Affair within a broader context of Church-state conflict, as akin to a thunderbolt, startling him to a new political and religious consciousness.[12] He served as an elected representative to the German National Assembly in Frankfurt in 1848-49, as well as to the Erfurt Parliament in 1850, during which he voted against a Prussian-dominated German Confederation. He sat in the Prussian Lower House between 1850 and 1863, and helped found the Catholic party the *Katholische Fraktion* with his brother Peter, in 1852. Later in life Reichensperger reentered politics and represented the district of Krefeld in the national parliament as a member of the Catholic Center Party from 1871-84.

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[11] David Blackbourn, "Progress and Piety: Liberals, Catholics and the State in Bismarck's Germany," in Blackbourn, *Populists and Patricians: Essays in Modern German History* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 146-47, Frank Eyck, "Liberalismus und Katholizismus in der Zeit des deutschen Vormärz," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 *Sonderheft.* Liberalismus in der Gesellschaft des deutschen Vormärz (1983): 133-146, and Jon Vanden Heuvel, *A German Life in the Age of Revolution: Joseph Görres, 1776-1848* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2001), 322-331. On the mid-century religious revival, see Jonathan Sperber, "Roman Catholic Religious Identity in Rhineland-Westphalia, 1800-70: Quantitative Examples and Some Political Implications," *Social History* 7 (1982): 316.

[12] Pastor, *August Reichensperger*, 83.

Like similarly minded politicians, including Görres, Reichensperger invested certain medieval buildings with more than architectural significance. When he advocated for the restoration of the Cologne cathedral, he proposed a twofold reconstruction: of the building, and of modern society. He positioned himself against an artistic establishment that he described as hostile to Gothic architecture and to medieval art more generally. As his reputation grew, critics attacked him in the periodicals of art societies, such as the *Deutsches Kunstblatt*, and he published extensively in response.[13] Reichensperger also joined a larger community of European theorists, including Augustus Pugin and John Ruskin in England, and Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus in France, who believed that a Gothic revival would bring with it a renovation of society. Yet he grew close only with his Catholic interlocutors, Pugin and George Gilbert Scott Jr. Reichensperger's renown as a theorist of Gothic architecture grew and he influenced a younger generation of practicing architects, like the Viennese Friedrich Schmidt. As his fame increased, so did a network of influence that transcended Prussian politics and culture. Reichensperger received numerous honorary memberships in recognition of his contribution to artistic debate, despite his legal background.[14]

Reichensperger frequently used linguistic metaphors for architecture and in this chapter I suggest what Reichensperger thought Gothic architecture communicated.[15] Historians have

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[13] August Reichensperger, *Vermischte Schriften über christliche Kunst* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1856), iv.

[14] Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ana 429, B, Radnitzky, Carl: Letter from 25 April 1868.

[15] For one such example, see Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 58: "So ist es denn keineswegs eine tote Sprache, die wir wieder sprechen lernen sollen; es ist eine Sprache, deren Wurzelwerk zugleich mit dem Glauben, dessen eigenster Ausdruck sie ist, still und unvermerkt in unserm Geiste fortlebte, und die dem Kerne des Volkes fortwährend verständlich blieb, wenn auch die Zungen mühsam ein aufgedrungenes Rothwälsch lallten, welches, so wie es nicht aus dem Leben erwachsen ist, auch mit dem Leben niemals verwachsen konnte." On the

evaluated with nuance the specificities of his contributions to architectural theory.[16] I read Reichensperger's work instead as a utopian program. He framed the Gothic revival as an alternative to a Prussian cultural and educational hegemony, implicitly coded as Protestant. Historians have reconstructed in rich detail the German Catholic subculture that emerged in the decades before the *Kulturkampf*.[17] I argue that Reichensperger tried to establish Gothic architecture as a visual code for this subculture. He read Gothic architecture not only as a material source of history – as he claimed – but also as the embodiment of an alternative modernity. He projected onto Gothic structures solutions for nineteenth-century social and economic problems. Reichensperger envisioned specific educational and cultural institutions, with attendant modalities of knowledge, that would arise from this social reform. Had his program been realized, to the Prussian Protestant majority Gothic architecture would have become the aesthetic corollary to the charge of Catholic atavism, visual proof for a political program focused on the past rather than on the future.

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long theoretical tradition associating architecture and language, see Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture as Language in the Hapsburg Empire and its Aftermath, 1867-1933* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1, 8-15.

[16] See in particular Michael Lewis's analysis of Reichensperger's architectural thought in *The Politics of the German Gothic Revival: August Reichensperger* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).

[17] Notable works on this subject include David Blackbourn, *The Marpingen Visions: Rationalism, Religion and the Rise of Modern Germany* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), Olaf Blaschke and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, eds., *Religion im Kaiserreich: Milieus, Mentalitäten-Krisen* (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 1996), Winfried Halter, *Katholische Vereine in Baden und Württemberg, 1848-1916* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1995), Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), and Thomas Mergel, *Zwischen Klasse und Konfession: Katholisches Bürgertum im Rheinland, 1790-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

2. Medieval Architecture and Regional Autonomy

The restoration of the Cologne cathedral antedated Reichensperger. In 1816, shortly after the congress of Vienna, the Prussian court architect Friedrich Schinkel called for the completion of the structure before its further deterioration.[18] Just as the founders of the *MGH* collated medieval manuscripts to prevent textual loss, so too did preservationist worries motivate early restorers. As Susan Crane has argued, the fear of loss, especially of material culture, animated early nineteenth-century conservationist projects.[19] Yet the Cologne cathedral transcended this culture of concern and became the symbol of a German heritage shared by both confessions.[20] By the time of Reichensperger's activism during the 1840s, however, the Cathedral had become a site of religious contestation rather than agreement. No longer a national monument, Catholics and Protestants alike claimed it as their own and argued for the monument's particularly confessional character.[21] Reichensperger's involvement in this project, as well as his more general commitment to what he characterized as a Catholic and Gothic architectural patrimony, assumed ideological importance in the context of longer trends in the polarization of German political debate.

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[18] Reichensperger republished excerpts from Schinkel's report as an appendix in his first lengthy engagement with Gothic architecture, "Auszug aus dem amtlichen Bericht über den baulichen Zustand des Kölner Doms, vom damaligen Geheimen Oberbaurat, später Oberlandesbaudirektor Schinkel," *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst und ihr Verhältnis zur Gegenwart* (Trier: Lintz, 1845), 111-15.

[19] Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), ch. 1 & 3. This fear was not exclusive to Germany and extended to France, in the context of cultural and administrative centralization. See Christopher M. Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir and the *Musée des monuments français* during the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 12 (1981): 200-22.

[20] Nipperdey, "Der Kölner Dom," 163.

[21] Ibid., 163-64.

Reichensperger's political and religious beliefs found their common expression in his impassioned advocacy for Gothic architecture, which even predated his involvement in politics. He was not formally trained in art or architecture, yet he read extensively on the subject and lived in an environment in which Gothic architecture was ubiquitous. He grew up in a region noted for its medieval structures, one that had attracted artists, and inspired spiritual movements like the Rhine *Burgenromantik*, for decades.[22] In 1840 Reichensperger first became involved in debates about architecture with his anonymous pamphlet, *Einige Worte über den Dombau zu Köln*, in which he vehemently catalogued the urgency of the Cathedral's restoration and speculated about the meaning of Gothic architecture for the present.[23] Reichensperger published his most well-known book five years later, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst und ihr Verhältnis zur Gegenwart*, in which he deepened his analysis and made even more ambitious claims for Gothic architecture's relevance for contemporary life.[24]

Although Gothic architecture was found across Europe, Reichensperger appropriated it as a fundamentally German style. He frequently included variants of the question, "In welchem Style soll die Kirche errichtet werden?" in his writing, thereby joining a contemporary European

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[22] Ursula Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik am Rhein: Studien zum Wiederaufbau von Rheinstein, Stolzenfels und Sooneck (1823-1860)* (Munich: Prestel, 1979), and Robert R. Taylor, *The Castles of the Rhine: Recreating the Middle Ages in Modern Germany* (Waterloo: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1998).

[23] August Reichensperger, *Einige Worte über den Dombau zu Köln, von einem Rheinländer an seine Landsleute gerichtet*. Der Ertrag ist für den Dombau bestimmt. (Koblenz: J. Hölscher Verlag, 1840).

[24] Lintz published three editions of *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst* between 1845 and 1860.

debate about modern architectural form.[25] Reichensperger described Gothic structures as "ancestral, magnificent, truly national, and, at the same time truly Christian, art."[26] His bid for the Germanic origins of Gothic art can be understood in the context of an interpretative tradition dating to the sixteenth century, when Giorgio Vasari first attributed high medieval art to the Germans with his derogatory description, *la maniera tedesca*. Eighteenth-century Germans subverted this originally negative designation and began to praise Gothic architecture – often Gothic ruins – that drew from terminology of the sublime.[27] Yet during the 1840s Europeans conceded the historically French origins of Gothic art. Reichensperger avoided this development and claimed that although Gothic architecture might have originated elsewhere, it reached its ideal form only in Germany with the Cologne Cathedral.[28] Reichensperger continued, therefore, to describe Gothic architecture in possessive terms that belied contemporary art historical consensus. As for Niebuhr and his contemporaries, the Middle Ages functioned as a point of origins. Yet for Reichensperger the medieval moment was not an inclusive one, but rather a means to mark boundaries between Germans and foreigners, and Catholics and Protestants.

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[25] Heinrich Hübsch first posed this urgent question for a broad German audience in 1828 in his treatise, *In welchem Style sollen wir bauen?* (Karlsruhe: Chr. Fr. Müller, 1828).

[26] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 9.

[27] Three notable examples include, Goethe, "Von deutscher Baukunst," *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, Vol. 12, ed. Erich Trunz (1772; repr., Munich: Beck, 1960), 7-15. Georg Forster, "Ansichten vom Niederrhein," *Werke in vier Bänden*, Vol. 2, ed. Gerhard Steiner (1791; repr., Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1967), and Friedrich Schlegel, "Grundzüge der gotischen Baukunst," *Kritische Schriften*, ed. Wolfdietrich Rasch (1803; repr., Munich: C. Hanser, 1956). See especially Susan Crane's discussion of historical consciousness and the sublime, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1-37.

[28] Lewis, *Politics of the German Gothic Revival*, 25-56.

Reichensperger's periodization for Gothic architecture, and the ebb and flow of European history more generally, remained relatively consistent during four decades, even as he refined historical causation and its implications. Reichensperger specified that the thirteenth century was the culmination of medieval culture and architecture. His timeline coincided with the initial phase of construction of the Cologne cathedral, thereby justifying both its significance as the purest expression of Gothic art and also its restoration. The thirteenth century represented, for him, the only moment at which the medieval world became Christendom, one united organism working to express its belief.[29] Many nineteenth-century historians would have agreed with his assertions about the importance of the thirteenth century, the high point of imperial German power and territorial reach. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the critical literature had enthusiastically rediscovered this period.[30] Yet these histories focused on very different subjects: the German literary world; notions of kingship; and medieval constitutions. Furthermore, historicists relied on textual sources. Reichensperger, by contrast, emphasized medieval culture and society more generally and he extrapolated his conclusions from material artifacts. Based on the introduction of neoclassical styles during the eighteenth century, he argued that the Enlightenment had dissolved the remaining socioeconomic structures of medieval and early modern Europe, such as guilds and associated trades, and replaced them with national citizenship and free trade.[31] Reichensperger advanced a historical narrative of architectural and social

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[29] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 23.

[30] Johann Jacob Bodmer's rediscovery of the Hohenstaufen period during the mid eighteenth century sparked a frenzy of interest that scholars, authors, and artists sustained well into the twentieth century. See Peter H. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 208-212.

[31] August Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige auf dem Gebiete der kirchlichen Kunst* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1854), 11.

decline since the Middle Ages, emphasizing the relations between the arts, and social and political life.

Reichensperger's periodization was strict and he disqualified earlier architectural idioms, maintaining that the medieval basilica or Romanesque style was ultimately little better suited than the classical for a modern revival. Arguably he agreed with Niebuhr's assessment that the early Middle Ages represented the fusion of Roman and German culture. Reichensperger described the Romanesque as a style in development, caught between antiquity and the Middle Ages. Even though Romanesque churches were vast improvements over classical structures in form and layout, Reichensperger argued that they exhibited a stylistic indeterminacy, even pre-Christian references. Romanesque architecture was not yet fully Christian, for "the spirit still wrestles with the material for supremacy; in short, everything unmistakably indicates a stage of development, not a completed journey."[32] Furthermore, Reichensperger claimed that the transitional qualities of the basilica style made it difficult to typify and resulted in eclecticism when reproduced.[33] The Romanesque nonetheless marked an important architectural development and, in an early work, Reichensperger located the birth of this new world in time and space, to the German Carolingian empire along the banks of the Rhine.[34] Reichensperger claimed the Frankish dynasty as "German" and, in doing so, he attributed medieval architecture to the beginning of a specifically German, and Catholic, Middle Ages.

For Reichensperger, Gothic architecture was not just a style; it betokened a way of life. He therefore distinguished between Gothic revivalism, a superficial architectural imitation, and the

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[32] Ibid., 22.

[33] Ibid., 21-22.

[34] *Reichensperger, Über den Dombau*, 9-10.

recovery of high medieval Germany, which would entail the resurrection of an entire world. Reichensperger modeled the ideal Gothic form on the style's thirteenth-century northern European variant. In brief, a church should have an axial western tower and a large central apse with two smaller apses on either side. Transepts would create a cruciform plan, though the structure's external face could be asymmetrical.[35] The interior would be richly detailed and polychromatic, in marked contrast to the whitewashed interiors common during the nineteenth century.[36] Yet Reichensperger did not believe that contemporary architects and craftsmen were trained well enough to create these kinds of structures. Architects would never transcend the *Phantasiegotik* prevalent in Germany during the 1840s and 1850s without a new training program to reeducate the German craftsman according to the high standards of medieval guilds.

This ahistorical Gothic Revival in fact only hindered its true recovery, for it "is perhaps likelier than anything else to provoke a bias against medieval art."[37] Reichensperger doubtless believed this to be true. His criticism of the nineteenth-century Gothic revival may, however, also have been intended as a criticism of the Prussian restoration projects along the Rhine, many of which began during the 1840s. These projects took liberties with the historical record and often included components not original to the structure, such as the addition of a jousting court to Stolzenfels castle.[38] Oftentimes these more perfect realities entailed an aesthetic and moral

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[35] Lewis, *Politics of the German Gothic Revival*, 107, 115, and 122.

[36] One can see Pugin's influence on Reichensperger in this emphasis on polychromy. August Reichensperger, *Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, der Neubegründer der christlichen Kunst in England. Zugleich zur Frage von der Wiederbelebung der Kunst und des Kunsthandwerks in Deutschland* (Freiburg: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1877), 32.

[37] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 65.

[38] See Jan Werquet, *Historismus und Repräsentation. Die Baupolitik Friedrich Wilhelm IV. in der preußischen Rheinprovinz* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), Taylor, *The Castles of the*

idealization of the past that ignored the historical record. Susan Crane has described this model of restoration as based on "an aesthetics of completion," in which restorers created an ideal finished state that may never have existed.[39] The jousting court at Stolzenfels, for example, alluded to a fictional, and often only nominally religious, Middle Ages of chivalry and romance, like the world created in Walter Scott's widely read novels. Reichensperger's Middle Ages were neither literary nor source-based; he used, instead, the material record to interpret the world that created Germany's extent medieval buildings.

In contrast to these indulgent medievalizing creations, Reichensperger advocated for an archeological principle of restoration that intervened as little as possible.[40] Even ruins were better than an overenthusiastic restoration because they still preserved elements from medieval Germany.[41] Reichensperger argued that stylistic inconsistencies of older buildings should be retained during restoration. If a Gothic church, for example, included rococo finishes in its interior, these finishes should be left undisturbed because their modern replacements would appear far more incongruous. Uniformity characterized the modern age, not the medieval one.[42] Medieval craftsmen often built over or expanded earlier structures and Reichensperger proposed

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Rhine, and Ursula Rathke, *Preußische Burgenromantik*, on the oftentimes destructive restoration of castles along the Rhine.

[39] Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness*, 41.

[40] The rediscovery of the medieval plan for Cologne Cathedral's façade caused great excitement in 1814 and guided its future restoration, Lewis, *Politics of the German Gothic Revival*, 31. On the archeological principle, see Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 134, and *Fingerzeige*, 18.

[41] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 30.

[42] Ibid., 32.

that modern restorers should not erase these historical layers, but instead preserve them.[43] Reichensperger's "archeological principle" was ultimately an evolutionary one. He placed greater emphasis on the development of a building than on its idealized – and often imaginary – appearance. Restoring a building to an ideal typical Gothic form would only reveal its modernity.

Material assumed an important role during restoration and Reichensperger believed that the cohesion of medieval architecture depended on the material originally used in construction.[44] An element out of place would give betray its modern renovation.[45] He specified, for example, that smiths should never incorporate iron in their restoration work. A medieval worker, knowing the material's brittleness, would never have selected it as a structural element. Reichensperger described iron as "the ruin of all smithery and an unconquerable source of bad taste." Iron encouraged uniformity, since products could be cast from molds, and contributed in this way to the deskilling of smiths, who would have increasingly little opportunity to practice their craft.[46] Iron betokened not just modern methods of construction, but also the loss of an inherited craft sense, which Reichensperger implicitly historicized. Yet iron had an even more specific

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[43] Ibid., 29-32.

[44] Ibid., 31: "jede Formgebung ist durch das material, seine Kohäsion, Schwere, Zersetzungsverhältnisse u.s.w. bedingt."

[45] Reichensperger wrote vehemently against the incorporation of iron in both restoration and modern construction. "Ein Wort über den Londoner Glaspalast," *Vermischte Schriften über christliche Kunst* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1856), 432-441.

[46] Reichensperger, "Einige Andeutungen in Bezug auf die Restaurationen geschichtlicher Baudenkmäler (1845)," in *Vermischte Schriften*, 401. This protest positioned Reichensperger against prevailing methods of construction, in which iron enabled new modern structures like the Crystal Palace in London, a structure that Reichensperger dismissed as "no more than a colossal greenhouse" or a glass tent, with no artistic expression, "Ein Wort über den Londoner Glaspalast," *Vermischte Schriften*, 434. Essay originally published in 1851.

symbolic function in the Prussian Rhine Province during the 1840s and 1850s.[47] Iron was long associated with Prussian sovereignty even before Otto von Bismarck's famous Blood and Iron speech before the Prussian Parliament on September 30, 1862. Schinkel had designed the Iron Cross in 1814-15 as the Prussian decoration for veterans in the Wars of Liberation.[48] Iron became coterminous with the modern Prussian state—its military strength, its political power, and its economic might.[49] Reichensperger wanted to ensure that iron's contemporary resonance would not interrupt the power of Gothic structures as symbols of Catholic regionalism.

Reichensperger foregrounded the intersection of workmen, materials, and technology. This preoccupation informed his recommendation for restraint in both restoration and construction, for he believed that nineteenth-century training programs had disrupted relations between these three components. He advocated for the reintroduction of Gothic architecture as an architectural style with associated crafts and modalities of knowledge, which he maintained would be reintroduced to German practice only through educational reform. The program that Reichensperger proposed should be considered within broader mid-century official debates regarding education, debates in which he and his brother Peter participated as representatives in

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[47] Iron represented to many an aesthetic of the modern industrial nation, even into the twentieth century. See Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for his Students to this Field of Art*, intro. and trans. Harry France Mallgrave (1902; repr., Santa Monica: The Getty Center Publication Programs, 1988), 21-22.

[48] John Edward Toews, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160, 135-36.

[49] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2006), 375-76.

the Prussian *Bundestag*.[50] These charged discussions addressed institutions of contemporary education, as well as their content. Education was a particularly significant question for the sizable Catholic minority in Prussia, many of whom feared the imposition of a Protestant state curriculum.[51]

Reichensperger suggested an alternative model to the architectural training schools then the norm in Berlin. Instead, he advocated for the reintroduction of the medieval builders' lodges, the *Bauhütte*. According to Reichensperger, although they were not formal institutions, they nonetheless regulated training and expertise. The lodges came into and fell out of existence with large-scale projects, like cathedrals.[52] They functioned in Reichensperger's writing as a microcosm for the high medieval world. The *Bauhütte*, as a physical structure, symbolized the process of building specific to Gothic cathedrals and the society that this generated. The *Bauhütte* included a range of workers necessary for monumental construction – from people to clear the land, to cooks, to various skilled craftsmen – with a range of experience, including apprentices, journeymen, and masters. It arose for a particular commission and was considered an administrative, economic, and social unit. When Reichensperger urged its reintroduction, he suggested not only an ostensibly older form of training, but also fundamentally different relations between craftsmen, their work, their patrons, and society at large.

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[50] See Reichensperger's political speeches on the subject republished as, *Parlamentarische Reden der Gebrüder August und Peter Franz Reichensperger* (Regensburg: G. Joseph Manz, 1858), 112-115 and 259-271.

[51] August and Peter Reichensperger, *Deutschlands nächste Aufgaben* (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 1860), 57.

[52] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 67-68.

When Reichensperger first advocated for this institutional reform during the late 1840s, guilds had not existed in the Rhineland for over forty years and were rapidly losing influence in other German states as well.[53] He hoped to reinvigorate these professional organizations just as they were disappearing from nineteenth-century German society. In the 1840s the German states were poised on the brink of the first major wave of industrialization. Large factories on the English model were rare, though the pace of small-scale manufacturing had become more rapid. Germans had already begun to experience the problems of an industrialized society. During the 1840s the term pauperization was frequently used in public debate to describe a growing class of poor, itinerant laborers.[54] Reichensperger's suggestions for reform acknowledged these problems. He did not propose gradual relief for these vulnerable classes, but instead proposed a social organization that was ostensibly medieval. In advocating for the *Bauhütte*'s reintroduction, Reichensperger encouraged not only an older model of professional training, but also an older model of social and economic regulation. *Bauhütten* would impose a traditional model of professional hierarchy at the same time that they refocused attention on the craft itself, as well as on all associated trades such as smiths and glass workers.

Both state and church were essential to this transformation even in early iterations of Reichensperger's program, though the state's function was strictly limited. Like existing training programs in universities and technical schools, *Bauhütten* would offer standardized courses of

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[53] Shulamit Volkov, *The Rise of Popular Antimodernism in Germany: The Urban master Artisans, 1873 – 1896* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 13-15, and Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648-1871* (Ithaca, 1971), 405-08.

[54] Werner Conze, "From 'Pöbel' to 'Proletariat': The Socio-Historical Preconditions of Socialism in Germany," in *The Social History of Politics: Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing*, ed. Georg Iggers (Dover: Berg, 1985), 49-80.

study, fellowships, and exams. The government, however, would have no influence over the curriculum, in marked contrast to its interventionist role during the nineteenth century.[55] Prussia would offer financial support because, as Reichensperger noted, guild costs were often prohibitive. In effect, the role of government funding would be to liberalize the building lodge and open it to students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. The building lodge, though an antiquated concept, would be an institution strangely familiar to contemporary Germans, as it mimicked the model of instruction offered at technical schools. Reichensperger formulated this alternative model in response to distinctly modern problems and he used the guise of medieval tradition to suggest an ultimately radical program. He did not flee into total archaic fantasy, but rather suggested plans to lessen industrialization's social effects. At the same time, Reichensperger's utopian future entailed the social and economic reorganization of nineteenth-century Germany away from industrialization.

Reichensperger advocated for Gothic architecture as the expression of Catholic regionalism and also to reestablish mid-century social and economic life in terms of smaller communities of work and worship. His program relied on the Prussian state financially, but otherwise limited its role. Reichensperger's impassioned writing suggests how seriously he considered this cause. The 1840s and 1850s were not the apogee of either Catholic religiosity or persecution. Yet by the *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s, the aesthetic preferences of each confession had already hardened. As Anthony Steinhoff has noted, when Protestants from Strasburg rebuilt their church after the Franco-Prussian war they purposefully eschewed a Gothic style, judging it inappropriate for

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[55] Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 5.

Protestant use.[56] This distinction was doubtlessly especially clear to the Alsatians, given the fame of the Gothic Strasburg cathedral. The design for the church renounced Catholic architectural practices yet it also envisioned the new structure in a familiar idiom that rooted it in the traditions of the Protestant community in Strasburg.[57] Reichensperger, by contrast, illuminates the preceding period during which architects and politicians contested stylistic idioms in order to claim them for a particular confession. In Cologne as in Strasburg, religion was paramount in these debates. Reichensperger argued that Gothic architecture was a Catholic tradition, but even as he claimed this, Protestants asserted that the Gothic was actually theirs, an early artistic expression of the rationalism that later animated the Reformation.[58] Yet Reichensperger's arguments about religion were inseparable from his criticism of the Prussian state. The dynamic between state and religion became clearer when he described the predominant architectural style of the Prussian state.

3. 'Catacombs of Science': Neoclassicism and Architectural Training in Prussia

Reichensperger vilified neoclassicism as a specifically Prussian and French style even though it appealed widely across Europe and North America. As a political representative in Berlin he witnessed the neoclassical transformation of the cultural and political center of the city.[59] The Prussian court architect Friedrich Schinkel understood neoclassicism as an architectural idiom

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[56] See Anthony J. Steinhoff, "Building Religious Community: Worship Space and Experience in Strasburg after the Franco-Prussian War," in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York: Berg, 2001), 267-96.

[57] Ibid., 270-71.

[58] Toews, *Becoming Historical*, 120-21.

[59] Ibid., 141-60.

that represented the Prussian civic community and he sketched plans for the city center that reimagined it in classical terms.[60] He sketched plans for the city center that reimagined it in classical terms. This program continued at the behest of the King Friedrich Wilhelm IV even after the architect's death in 1841 with the creation of the *Neues Museum*, the construction of which Reichensperger would have witnessed during his visits to the capital.[61] Yet Schinkel's fame was such that even Reichensperger could not deny his talent and he had to settle instead on criticizing the disciples of the famous artist, students whom Reichensperger described as derivative.[62] Reichensperger usually described not individual architects, but rather the general stylistic dominance of neoclassicism in Prussia. During four decades of publications he consistently focused his animus on this architectural style, even though neoclassicism was by no means the only historicizing rival to Gothic architecture during the mid century.[63] Reichensperger identified a connective tissue between the architectural regularity of neoclassicism, its intellectual theory, and political liberalism. He understood neoclassicism as homogenization, the erasure of difference and individual expression, and from this he extrapolated the political message of neoclassicism, namely legal equality and the leveling of social distinction.

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[60] Ibid., 160.

[61] Ibid., 198-203.

[62] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 21.

[63] *Rundbogenstil*, or Romanesque architecture, was also popular in German architectural academies and polytechnical schools, including those in Berlin, Munich, and Karlsruhe. Reichensperger did occasionally discuss Romanesque revival styles, but often only briefly, reserving his animus for Neoclassicism.

Just as Reichensperger naturalized Gothic architecture as a domestic German product, so too by contrast did he cast neoclassicism as foreign. He described its presence in Germany as an invasive species.[64] It originated in France and first entered Germany during the eighteenth century through the *Franzosentum* of Frederick the Great. Reichensperger's strategy in this instance exhibits the same logic that Niebuhr and his colleagues espoused. To describe a cultural product as foreign was to denigrate it; to describe it as German was to advocate for its appropriateness and superiority. As Reichensperger alleged, Frederick the Great was indeed a francophile, more comfortable in French than in German. His francophilia radically altered the culture of the Prussian upper classes during the eighteenth century, who adopted the preferences of their monarch.[65] Reichensperger cast neoclassicism as a French visual regime that Prussians had adopted, thereby suggesting that the government was derivative at best and un-German at worst.

French neoclassicism was no neutral revival style and Reichensperger described it as the visual expression of the Reformation.[66] He identified Protestantism, and its architectural expression, as modern paganism. This criticism was yet sharper. Reichensperger did not merely denounce the religion of the Prussian government as modern paganism. He also criticized Prussia's very founding mythology in the person of Frederick the Great, who first welcomed neoclassicism into Germany. Neoclassicism divided paganism from Christianity and Protestant Prussia from the Catholic Rhineland. Reichensperger framed the state as an inherent threat.

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[64] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 9.

[65] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2006), 104 and 184-85.

[66] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 9-10.

Prussia stood for a non-native, irreligious culture that exerted sovereignty over the Prussian Rhine Province, which became implicitly more "German" by comparison. Despite Reichensperger's dramatic rhetoric, he was not entirely mistaken. During the 1840s, the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV promoted the projects of Schinkel's protégées in order to continue the architect's legacy.[67] This marked a shift in Prussian cultural policy. The state, under pressure from the king, intensified its efforts to produce a standardized German cultural identity.[68] Reichensperger formulated his program in response to this cultural centralization, in defense of alternative sites of memory and heritage not included in the new Prussian agenda.

Reichensperger did not confine his polemic to the foreign origins of neoclassicism. He emphasized how the appearance of neoclassical architecture affected one's experience of it and scathingly caricatured contemporary methods of neoclassical construction in *Christlich-Germanische Baukunst*:

> "If someone nowadays wants to build a house for himself, he tells a builder how many rooms he'd like and the amount of money he's willing to spend. The builder draws up his plan according to these parameters, always beginning with the façade, into which he hacks three, four, five, or even more quadrangular window openings, one upon the other—as many as the given sum allows—always neatly symmetrical, and of course at the same distance from one another. A door is installed in the middle of the lower line of windows, while above, an antiqued molding,…usually tacked together from boards, worthily crowns this brilliant design and, finally, some rows of skylights and chimneys that precisely correspond to the lower rows of windows. The master architect then begins to construct an interior that corresponds to this grandiosely conceived exterior…the architects always take especial care that the doors and windows on opposite sides always correspond to one another exactly, while the carpenter takes it upon himself to make sure that neither the one nor the other can close."[69]

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[67] Toews, *Becoming Historical*, 197-98.

[68] Ibid., 198.

[69] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 28.

Reichensperger cautioned that entire towns had reproduced this effect. Town councils preferred to tear down medieval structures rather than restore them, and in their place they erected neoclassical public buildings, widening town streets and straightening their path in the process.[70] Reichensperger's descriptions in these passages matched the overall tone of his first book: detailed, sarcastic, and deeply concerned. He fixated on the geometrical quality of contemporary revival styles in which new buildings were built, including churches, theaters, banks, and post offices.[71] He asserted that symmetry seemed the only principle of neoclassicism, with no thought for effect or function, and identified the modern machine, the automaton, as the animating spirit of the style.[72] Just as factories produced uniform mass goods, so too did architects produce identical urban structures that erased historical stylistic difference and replaced it with an experience of urban uniformity. Reichensperger emphasized external invariability in houses that were built to order, infinitely replicable, and without unique attributes.

Reichensperger consistently argued throughout publications during the 1840s and 1850s that symmetry was the leading principle of neoclassicism. He reiterated this point in all three editions of *Christlich-Germanische Baukunst*; again, in a collection of previously published essays,

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[70] Ibid., 24. Reichensperger worried about the power of local bureaucrats in all his published works, fearing that they had too much power. Entire historic neighborhoods could be demolished in the name of progress without easy recourse to stop the changes.

[71] Reichensperger commented on contemporary trends. Extensive architectural reconstruction was closely associated with state building, such as in post-Napoleonic Munich, see Joshua Hagen, "Shaping Public Opinion through Architecture and Urban Design: Perspectives on Ludwig I and His Building Program for a "New Munich."" *Central European History* 48 (2015): 4-30. Georges-Eugène Hausmann's renovation of Paris and the reconstruction of Vienna's *Ringstraße* are perhaps the most well known. For similar projects in mid-century Berlin, see Toews, *Becoming Historical*, 117-206.

[72] Reichensperger invoked *das Fabrikwesen*, or *das Maschinenwesen*, in numerous works. For this particular example, see *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 10.

Vermischte Schriften, reprinted in 1856; and he elaborated on symmetry's pernicious effects in his mature account of Gothic architecture, *Fingerzeige auf dem Gebiete der kirchlichen Kunst* (1854). This fixation, however, predated Reichensperger's career as a politician and as an architectural theorist. His aversion to the regularity that typified neoclassicism dated to his university days. He went on a walking tour throughout West Germany in Spring 1829 with a friend from Heidelberg and effusively noted old churches and houses, and the particularities of local culture, in his diary. He contrasted medieval towns, such as Strasburg and Freiburg, with the ugliness of early modern Karlsruhe, noting that it lacked the charm of older cities.[73] The modern urban grid represented a fundamentally different way of life than that in which Reichensperger grew up, among the narrow meandering streets of towns along the Middle Rhine.

Reichensperger's early writing reveals the genesis of his later concerns, which compared the beauty of medieval irregularities with the mathematical precision of neoclassicism, the richly historical Rhineland with modern Prussian industrial cities. By the 1850s Reichensperger had deepened his criticism of neoclassicism's symmetry and elaborated on its effects in, *Fingerzeige auf dem Gebiete der kirchlichen Kunst*, his most influential publication after *Christliche-Germanische Baukunst*.[74] He associated neoclassicism with France as the source of its eighteenth-century revival, and also because he saw an ideational link between architectural symmetry and the principles of the French Revolution. Reichensperger believed that the primary intellectual development of the French Revolution was "a mathematical spirit," whose

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[73] Pastor, *August Reichensperger*, 19-20. In his diary, he bemoaned contemporary life, "with its conventionality, rectilinearity, its standardization, its overwhelming, yet meaningless, activity, its purposiveness, its inescapable cosmopolitanism, its eternal going and coming, its fitful comforts." Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz Best. 700, 138 Nr. 334. Diary entry dated 13 September 1833.

[74] Lewis, *Politics of the German Gothic Revival*, 4.

fundamental law was that of sameness and uniformity. Just as the revolution destroyed the political order and leveled social difference, so too did it destroy an aesthetic regime and attempt to level artistic difference.[75] Reichensperger noted that "the political principle of linearity is infinitely more dangerous to the overall beauty of cities than the brutality of the agitated mob."[76]

Reichensperger grouped political thought and architectural expression around a common theme of homogenization. The French revolutionaries wanted legal equality and an egalitarian society, and they turned to neoclassicism as the embodiment of these principles of homogeneity. Contrary to Reichensperger's narrative, the Rhineland had a long tradition of French support and the state was a center of German Jacobin political agitation earlier in the century.[77] Even by the Revolutions of 1848/49, Rhenish democrats invoked memories of revolutionary and Napoleonic years in their resistance to Prussian political dominance. Jonathan Sperber has identified this as neo-Jacobin agitation, the final manifestation of a political tradition rooted in the *Sattelzeit*.[78] Yet these late Jacobins marked a political endpoint. Reichensperger's repudiation of Prussia, neoclassicism, and the French revolution illuminates a transitional moment in Rhenish politics. He belonged to a milieu during the 1850s in which religious and regional autonomy oriented Catholic political energy against Prussia.

Reichensperger's catalogue of the failures of neoclassicism included architectural training programs. Modern German architects, he argued, learned the principle of symmetry in Berlin academies. Yet this rule was only one component of a faulty curriculum and professional model.

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[75] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 8-9.

[76] Ibid., 8-9.

[77] See Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, intro.

[78] Ibid., 490.

He suggested that one could not learn the craft of building in front of a lectern. Students would absorb only architectural theory, never architectural practice.[79] The art academy also replaced the traditional prestige of guild membership. Architecture became a job rather than a profession and its practitioners lost the ability to regulate its ranks in terms of quality, economics, and reputation. Academics, rather than experienced stonemasons and masters, taught future architects. Reichensperger described academics' knowledge as at best mere *Bücherweisheit* and at worst *Schulpedanterien*, and he presented the rise of the modern automaton, *das Maschinenwesen*, as the logical result of the lessons given in lecture halls or, in his words, in the "catacombs of science."[80] He argued that this utilitarianism was the only metric in modern training.

In 1852 Reichensperger focused his attack on the Berlin *Bauakademie* in a speech to the Lower House of the Prussian Parliament. Its members were debating whether to increase funds allocated to the *Bauakademie*, which included both the Prussian General School of Architecture and the Prussian State Building Commission. Designed in a neoclassical style by Schinkel, the building embodied almost all phenomena to which Reichensperger objected. Furthermore, its dual function effectively centralized certain economic and social activities, thereby uniting Berlin's disparate neighborhoods into a more unified economic and social organism.[81] For Reichensperger, neoclassicism communicated a coercive cultural monopoly, with attendant structures of power, which created one unified aesthetic for the diverse Prussian state.

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[79] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 27.

[80] Ibid., 8.

[81] Toews, *Becoming Historical*, 176.

Reichensperger opened his speech describing the famous structure of the *Bauakademie*. He emphasized the alienating effect of its façade: "it could almost appear to one as if the building had been constructed on the banks of the Ilisos, rather than on the banks of the Spree, had not the different objects with which it's rigged out—the muses, the graces, and however else the pagan-mythical personnel are called—…been created from plaster, papier-mâché, or zinc."[82] The building's very appearance offended Reichensperger, for it made no historical reference to German society. And yet, argued Reichensperger before his political peers, the building sadly blended into the stylistic hodgepodge of central Berlin. The public buildings on either side of Berlin's central boulevard, *Unter den Linden*, had been designed similarly, adorned with gods and goddesses irrelevant to Germany's history and beliefs.[83]

Moreover, Reichensperger noted that the only course on historical architecture listed in the lecture index was on classical architecture—or, to use Reichensperger's own partisan gloss, "on pagan, pre-Christian architecture."[84] He regretfully added in his speech that the other courses were devoted to advanced sciences that the academy deemed necessary to construction. Reichensperger drew an analogy to contemporary philology. Just as *Sattelzeit* philologists had rescued the German language from its degraded state and banished foreign derivations, so too did architecture need a similar renovation. Yet his goal was not compromise. He claimed that an architect could not be equally well trained in neoclassical and medieval, and suggested that the

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[82] August Reichensperger, "Über deutsche Baukunst," *Parlamentarische Reden*, 335. Speech delivered on 20 February, 1852.

[83] Ibid., 336.

[84] Ibid., 335.

latter supplant the former entirely.[85] He acknowledged that one could appreciate both stylistic rivals as an amateur, "but it is not possible, or hardly possible, to draft truly artistic, accomplished structures in the German style, if one took one's basic training in antiquity."[86]

In the seven years between the publication of *Christlich-Germanische Baukunst* and his 1852 speech to parliament, Reichensperger made the significance of his earlier argument against the contemporary educational structures explicit. The very appearance of the *Bauakademie* made its allegiance to Prussian authority, and to the Prussian economy, clear. Training in neoclassical architecture was fundamentally incommensurate with training in Gothic architecture, because they influenced how their practitioners understood the built environment. Neoclassicism may have resembled a coercive cultural monopoly at the mid century, but his own agenda was no less radical: he wanted to replace one monopoly with another.

Reichensperger's general criticism of centralized sovereignty, and his more pointed criticism of Prussian statehood, was inherent to his defense of Gothic architecture, and to his understanding of historical change. Education, for example, was an obviously political issue because reform was centrally organized from Berlin, and because nineteenth-century instructors were state employees. Reichensperger's interlocutors in France and England shared his political and aesthetic commitments. Among the British, he acknowledged only Pugin's influence, even publishing a book later in life that described his indebtedness to his British peer.[87] Although Pugin belonged to a circle of English Catholics whose interest in Gothic architecture was markedly more romantic than political, his commitment to Gothic architecture on nominally

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[85] Ibid., 340.

[86] Ibid., 340.

[87] Reichensperger, *Pugin, der Neubegründer der christlichen Kunst in England*.

religious grounds was nonetheless closer to Reichensperger's program than John Ruskin's more secular interests.[88]

In France, Reichensperger similarly sought advice from the Catholic politician and amateur architectural theorist Charles de Montalembert, rather than from the celebrated restorer Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. The two began corresponding in 1849 and continued until the Frenchman's death in 1870, discussing Gothic art and political Catholicism interchangeably. Montalembert followed Reichensperger's two careers with equal interest and inquired about both. He saw similarities between France and Germany and, like Reichensperger, disavowed both bureaucratic centralization and the regime of Napoleon III.[89] Montalembert was particularly concerned, however, that their political opponents had compromised the feasibility of their medievalizing political and artistic revival. He described how state officials, too, had favorably identified the Middle Ages as the origin of their own imperial politics, a historical theme relevant for later chapters of this dissertation.[90]

Yet Reichensperger's interest in the negotiations between the centralized and local interests involved in Gothic restoration predated even these relationships. Early in his career he had

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[88] Rosemary Hill, *Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 174-75. See Robert Hewison's edited volume, *New Approaches to Ruskin: Thirteen Essays* (London: Routledge, 1981), and John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 47-105. Rosenberg suggests that Ruskin's hatred of Pugin, and Catholic art generally, is overstated, and in fact conceals an attraction that Ruskin had to dispel through the "reassuring tonic of bigotry."

[89] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz Best. 700, 138, Nr. 54. Montalembert's correspondence frequently referred to "le césarisme napoléonnen," first mentioned in 1852, and variants of "la centralization bureaucratique," "le despotisme administratife," and, scathingly, "la démocratie napoléonienne." These terms were common criticisms that nonetheless expressed a profound criticism of the Second Empire.

[90] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz Best. 700, 138, Nr. 54, letter from Montalembert dated 11 January 1856.

observed how bureaucrats reached decisions for distant cities, like Cologne. During the early 1840s, damaged medieval frescoes had been discovered in the spandrels of Cologne cathedral. A committee selected the young painter Eduard von Steinle to restore them, yet Steinle's plans encountered lengthy delays because of funding debates in Berlin.[91] Reichensperger met the painter and published numerous articles in support of his plans for the paintings. He argued that painting in a historic cathedral presented one specific problem: the artist had to create something new in the spirit of the old.[92] Steinle intended to represent the spiritual orders of Catholicism, using the iconography of Christian mysticism to create a uniform message between the medieval building and his modern painting, and Reichensperger argued that this portrayal of spiritual continuity befitted the cathedral. In this instance, Reichensperger ignored the conceptual dissonance between the world in which the cathedral was created and the world of the modern paintings. For him, the paintings made visible a continuity that did not actually exist in the historical record.

Reichensperger mapped his aesthetic categories onto contemporary politics, infusing architectural idioms with political valences and vice versa. France, for example, had become a second Roman Empire in Reichensperger's popular and political writing by the 1850s. Reichensperger argued that, like its Roman predecessor, the French empire was an absolutist power, a discourse common at the time. Political centralization had two important corollaries. First, the French state concentrated the production of knowledge and culture at Versailles, so that

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[91] *Edward v. Steinle und August Reichensperger in ihren gemeinsamen Bestrebungen für die christliche Kunst*. Aus ihren Briefen geschildert durch A. M. v. Steinle (Cologne: J. P. Bachen, 1890), 17.

[92] Reichensperger, "Die für den Kölner Domchor bestimmten Wandgemälde von E. Steinle (1843)," *Vermischte Schriften*, 324.

modern art expressed the same impulses of political rule. Second, the absolutism of reason came to parallel the absolutism of the state. As a result, Reichensperger saw the principles at work in architectural projects – the impulse towards symmetry, for example – and in social reform, in laws that leveled difference between classes that had previously been divided according to what he believed were more organic distinctions.[93]

Even in his early publications, Reichensperger described a special relationship between art and the state. Architecture had a particularly close relationship with culture and the nation, functioning in every age as "the truest mirror" of society.[94] By the 1850s, Reichensperger had developed his theories of architectural development into a decided response to the question of German nationhood. As questions of German unification became more pressing, Reichensperger argued against dramatic political change. When the German National Assembly debated the potential organization of the German Confederation in January 1849, he argued against any model of nationhood that was not founded on a historical basis. Agreeing with Thomas Macaulay, Reichensperger maintained that the Revolution was successful because it was a conservative, not a subversive one, by which he meant: "because it carefully built upon the immediate past and only addressed what was of the utmost necessity; because the constitution did not emerge from study chambers, but rather sprang from the middle of life; because the public spirit in natural force brings forth the institutions from itself, of which the most important are not even partially formulated in writing."[95] Reichensperger selectively used historical

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[93] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 8-10.

[94] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 62.

[95] Reichensperger, "Die Oberhauptsfrage," *Parlamentarische Reden*, 47. Speech originally delivered to the German National Assembly on 16 January 1849. Reichensperger's belief in the ultimately conservative character of the English led him to describe the British as somehow still

precedent to counter centralization, ignoring other examples, such as the medieval imperial past, in its favor. His religious and architectural commitments, furthermore, led him to support political positions far more extreme than other Catholic politicians, such as his protectionist position on guilds.[96] Yet his political positions were not merely defensive. He also identified structures of Prussian modernity and tried to undermine them.

4. Museums at the Center and at the Periphery

Reichensperger's interest in education extended to another great nineteenth-century pedagogical institution, the art museum. During the late eighteenth century the exhibition of artifacts in Europe underwent significant changes. By the mid nineteenth century scholars classified collections and presented them in terms of evolutionary narratives that linked past to present.[97] In the German context the pedagogical function of the museum assumed particular importance as a means to reconstruct society through art. As a state institution, officials and theorists alike saw the museum as a means to shape better subjects.[98] This program was successful among the urban elite and Thomas Nipperdey has referred to the nineteenth-century sacralization of art, the creation of a *Kunstreligion*.[99] In Berlin, the *Altes Museum* was completed in 1830 and the *Neues Museum*, part of the new museum complex in the city center, was finished only twenty-five years

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fundamentally Catholic, Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz Best. 700, 138 Nr. 70, "Reisebilder aus England. I," *Der Katholik* Nr. 20 14 February 1847.

[96] Ibid., 488.

[97] James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World. From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 89.

[98] Ibid., 49.

[99] Cited in ibid., 119.

later. Yet Susan Crane has noted the coercive aspects of these new institutions. Especially by the mid century curation limited the kinds of experiences available to the museum-going public, leaving little room for individual interpretation.[100]

During the 1850s the art museum assumed this more sinister interpretation in Reichensperger's writings when he seemingly realized its ideological potential to advance a historical narrative that contradicted his own. Reichensperger noted that new, "improvised," German states funded museums to support claims to sovereignty. Reichensperger dismissed these institutions as mere "charnel houses," a graphic metaphor which suggested that these temples of culture in fact displayed only culture's random remainders. This criticism did not originate with Reichensperger, but rather was common during the nineteenth century. Critics often claimed that museums decontextualized their contents, sterilizing their meaning.[101] Reichensperger urged his readers that it would depend upon "us" – suggesting an exclusively Rhenish intended audience[102] – to create a new kind of museum that for Germanic art, independent from new centers of improvised sovereignty. Reichensperger specified that these artworks would not be collected, exhibited in an institution, and denied their local context. Instead, these artworks would remain in their place of origin, "to which history assigned them."[103]

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[100] Susan A. Crane, ed., *Museums and Memory*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1.

[101] Greene, "Alexandre Lenoir," 207.

[102] All three editions of *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, were published in Trier, another historic Rhenish city.

[103] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 77.

Reichensperger revealed how his medievalism informed his understanding of sovereignty. He believed that cultural institutions could not effectively buttress the claims to power of new states. The logic of his retort also suggested that these museums in fact revealed the very illegitimacy of these states. Art exhibitions, collected from around the world, actually emphasized the historical groundlessness of new governments. The Rhineland, by contrast, modeled an art historically grounded political legitimacy. He maintained that no other part of the fatherland had more monuments from all periods of Christian Germany. This continuity in the material record embodied the justification for Rhenish local government and custom. According to Reichensperger, it fell to the Rhineland as a pressing *Ehrenpflicht* to create a new model of art collection, one that highlighted the Rhenish contributions to German cultural patrimony. In this region, "the noble Frankish tribe still possesses this interior, living connection with its illustrious past."[104] Reichensperger reminded his local audience of its medieval Christian origins and argued that this historical past remained in architectural monuments.

Reichensperger not only hoped to reanimate older institutions like the *Bauhütten* for the demands of modern life; he also planned to adapt modern institutions, like the museum, to advance local autonomy. Yet a new art museum that emphasized regional over universal narratives would be far beyond the abilities of local organizations, even in the Rhineland, and he noted that this new kind of museum would need both financial and administrative help from the state government.[105] He justified this appeal on two grounds. First, this kind of project would be "a strong vehicle for the elevation of the *Volkskultur* and especially to the strengthening of historical consciousness and of the traditional, truly conservative element, in opposition to the

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[104] Ibid., 77.

[105] Ibid., 77.

centrifugal forces, which become more and more threatening." Beyond this, Reichensperger also argued that this support would in fact merely return to local monuments the funds that had once belonged to them, before they were diverted to government finances.[106] Reichensperger grounded his claim to state funding in what he described as historical precedent—a historical precedent that would guarantee financial resistance to government centralization.

By the 1850s Reichensperger's judgment of the modern art museum assumed a polemical tone. He continued to criticize museums for removing art from its place of creation, but this decontextualization assumed sinister repercussions for religion. He argued that when an object was removed from circulation and placed into a permanent collection, the museum audience would inevitably assume that these objects no longer had any relevant meaning. As a result, Reichensperger projected that when one saw a reliquary or a crucifix in a museum, one was forced to ask, "has this *Kultus* already become just some historical object or myth? Are we standing before the detritus of a lost world?"[107] Reichensperger described the inclusion of Christian art in museums as their profanation because the art lost its meaning when no longer used.[108] Reichensperger cautioned his readers that temporary exhibitions, too, exacerbated this phenomenon:

> "Even the bundling together, packing and unpacking, classification and hanging up in neat rows; in short, all the diverse activities undertaken by so many different people do not suggest the value of sacred objects. This worth is, moreover, actually at least in part bound to specific regions…they have a totally different meaning at those places where they were created and where they stood for centuries than when one observes them isolated and alone; they compose at the same time a link, an integrated component of the

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[106] Ibid., 78-79.

[107] Reichensperger, *Fingerzeige*, 107.

[108] Ibid., 112-13.

> relevant church; a delicate web, through which history gradually joined them, and one should not separate them unless in an emergency…let one relinquish to industry, to artistic and factory industrialism, this kind of exhibition; they are appropriate only for machines and worldwide competition."[109]

The daily rituals of the modern art museum robbed religious objects of their spiritual meaning, which was necessarily bound to local context. Reichensperger argued that there should be a formal ban on displaying religious artifacts in an art museum in order to prevent the assumption that the medieval world was as distant, and as obsolete, as the ancient Greek one.

This act of decontextualization was also one of secularization. Religious artifacts were no longer part of an act of worship, assimilated instead into an art historical narrative in which they had a specific, fixed value. A religious icon no longer mattered as an aid to religious reflection; it mattered only as a transition to a new style. Reichensperger tried to resist what he saw as the reductive lens of art history, which discounted the spiritual importance of a sacred object in favor of the material. Yet Reichensperger advocated before the Prussian Parliament for a specific kind of museum: a "living" museum, rather than the secularizing collections in the capital. He believed in the museum as a pedagogical project, but its organization prevented true education– or, rather, it promoted a false education.[110]

In an 1854 speech that addressed the preservation of historical monuments, Reichensperger argued for their relevance to the present. "We build incredibly expensive museums for art pieces from all around the world, from bygone eras; we even create ornate palaces to exhibit plaster statues. I should think that it would be more appropriate if the government cared for living

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[109] Ibid., 112-13.

[110] Reichensperger, "Erhaltung der geschichtlichen Denkmäler," *Parlamentarische Reden*, 346-47.

museums, which history has placed before our eyes, and I would like to confess the opinion, additionally, that it is the calling of a great state not to allow the cities from prehistory to grow dark."[111] Reichensperger encouraged the government to invest in projects that decentralized culture away from the capital, and he urged Rhinelanders to do the same. Later in his career he granted that there was yet another alternative model for the museum, one that exhibited a local character, that "drew on the history and traditions of the place or the country," such as the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg or the South Kensington Museum in London.[112] Although the museum was nominally familiar to his contemporaries, he reimagined it as a project that strengthened local politics rather than the nation.

5. Conclusion

The Cologne city hall is an architectural hybrid. It includes a late medieval Gothic tower, a Renaissance loggia, and a modern building from the mid twentieth century. The tower dates to the fifteenth century and its decorative external crenellations resemble those of the cathedral. In alcoves along the exterior stand statues of importance figures for the history of the city. Yet these sculptures are twentieth- and twenty-first-century additions, not original to the structure. One of these dignitaries is August Reichensperger. He stands wearing a nineteenth-century frock coat, holding in his left hand a model of the cathedral and a copy of the civil code in his right. Like the

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[111] Ibid., 501.

[112] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz Best. 700, 138 Nr. 70, *Niederrheinische Volkszeitung* (Crefelder Journal) Crefeld, Samstag den 18. März 1876, "Über Kunst, Museen und Gemäldegalerien." Vortrag des Herrn Appellationsgerichtsrates Dr. August Reichensperger, gehalten in der Bürgergesellschaft "Constantia" am 12. März.

historical figure, the statue rests on the foundations of the Middle Ages and presents modern politics through a medieval frame.

Reichensperger's medievalism was nominally based on an idea of historical continuity and, where it had died out, its resurrection. Reichensperger ended *Die Christlich-Germanische Baukunst* with an epigram from Horace: "Many things shall revive which have fallen into decay."[113] He repeated this quotation in his parliamentary speeches and it became a byword for artistic, religious, and political restoration. Just as the decline of Gothic architecture signaled the end of the medieval world, so too would its restoration indicate a new way of life. Reichensperger did not advocate for a wholesale reanimation of the medieval German world, however, but rather for a certain version of it. Reichensperger's Middle Ages did not include specific historic rulers or dynasties. His Middles Ages thematized an idealized way of life that he located in the thirteenth century along the Rhine. He described largely anonymous figures and general categories of society: the *Baumeister*, the bishop; artisans that had assembled into a guild. Reichensperger's medievalism described a social and economic world that oriented itself toward the Catholic Church, a holistic organization that found its aesthetic expression in the Gothic. Gothic architecture became shorthand for this medieval world even in the middle of a modern city. Medieval architectural idioms became a kind of code for a religiously homogeneous society. Whereas Niebuhr and his Napoleonic-era colleagues used the Medieval to unite Germans, Reichensperger used it to demarcate and strengthen religious and regional boundaries between Germans.

The consistency of Reichensperger's vision suggests that his medievalism was no mere political instrumentalization of past for present, but rather a sincerely held historical

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[113] Reichensperger, *Die Christlich-germanische Baukunst*, 108.

understanding. His aesthetic program aligned with his political beliefs—a decentralized state subordinated to a strong, local church—and the affinities that he saw between the two were, in his understanding, inherent, not constructed. Secular and religious Gothic structures represented a Catholic stylistic idiom that bespoke an idealized social and economic order at odds with modern Prussia. Reichensperger's program created a visual corollary to charges of Catholic atavism. He seemingly confirmed the suspicion that German Catholics looked backward in history rather than forward into the future. By the time of his death in 1895, his pupils had built or restored structures according to his guidelines across Western and Central Europe.[114] Gothic buildings seemed to provide proof that there was an atavistic Catholic agenda, yet Reichensperger was not desperately trying to preserve an archaic social organization. He hoped instead to reconstitute a lost world for modern society. Reichensperger wanted to adapt medieval institutions for contemporary life, transforming them in the process.

Reichensperger's own reconversion predated the Catholic Revival of the 1850s and 1860s, but he influenced its aesthetic preferences, entering debates during the 1840s about architectural form and symbolism. His interest in medieval architecture suggests the pathways through which the Catholic minority contested the appearance of the state. Reichensperger criticized, too, newer institutions of professional training. His argument historicized a craft sense based on an inherited knowledge of materials and their function, and he located this wisdom in a specific historical period, the thirteenth century in Germany. Yet Reichensperger's paean to tradition masked the more radical aspects of his program. He praised the holistic freedom of artistic expression in the medieval world, for example, yet modern Gothic structures would follow examples from model books, based on faithful inventories of medieval structures. Reichensperger protested the

[114] Sisa, "Neogothic Architecture," 175.

standardization of courses at the *Bauakademie*, but he ultimately advocated for an analogous regulation, dependent upon modern tools of instruction, including mass-produced model books. Reichensperger's medievalism represented in fact profound historical rupture, not tradition and continuity no matter his claims.

The mid-century Cologne that Reichensperger knew so well was disappearing. The city's transformation involved the same issues that Reichensperger addressed in his program for the revival of Gothic architecture: shifts in the organization of social and economic life; the changing place of religion in contemporary life; and a reorientation towards a centralized political capital. His medievalizing reforms were not realized. The *Bauakademie* in Berlin, for example, only grew in prestige, whereas the *Bauhütte* was never reproduced outside of Cologne. Architectural preservation became more widely practiced, but in a mode far from Reichensperger's recommendations. By the time E. M. Forster published *Howard's End* in 1910, the German mania for idealized restoration had become the subject of caricature. His half-German protagonist Margaret Schlegel described their trip to the medieval Speyer Cathedral on the Rhine as a disappointment, marred by the thoroughness of German reconstruction: "The train crossed by a bridge of boats, and at first sight [the cathedral] looked quite fine. But oh, in five minutes we had seen the whole thing. The cathedral had been ruined, absolutely ruined, by restoration; not an inch left of the original structure. We wasted a whole day…Germans are too thorough."[115]

The Middle Ages enabled Reichensperger to contest the centralization of political and cultural authority with a historical vocabulary and regional precedent. Niebuhr deployed the Middle Ages as a unifying reservoir that emphasized the long tradition of German constitutionalism. Reichensperger, by contrast, used the Middle Ages to articulate German

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[115] E. M. Forster, *Howard's End* (1910; repr., New York: Random House, 1989), 7-8.

difference. The sources from which he drew also differed. Niebuhr, and other historicists, based their arguments on texts. Reichensperger relied instead on material artifacts, especially structures and their ornamentation. His medieval world was an exclusionary one, but his narrative also retained a certain flexibility of interpretation, dependent not on critical editions of manuscript sources but on physical structures. Historicists focused on kingship and law; Reichensperger rarely mentioned either and discussed instead the institutions of medieval social and economic life. Yet he did ultimately, and for good reason, fail to realize his revivalist program. Despite this, the Medieval continued to gain visibility during the second half of the nineteenth century, but this medieval world was not one Reichensperger would have recognized. His sober craftsmen and corporate society gave way to a medievalism of historical romances and modernist operas, discussed in the following two chapters.

Chapter 3. 'History in the garb of a novel': Fact and Fiction in J. Victor von Scheffel's *Ekkehard*

1. Introduction

Theodor Fontane counted the historical novel *Ekkehard* (1855) among the best books that he had read.[1] He praised the fictional work, set in tenth-century Germany, as "subtle, knowledgeable, virtuous, and humorous." He argued that the novel even surpassed Walter Scott's best works, the highest compliment for histoical fiction.[2] Fontane described *Ekkehard*'s author, Joseph Victor von Scheffel (1826-1886), as "[Scott's] superior in art and erudition; his equal in humor, as well as in his gift for description and in regional patriotism."[3] German literary critics reviewed it positively from its first edition through World War I. In 1856 the author Paul Heyse rapturously thanked Scheffel for his contribution to German literature and a few years later described Scheffel as "the noblest, most helpful, and best Crocodile of this century," thereby informally inducting Scheffel into his influential literary group, *Die Krokodile*, based in Munich.[4] Heyse reported, too, that the king of Bavaria, Maximilian II, wanted to meet *Ekkehard*'s author.[5]

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[1] Theodor Fontane, *Aus dem Nachlass von Theodor Fontane*, ed. Josef Ettlinger (Berlin: F. Fontane & Co., 1908), 235. Joseph Victor von Scheffel, *Ekkehard* (1855; repr., Zurich: Diogenes, 1985).

[2] Murray Pittock, ed., *The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2006).

[3] Fontane, *Aus dem Nachlass*, 235 and 238. He also noted that *Ekkehard* directly influenced the plots of other nineteenth-century novels, including George Hesekiel, *Unter dem Eisenzahn* (1864), and Berthold Auerbach, *Auf der Höhe* (1865).

[4] Letter dated January, 14, 1856. *Briefwechsel zwischen Joseph Victor von Scheffel und Paul Heyse*, ed. Conrad Höfer (Karlsruhe: Scheffelbund, 1932), 18.

[5] Ibid., 18.

Enthusiasm for the work extended far beyond Germany. Scheffel's novel had been available in English since 1872 and an abridged version was later published as a textbook for German classes.[6] Harvard Professor Kuno Francke, an unofficial German-American cultural ambassador, included a translation of the text in the thirteenth volume of his edited series, *The German Classics*.[7] By the early 1900s, "Scheffel" had become a household name among New Yorkers, not least because one of the city's most popular beerhalls, on East Seventeenth Street, was named after the German author and decorated with scenes from his writing.[8]

Recent scholarship in book history has suggested frameworks with which to analyze *Ekkehard* in context, as an artistic work, a contribution to nineteenth-century scholarship, and also in terms of networks of reading and consumerism. Robert Darnton has urged historians to consider books in larger communications circuits that encompass author, publisher, printer, shipper, bookseller, and reader; what he has called the "life cycle" of a book.[9] I argue that

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[6] *Ekkehard: A Tale of the Tenth Century*, trans. by Sofie Delffs (Leipzig: Berhard Tauchnitz, 1872). The German-language version was later edited and abridged for study by Carla Wenckebach as part of Heath's Modern Language Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co, 1893). *The Review of Reviews* 9 (1894): 371, described the importance of Wenckebach's edition: "Scheffel's "Ekkehard," an historical novel of the tenth century, has a high place in German prose, but its length has largely unfitted it for school-room use. Prof. Carla Wenckebach, of Wellesley College, has by judicious condensation overcome this difficulty. Her abridgement of the story, with some twenty-five pages of notes, has been given a place in Health's familiar *Modern Language Series*."

[7] Kuno Francke, ed., *The German Classics of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, vol. 13 (New York: The German Publication Society, 1915), 173-297. Francke also included selections from Paul Heyse, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and Heinrich Seidel in this volume.

[8] "Scheffel Hall," owned originally by Carl Goerwitz, 141 East 17th Street. Landmarked in 1997. Gale Harris, Preservationist at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, June 24, 1997. Published Preservation Report.

[9] Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009), 175-182.

Ekkehard had two nineteenth-century "lives." Its first entailed a warm critical reception in the 1850s and 1860s, during which time its readership was large, though not as extensive as it would later become. The novel excited critics because its historical methodology seemed to complement its poetic insight, making it an academic and literary success, though it did not initially reach a broad reading public. Scheffel was not prolific and he did not attain name recognition until the late 1860s, unlike other historical novelists from the same time, such as Louise Mühlbach and Karl Gutzkow, whose astounding productivity ensured a loyal readership. Larger structural changes also affected the tempo of Scheffel's fame. Only in the 1870s did technological innovations transform the book from a luxury object into one accessible for a far larger audience. Additionally, literacy rates rose rapidly during the last third of the nineteenth century, bringing illiteracy in Germany close to zero by 1900.[10]

In its second life *Ekkehard* became a bestseller and it remained so into the interwar period. The novel's two lives suggest how historical fiction intersected with education, institutions of reading, and the more general search for Germanic origins during the nineteenth century. I argue that Scheffel's novel, because of its later, but astounding, success, illuminates certain themes and strategies that resonated with a German reading public after the mid century. By the time middle- and working-class German readers encountered his novel, many components that in the 1850s would have been innovative seemed already familiar: scholarly historical practices; a medieval German landscape; ethnic communities that functioned as a precursor to modern Germans; and

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[10] On literacy, see Alberto Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek: Geschichte einer literarischen Institution (1750-1914)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990), 290-300, and Reinhard Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels: Ein Überblick* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1991), 262.

medieval behavioral norms that betoken a supposedly rawer emotional spectrum, evident in coarse manners, gratuitous violence, and also unexpressed love.

Readers responded, as Fontane noted, to the novel's historical background, sense of place, dramatic narrative, and Scheffel's rich descriptions. *Ekkehard*'s main plot is relatively straightforward. Set in tenth-century Swabia, a monk named Ekkehard falls in love with his female patron, Duchess Hadwig, whom he tutors in Latin. She ultimately rejects him and, in his dejection, he enters temporary exile nearby in the Swiss Alps. After recovering from a sudden illness he devotes himself to writing poetry in the novel's artistic and emotional culmination. It is a two-fold act of creation: Ekkehard composes an epic poem and, after doing so, ends his exile as a free man, no longer a monk. Scheffel did not compose the poem for the novel, but translated the masterpiece from medieval Latin, based on a critical edition published in 1838 by Jacob Grimm and Johann Andreas Schmeller.[11] Though the protagonist has a relatively uncomplicated development, the novel is otherwise crowded: with monks, wicked and virtuous; drunken stewards; superstitious peasants; a haughty noblewoman; even invading Huns. Its many subplots thematize a range of subjects, from scheming clergy to medieval ethnic communities.

Ekkehard was not an immediate bestseller despite its critical success. Scheffel first gained a large audience with his collection of poetry and songs, *Gaudeamus!* (1868), published towards the end of his most productive period, between 1850 and 1870. *Gaudeamus!* included compositions from Scheffel's years as a student in Heidelberg. He had belonged to three fraternities – Franconia, Alemannia, Teutonia – and circulated his early writing among these circles. His early poems addressed student interests: drinking; male friendship; and love. The

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[11] Jacob Grimm and Johann Andreas Schmeller, eds., *Lateinische Gedichte des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Dieter, 1838).

volume was a hit. Scheffel became celebrated as an author and as a *bon vivant*. A letter from an early California winemaker in 1879, urging Scheffel to sample wine from Sonoma Valley, testifies to this latter reputation.[12] Scheffel's *Nachlass* does not contain a copy of his reply, but a few scrawled notes about Riesling on the back of the vintner's message suggest that he responded with enthusiasm. By 1901 his "*Saufpoesie*" had prompted moral indignation as well, and the Viennese chapter of the International Congress against Alcoholism urged people not to read his work.[13] *Gaudeamus!* also included recent compositions that he had classified as "cultural historical" poems. They described German landscapes and history, and his readers soon discovered Scheffel's earlier works on related subjects, notably *The Trumpeter of Säckingen* (1854) and *Ekkehard*, both of which became bestsellers in the mid 1870s.

There was a wide gap between Scheffel's public reputation and the personality he revealed in correspondence with friends and family. Beginning in the early 1850s he described periods of loneliness and melancholy, accompanied by hypochondria debilitating enough to interfere with his work. This development contrasted with his otherwise happy childhood and student years. Born in February 1826, in Karlsruhe, he graduated at the top of his class from the town's *Gymnasium*. His father, Philipp Jacob Scheffel, was employed as an engineer for public works in Baden and had earlier served as a major in the militia.[14] His mother Josephine, née Krederer, was also active in local life and founded the Karlsruhe chapter of the *Elisabethenverein*, a volunteer

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[12] Oberrheinisches Literaturarchiv, Nachlass Scheffel, Nr. 1491. Letter dated February 19, 1879, from J. Gundlach & Co., California Wines and Brandies.

[13] Oberrheinisches Literaturarchiv, Nachlass Scheffel, Nr. 939. "Alkoholfreie Studentenlieder," *L.N.N.* 20/4/1901.

[14] Scheffel's father was among the many civil servants that worked in Baden's great mid-century *Beamtenstaat*, L. E. Lee, "Baden between revolutions: state-building and citizenship, 1800-1848," *Central European History* 24 (1991), 248-67.

Catholic organization that cared for the sick. His parents belonged to the generation of middle-class Badenese that transformed the state from the political entity created in 1815 into a loyal and coherent whole. Though both were Catholic, neither was especially devout and in his private papers Scheffel rarely mentions Catholicism aside from annual Christmas greetings.[15] His father encouraged him study law in order to enter the civil service, over the wishes of Scheffel and his mother, who thought he was better suited an artistic career. This debate lasted into the 1850s and Scheffel often wrote to his parents from Italy, describing his continuing indecision between *Kunst* and *Wissenschaft*.[16]

This ambivalence characterized his early career. He enrolled as a law student at university in 1844 and over the next three years divided his time between Munich, Heidelberg, and Berlin. In 1848 he was hired as the secretary for a representative in the Frankfurt Parliament, Karl Theodor Welcker. Scheffel supported liberal democratic ideas and by 1849 openly disavowed an increasingly radical republicanism. He moved to Säckingen to work as a criminal investigator, but abandoned this career only two years later, in 1852. With his mother's support, he traveled to Italy to spend a year there training to be a painter. In Rome, Scheffel studied with Ernst Willers, the landscape painter, rather than with more renowned members of the Nazarene School. Unlike many contemporaries, Scheffel did not admire their religious paintings; he found them at best imitative and at worst alienating.[17] Willers's students studied scenery in the hills above Rome

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[15] *Joseph Victor von Scheffel: Ein Lebensbild in Briefen*, ed. Willibald Klinke (Zürich: Gute Schriften, 1947), 5-12.

[16] Letter dated January 9, 1853 in *Scheffel in Italien: Briefe ins Elternhaus, 1852-53*, ed. Wilhelm Zentner (Karlsruhe: Scheffelbund, 1929), 70-71.

[17] Scheffel, *Briefe ins Elternhaus*, xii and 97. Scheffel thought that the Nazarene School's emphasis on religious symbolism did not speak to a mid nineteenth-century audience. See also Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) and

and Scheffel later translated this same attention to environment into his fiction.[18] He left Italy the following year not with a painter's portfolio, but with a draft of *The Trumpeter*. The poem met enough critical favor that he continued writing throughout the 1850s.

The next three decades were peripatetic. Based on his qualifications as the author of *Ekkehard*, Scheffel unsuccessfully made a bid for the chair in German literature at the Polytechnical University in Zurich, and also in Munich. He instead held short-term posts, working, for example, as court librarian at the Fürstenberg library in Donaueschingen from 1857-59. His success as a bestselling author allowed him to avoid the downward decline that many writers and academics, except the most well known, faced during the second half of the nineteenth century.[19] *Ekkehard* was the only full-length novel that he wrote and he spent the 1860s and 1870s composing poetry, short stories, and novellas. Scheffel traveled extensively throughout Germany, France, and Italy, mostly for research – broadly interpreted to include hiking – until his worsening health forced him to stop in the 1880s. By this point he had become a public figure in Germany and the city of Karlsruhe fêted him on his sixtieth and seventieth birthdays, in 1876 and 1886.[20]

According to literary critics, *Ekkehard* belonged in the nineteenth-century German popular literary canon. The novel had a moderately successfully reception during its first two decades of

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Lionel Gossman, "Unwilling Moderns: The Nazarene Painters of the Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 2 (2003).

[18] *Scheffel in Italien*, xii.

[19] Britta Scheideler, *Zwischen Beruf und Berufung: Zur Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Schriftsteller von 1880 bis 1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1997).

[20] Though Scheffel spent most of his life in Karlsruhe, he never liked it; like August Reichensperger, he thought its city plan was too orderly, and too modern.

printing, reaching its seventh edition in 1871. Thereafter its publication tempo changed dramatically as the novel began what I have designated as its second life. The Stuttgart publishing house Metzler printed the ninth edition of Scheffel's novel in 1874 and the fifty-first only six years later in 1880. The German reading public developed a seemingly limitless interest in this historical novel. The Adolf Bonz Verlag produced *Ekkehard*'s 100th edition in 1888; its 200th in 1904; and the house's 294th in 1921.[21] As historians Alberto Martino and Reinhard Wittmann have noted, even the enormous print runs of the late nineteenth century vastly underestimate the total readership of any book.[22] The majority of Germans continued to rely on lending libraries, from which readers borrowed books until they fell apart from use.

Technological developments in printing enabled this exponential increase in production. Germany's increasingly dense network of railroads also allowed books, and their sellers, to reach isolated markets and to respond to demand quickly. Train journeys even provided a new space for reading and booksellers opened shops in stations to meet demand.[23] Advances in papermaking, printing, and bookbinding guaranteed that books were cheaper than ever before in Western Europe. In 1874, German paper manufacturing plants introduced the chemical processes that broke down cellulose, and paper production increased one hundredfold between 1853 and

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[21] Data related to *Ekkehard*'s publication history can be found on the Innsbruck Database for Historical Novels, http://www.uibk.ac.at/germanistik/histrom/cgi/wrapcgi.cgi?wrap_config=hr_bu_all.cfg&nr=56370. Accessed 2014/1/4 at 2:15pm.

[22] Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 304-305; Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, 255.

[23] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1977), 64-69.

1897.[24] The 1871 invention of the mechanized compositor, the *Typensetzmaschine*, and the rotation printing press, first used in Augsburg in 1873, were made obsolete soon after their introduction by Ottmar Mergenthaler's fully automated linotype machine, which revolutionized the speed of printing.[25]

These technological improvements contributed to what Wolfgang Langenbucher has called "the second reading revolution" that occurred during the last third of the nineteenth century.[26] This second revolution entailed the democratization of literacy. *Gründerzeit* advances in inexpensive printing enabled the expansion of the urban lending library, which reached new sectors of the population. This institution was the most important factor in the rise of literacy rates during the second reading revolution, as it was for the first. Political societies often underwrote their costs. After 1875, *Volksbibliotheken* increased exponentially, reaching mostly the lower middle classes, followed in 1890 with the proliferation of *Arbeiterbibliotheken* after the government lifted the laws that banned socialist organizations.[27] By 1900, the most popular lending library in Berlin, Fritz Borstell, had over 600,000 volumes in circulation.[28] Their

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[24] Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 302. Paper production increased from 62000 tons in 1853 to 677000 tons in 1897.

[25] Ibid., 302. Printers grew from 6701 in 1882 to 9538 in 1895; workers in the industry increased from 61026 to 111394 in this same period, a tremendous increase despite automation.

[26] Wolfgang R. Langenbucher, "Die Demokratisierung des Lesens in der zweiten Leserevolution. Dokumentation und Analyse," in *Lesen und Leben*, ed. by Herbert G. Göpfert, Ruth Meyer, Ludwig Muth, and Walter Rüegg (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung GmbH, 1975), 12-35. This major expansion in literacy was uneven, limited largely to urban centers. In southern and Catholic Germany, as well as in rural areas, a widespread reading culture developed more slowly. See too Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 307.

[27] Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 304-08.

[28] Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, 255.

holdings reflected demand and *Ekkehard* was the library's fourth most popular volume at 1317 copies, behind Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (2315), Felix Dahn's *Ein Kampf um Rom* (1688), and Freytag's *Verlorene Handschrift* (1584).[29] These technological and structural developments account for how *Ekkehard* enjoyed seven decades of success, but not why.

Ekkehard was even translated into three musical settings between 1878 and 1903, and all composers identified their works with a variation on, "interpreted from J.V. v. Scheffel's novel by the same name" (*fig. 1*).[30] These interpretations lost some of Scheffel's nuance, though they shared many of his themes. Johann Abert's opera, *Ekkehard*, included panegyrics to simpler times in the countryside, describing the mild fall sun and the ripening wine. Some of novel's figures became stock characters. The monks prayed little, but drank a lot. The abbot of Reichenau led the brothers in song: "Wer Ohren zu hören hat, hör mich an, | Wie sagt Mathäus, der heil'ge Mann? Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brod allein, drum gab uns Gott der

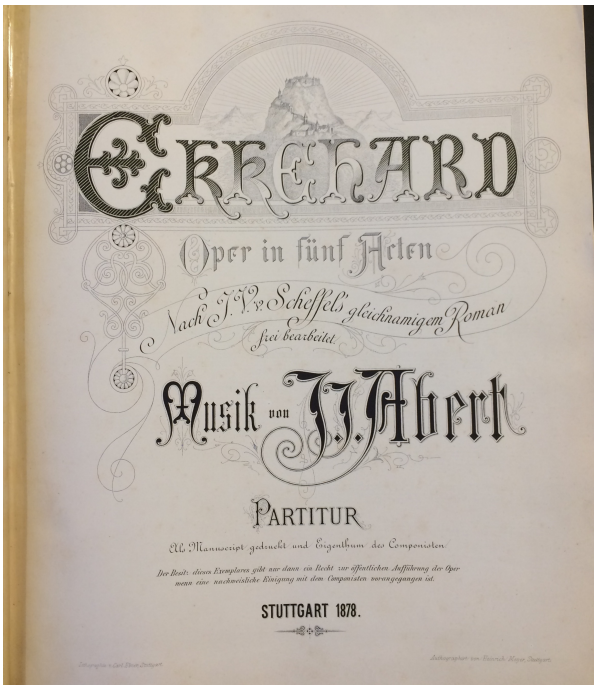


Figure 1. Title page for the score of Johann Joseph Abert's opera, *Ekkehard: Oper in fünf Acten* (Stuttgart, 1878).

[29] Ibid., 255.

[30] Johann Joseph Abert, *Ekkehard: Oper in fünf Acten*, first performed in 1878. Hugo Röhr adapted the novel for soloists, chorus, and orchestra: *Ekkehard: Dramatische Dichtung in drei Abtheilungen* (Stuttgart: Luckhardts Musik Verlag, 1900) and Franz Schreker composed a symphonic overture for the poem: *Ekkehard: symphonische Ouvertüre*, Op. 12 (1902-03). As all three composers noted, their works were "frei nach dem gleichnamigen Roman von J. V. v. Scheffel."

Herr den Wein. Drum gab uns Gott der Herr den Wein. Reicht mir den Becher, laßt mich proben!"[31] In *Ekkehard*'s translation to the stage, Abert also emphasized the romantic plot more than in the original. But the opera was nonetheless still recognizably Scheffel's. *Ekkehard* was more than a bestseller; it had become a cultural reference difficult to avoid. Its popularity guaranteed even its success when translated into other artistic forms.

Few read *Ekkehard* now and its resonance with earlier readers is initially hard to reconstruct. Scheffel's archaizing prose now seems alienating rather than authentically medieval. He relied on consonance – *schalten und walten*, *webt und strebt*; he did not inflect adjectives for neuter nouns; he often preferred longer forms over shorter, such as *lässest* for *lässt*, or *sonderbarlich* for *sonderbar*; and he used archaic terms, like *jetzo* for *jetzt*, *dieweil* for *unterdessen*, or *frug* instead of *fragte*.[32] Other writers of medievalizing fiction, including Richard Wagner, used consonance and alliteration to indicate temporal remove, but even nineteenth-century readers sometimes found this strategy clumsy.[33] The novel, furthermore, now seems profoundly unhistorical, whereas readers once valued its historical veracity. Despite *Ekkehard*'s popularity with generations of readers, it has functioned as little more than a footnote in scholarly writing. The book has represented the popularity of historical fiction in nineteenth-century Germany, particularly for works set in the Middle Ages, a genre considered kitschy, even déclassé. Once so highly regarded, *Ekkehard* has been reevaluated and found wanting.

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[31] Abert, *Ekkehard*, 37-38.

[32] Wenckebach, *Ekkehard*, 208.

[33] The many parodists of Wagner often retained alliteration as a comic element. See Dieter Borchmeyer and Stephan Kohler, eds., *Wagner Parodien* (Frankfurt a/M: Insel, 1983).

Yet this charge of scholarly disregard has applied to the historical novel more generally. Scholars have avoided the genre because it occupies an uneasy interdisciplinary space between literature and history, and scholars from neither discipline take it seriously. The nineteenth-century historical novel is a hybrid product whose historical and literary merit are both equally doubtful. This trend is at odds with an older critical tradition that acknowledged the literary worth and the cultural influence of the genre.[34] Georg Lukács considered the development of the historical novel in the early nineteenth century as an aesthetic realization of modernity's new historical consciousness.[35] In Lukács's monograph as in nineteenth-century literary criticism, Walter Scott was the first, and also the preeminent, author of historical fiction. Unlike his predecessors in literary and scholarly writing, Scott portrayed the great crises of historical life not through famous figures from history, but through what Lukács described as Scott's "mediocre heroes."[36] The Marxist critic noted an affinity between Scott and Hegel, though the British author had almost certainly not read the German philosopher. Scott's focus on the average man in his social environment replicated the distinction Hegel drew between "world-historical individuals" and "maintaining individuals," the latter those men in civil society who replicated the social world.[37] Lukács argued that this method granted access to the inner life of the past, allowing Scott's readership to reexperience history. Scott's greatest contribution to the historical

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[34] See Ernst Lemke, "Der geschichtliche Roman der Gegenwart," *Hellweg. Wochenschrift für deutsche Kunst* 4 (1924), and Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell, intro. Frederic Jameson (Boston: Beacon, 1962).

[35] Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, 19-30.

[36] Ibid., 35.

[37] Ibid., 39.

novel and to his German adaptors was the transformation of it into a populist and collective genre.[38]

Recent scholarship has reanimated this debate.[39] Brian Hamnett has recently argued that the historical novel should be understood in the broader context of the nineteenth century's search for roots and origins.[40] Nineteenth-century actors themselves understood the genre in this context. In his history of nineteenth-century Germany, Heinrich Treitschke emphasized Scott's intellectual debt to early German sources: "The Germans now repaid to the British what they had once received from Shakespeare and Sterne. Walter Scott, the most fruitful and best-loved poet of the age, went to school to Goethe, drawing from the profound spring of sagas and folk-songs which the Germans had unlocked for the world; by his historical romances the broad masses of the European reading public was first won over to romanticist ideals."[41] Though Scott had indeed studied these texts, arguably the national debt was reversed, no matter Treitschke's bullish assertions. Scott's novels precipitated the nineteenth-century vogue for historical fiction in Central Europe, the start of which coincided with the translation of his novels into German during the 1820s.[42]

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[38] Frederic Jameson, "Introduction," in ibid., 2.

[39] Günter Mühlberger and Kurt Habitzel, "The German Historical Novel from 1780 to 1945: Utilizing the Innsbruck Database," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik* Travellers in Time and Space 51 (2001): 5-23.

[40] Brian Hamnett, *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Representations of Reality in History and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

[41] Heinrich von Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, and ed. and intro. Gordon A. Craig (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 61-62.

[42] Frauke Reitemeier, "The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in German Literary Histories," in *The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittock (London: Continuum, 2006), 95, 97.

The popularity of Scott's books mirrored the broader attraction of historical fiction during this century. After a peak in the 1820s, its readership declined, picking up again after 1860, peaking in that decade and again in the 1900s.[43] Scott's novels in German translation reveal yet another change in the tastes of readers. Whereas they had selected Scott's early modern historical writing during the first half of the nineteenth century, thereafter they turned to his novels set in the Middle Ages, a representative shift for the genre more generally.[44] Yet this transformation remains underresearched. As one scholar has advised, we know a great deal about the German foundation myths articulated by members of the Prusso-German school, yet we know far less about narrative myth-making among professionals with a far greater impact, such as secondary school teachers, amateurs, and historical novelists.[45]

Nineteenth-century historians and authors grappled with the uneasy relationship between creative imagination and historical accuracy, but novelists did not attempt merely to replicate historical scholarship. Though Hayden White interrogated historical writing for its debt to literary form in the 1970s, it has taken scholars far longer to invert this interrogative framework to consider why authors of realist fiction grounded narrative form in historical research.[46] Brent Peterson has recently suggested that "historical fiction claimed to be an alternate mode of representation possessed of an alternate epistemology and in touch with truths that lay beyond

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[43] Ibid., 99.

[44] Ibid., 99-102.

[45] Celia Applegate, "The Mediated Nation: Regions, Readers, and the German Past," in *Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933*, ed. James Retallack (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 38.

[46] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1973). See also Lionel Gossman, *Literature and History* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1990).

the narrow confines of archival scholarship."[47] The historical novel lay along a spectrum of historical understanding with academic scholarship, yet its methodology and content – as well as audience – differentiated it from high historical writing. Historical novels like *Ekkehard*, located in the Middle Ages, were foundational texts for the German national canon because they so obviously thematized the relations between the German past and present.[48]

2. 'Persons and dates have sometimes been dealt with a little freely': Sources and Methodology in *Ekkehard*

Scheffel believed that *Ekkehard* provided historical insight equal to academic analysis. In a letter to an old friend dated November 30, 1854, he emphasized the veracity of his novel, "which, in a playful way, reflects the culture and the spiritual life of a long-lost era. Moreover, if one were to strip away the psychological framework of the story, it could easily be included in a series of scholarly essays."[49] Perhaps; but Scheffel ultimately believed that that the "psychological framework of the story" enriched his historical narrative. He admitted that he had occasionally taken liberties with persons and dates, but in the preface to *Ekkehard* quoted the great English historian Thomas Macaulay in his defense: "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having

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[47] Brent O. Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany: Writing the Nineteenth-Century Nation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 35.

[48] On the creation of this national canon, see Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter des Liberalismus 1830-1870* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1985). See also Lynn Tatlock, ed., *Publishing Culture and the "Reading Nation": German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Rochester: Camden House, 2010); Lynn Abrams, "Contexts of the Novel: Society, Politics and Culture in German-Speaking Europe, 1870 to the Present," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel*, ed. Graham Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004); and Russell A. Berman, *The Rise of the Modern German Novel: Crisis and Charisma* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[49] Scheffel, *Leben in Briefen*, 110.

descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors."[50] Scheffel contextualized his work in terms of historical production, but he emphasized creativity as a vital component of this. He sought to reconstruct the historical record and also to reanimate it for readers, despite its temporal distance.

Yet this claim sounds at best slightly disingenuous when coupled with the lengthy footnotes that Scheffel provided to support his fictional narrative. He went to great lengths to convince his readers that this particular historical novel belonged on a spectrum with academic historical writing, based on the merits of his scholarly research. He framed his project as a scholarly contribution rather than as a popular history or novel. Scheffel's footnotes attested the novel's factual truth. More importantly, they testified to his belief in the talismanic function of footnotes. As a signal of credentials or evidentiary legitimacy, they had become scholarly convention by this time in the nineteenth century.[51] Yet footnotes were not the norm across European and British literature. Scott remained the model for historical fiction, often even expressly so, and he included few, if any, in his novels.[52] By the mid century, German novelists, departure from precedent, incorporated sometimes extensive quotations notes into their works, tacitly acknowledging the importance of rigorous academic standards in their own claims to truth.[53]

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[50] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England* (1848; repr., London: Heron Books, 1967), I:3.

[51] Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997), 190-222.

[52] Many German authors credited him directly. See Reitemeier, "The Reception of Sir Walter Scott," 96.

[53] Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany*, 50.

Scheffel's relations with academic scholarship were more ambivalent than these footnotes suggest and signs of this tension mark *Ekkehard*, as well as his personal papers. Only ten years after the novel's publication, Scheffel remarked in a later to Heyse that he could feel the ghosts of Jacob Grimm and Georg Pertz, the latter a prominent medievalist, looking mockingly over his shoulder at his work.[54] Scheffel reproduced this antagonism in *Ekkehard* and presented his protagonist as the exception to a monastic education that was otherwise misdirected toward empty erudition. This education prioritized memorization and learned citation rather than a humanistic engagement with texts. Scheffel included a scene in which Ekkehard's intellectual nemesis, Gunzo, crafted a learned polemic against him, in which he wove together classical quotations that masked the pettiness of his attack and lent it the veneer of scholarship.[55] Ekkehard's evolution as a character entailed a transformation in which he distanced himself from the medieval church and its emphasis on rote learning. Scheffel equated medieval monastic training with modern, formal education, similarly decrying the "dry dialectics" of the nineteenth-century in his Afterword to the text.[56]

Even as his protagonist disassociated himself from the educational institutions of the church, Scheffel continued to mark his prose with a scholarly apparatus especially important for nineteenth-century academia. He informed his readers that he provided an appendix of notes "in order to satisfy those, who might otherwise be inclined to treat the subject as a mere fable or idle

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[54] Letter dated 17 January 1856. *Briefwechsel zwischen Joseph Victor von Scheffel und Paul Heyse*, 20-21.

[55] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 263.

[56] Ibid., 433.

invention."[57] These footnotes confirmed Scheffel's thick description of the medieval world, substantiating everything from local *Sprichwörter* to medieval clothing. Printed editions of medieval primary sources supplied the bulk of his proof. The two most frequently cited sourcebooks were Jacob Grimm and Andreas Schmeller's *Lateinische Gedichte des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts* and the ongoing series, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*MGH*)*,* Historical Monuments of Germany.[58] Scheffel based aspects of his historical novel on sources from the second volume of the *MGH*, in particular the *Casus sancti galli*, *The Annals of St-Gall*, chronicles from a Carolingian monastery in Switzerland. These sources both substantiated his representation of the medieval world and anchored it in a specific medieval geography and culture.

Scheffel alluded to the *MGH* in his Afterword to *Ekkehard*, describing "a literature *of* scholars *for* scholars" that the majority of Germans gratefully ignored.[59] Yet Barthold Niebuhr and his colleagues had founded the *MGH* in 1819 with far different intentions, envisioning the series as an educational program for ideological renewal after Napoleon. They dedicated the *MGH* to publishing critical editions of medieval German sources. Its founders hoped to establish a specifically German understanding of the Central European medieval past, one component of their broader struggle against French cultural and historical influence. The very *Monumenta* of the series' title suggested a construction metaphor that mimicked the extensive rebuilding of German cities in the decades after 1815. The first editor of the series, Georg Pertz, emphasized

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[57] Ibid., 435.

[58] Grimm and Schmeller, *Lateinische Gedichte*, and Georg Pertz, ed., *Monumenta Hermaniae Historica Scriptores* I (Hanover: Hahn, 1826).

[59] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 431.

that the collection represented a departure from other medieval sourcebooks, the contents of which were usually limited to a particular geographical region or even local library.[60] The series embodied a new, post-Napoleonic unity in that it purported to provide the sources for a unified German history – a unity that had to be necessarily located in the Middle Ages. The *MGH* rapidly became the most prestigious institute of its kind in Germany and served as a model for similar series published in France and the United Kingdom.[61]

The publication program for the series was simple, albeit ambitious: to publish critical editions of all German historical sources from the fall of Rome to the invention of printing. The founders of the *MGH* broadly interpreted medieval Germany as an idealized kingdom spanning Western, Central, Eastern, Northern, and Southern Europe over 1000 years. The *MGH*'s contents were to be comprehensive, divided by subject between chronicles, laws, charters, letters, and antiquarian writings. Pertz published the first volume in 1826 and, in a later edition, subtitled it *The Annals and Chronicles of the Carolingian Age*. The tome included significant monastic annals composed between the eighth and tenth centuries, such as *The Annals of St-Gall* and *The Annals of St-Bertin*. The texts had been written in the Carolingian heartlands: Switzerland, eastern France, and Germany. Many of these sources were culled from far beyond the borders of

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[60] These volumes remained common during the nineteenth century, a textual equivalent to the *Heimatmuseum*. See, for example, *Die Handschriften der Grossherzoglich Badischen Hof- und Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe*, edited by the librarians, who completed six volumes by the start of World War I (Karlsruhe: C.T. Groos, 1891-1914).

[61] C.f. Abbé Migne's work on the *Patrologia Latina* and the *Patrologia Graeca*. R. Howard Bloch relates this story in *God's Plagiarist: Being an Account of the Fabulous Industry and Irregular Commerce of the Abbé Migne* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994). On the history of the MGH, see M. D. Knowles, "Great Historical Enterprises III: The Monumenta Germaniae Historica," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Fifth Series 10 (1960), 129-150, and Horst Fuhrmann, *'Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen.' Gelehrtenleben im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert. Dargestellt am Beispiel der* Monumenta Germaniae Historica *und ihrer Mitarbeiter* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997).

nineteenth-century Germany, yet they were nonetheless considered German history. The "Germany" of the series' title was purposefully aspirational, a reinterpretation of German history at its broadest temporal and geographical reach.

Contemporary novelists relied on similar sources to support their claims to truth, seemingly sharing Scheffel's unease regarding historical accuracy. Louise Mühlbach, another bestselling author whose popularity would be difficult to overstate, also included footnotes in her novels to corroborate her narrative's veracity. Literary scholars have explored this tension between fact and fiction in historical novels, particularly in comparison with similar debates in the nineteenth-century academy. Brent Peterson recently suggested that an emended quotation from Leopold von Ranke best captures the philosophy behind historical fiction: to show not what actually happened, but what could have happened.[62] Authors mediated between the historical record and their own imagination, and also between members of the academic community and their own broader readership. Novelists and historians often featured the same figures and even sources: both Louise Mühlbach and Ranke published monographs on Friedrich II; Scheffel included in his novel lengthy excerpts from a medieval poem that medievalists had edited for scholarly volumes. Yet fictionalized historical narratives reached a far greater audience than scholarly writing. Peterson arranges historical literature – scholarly and fictionalized – along a spectrum of influence that contributed to the nineteenth-century German historical imagination.[63]

Scheffel tacitly acknowledged his debt to a critical methodology, but did not admit a hierarchy between historical writing and fiction. He described this relationship as complementary; the historical novel was "erected on the basis of historical studies,…the twin

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[62] Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany*, 52.

[63] Ibid., 67.

brother of history."[64] Scheffel's goal as a novelist was not to strike a balance between fact and imagination, but rather to convey another era's lived experience by describing its daily life and rituals.[65] His work had a nobler function than historiography and Scheffel likened it to "epic poetry…in the time of the blooming youth of the nations," suggesting that *Ekkehard* had an expressly nationalistic function. He dodged the question of strict accuracy by criticizing books that purported to be factual. "History as it is generally written is also but a traditional conglomeration of the true and the false, which merely by its greater clumsiness is prevented from filling up the occasional gaps, as the more graceful poesy can do."[66] Scheffel advocated for *Ekkehard*'s historical merit by describing historicism's truth claims as similarly constructivist.

He used figures and events from *The Annals of St-Gall* as the inspiration for his novel, but he rearranged them at will. Earlier in the nineteenth century, the librarian from St Gall monastery, Ildefons von Arx, had edited this important early medieval text and Pertz included it in the second volume of the *MGH*, published in 1829. Many Ekkehards populate *The Annals* and Scheffel's is an amalgamation of two. Ekkehard I (ca. 900-973) was a deacon, deputy to the abbot of St Gall. *The Annals* note, in Chapter 80, that this Ekkehard had composed an epic poem, *Vita Waltharius manufortis*, which Scheffel identified as *The Waltharius Song*.[67] *The Annals* described Ekkehard I's nephew, Ekkehard II (d. 990), as a handsome man, noted as a scholar. The text's author noted that the widow of Duke Burchard II, Hadwig, arrived to pray at St Gall and hired Ekkehard as a private tutor, bringing him back to the Hohentwiel. She later introduced

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[64] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 432.

[65] Hamnett, *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 13.

[66] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 432.

[67] Georg Pertz, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores* II (Hanover: Hahn, 1829).

him at the Ottonian Court and he eventually became the chaplain to Otto II and dean of Mainz Cathedral, where he died in 990.[68] Scheffel combined these two Ekkehards into his protagonist, but he maintained that this biographical license nonetheless did not affect his narrative's historical truth.

Scheffel quoted extensively from primary sources, the most significant example of which was his German translation of the tenth-century Latin *Waltharius Song*. His protagonist left Hadwig's court after his feelings for her were discovered. He retreated to a cave in the mountains where he composed the epic. The medieval poem was already well known in scholarly circles when Scheffel first published his novel. In 1780 Friedrich Fischer, a historian at Halle, published an edition of the poem based on the Stuttgart manuscript, which Friedrich Molter translated into German two years later.[69] The poem reached new audiences in 1838 when Grimm and Schmeller included it in their collection, *Lateinische Gedichte*. More scholarly editions followed, based on new manuscript sources discovered in German libraries. In 1874, when *Ekkehard* entered its second, more popular life, Scheffel recycled his translation for a new publication that included the poem in German and in Latin. His coauthor, the Karlsruhe librarian Alfred Holder, provided a version of the epic in its original language that accounted for all manuscript variants, as well as historical and cultural notes for the tenth century.[70] Just as Scheffel elided fact and fiction in his

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[68] Werner Wunderlich, "Medieval Images: Joseph Viktor von Scheffel's Novel *Ekkehard* and St. Gall," in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honor of Leslie Workman*, ed. Richard Utz and Tom Shippey (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 218.

[69] Friedrich Fischer, *De rebus gestis Waltharii, Aquitanorum principis, carmen epicum saeculi VI* (Leipzig: Suikerti, 1780) and Friedrich Molter, *Prinz Walther von Aquitanien. Ein Heldengedicht aus dem sechsten Jahrhunderte* (Karlsruhe: Macklot, 1782).

[70] Joseph Victor Scheffel and Alfred Holder, eds., *Waltharius. Lateinisches Gedicht des zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1874).

novel, so too did he fuse the nature of his authorial contributions. Even though he protested academic history in his fictional writing, he readily contributed to a more scholarly volume. Scheffel grants insight into nineteenth-century German historical culture. Critics often represent historical fiction and scholarly history as oppositional epistemological fields. Yet the example of Scheffel suggests that they functioned instead as ends on the spectrum of historical understanding. Authors wrote for multiple audiences in a range of genres, including fiction, narrative history, source collections, and even, in the case of Scheffel and Walter Scott, as the inspiration for musical settings.

3. Historicizing the Landscape

Scheffel did not rely solely upon textual research. He finished the last chapters of his manuscript in Switzerland among sites from his text and he claimed that he drew inspiration from his surroundings. He traipsed in the ruins of Hohentwiel castle, hiked up Säntis peak, and visited the mountain hermitage [*Wildkirchlein*] where his protagonist would spend his exile. Unlike medieval sources that had to be interpreted, he found the German historical past immanent in nature. History somehow possessed Scheffel during his time in the Swiss-German borderland, "mind and soul filled with the life of bygone generations," a dual process of poetic inspiration and historical intuition.[71] The social ethnographer and cultural historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl witnessed this process during a *Rheinfahrt* the two men took together in 1857. From the village St. Goarshausen the two men hiked up to a nearby castle, Burg Reichenberg. They wandered the ruins and invented stories about the castle's construction, based on the remaining physical

[71] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 435.

structures and their working knowledge of medieval history. Riehl asked Scheffel whether he would consider altering this story if research contradicted their inventions and Scheffel responded that facts would not bother him. "As a poet he had the sovereign right" to date Reichenberg's creation as he pleased.[72] In the great nineteenth-century German tradition, physical setting was indispensable to learning about himself and about German history.[73] Scheffel's personal motto, "we learn through travel" [*ambulando discimus*], speaks to landscape's function in his fiction and in his philosophy of history. Scheffel reproduced in his text the historical immanence that he experienced in Swiss-German nature. His readers did not have to agonize through historical sources; they merely had to replicate his immersion in history through his frequent, and detailed, descriptions of landscape. Scheffel's audience could apprehend the medieval world directly from *Ekkehard*.[74]

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, writing in 1926, identified Scheffel's attention to nature and history as the novel's strength. "Its especial beauty lies in the fact that the delicate and pure figures are at the same time set against a distant German past and against a fully contemporary German landscape…through the novel's setting, it leads into the greatness of nature; through its points of

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[72] Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Kulturgeschichtliche Charakterköpfe* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1891). Riehl acerbically noted that in 1857 he had still been more famous than Scheffel, though the situation had since reversed.

[73] On the relationship between location and Germanness, see Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990) and Mack Walker, *Germany Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate 1648-1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1971).

[74] "[One] approach regards realism as belief in both the transparency of language and its ability to reflect external reality," Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany*, 36.

spiritual contact, which echo within us, into the greatness of spiritual connections."[75] The novel begins with a description of its setting. Scheffel enumerates different aspects of the Hegau, the region around Lake Constance: mountains and lake; meadows and river; farms and monasteries; peasants and monks. Scheffel's earlier training as a landscape painter is evident in his attention to detail:

> He who has ever looked down from those quiet mountain-tops, when on a bright, radiant, day, the sun is slowly sinking down, arrayed in all the splendor of his royal robes; when heaven and earth are palpitating with warmth and light, whilst dark purple shadow, fill up the valleys, and a margin-glory, like liquid gold illumines the snowy alpine peaks,–he will not easily forget that aspect; and perchance when sitting later, within his dusky walls, the memory of it will rise in his heart, as soft and bewitchingly sweet, as a song uttered in the melting tones of the South.[76]

Scheffel included in his description both geographical and historical time, allowing his audience to witness both processes. He reimagines the violence of the region's volcanic prehistory to which the Alps attest.[77] He later describes a battle between the local Alemannians and invading Huns, capturing as well how this event became part of a mythical landscape. After defeating the Huns, the Swabians buried their enemies in a valley and placed a large stone on top of the grave. Scheffel relates that this moment "still lives in the memory of the present generation. The piece of rock which had been rolled upon the grave, is called the "Heidenbuck," by the inhabitants of the Hegau, and in the night of Good-Friday, there is nobody who would like to pass the valley," when they briefly awake again.[78] In Scheffel's novel the landscape becomes

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[75] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke* 10, ed. Bernd Schoeller (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1980), 212.

[76] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 250.

[77] Ibid., 9-10.

[78] Ibid., 220-21.

historically legible in a framework of possession. Scheffel understood the landscape because it was inherently German, a characteristic that historical events had inscribed into it. Even though the *Bodensee* was situated beyond the borders of unified Germany, it remained culturally German, falling within the geographical reach of the German Middle Ages as the founders of the *MGH* envisioned them.

This historicization of the landscape was a nineteenth-century phenomenon. As art historians have noted, visual representations of nature changed at the start of the century. Landscapes assumed historical attributes. Often the only markers aside from natural formations were ruins and medieval structures.[79] Even natural features, such as the forest, communicated a German historical symbolism.[80] The founders of the *MGH* similarly understood modern European geography in terms of a medieval textual heritage that disregarded political borders. Georg Simmel, fin-de-siècle theorist and protagonist of chapter five, represented the culmination of this tradition in his essay, "The Philosophy of Landscape (1913)." He argued that the very concept of landscape was a modern one. Medieval Germans understood nature as an "infinite interconnectedness of objects…[a] flowing unity," whereas a nineteenth-century observer endowed only a subset of nature with "a wholeness, a unity, over and above its component elements."[81] Any landscape was an active creation because it depended on a subject that used perception to select and demarcate part of nature.[82] Simmel's definition describes how Scheffel

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[79] Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*, 2nd edn. (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2009), 128, 278-83.

[80] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Random House, 1995), 75-134.

[81] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape," trans. Josef Bleicher, *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (2008): 21-22.

[82] Ibid., 23.

interpreted nature. The novelist saw only the natural features and medieval structures of the Swiss landscape, and so it became coded as German.

Scheffel portrayed, too, the scenery's mystical qualities. These enabled his protagonist to sublimate unrequited love into poetic inspiration. In nature, Ekkehard was able to transcend the conventions of his era, no longer a monk but a poet. He was forced to flee the Hegau for valleys in the Alps, roughly thirty kilometers away, after his nemesis revealed Ekkehard's forbidden love for Hadwig. This change in location prompted an immediate personal transformation and in a matter of pages he was suddenly hiking the hills, wearing "a mantle made of wolves' skins over his monkish garb; a leathern pouch at his side, and he carried a spear in his right hand. Often, he pushed the iron point into the ground, and leaned on the butt end, using the weapon thus, as a mountain-stick."[83] The remoteness of the Alps inspired in him an independence that he did not have while living among others in a monastery. The mountain air's restorative properties brought him to his senses. He was granted insight that he could not have accepted in the valleys; "the mysterious influence which reigns on airy mountain-peaks, widening and ennobling the human heart, raising it heavenwards, in loftier thoughts."[84] Ekkehard's poetic inspiration in the Swiss Alps mirrored Scheffel's historical revelations in the same spot. Scheffel's descriptions of nature communicated to his readership the process of poetic creation and also the historical German possession of the land.

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[83] Ekkehard, *Scheffel*, 350.

[84] Ibid., 372.

Despite Scheffel's doubts about scholarly historical practices, the geography of his novel accorded with that of the *MGH*. The majority of the text took place at three sites around Lake Constance: the Abbey of St Gall, a Benedictine monastery to its south; the Hohentwiel, a castle northwest of the lake; and Reichenau, a Benedictine monastery on an island between Gnadensee and Untersee (*fig. 2*). Scheffel's fictionalized plot unfolded in a real medieval geography. These

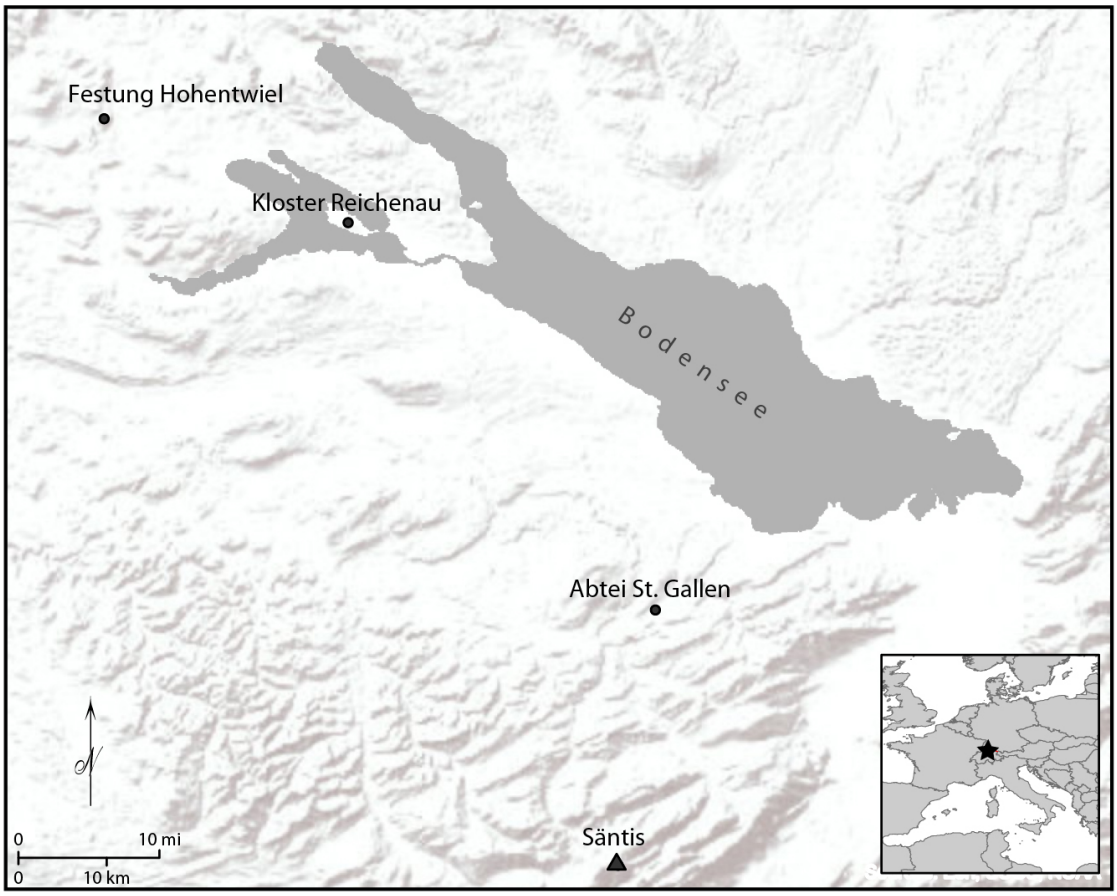


Figure 2. Map depicting the main locations cited in Joseph Victor von Scheffel's novel, *Ekkehard*. Map by C. Scott Walker.

two abbeys were among the most important religious houses during Carolingian and Ottonian reign.[85] This border region between southwestern Germany and Switzerland, moreover, was the same region that the founders of the *MGH* had identified as the cradle of German civilization. Scheffel reproduced the same expansive understanding of German political and cultural influence that scholars of medieval history had suggested, and also provided a popular understanding of the history of national borders.

Tensions between historical and nineteenth-century geographies affected the *MGH*, too. From its inception the editors curated the medieval sources they included to suggest certain interpretations of German history. The first volumes emphasized historical German unity, purposefully eschewing expressly religious sources that might have produced scholarly polemics. The *MGH* contained instead annals, charters, laws, even poems. The series, however, underwent significant institutional change during the 1860s and 1870s. After unification the state assumed financial responsibility for the series, even briefly subsuming it within the Royal Academy. The process of centralization had begun in the previous decades, culminating with 1871. By the 1880s, the Kaiser himself selected new editors of the *MGH*.[86] The series assumed a particularly important role in national education. In 1863 its editorial board first debated publishing smaller octavo versions of its volumes, previously available only in folio.[87] During the 1880s, the production of the *MGH* expanded yet further to include pocket editions expressly

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[85] On early medieval geography, see Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *The Early Middle Ages: Europe 400-1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Janet L. Nelson, *The Frankish World, 750-900* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996).

[86] GSt PK I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI. Nr. 1 Teil 1 Bd. 7, letter dated 12 July 1887.

[87] GSt PK I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI. Nr. 1 Teil 1 Bd. 3, letter dated 6 November 1863.

published for teachers, for whom the complete series would be too expensive[88] and the *MGH* archives contain letters from the directors of provincial *Gymnasien* who attested the importance of the series in terms of both national and regional history.[89] During the 1870s, the *MGH*, like *Ekkehard*, had entered its second life, secure in state support after decades of an uncertain existence. Both texts gained resonance as contributions to regional histories that nonetheless informed a sense of national understanding, one scholarly and one popular.

4. Emotional Communities

Scheffel discussed the *Bodensee* not only in terms of geography and history, but also in terms of its inhabitants. He referred to the region interchangeably as the *Bodensee*, Swabia, and the Hegau; he referred to its inhabitants, however, as Alemannians, originally a Roman term. Cassius Dio first attested to *alamanni* in 213 CE, describing them as the residents around the Main basin. The Alemanni are now understood not as a particular Germanic tribe, but as a confederation of clans from modern-day Baden-Württemberg, which had formed an alliance against the Romans.[90] "Alemanni," as a term, originally demarcated the boundaries of the Roman world. This boundary may have been porous, but the term represented a group outside of Roman law.[91] They remained independent until the late fifth century, when they were conquered by the Frankish King, Clovis I, at the Battle of Tolbiac. The term Alemannian outlasted the Roman

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[88] GSt PK I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI. Nr. 1 Teil 1 Bd. 7, letter dated 30 April, 1889.

[89] GSt PK I. HA Rep. 76 Vc Sekt. 1 Tit. XI. Nr. 1 Teil 1 Bd. 7, see letters dated 15 December, 1890, and 27 December, 1890.

[90] Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2002), 56.

[91] Ibid., 81, 84.

Empire and had entered general use by the early Middle Ages. Walafried Strabo, a ninth-century monk at St Gall, noted that although the people around Lake Constance called themselves *Suebi*, foreigners designated them *Alemanni*.

Scheffel adapted this historical term to express not a geographical designation, but rather the qualities of a homogeneous ethnic group. He repeated the same few adjectives when describing the Alemannians. They possessed, "a striving and healthy, though rough and imperfect strength;" "a considerable roughness, tempered by much natural kindliness, still clung to the people in general."[92] Alemannians were generally "rough, plainspoken, honest fellows…who, under their coarse husk, hid an excellent kernel; susceptible of all good and noble things," who exhibited "primitive but vigorous life."[93] Scheffel also gendered "alemannic" so that it was exclusively masculine. It stood for an awkward strength that prized liberty above all.[94] Originally an ethnic designation dating to the Roman Empire, Scheffel used "Alemannian" as a normative term, with a set of associated behaviors and values.

Scheffel cited primary and secondary sources as evidence for these ethnic characteristics. He used medieval texts with a geographical scope that was more limited than the *MGH*, focusing only on the area around Lake Constance. These sources included Ildefons von Arx's, *Geschichten des Kantons Sankt Gallen*; the section, "Alemannische Landrecht," in Jacob Grimm's collection of German law; an edition of the *Lex Salica*; collections of local sagas; and

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[92] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 433.

[93] Ibid., 433.

[94] Ibid., 106, 212, 349. The Germanic tribes had been associated with liberty since the rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania* in the fifteenth century, see Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 75-81.

also unpublished manuscripts from royal and monastic libraries in Baden.[95] Scheffel also consulted secondary sources that narrated the history of the area.[96] These sources informed his attention to regional legend, vocabulary, and customs. He transformed a Germano-Swiss borderland into the cradle of modern Germany. A loose geographical designation, moreover, had been translated into a historically conditioned ethnic term. Yet his novel transcended these specificities and appealed to a broad German audience. The book serves as a case study for how the Medieval enabled a novel to enter the national canon as more than a regional story, despite its focus on particularity. The founders of the *MGH* worried that without a national collection of German medieval sources, Germans would never be able to think at a narrative scale greater than individual German states. *Ekkehard* suggests that by the 1870s, during its second life, its regionalism functioned as a kind of truth-claim, not in its details but in imagining a German national past.

Unlike nineteenth-century historical writing that was often restricted to high politics, Scheffel portrayed average Alemannian life, which enabled him to draw conclusions beyond the scope of academic work. Alemannian roughness corresponded to a medieval Swabian world marked by

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[95] Ildefons von Arx, *Geschichten des Kantons St. Gallen*, 3 vols. (St. Gallen, 1810-13); Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer* (Göttingen, 1828); Johannes Merkel, ed., *Lex Salica*, intro. Jacob Grimm (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1850); Bernhard Baader, *Volkssagen aus dem Lande Baden und den angrenzenden Gegenden* (Karlsruhe: Herder, 1851); and Titus Tobler, *Appenzellischer Sprachschatz: Eine Sammlung* (Zurich: Orell, Füssli, & Compagnie, 1837).

[96] These sources included the first two volumes of Christoph Friedrich von Stälin's *Wirtembergische Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1841-47), Gustav Schwab, *Der Bodensee nebst dem Rheinthale von St. Luziensteig bis Rheinegg. Handbuch für Reisende und Freunde der Natur, Geschichte, und Poesie* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1827); August Friedrich Gfrörer, *Geschichte der ost- und westfränkischen Carolinger, vom Tode Ludwigs des Frommen bis zum Ende Conrads I.*, 2 vols. (Freiburg i/B: Herder, 1848); Johannes von Müller, *Die Geschichte der Schweizer* (Boston/Bern: Bey der neuen typographischen Gesellschaft, 1780); and Johann Caspar Zellweger, *Geschichte des appenzellischen Volkes. Urkunden* (Trogen: Meyer & Zuberbühler, 1831-38).

gratuitous violence. Scheffel seemed to delight in describing a sadistic church: monks flagellated themselves; peasants were superstitious and quickly resorted to violence; both monasteries and castles had torture chambers. Huns invaded the countryside; miscreants were tried by ordeal. A rough medieval world required fewer civilized conventions and Scheffel glorified these medieval behavioral norms. He described how after Frankish defeat, "a handful of liberty-loving Alemannic men, who could not learn to bend their necks to the Franconian yoke had settled down" in the wilderness of the Alps instead. They lived there, "a race of strong and healthy mountaineers, who, untouched by the goings on in the world at large, enjoyed a simple free life, which they bequeathed to the following generations."[97] These Alemannians did not even acknowledge the abbot to whom they paid tithes as their sovereign; they acknowledged only the mountains as their master.

Scheffel stressed their manners and often described them in detail. Ekkehard at one point hired a hardy Alammanian shepherd to deliver a message to the monastery of St Gall. The messenger laughed at the monks, finding them "weak and miserable," and they in turn described him as "coarse" in contrast to their own strength, which lay in science and intellect. Coarseness was a positive attribute and the monk's civilized polish represented a decline from ethnic strength. Minor characters tested this metric of civilization. Spazzo, a member of Hadwig's court, functioned as comic relief. Monks easily tricked him and diverted him from his tasks; he was often drunk; and he spent his time flirting uselessly with a maid. Yet when the Huns invaded, he defended the territory fiercely and proved a far more valuable asset than a monk. The leader of the Huns, Ellak, advised a companion that Christianity favored invading armies because "a

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[97] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 349.

hundred blockheads more" – monks, that is – "make a hundred soldiers less."[98] In dialogue, Scheffel's characters do not appear particularly "medieval" in any way, but his descriptions signal their difference. Scheffel emphasized Alemannic roughness as one of the few points of difference from modern Germans and its loss amounted to a narrative of decline. Ekkehard's personal development entailed regaining a certain coarseness that he had lost in the confines of the monastery. Religious education, and implicitly modernity, is a history of increasing emotional restraint: self-discipline, control, and suppression.

Scheffel's medieval world was far different from August Reichensperger's. Scheffel's was set in tenth-century Swabia rather than in the twelfth-century Rhineland. While this was nominally the Ottonian era, the characters in *Ekkehard* understood their polity as Carolingian, which was, in this story, a German dynasty. The merits of tenth-century southwestern Germany were partly temporal. This society was far more classical than the later medieval world. Germanic tribal roughness had mixed with Roman culture to produce the tenth-century Alammanian, who represented a new kind of German. This chimera found its literary analogue in *The Song of Waltharius*, which thematized German myth yet did so in medieval Latin. The early Middle Ages had the further advantage of being Christian, but not yet Christendom. Scheffel's novel was profoundly anticlerical: monasteries signify the pursuit of a kind of scientific knowledge that denied the requirements of the medieval world. His tenth-century Swabia was both profoundly regional, grounded in an ethnic community with a strong geographical component, and national, in that Alemannians also acknowledged a loose Carolingian suprastructure to which they owed allegiance. Casual, sometimes senseless violence, characterized this medieval world, and

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[98] Ibid., 194.

sensibilities were coarse and rough in response. This medieval world was implicitly masculine and Alemannian identity was ultimately soldierly.

Ekkehard's development as a character relied on the rejection of his monastic training and regaining a more medieval roughness. This transformation happened in two phases, the first of which occurred during the attack of the Huns. Scheffel emphasized the general incompetence of the monks, who all sought safety with Hadwig. She herself voiced the superiority of deeds over philosophy, haranguing her listeners, that "the habit of long thinking and wavering in critical moments, has been sown by the enemy, like weeds in the German lands…he who misses the right moment for action, often digs his own grave."[99] On this occasion Ekkehard overcame his trained instincts and fought off the invaders. The second stage of his transformation took place during his flight from society, when he composed *The Song of Waltharius* in self-imposed exile. While writing in the cave, he lost the veneer of civilization and regained a coarser self-reliance. Like Niebuhr's figure of Charlemagne, Scheffel described a primitive, but healthier, medieval masculinity. Ekkehard became the model of the German soldier, hardy and self-sufficient. For Niebuhr and Scheffel, the Middle Ages was less civilized, an era before foreign manners and polish weakened German life. Both authors relied on an implicit narrative of modern decline away from this purer state. They also promised a renewal based on the revitalization of these more wholesome, and more genuine, medieval values.

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[99] Ibid., 163.

5. Conclusion

Ekkehard ensured that Scheffel was among the most widely read German authors during the second half of the nineteenth century, a status that he retained throughout German-speaking Europe even though he published only one long novel.[100] Thanks to near universal literacy, statistics from lending libraries reflect little to no difference in taste between readers from the middle and lower classes.[101] By the end of the century, Scheffel's historical novel had reached a socio-economically diverse reading public. Aspects of his novel would have seemed already familiar to his new readers. His descriptions of the Swiss-German landscape almost transform the book into a travel narrative. He mentioned landscapes and local attractions, like the early medieval monasteries that still stood in his time. Readers would also have had the impression of history fulfilled. Scheffel included an anecdote with a minor character, called "the old man of the Heidenhöhle." The old man was in fact the last legal heir to the Carolingian throne, pejoratively known as Charles the Fat. He had hidden in a mountain above the Hegau, mourning the fracture of the Germanic kingdom, and he survived only long enough to save the Swabians from the Huns. This story would have sounded familiar to nineteenth-century readers, accustomed to slumbering kings from myth who would awaken in times of need, or on reunification, most

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[100] Based on surveys conducted at lending libraries across the German Confederation between 1850 and 1860, Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 416, Table 9. In 1899 lending libraries considered *Ekkehard* a *deutscher Kernroman* and Scheffel was still among the most read novelists in Germany. See Table 18: the lending library Mandel Mór in Budapest, 1893, 433-35; Table 26a: the Nordmeyer Lending Library in Hanover, 1899, 448; Table 27: the Ottendorferschen Volksbibliothek in 1899, 451; and Table 55: by 1900 Scheffel ranked among the most frequently read authors in all Viennese *Volksbibliotheken*, 875.

[101] Martino, *Die deutsche Leihbibliothek*, 400-401.

famously Barbarossa at the Kyffhäuser.[102] The latent antagonism between church and secular authority would, too, have been a familiar theme with readers during the *Kulturkampf*. These congruences between medieval and modern Germany strengthened Scheffel's claims to historical truth because he portrayed a familiar Middle Ages, one that represented a better version of nineteenth-century German society.

Scheffel borrowed practices common to fictional and non-fictional historical narratives. Yet he did not engage in the politicized interpretative debates of nineteenth-century historiography. The most explicitly charged moment in *Ekkehard* comes when the Carolingian king in the Heidenhöhle cautioned against an expansionist Germany. The Old Man referred to Italy as "a thorn in the German flesh" that distracted rulers from what should have been their focus, the East and the North.[103] In an academic context, a statement like this would have signaled Scheffel's allegiance to a historiographical position in favor of a *Kleindeutschland*. During the 1850s, the historian Heinrich von Sybel, too, characterized medieval geographical overreach as the reason for medieval Germany's fall from power. Wilhelm von Giesebrecht responded with a history of the Hohenstaufens, whom he regarded favorably for their expansionism during the twelfth century. This polarized interpretative debate continued into the 1860s.[104] Yet Scheffel's statement

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[102] Arno Borst, "Barbarossas Erwachen – Zur Geschichte der deutschen Identität," in *Identität*, ed. Odo Marquard and Karlheinz Stierle (Munich: Fink, 1979), 17-60, and Gunther Mai, *Das Kyffhäuser-Denkmal, 1896-1996. Ein nationales Monument im europäischen Kontext* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997).

[103] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 158.

[104] Regarding the stakes of this debate, see Martin A. Ruehl, "'In this time without emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 187-242.

was anodyne enough to have escaped even the enthusiastic censorship of the 1850s.[105] In one of his few general reflections on historical change, he asserted that history was cyclical. This was not a particularly grand statement of philosophy but rather an indictment of religious claims to ultimate truth. "The races of men come and go like the leaves…and all their thinkings and doings last but a short span of time…new gods mount the throne,—and it is well if their altars are not erected on the bodies of too many victims."[106] His novel avoided the overtly ideological interpretations of the Middle Ages common in scholarly historical writing. Framed by this distinction, *Ekkehard*'s functioned as escapist relief from highly politicized *Gründerzeit* culture, perhaps contributing to the runaway of its "second life" during the last third of the nineteenth century.

Scheffel's claims to historical truth were based in part on critical methodology and yet he asserted that he was not trying to reproduce historical writing. As Brent Peterson has concluded, "these two modes of writing about the past were locked in a kind of structural opposition, each defined by the other, each becoming what the other was not, and each making claims that still need adjudicating."[107] Despite footnotes that emphasized his familiarity with sources that demanded a great deal of specialized knowledge, Scheffel's Middle Ages were neither alienating nor particularly distant from the nineteenth century. In fact, he seemed to lessen the foreignness of medieval Swabia by emphasizing the shared customs that spanned the thousand-year separation. In a typical anachronism, Scheffel related the preparations for Christmas that took

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[105] Gary D. Stark, *Banned in Berlin: Literary Censorship in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 261-262.

[106] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 124-25.

[107] Peterson, *History, Fiction, and Germany*, 35.

place every year: "the year is long and numbers many a day in which people can show each other little kindnesses; but the Germans like having one special day set aside for that in particular. Therefore before all other nations they keep up the custom of making Christmas presents. The good heart has its own peculiar rites."[108] Christmas in medieval Germany was just as *gemütlich* as in the nineteenth century.[109] Scheffel's medievalism tried to use sources to overcome historical distance and make the ancestral past seem familiar and everyday. He was able to do this, in part, because of genre. Histories of modern Germany focused on leaders and statesmanship; historical novels focused on the everyday and the intimate, a history of the national affinity for local customs. Scheffel, and historical novelists like him, created a framework for popular historical knowledge. In 1912 a historical volume on Prussian genealogy was reviewed in the *L.N.N. Feuilleton*.[110] The article's author described various figures mentioned in the book and then invoked Scheffel in connection to one. The reviewer mentioned that doubtless his readers had already heard of Kurfürst Friedrich III von der Pfalz (1515-76), whom Scheffel had already made popular [*volkstümlich gemacht*] to German audiences in his work.

Scheffel's novel combined literary and historical methodologies. In *Ekkehard* he presented a medieval German world that appeared similar to modernity. The subjects that the Middle Ages and modernity shared, like religious contention, a soldierly masculine ideal, and a historical understanding of geography, contributed to a teleological or predestined sense of German history. Scheffel thematized a cultural and national patrimony transmitted to the nineteenth century from

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[108] Scheffel, *Ekkehard*, 135.

[109] On the meaning of Christmas during nineteenth-century Germany, see Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010).

[110] Oberrheinisches Literaturarchiv, Nachlass Scheffel, Beilage der L.N.N. No. 235 24.8.1912.

the German past. Just as Scheffel described the landscape in possessive terms, so too was the tenth-century culture he portrayed recognizably, and profoundly, German. His novel also reveals how nineteenth-century popular and academic writing influenced the other and even created hybrid texts of the two, such as Scheffel's coauthored edition of *The Song of Waltharius*. The text also indicates how historical writing even crossed into entirely different settings, such as in the musical adaptations of *Ekkehard*. During the nineteenth century the Medieval was particularly well suited to this interdisciplinary transfer. No matter how modern iterations of the Middle Ages differed, many nonetheless contributed to shared discussions about German origins and cultural patrimony. The following chapter on Wagner continues this conversation. I discuss his musical and prose writing in terms of a matrix of influences that included historical research, the visual arts, the German musical world, and nineteenth-century politics.

Chapter 4. Setting the Stage: Convention and Resistance in Early and Late Richard Wagner

1. Introduction

Richard Wagner set his opera cycle, *Der Ring der Nibelungen*, at the intersection of the real and the imaginary. He mapped a mythical geography onto a German landscape. Stage instructions included in his original score reinforce its rootedness in the German landscape.[1] The operas' fantastical events often unfold in familiar topographies: in the final scene of *Das Rheingold*, Wotan and Fricka walk to Valhalla along a rainbow spanning the Rhine;[2] in Act II of *Siegfried*, the eponymous hero follows a woodbird deep into the dense forest.[3] By the cycle's premiere in 1876, the forest and the Rhine had long marked German cultural belonging. The latter had a historical, and literary, association with Germany that dated to the rediscovery of Tacitus in the fifteenth century. The Roman author's contrast between the civilized empire and the wooded north introduced what became a popular trope in the German canon. Nineteenth-century tourism along the Rhine reinscribed new patriotic affinities onto older ones.[4] Even Wagner's detailed instructions for craggy rocks and misty, sunken caves invoke less the strange world of legend,

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the libretto are based on the score used in the premiere of the cycle in 1876 in Bayreuth.

[2] Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington, eds., *Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung: A Companion*, trans. Spencer (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 1993), 116.

[3] Ibid., 243, 247, 254.

[4] On artistic *Rheinromantik*, see *Rheinromantik: Kunst und Natur*, ed. Peter Forster, with Irene Haberland and Gerhard Kölsch (Wiesbaden: Schnell & Steiner, 2013). For the tourist industry along the Rhine, see *Baedeker & Cook. Tourismus am Mittelrhein 1765 bis ca. 1914*, ed. Benedikt Bock (Frankfurt a/M: Peter Lang, 2010).

and more the landscapes of nineteenth-century painting. The "wild and rocky mountain landscape" of *Die Walküre's* second act can easily be compared to Carl Blechen's "Felslandschaft" (1826), or any number of similar artworks.[5]

The *Ring*'s wilder scenes are made imaginable through familiarly German iconography. When Loge and Wotan enter Nibelheim in *Das Rheingold*, Wagner intended the stage to transform before the audience's gaze. He asked for "sulfurous vapors" to darken the stage, hiding changes to the scenery. At the foot of the stage, "a solid, dark rocky chasm" would continually move upwards, "giving the impression that the stage is sinking deeper and deeper into the earth," until the characters arrive at Mime's forge.[6] There, and in a similar setting during the first act of *Siegfried*, familiar routines of the smithy function as a prosaic counterpoint to the operas' mystical events. Siegfried slays a dragon; but he does so with a sword that he has just shaped, and hammered. By *Siegfried*'s performance in 1876, blacksmithing was more than a venerable craft; it had become a metaphor for German unification. Bismarck was called the "Blacksmith of German Unity" and he was figured in the costume of a smith, bearing the profession's tools, in photographs and paintings commemorating 1871.[7] In *Götterdämmerung* the Hall of the Gibichungs and its inhabitants exist, too, in limbo between the real and the imagined, yet its described location is resolutely regional. The scenery in the foreground portrays the interior of the wooden structure and, in the middle distance, the back of the house opens onto a view of the

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[5] Spencer and Millington, *Wagner's Ring*, 140.

[6] Ibid., 87. The scenery changes in the same way between Acts III and IV, though this time the rocky chasm retreats to reveal "an open space on a mountain summit," veiled in pale mist (115).

[7] In one vivid example, Bismarck, wearing an apron, stands by a forge and passes a newly made sword to the female figure of *Germania*, Bildagentur Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz No. 30009933.

Rhine and the rocky outcrops along the shore (*fig. 3*).[8] At the end of the opera, the same scenery is in place again, yet the back of the building has been destroyed and, in addition to the Rhine, the audience can see Valhalla burning.[9]



Figure 3. Joseph Hoffmann's initial sketch for the scenery for Act II of Götterdämmerung in Hoffmann, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Vienna: V. Angerer, [1878?]), plate 10.

Tensions between the real, or the historical, and the mythological frame this chapter. The *Ring*'s long development over three decades informed these relations. Wagner drafted a libretto for an opera called *Siegfrieds Tod* in late 1848 and during the next three decades he expanded

[8] Spencer and Millington, *Wagner's Ring*, 288.

[9] Ibid., 351.

this single work into four. This chapter examines the beginning and the end of this process in broader political and artistic contexts. During the 1840s the composer belonged to a radical milieu that advocated for profound structural change. Wagner, like others from this circle, relied on purportedly medieval precedent to articulate his vision of political transformation, and I trace these affinities between medievalizing politics and music. By the 1870s, when he finished the *Ring*, he expressly positioned himself against his earlier uses of the Middle Ages. He tried instead to create new visual representations of the *Nibelungenlied*, the source material for his operas, for their premiere in 1876. I suggest that the poem had developed a dominant iconography during the nineteenth century, one that located the epic in the High Middle Ages at the time of its first transcription. Wagner resisted this interpretation and I argue that he did so because the Medieval had lost the radical political potential that it had held for him during the 1840s. Wagner's rejection of certain medieval tropes reveals both their prevalence in imperial Germany and also the pathways by which once flexible interpretations of the Middle Ages had hardened.

The first half of this chapter focuses on Wagner during the 1840s, an especially productive decade for him in terms of research. Though he moved frequently, he formed friendships, and collected books, that shaped his musical compositions and prose. This decade was also his "medievalist" period, for he read widely on the Middle Ages. These source materials present an intellectual genealogy among nationalist circles, one that links the Napoleonic period to the reformist era of the 1840s. The *Nibelungenlied* in particular was a product of Niebuhr's *Sattelzeit* milieu, concerned as it was with literary and patriotic origins. This interpretation of the poem continued through the mid century and provides the context in which I read Wagner's work on the poem, and the work it inspired. Leading up to and during the Revolutions of 1848/49, he

produced two texts in tandem: the essay, "Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage," printed as a booklet in 1850, and a sketch for an opera or drama about the Hohenstaufen ruler Friedrich I. The *Nibelungenlied* and the medieval emperor were already familiar subjects for academic and lay audiences alike and I examine how Wagner's writings can be read within this tradition and when they transcended it. I argue that in 1849, Wagner blurred the boundary between myth and history in order to suggest alternative models of sovereignty, based on Germanic precedent.

An existing tradition in Wagner historiography divides his corpus in two, separating his early, "Romantic operas" from his later work. This interpretation is approximately biographical. His Romantic works comprise *Der fliegende Holländer* (1841), *Tannhäuser* (1842), and *Lohengrin* (1847), all composed in his medievalist period during the 1840s. According to this paradigm, these operas cohere because Wagner was a historicist at the time of their composition and attended to concerns of accuracy absent from his later work.[10] Wagner served as librettist and composer for these pieces, and also as dramaturge, a role he did not reprise for his operas after 1848, which largely avoided historical content markers. This interpretation is useful as a broad framework to distinguish between the intellectual priorities of early and late Wagner.

Wagner's early work on the *Nibelungenlied* in 1848 began this compositional shift, which also involved a switch in subject, from history to timeless myth. Drawing on German and Scandinavian variants of the same tale, Wagner created from them a synthetic myth, wholly his

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[10] For an overview of this position, see Stewart Spencer, ""The "Romantic Operas" and the Turn to Myth," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67-73.

own.[11] Some argue that this turn to legend occurred even earlier, with his 1843 appointment to the Royal Saxon Theater.[12] Barry Millington has described Wagner's animating impulse as the desire to produce a total work of art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, modeled on Greek drama's integration of all the arts.[13] Far from seeking to recover the condition of the *Nibelungenlied*'s composition, Wagner sought to transcend the poem's historical genesis and reach a truer version of the myth. Susan Crane has described this authorial strategy as an "aesthetic of completion," one that seeks to create an ideal variant of a document or artifact, rather than recover the historical original. In retelling the legend, Wagner did not hope to portray an allegory of modernity, but rather to demonstrate how modern social conditions were already presaged in myth.[14] The composer reworked the medieval epic in conjunction with political concerns.

This developmental interpretation of Wagner becomes less helpful when discussing his nineteenth-century reception. As Wagner knew well, his audiences read, and saw, him out of order. Baudelaire described this phenomenon in an essay about the 1861 Paris performance of *Tannhäuser*. Familiar already with the *Lohengrin* overture, the French author resolved that

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[11] Volker Mertens, "Wagner's Middle Ages," in *The Wagner Handbook*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, and trans. John Deathridge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 246, 252. For greater detail on these sources, see also Edward R. Haymes, "Richard Wagner and the *Altgermanisten*: *Die Nibelungen* and Franz Joseph Mone," in *Re-Reading Wagner*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 23-38, and Nancy Benvenga, *Kingdom on the Rhine: History, Myth and Legend in Wagner's Ring* (Harwich: Anton Press, 1983).

[12] George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 183.

[13] Barry Millington, "*Der Ring der Nibelungen*: Conception and Interpretation," in Grey, *Cambridge Companion*, 74.

[14] Dieter Borchmeyer, *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner*, trans. Daphne Ellis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 115, 221.

Wagner's writings would frame the performance: "I determined to discover the why and the wherefore, and thus to exchange my sensuous pleasure for knowledge, before a performance on the stage brought complete enlightenment."[15] Baudelaire noted that although numerous essays remained untranslated, singling out in particular *Art and Revolution* (1849) and *The Art-Work of the Future* (1849), he read *Opera and Drama* (1851) in English.[16] This latter essay structured Baudelaire's reception of the music and also the remainder of his review. Not only did Wagner's prose determine how the French writer interpreted the opera; it did so during the period when, according to modern criticism, Wagner had already transcended his own earlier historicist compositions.

Other historians have recently argued that Wagner was never a systematic thinker. His process was instead "agglomerative," layering new reading on old insight.[17] Accordingly, Wagner was neither strict historicist nor pure mythographer. Mark Berry has favored an approach that emphasizes Wagner's intellectual contradictions rather than his linear development. This framework enables a reading of Wagner's essay, "Die Wibelungen," that takes into account both history and myth. Following this path, this chapter will analyze the origin and the end of the genesis of the *Ring* to investigate not only the contradictions and development in Wagner's thought, but what these intellectual shifts suggest more generally about musical medievalism during the nineteenth century.

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[15] Charles Baudelaire, "Richard Wagner and *Tannhäuser* in Paris (1861)," in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, trans. and intro. P.E. Charvet (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 333.

[16] Ibid., 333.

[17] Mark Berry, *Treacherous Bonds and Laughing Fire: Politics and Religion in Wagner's Ring* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 10.

The second half of this chapter considers the 1876 production of the *Ring* as a visual work and why, from Wagner's perspective, the production was a disappointment. As he developed the cycle throughout the 1850s and 1860s, he increasingly distanced it from other versions of the *Nibelungenlied*. Rightly so, for he had combined German and Scandinavian sources to produce an epic poem far different from the originals.[18] Yet despite its originality, Wagner had to contend with his audience's preconceptions about the work. By the premiere of the *Bühnenfestspiel*, the "stage festival play," illustrated editions of the *Nibelungenlied* had circulated for seven decades among Germany's reading public. Scenes from the poem adorned public and private spaces, such as Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld's frescoed *Nibelungensäle* for the royal Munich residence. Wagner was particularly anxious to separate his work from these earlier artistic renderings of the famous epic. I examine what, specifically, he objected to in these representations and how he hoped to overcome the preconceptions of his audience. I attend in particular to his detailed instructions for the scenery and costumes of the production.

This "bookends" approach considers Wagner's development as a composer and as an intellectual. It also measures how Wagner positioned his work in German culture. I argue that Wagner began his *Ring* project as a cautious medievalizer, believing that the Middle Ages could serve as a model for radical politics. He ended the cycle resisting this medieval interpretation because he believed that the Middle Ages no longer held redemptive potential.

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[18] For a detailed reading of Wagner's poem compared to their original sources, see Elizabeth Magee, "In Pursuit of the Purely Human: The 'Ring' and its Medieval Sources," in Spencer and Millington, *Wagner's Ring*, 29-32, as well as her authoritative *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

2. The Discovery and Reception of the *Nibelungenlied*

Wagner's biography has been endlessly revised and rewritten. The composer published a four-volume autobiography between 1870 and 1880, to be circulated among his friends. This inaugurated countless, and competing, iterations of the story, perhaps fittingly, for few figures have produced as polarizing an effect as Wagner, both during his life and certainly afterwards, particularly after his appropriation by National Socialists. To avoid repetition, mention of his life will be brief. Yet a few moments are particularly relevant for his development as an intellectual, as a writer, and as a German. An autodidact, Wagner read widely and deeply during the 1840s, and this training remained influential. Wagner later referred to 1848 as his year of "medieval German studies," but this description applies more generally to this formative decade.[19] In what was also an itinerant period, his friends in cities across continental Europe influenced his education. In Paris between 1839 and 1842, Wagner grew close to Samuel Lehrs, a German philologist, who loaned him works medieval literature translated into modern German. Wagner continued this research after he and his first wife, Minna, moved to Dresden for his appointment as the director of music to the Royal Saxon Court. He studied medieval sources and modern literature consistently throughout this post.[20] The majority of books in Wagner's Dresden library

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[19] Richard Wagner, *The Diary of Richard Wagner: The Brown Book 1865-1882*, trans. George Bird (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 95.

[20] Some periods were more productive than others. His hydrotherapy cure at Marienbad during Summer 1845, for example, later proved particularly important for *Parsifal*; see Mary A. Cicora, "Medievalism and Metaphysics: The Literary Background of *Parsifal*," in William Kinderman and Katherine R. Syer, eds., *A Companion to Wagner's* Parsifal (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2005), 30-31.

related to the Middle Ages and he went to great effort to track down yet other medieval sources in local collections.[21]

Raymond Furness has described this decade as a restless period for Wagner, during which the composer sought to align himself with radical reform movements.[22] Wagner's activism focused on two areas, the political and economic system, and the condition of modern theater. Wagner composed little music during the turbulent years between 1848 and 1853, but he published numerous essays: on artwork, on theater, on politics. Involved in the revolutions of 1848/49 in Dresden, Wagner entered a fifteen-year exile from the German Confederation to avoid lifelong imprisonment. Sometimes together, sometimes apart, Wagner and Minna lived in homes across Switzerland and France, often moving frequently to avoid their creditors.[23] Exile ended only in 1864 with the forgiveness of Wagner's revolutionary activities and he returned to Germany, this time to Bavaria, under the patronage of his most ardent admirer, King Ludwig II.[24] He remained in southern Germany, falling into and out of favor with the king, and devoted himself to composition and to his theater in Bayreuth.

Wagner's initial interest in the *Nibelungenlied* and its historical sources conformed to a patriotic reading that dated to the second half of the eighteenth century. In the 1740s, Johann Jacob Bodmer posited a thirteenth-century golden age of German sovereignty and culture, basing

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[21] Curt von Westenhagen, *Richard Wagners Dresdener Bibliothek, 1842-1849. Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte seines Schaffens* (Wiesbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1966), 84-110.

[22] Raymond Furness, *Richard Wagner* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 60. Wagner's political activism also coincided with his interest in radical German philosophy, first Ludwig Feuerbach, followed by Arthur Schopenhauer.

[23] Furness has described in particular the years 1859-64 as Wagner's *Wanderjahre*. Ibid., 117.

[24] Ibid., 125.

his argument on only fragments of printed poetry. During the next several decades, he corresponded with librarians and archivists in France, Switzerland, and Germany, searching for unread medieval manuscripts that would substantiate his speculative claim.[25] Remarkably, Bodmer uncovered exactly what he had hoped to find and published several volumes of forgotten poetry from the German High Middle Ages, the *Stauferzeit*. Bodmer's contact at Hohenems' library, in the Tirol, even discovered the manuscript for the *Nibelungenlied*, of which Bodmer printed extracts in 1757.[26] He argued that the thirteenth century was a heroic age, a German political and cultural apogee, especially compared to his own century. Bodmer suggested, more specifically, that his new historical type, "the medieval poet-knight," was a better counter model for German regeneration than the faith of *Aufklärer* in the figure of the Renaissance humanist.[27]

Bodmer's literary discoveries were already a sensation during the eighteenth-century, but they assumed an urgent political meaning during the Napoleonic era in German Central Europe. In 1807 Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen published a translation of the poem in modern German to great acclaim and new critical editions of the poem were printed every few years after

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[25] For greater detail about this exciting moment in medieval research, see Peter H. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 208-212. For further material on the eighteenth-century interest in the German literary and historical medieval past, see Rudolf Vierhaus, "Historisches Interesse im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Aufklärung und Geschichte. Studien zur deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker, Georg Iggers, Jonathan B. Knudsen and Peter Reill (Göttingen: Max Planck Institute for History, 1986), 264-75, and Otto Dann, "Das historische Interesse in der deutschen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts. Geschichte und historische Forschung in den zeitgenössischen Zeitschriften," *Historische Forschung im 18. Jahrhundert* 13 (1976): 386-415.

[26] Johann Jacob Bodmer, *Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage. Zwey Heldengedichte aus dem schwaebischen Zeitpuncte. Sammt Fragmenten aus dem Gedichte von den Nibelungen und aus dem Josaphat* (Zurich: Verlegen Orell & Comp., 1757).

[27] Reill, *Rise of Historicism*, 210.

that.[28] Hohenstaufen history and culture became a cottage industry in Germany in the first few decades of the nineteenth century.[29] Authors wrote for a public with a new, seemingly limitless interest in the medieval epic and the world from which it arose. Between 1807 and 1815, von der Hagen's edition became particularly popular among patriots from the same social circles to which Barthold Niebuhr belonged. The *Nibelungenlied* represented a national history and literature, a tradition that became even more relevant in the context of the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire after 1805 and 1806. During this time Niebuhr revealed an interest in medieval poetry to which he had never before admitted, describing the medieval epic rapturously. He discussed his progress with von der Hagen's edition of "this marvelous poem" in letters to friends in 1810, while also reading additional primary sources and secondary literature.[30] His historical research became more expansive in conjunction with these readings.[31] Niebuhr claimed that he would pursue Roman history from its oldest period until its institutions finally vanished

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[28] Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, ed., *Der Nibelungen Lied* (Berlin: J.F. Unger, 1807). Von der Hagen published the poem again in 1816, in a dual language edition with the poem also in the original Middle High German. By that time, two more editions of the *Nibelungenlied* had appeared, *Das Lied der Nibelungen*, ed. Joseph von Hinsberg (Munich: Hübschmann, 1812) and *Das Nibelungenlied. Die Urschrift nach den besten Lesarten neu bearbeitet, und mit Einleit und Wortbuch zum Gebrauch für Schulen versehen*, ed. August Zeune (Berlin: Maurer, 1815).

[29] Poets and historians alike contributed to this growing cottage industry. Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué adapted the poem for his own epic, *Der Held des Nordens* (Berlin: J.E. Hitzig, 1810) and Franz Rudolf Hermann transformed it for the stage, *Die Nibelungen. Drei Dramen* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1819). Critical commentaries, too, became common, intended for personal and school use: Karl Wilhelm Göttling, *Über das Geschichtliche im Nibelungenliede* (Rudolstadt: Hof-Buch-Handlung, 1814); Karl Lachmann, *Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichts von der Nibelungen Noth* (Berlin: F. Tümmler, 1816); Franz Joseph Mone, *Einleitung in das Nibelungen-Lied. Zum Schul und Selbstgebrauch* (Heidelberg: A. Oswald, 1818).

[30] *Die Briefe Barthold George Niebuhrs. Vol. II 1809-1816*, ed. Dietrich Gerhard and William Norvin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1929), 129f.

[31] Ibid., 148.

in medieval Germany. As he and his wife read the *Nibelungenlied* aloud to one another, they spoke, too, of their hopes for the regeneration of the German language.[32] As Bodmer had suggested nearly fifty years earlier, the *Nibelungenlied* epitomized to a broad, educated readership a lost German age of unified territorial power and cultural sophistication. The era in which the poem was transcribed functioned as both a rebuke to Napoleonic Germany and a model for its renewal.

The *Nibelungenlied* remained popular through the 1840s. Wagner had four versions of the text in his Dresden library, all recently published.[33] He also owned commentaries on the text and on additional heroic sagas, particularly those by Franz Joseph Mone, Karl Lachmann, and Jacob Grimm. These scholars elaborated a tradition that posited a relationship between myth, language and history. Mone and Grimm, among others, argued that written sagas and legends had assumed historical names during the Middle Ages with their transcription.[34] Karl Wilhelm Göttling, for example, suggested a kinship between the mythical *Nibelungen* and the medieval Ghibellines.[35]

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[32] Ibid., 345.

[33] All were later editions of volumes first published during the 1810s and 1820s.

[34] They developed a taxonomy according to which myth was far older than legend. Intriguingly, contemporary scholarship once more supports this hypothesis, Sara Graça da Silva and Jamshid J. Tehrani, "Comparative Phylogenetic Analyses Uncover the Ancient Roots of Indo-European Folktales," *Royal Society Open Science* 3 (2016): np. For a more detailed discussion of the early nineteenth-century tradition, see Haymes, "Richard Wagner and the *Altgermanisten*," 23-38.

[35] Karl Wilhelm Götting, *Nibelungen und Gibelinen* (Rudolstadt: Hof-, Buch-, und Kunsthandlung, 1816).

For these latter writers, as for Wagner and his friends, the *Nibelungenlied* retained its patriotic resonance from the Napoleonic era. This tradition made the poem especially relevant in a revolutionary context. Wagner began to adapt the *Nibelungenlied* materials as the revolution of 1848 began. This reworking included an outline for a drama set during the High Middle Ages, *Friedrich I*, and an essay titled, "Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage."[36] This latter work can be described as Wagner's early philosophy of history. In it, Wagner placed myth and history in dialogue, using the former to understand historical change.[37] Disregarding Wagner's orthographical eccentricities, the article explored how Siegfried and the Nibelung hoard acted as a framework to analyze history. At the same time, the Siegfried story became a mythological paradigm that guided historical development.

In "Die Wibelungen," Wagner switched between myth and history with a frequency that destabilized both. His essay opened far from Germany, in the Caucasus Mountains, and portrayed the Aryan origins of Europeans. Wagner argued that sagas preserved this homeland "in memory," so that long after their migration to the continent, Europeans remembered the concepts and institutions of this early society, particularly its centralized rule that united religious and secular interests. Wagner incorporated historical events to reveal how these legends affected history. Carolingian victories served as evidence that the Franks, alone of all the European

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[36] Published in a booklet as, "Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage," (Leipzig: O. Wigand, 1850).

[37] In this essay and in other works, Wagner used the terms "myth" and "saga" synonymously, a less precise usage than found in specialists' works, such as those by Mone and Grimm.

peoples, had retained an Aryan understanding of absolute sovereignty, transforming a local bid for power to one for world domination.[38]

Frankish mythology was as important in Wagner's essay as Frankish history. Their tribal sagas described the Nibelungen hoard, its treasures created by smiths deep within the earth. Its very wealth created a historic pattern fueled by envy: "though doomed to death by acquisition of the hoard, each subsequent generation tries to seize it."[39] The hoard's contents – weapons, gold, accessories of power – contained its means of mastery. When Siegfried, the archetypal ruler of legend, seized this treasure, he initiated a pattern in which others would try to win the hoard. Worse; Siegfried became a Nibelung, for ownership of the treasure transformed the hero into a figure motivated only by material acquisition. Wagner used this mythological pattern as a tool for historical explanation. The hoard, in a historical context, became the drive for rule; and Wagner found Siegfried's parallel in medieval kings that illustrated this same logic.

Wagner discussed Carolingian unification according to this paradigm. The Franks acted as a centralizing force, beginning with the Merovingians and culminating in Charlemagne's victories over other Germanic tribes, once more uniting secular and sacred power. Wagner described Charlemagne as the first historically attested figure, "in whose power the impulse of the Nibelungen hoard appeared to reach its fullest force." Charlemagne's victories over the other tribes functioned as Wagner's proof of concept. The emperor's territorial conquests demonstrated that only the Franks retained vestiges of the *Urkönigtum* from the Caucasus.[40]

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[38] "Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage," in *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen von Richard Wagner*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: C.W. Fritzsch, 1887), 2: 115-55.

[39] Ibid., 133.

[40] Ibid., 133.

After Charlemagne's death, power struggles devolved among different, and weaker, lines until a Saxon family took over. Wagner describes this century of rule, however, as a mere "interregnum," for Conrad the Salier, allied with the Carolingians, restored the Frankish lineage and inaugurated the Hohenstaufen era that ended in 1268 with the beheading of Conrad in Naples.

Wagner posited a historical opposition party based in Italy, the Welfs, and he explained their emergence as a contestation of Hohenstaufen power. An Italian refused to accept enfeoffment to a Frankish king and Welf became synonymous with tribal independence from Frankish sovereignty.[41] Yet this challenge originated not among the people, but among the aristocracy, who for centuries had undermined Frankish centralized authority.[42] Otherwise stated, Welfs did not represent a popular, nationalist resistance, but rather an aristocratic challenge to unified power. Wagner discussed this as a historical development, but he also argued that the natural opposition between the (aristocratic) Welf and the (royal) Wibelung principles predetermined this narrative.[43] This triad of people, aristocracy, and king preoccupied Wagner during this period and appeared in other texts. In his June 4, 1848 speech to the Dresden *Vaterlandsverein*, Wagner defined Republicanism in terms of these categories.[44] The term meant the abolishment of the hereditary aristocracy, which had no social function, nor had it ever been more than a force for violence and oppression. Accordingly, there would be no more first chamber in the

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[41] Ibid., 126.

[42] Ibid., 127.

[43] Ibid., 127-28.

[44] Later published as a supplement in the *Dresdener Anzeiger*, June 16, 1848. Reproduced in *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, ed. Richard Sternfeld (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1911), 12:220-29.

state assembly, leaving only one house of representatives, voted into power in a general election, with universal male franchise. Wagner invoked the struggles against Napoleon: "This will be the great War of Liberation for the deeply dishonored, suffering mankind."[45] The people would transform from subjects to citizens, yet the king would remain in power, as first among all republicans.[46]

Wagner read this Welf-Wibelung struggle onto his society and advocated, as a revolutionary, for the final extinction of the Welf principle, so evident in German mythology and history. Wagner used the Middle Ages as a means better to understand the cyclical pattern of mythology in the historical record; and he then applied these conclusions to nineteenth-century Germany.[47] Throughout "Die Wibelungen," Wagner noted that myths and sagas suggested, and even predicted, historical patterns.[48] "Naked history" only revealed the consequences of a people's "essential attributes."[49] The Nibelung saga, for example, foretold "the historical growth, flourishing, and death" of the Germanic tribes.[50] Despite Wagner's terminological slippage between myth and saga, Wagner identified a kind of genealogy, not only between Frankish dynasties, but between myth, saga, and history. His essay suggested a linear progress from myth

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[45] Ibid., 220-22.

[46] Ibid., 222.

[47] This argument is in dialogue with Haymes's position that Wagner, like Mone, "tended to see heroic stories as degenerations of original mythic patterns," "Richard Wagner and the *Altgermanisten*," 27.

[48] Wagner, "Die Wibelungen," 123.

[49] Ibid., 119.

[50] Ibid., 125.

to history. Yet he also introduced an analytical confusion, where myth functioned as both a distant temporality and a framework with which to understand later events.

His discussion of Friedrich I, in "Die Wibelungen" and in a sketch for an eponymous drama, illustrated how history retreated into myth. Wagner first mentioned the Hohenstaufen king as a ruler who successfully negotiated with the Welfs. To bring peace and ensure support for his rule, Friedrich pacified the aristocracy with land grants.[51] This strategy, however, slowly undermined Hohenstaufen sovereignty, based increasingly on decree rather than on military power. At this point, the medieval narrative receded once more into myth. Friedrich, gripped by "a resistless force," traveled to the Levant, hearing "wondrous legends" of a "lordly country deep in Asia," where a relic performed miracles,"[52] and was never heard from again.

Wagner noted that legends of the grail emerged when Friedrich became merely the ideal keeper of world power.[53] He argued that during the High Middle Ages the hoard transformed from a material to a spiritual substance, the grail. According to legend, the keeper of the grail was priest and king, and Wagner argued that this figure was Friedrich I. After the emperor's historical disappearance, the earthly "dregs" of the hoard remained in the form of aristocratic property.[54] The Nibelungen treasure transformed into a historical struggle for property and ownership, whereby an oppressive social system slowly emerged from the monopoly of land in the possession of the few.[55] As in his speech to the *Vaterlandsverein*, Wagner emphasized the

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[51] Ibid., 127.

[52] Ibid., 150.

[53] Ibid., 150-51.

[54] Ibid., 153.

[55] Ibid., 153-54.

historical residue of the hoard in the social unrest of the 1840s. Its spiritual, ideal form lived on, but only in the form of sagas among the Germanic people. The *Nibelungenlied* was their only "keepsake" from the hoard, for they "knew it was no longer in the world." As their stories claimed, Kaiser Friedrich has returned to Germany, hidden until the time of his reemergence: "[the hoard] had been such into an old god's-hill again, a cave like that when Siegfried once had won it from the Nibelungen. The great Kaiser himself had brought it back to that hill, to save it up for better times. There in the Kyffhäuser he sits, the old "Friedrich Rotbart;" all around him the treasures of the Nibelungen, by his side the sharp sword that once slew the dreaded dragon."[56]

During this same revolutionary period Wagner also outlined a drama based on the life of the Hohenstaufen emperor, *Friedrich I*. Many of the concerns evident in "Die Wibelungen" also informed the play. In February 1849, Wagner's friend, the author and composer Eduard Devrient, noted in his diary that, "at home, *Kapellmeister* Wagner read aloud a historical-philosophical work [= *Die Wibelungen*], in which he developed with an especially spiritual and poetic combination the lofty enthusiasm for *Weltherrschaft* from the earliest sources for the sagas. Friedrich I arose as the mightiest bearer of the entire content of this idea, of enormous, awe-inspiring beauty. He wants to treat the subject in a drama. We had good conversations about it."[57] Extant sketches of the work suggest more specifically which aspects of Friedrich's *Weltherrschaft* Wagner hoped to emphasize.

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[56] Ibid., 155.

[57] February 22 1849. Cited in, *Wagner-Werk-Verzeichnis (WWV). Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Richard Wagners und ihrer Quellen*, ed. John Deathridge, Martin Geck, Egon Voss, and Isolde Vetter (Mainz and New York: Schott, 1986), *WWV* 76. Devrient's son Otto later produced his own retelling of Friedrich I, "Kaiser Rotbart," at the Hoftheater in Karlsruhe to celebrate German unification. Cited in Arno Borst, "Barbarossas Erwachen – Zur Geschichte der

Over five acts, Wagner placed the Hohenstaufen ruler in conflict with the Lombard League, the aristocracy, and the church. Act One featured the skirmishes that led to the Diet of Roncaglia in 1158, which established relations between the emperor and the Italian cities. The drama proceeded with the siege and destruction of Milan in 1162 after the League rejected imperial demands and tried to sever ties from Friedrich I. Wagner did not note the events of the third act and the drama began again in act four with the imperial *Reichstag* in Augsburg. The final act involved two large crowd scenes. First, Wagner planned to represent the 1184 Mainz *Hoffest* that celebrated the promotion of Friedrich's sons to knighthood. The second major scene was set during the Diet of Mainz in 1188, where Friedrich stated his intention to lead the Third Crusade, from which he would never return. Wagner focused on Friedrich's struggles to retain centralized power despite competition from the church, the aristocracy, and the Lombard League, portrayed in the context of courtly ceremonial and festivals. Wagner also chose to emphasize twelfth-century institutions of political representation. Three of the five acts included a scene in a medieval *Reichstag*. Had he finished the drama, this setting would have assumed particular resonance among his audience in the context of 1848/49. *Friedrich I*, like Wagner's political essays and speeches, asserted the importance of centralized kingship, combined with popular government.

German historians had discussed the Hohenstaufen period long before Wagner's creative treatment. Bodmer's discoveries prompted literary interest in the Middle Ages and they also inspired new historical research. Some scholars published critical editions of the *Nibelungenlied* in the early nineteenth century; others wrote multivolume accounts of the high medieval German

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Deutschen Identität," in *Identität*, ed. Odo Marquand and Karlheinz Stierle (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1979), 42. Remaining sketches of Wagner's *Friedrich I* suggest that the composer first intended it as an opera, but later envisioned it as a drama.

Golden Age. In this patriotic tradition, Friedrich von Raumer began to research the *Stauferzeit* in 1807 and later published a six-volume work on the period.[58] So too did Friedrich Rückert.[59] Von Raumer framed his analysis as an exploration of German unity and its dissolution. He provided a survey of the "crusading age," focusing on the struggle between occident and orient, and on imperial centralization.[60] He presented the rise and fall of the Staufer as an epic tragedy. The dynasty emerged from near obscurity and its fame culminated with the two Friedrichs. Friedrich I initiated the empire's territorial expansion into Italy, a project that his grandson Friedrich II continued. The ambitions of the latter also precipitated the collapse of the kingdom through its overextension. Wagner studied this historical work, recommended by his friend Samuel Lehrs.[61] Both emperors fascinated him and, during the winter of 1842-43, Wagner had sketched an opera based on the life of the second Friedrich and his son Manfred.[62] His sustained interest in the dynasty designated the 1840s not only as his period of German studies, but specifically as a decade during which he tried to realize the High Middle Ages artistically.

Wagner noted in "Die Wibelungen" that "Ghibelline" was a Hohenstaufen epithet. Yet in other contexts the adjective had already assumed connotations beyond the merely dynastic. These alternative meanings had decidedly presentist ramifications. In the nineteenth century,

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[58] Friedrich von Raumer, *Geschichte der Hohenstaufen und ihrer Zeit*, 6 vols. (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1823-25).

[59] Friedrich Rückert, *Kranz der Zeit* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1817).

[60] On von Raumer's place in a longer tradition of Hohenstaufen historiography, see Arno Borst, "Die Staufer in der Geschichtsschreibung," in *Die Zeit der Staufer. Geschichte-Kunst-Kultur*, vol. 3, ed. Reiner Haussherr (Stuttgart: Württembergisches Landesmuseum, 1977), 270-71.

[61] Martens, "Wagner's Middle Ages," 237.

[62] *WWV* 66.

"Ghibellinism" betokened a historical understanding of national politics framed in terms of the German High Middle Ages. For modern Ghibellines, such as the historian Wilhelm von Giesebrecht, the *Stauferzeit* represented the apogee of German power and culture. During the 1850s and 1860s this historical understanding translated to support for Prussia in an imperial context. Ghibellinist scholars had, moreover, an expansionist understanding of how a unified Germany would appear. Accordingly, interpretations of Hohenstaufen history were sites of fierce ideological conflict.[63] This dispute only intensified during the *Kulturkampf* as Ghibellines also asserted a vehemently anti-papal attitude, interpreting Friedrich I and II's resistance to Roman power in terms of nineteenth-century identitarian politics.[64] Foremost in Wagner's essay, and his opera, was this concern with royal power. He focused on dynamics that diminished its exercise, particularly Friedrich's relations with the church.

Wagner's readers were preconditioned to consider Friedrich I in mythical context. At the end of "Die Wibelungen," he referred to Friedrich I as "Friedrich Rotbart," slumbering in Kyffhäuser mountain, ready to awaken when called. The sleeping king motif is common to many fairy tales, but by the nineteenth century in Germany the myth was geographically fixed and had assumed certain political interpretations.[65] In 1816, the Grimms brothers included the story, "Friedrich Rotbart auf dem Kyffhäuser," in their work, *Deutsche Sagen*, in which they described his rest in

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[63] See this discussion in Chapter Three.

[64] For a detailed reading of these intense debates, as well as their influence on twentieth-century German politics, see the insightful article by Martin Ruehl, "'In this time without emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's Kaiser Friedreich der Zweite Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000), 207ff.

[65] For a comparison of this myth in England and Germany, see Maike Oergel, *The Return of King Arthur and the Nibelungen: National Myth in Nineteenth-Century English and German Literature* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998).

the Kyffhäuser mountain in Thuringia.[66] The Grimms popularized a version of the emperor unrelated to new historiography about the *Stauferzeit*. Their Friedrich was an archetypal Kaiser, isolated from history. Arno Borst has argued that the Grimms' iteration of the emperor was doubly out of time: beyond the reach of historical science, and identified not with the movers and doers of Napoleonic reform, but with farmers and shepherds, those "forgotten by the revolution."[67] This conception of Kaiser Rotbart changed during the first half of the nineteenth century. During the *Vormärz* and the 1840s, the image of a sleeping king became popular as an artistic representation of possibility: of unification; of cultural renaissance.[68] Scheffel, too, included a slumbering king when he wrote *Ekkehard* in the early 1850s, though his version dwelled in the Swabian Heidenhöhle.[69] Decidedly less political than Wagner's works, even here the king functioned as a longing for a unified national life that rulers had squandered through ambition. Wagner's Friedrich also represented unfulfilled possibility, but he placed it in a broader context. Unification became part of the cyclical recurrence of mythology, a promise for the future and also a way of understanding its realization.

Wagner structured "Die Wibelungen" as a genealogy that traced the passage of the Nibelungen hoard from saga to history, and back into legend. Even though he read nineteenth-century historiography, he used the story of the *Nibelungenlied* mythologically and approached even primary sources with this framework. In his text he cited early medieval chronicles that

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[66] Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, eds., *Deutsche Sagen*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Nicolai, 1816-18).

[67] Borst, "Barbarossa Erwachen," 30-31.

[68] Ibid., 33.

[69] Scheffel's king – not technically sleeping, just biding his time – believed in a territorially small Germany, describing Italy as "a thorn in the German flesh." Joseph Victor von Scheffel, *Ekkehard* (1855; repr., Zurich: Diogenes, 1985), 158.

recorded Carolingian dynastic claims to be the descendants of Priam of Troy. He interpreted this not as a historical claim, but as evidence of the Frankish constellation of myth.[70] Wagner suggested that those who strive to understand events based on its actors' inner lives should first acknowledge that "it seems most important of all to note what they believed about themselves, or wanted to claim as a belief."[71] Accordingly, Wagner described these claims as important not in terms of content, but rather for the pattern to which they contributed. This was arguably a far more sophisticated gloss on early medieval sources than many nineteenth-century scholars would have granted, happier to understand this period instead as primitive and gullible.

Wagner understood this mythologized genealogy as part of a longer tradition. The Roman Julian family, too, had claimed a relation with Troy. He argued that the Carolingians, in fact, had merely reproduced these earlier Roman pedigrees. This suggested not a lack of sophistication, but a veneration of the Roman world and its myths. He posited that it was a means of laying claim to a "more cultured people," who then served as an origins tale for the Franks.[72] Yet Wagner used these twin genealogies to make a more general point about narrative models. In his essay, the Carolingian bid for Trojan lineage contributed to a broader legend, "common to all

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[70] Various sources attested this lineage, including the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and the *Chronicle of Fredegar*. This latter chronicle existed in over thirty manuscripts across Europe and its *Editio princeps* appeared in 1568. Both of these Merovingian sources were later republished in a critical edition in the 1888 volume of the MGH *Scriptores* II. This strained claim persisted throughout the Middle Ages and other dynasties replicated its genealogy, often claiming descent from Rome, Greece, or Troy in a bid for legitimacy based on a transfer of rule, *translatio imperii*. For a more detailed discussion, see Jacques Le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Arthaud, 1964), ch. 6.

[71] Wagner, "Die Wibelungen," 137.

[72] Ibid., 140.

nations."[73] This generic tale always involved a holy city destroyed by tribes from the provinces. This story referred ultimately to the journey from the Caucasus Mountains. When Indo-Europeans left their *Urheimat*, they created cities, or fantasy worlds, modeled on the original, such as Olympus for the Greeks. Wagner suggested, however, that German myth-making contained the purest memory of their earliest home in the Caucasus. The Greeks and Romans diluted this memory through their adoption of foreign legends. Isolated until the Romans, Germanic tribes preserved a memory of ancient migration to a degree not found in other cultures. For Wagner, this ur-memory also framed the Frankish affinity for Trojan descent as a natural one, for it merely reproduced a legend that already existed.[74] As in the essay more generally, and in his sketch for Friedrich I, he used a historical moment from the Middle Ages to make much broader claims. Details from the period remained, but they existed in service to an argument about the historical manifestation of the cyclical nature of myth.

Wagner's works from the late 1840s also highlighted the sometimes porous boundaries between medievalism, philhellenism, and orientalism. Wagner, like many others in the nineteenth century, never invoked the Middle Ages to the exclusion of all other historical periods. Even those who exhibited a clear preference for the German Middle Ages, such as Reichensperger or Scheffel, often situated the era relationally to other ancient civilizations. If medieval Germany was an origins point for the nineteenth century, many scholars also posited a yet more ancient genealogy for the Middle Ages. Niebuhr, for example, began his Charlemagne lecture with an excursus on the Greeks and the Germans, the two races which founded Europe.[75]

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[73] Ibid., 138.

[74] Ibid., 138-39.

[75] Barthold Georg Niebuhr, "Karl der Große. Eine Vorlesung," (Berlin, 1808), 1-2.

For Niebuhr, this shared origin with Greek culture distinguished Germans from other Europeans, but it did not detract from the accomplishments of the Middle Ages. For the Wagner of the 1840s, the Aryan ancestry of the Germans acted as an explanation for medieval, and mythological, phenomena.

Wagner invoked the German Middle Ages in "Die Wibelungen," but he discussed them ahistorically; not so in the outline for his drama, *Friedrich I*. Throughout Wagner's "German studies" in the 1840s, he was genuinely interested in the Hohenstaufen period. Moreover, a specifically patriotic reading of this period informed his studies. The authors of Wagner's sources were themselves German patriots. Many had started their projects in the context of Napoleonic occupation and in response to the fracture of Central Europe. Wagner's own usage perpetuated this radical deployment of the Middle Ages even as he adapted it for the 1840s. His interpretation emphasized a historical Republican tradition, native to Germany, which had existed in alliance with the emperor and without interference from an inherited aristocracy. The Medieval accessed a discourse attractive for its radical, nationalizing inheritance. Up to 1849, medieval Germany offered a potential model for German reform.

Before 1850, Wagner still found certain medieval figures and tropes useful; after, he largely avoided them. "Die Wibelungen" is in some respects paradigmatic of the ways in which Wagner de-historicized the Middle Ages and transformed them into myth. In his essay he suggested that Charlemagne and Friedrich Rotbart were best understood as mythical figures. Yet the fixity of the historical record made this project difficult. The popularity of these medieval emperors added to the challenge. The Hohenstaufen period became increasingly legible during the nineteenth century, as did the rest of the German Middle Ages. The *MGH* published new volumes with increasing rapidity and each included newly discovered sources, in addition to new critical

readings of older ones. Historians also contributed detailed narratives about these periods. The Middles Ages had less and less room for mythology; Friedrich I became essentially two figures, the historical and the mythical ruler. Even this latter personage gained an official mythology, supported by texts and national monuments.

4. Artistic Precedents: The *Nibelungenlied* in Nazarene Painting

This phenomenon affected Wagner's 1876 staging for the premiere of the *Ring*. The *Nibelungenlied* had a scholarly tradition similar to that of the Hohenstaufens and one that emerged in nearly identical circumstances. By 1876, the *Nibelungenlied* also had a particular visual tradition from which Wagner found it difficult to distance his own work. In 1850, Wagner utilized medieval subjects that he tried partially to decouple from historical content. By 1876 he had turned exclusively to myth, but he continued this same project of resistance. He tried to create an opera set independent from existing representations of the *Nibelungenlied* that located it in the Hohenstaufen twelfth century, when the poem was first transcribed.

Wagner premiered the complete cycle in 1876 only after a long struggle to realize his vision for the operas. Biographers often emphasize that he overcame numerous financial setbacks.[76] Prussian officials regularly denied his requests for financial assistance, acidly reminding Wagner that he did not hold a monopoly on the German national spirit.[77] In 1874 Ludwig II once again saved the composer from bankruptcy and agreed, at personal and political cost, to cover Wagner's debts in Bayreuth. In this section, I examine not Wagner's administrative or personal disappointments, but rather the artistic challenges of staging his *Bühnenfestspiel*. As John

[76] Furness, *Wagner*, 142-151.

[77] Ibid., 142.

Deathridge has noted, there has been little interdisciplinary research on Wagner.[78] Scholars have written eloquently about textual influences on the *Ring*'s composition, for example, but few discuss the work from alternative artistic perspectives despite Wagner's insistence that it represented a new fusion of the arts.[79] By the early 1870s Wagner had a clear conception of how the cycle should appear as a visual production, particularly its scenery and costumes.

Wagner's papers attest to a sustained interest in the staging of his operas, which long antedated the *Ring*. As early as 1842, he corresponded with the Dresden Court Theater's costume designer to inquire about its production of his early opera, *Rienzi*. He asked for detailed descriptions of the backdrops, cautioning, "there are none the less some individual sets…which cannot be adequately & *characterfully* assembled without new & additional sets being provided. Is anyone thinking about this and working on it?"[80] He never lost this interest and attention to detail. He harangued Franz Liszt for descriptions of his 1852 production of *Tannhäuser* in Berlin, while Wagner remained in Swiss exile.[81] Similar exchanges are consistently found throughout his papers. Doubtless Wagner wanted to retain control over productions for which he could not be present. Yet this cannot explain the extent of his interest. He emphasized scenery and staging even in his earliest instructions for the festival theater in Bayreuth. Wagner seemed

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[78] John Deathridge, "A Brief History of Wagner Research," in Müller and Wapnewski, eds., *The Wagner Handbook*, 203-04.

[79] An example of the former is Elizabeth Magee's careful and insightful reconstruction of early nineteenth-century research about the *Nibelungenlied*. See Magee, *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs*. A notable exception to this relative one-sidedness is Günter Metken, "Wagner and the Visual Arts," in Müller and Wapnewski, eds., *Wagner Handbook*, 354-372, which examines Wagner's posthumous influence on painting.

[80] Letter to Ferdinand Heine, dated January 1842. Wagner, *Selected Letters*, 85. Italics Wagner's own.

[81] Letter to Franz Liszt, dated 8 Sept 1852. Ibid., 267.

almost indifferent to the construction of the theater, specifying only that he wanted an "unornamented" and "provisional" theater. By contrast, "stage machinery and scenery, and everything that relates to the ideal, inner work of art – *perfect* in every way. *No* economies here: everything as though designed to last a long time, nothing provisional."[82] Shortly after these instructions, well before the theater's creation and even before the completion of *Götterdämmerung*, he approached artists for the set. In 1872 he hired a historical painter for the scenery and a year and a half later he found a costume designer based in Berlin. Wagner sent his libretti, as well as additional pamphlets, to both men so that they could begin their plans, even as the funding of the festival remained uncertain.

During the approximately seven decades of the *Nibelungenlied*'s popularity, its representation had developed a dominant aesthetic that Wagner found difficult to overcome in the *Ring*'s staging. Early nineteenth-century editions of the poem frequently included illustrations. Readers often identified these volumes by author – "the von der Hagen version" – and also, increasingly, by artist. Just as a range of writers adapted the medieval epic during this early period, so too did numerous painters. Johann Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825) provided illustrations for a popular version of the text, as did artists from younger schools of German painting. Peter Cornelius represented this latter set. While living in Rome during the 1810s, he sketched seven scenes from the *Nibelungenlied*, later printed as engraved plates in 1822.[83] He had moved from Germany to Rome in order to live in an expatriate artist colony informally called the *Lukasbund*. There, he slowly established his reputation as a painter. Niebuhr met

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[82] Letter to Friedrich Feustel, dated 12 April 1872. Ibid., 793.

[83] Peter Cornelius, "Die Nibelungensage," engraved by Samuel Amsler, Carl Barth, Johann Heinrich Lips, and Heinrich Ritter (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1822).

Cornelius and this circle of artists while posted in Rome. He described these men as the only worthwhile painters in the city and as the founders of a new artistic style. He wrote to Savigny in 1817, "I believe confidently that we are on the eve of a new era of art in Germany…that it only needs a little encouragement on the part of our governments to render us the participants of this beautiful development."[84] When Niebuhr met Cornelius, the painter had just finished his *Nibelungenlied* cycle. On seeing them, Niebuhr stated that "his taste in art is quite for the sublime, the simple and grand."[85] The artist recognized Niebuhr's interest and dedicated his cycle to the historian.[86] The two men shared more than mutual respect and artistic taste. Cornelius had begun to illustrate the medieval poem in 1812 for many of the same reasons that Niebuhr delivered a speech on Charlemagne and Fichte on the German nation. The artist hoped to create a work that thematized the national past for the present.[87]

Cornelius produced a purposefully archaizing style that avoided strict historical accuracy in order to represent the German spirit of the poem. He rejected scholarly analyses of the poem that dated it to the fifth century, believing instead that late medieval models would heighten its resonance as a national artifact.[88] His illustrations reveal this unmistakably medieval inspiration. He based the costumes of both men and women in his images on early fourteenth-century

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[84] Letter to Savigny, dated 16 February 1817. *The Life and Letters of Barthold George Niebuhr*, trans. Susannah Winkworth (London: Chapman and Hall, 1852), 3:94.

[85] Ibid., 71.

[86] "Dem Geheimrat Niebuhr als ein geringes Zeichen unbegrenzter Verehrung, Liebe und Dankbarkeit von P. Cornelius," cited in Frank Büttner, *Peter Cornelius: Fresken und Freskenprojekte*, Vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1980), 38.

[87] Ibid., 36.

[88] Ibid., 41.

models. The architecture, too, was either Gothic or Romanesque.[89] Even events and figures in the background thematized obviously medieval scenes, such as hunts and courtly ceremonial. Cornelius ignored consistency in favor of blended medieval elements to root the tale in a Germanic past unhindered by historical specificity, one that existed in a realm of visual fantasy.

Artists continued to interpret this material even as Wagner developed it in his essays. Cornelius's colleague from the *Lukasbund*, Schnorr von Carolsfeld, completed a set of paintings on the material, between 1828 and 1834, and 1843 to 1867. Cornelius intended his engravings for private ownership and circulation. Von Carolsfeld, by contrast, created a set of murals for King Ludwig I's Royal Residence in Munich, which were as monumental in size and scope as the original medieval poem had become in reputation. The palace designated six rooms in total as the *Nibelungensäle* and, during three decades of work, von Carolsfeld covered the walls and ceilings with scenes from the medieval epic. Like Cornelius's engravings, his paintings portrayed an unmistakably German past. They took place in forests, along the Rhine, and in large Romanesque halls. Von Carolsfeld also avoided strict historical accuracy and he used archaizing costumes and architecture to suggest instead a generic medieval past. Heinz-Toni Wappenschmidt has suggested that this set of paintings inaugurated a new interpretation of the *Nibelungenlied*, one that emphasized a continuous transfer of sovereignty from the poem's Germanic heroes to modern German princes and kings.[90] Wagner might have understood this assertion as similar to Carolingian claims about Trojan lineage. Cornelius participated as well in

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[89] Ibid., 41.

[90] Heinz-Toni Wappenschmidt, "Nibelungenlied und Historienmalerei im 19. Jahrhundert. Wege der Identitätsfindung," in *Die Nibelungen. Ein deutscher Wahn, ein deutscher Alptraum. Studien und Dokumente zur Rezeption des Nibelungenstoffs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Joachim Heinzle and Anneliese Waldschmidt, 223-24.

the *Nibelungenlied*'s visual expansion in meaning, from patriotic, private illustrations to large-scale public frescos. In 1859 he finished a painting of Hagen sinking the treasure in the Rhine, which was later hung in the *Alte Nationalgalerie* in Berlin. Cornelius's fellow *Lukasbruder*, Johann Gottfried Schadow, also portrayed the epic in a series of twenty-eight frescos for the archways above the sculpture hall of the museum, a cycle created for the National Gallery's opening in 1876.

All three painters belonged to the Nazarene school. Its members, including Cornelius, von Carolsfeld, and Schadow, had met during the 1810s in Rome, where they developed their signature style. These artworks appear at first naive and straightforward, and many represent religious themes. The Nazarenes were devout and often painted Christian allegories. As Niebuhr noted in 1817, when he began to socialize with them in Rome, "I like Overbeck and the two Schadows much, and they are estimable both as artists and as men; but the Catholicism of Overbeck and one of the Schadows excludes entirely many topics of conversation."[91] This religious fervor was evident in their subjects, perhaps contributing to modern criticism that has described these works as outmoded even when they were made. The group produced many secular works as well, including Friedrich Overbeck's political allegory, "Italia and Germania." Like many Germans in 1810, the *Lukasbrüder*'s paragons were medieval. Their artworks resemble a German prototype for the later Pre-Raphaelites, in their combination of religious and medieval motifs. Yet as Cordula Grewe has recently argued, Nazarene artwork was far more complex than often assumed.[92] Nazarenes understood their project as the reintroduction of the

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[91] Niebuhr, *Letters,* 3:71.

[92] Her two books on the subject, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009) and *The Nazarenes: Romantic Avant-Garde and the Art of the Concept* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015) are most helpful, as is Lionel

fixed meaning of artworks, particularly its religious import. Their artwork was didactic and its messages were complicated. The painters often provided guidebooks to explain their iconography, leading Grewe to caution that these works were meant to be read, not passively viewed.[93] Erwin Panofsky, too, has described the Nazarene textual method as a "crusading iconography," combining a historicist interest with intensely pedagogical content.[94]

Many scholars focus on the complicated ideography of their religious work. Lionel Gossman has described their technique as "the subordination of the visual to the conceptual," art in the service of religion.[95] Yet these painters worked on profane subjects throughout their career. Cornelius produced his *Nibelungen* illustrations while living in Rome, during which time he also provided illustrations for *Faust*. Their secular work stylistically resembled their religious art. Its interpretation, moreover, suggests that it was intended to provide the same stability of meaning. Von Carolsfeld began to paint his *Nibelungen* frescoes well before 1848/49 and he finished long after those tumultuous two years. Just as his religious paintings suggested Christian doctrinal permanence, so too did these murals attest ideational and dynastic continuity in an era when stability, to many, seemed lost.

The Nazarene artists belong to a much larger category of nineteenth-century art – historical painting – that critics have often ignored. Yet as Niebuhr noted in 1817, the *Lukasbrüder* represented the newest movement in art. Their popularity continued well into the mid century in

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Gossman's essay, "Unwilling Moderns: The Nazarene Painters of the Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 2 (2003): np.

[93] Grewe, *Painting the Sacred*, 311. Arguably, this idea of an active subject is indeed quite Romantic, despite the painters' aversion to some assertions of that early movement.

[94] Cited in ibid., 320.

[95] Gossman, "Unwilling Moderns," np.

Germany and abroad. Adolf Naumann, the painter in *Middlemarch* with whom Will Ladislaw briefly apprenticed, was broadly understood to be Overbeck, whom George Eliot had met in Rome.[96] New movements, including naturalism, eventually supplanted the Nazarenes in public opinion. By mid century, however, even Nazarenes complained about the high demand for literalist historical painting.[97] Arguably they were themselves partly responsible for this shift in taste. They had popularized a historicist idiom, archaizing in some respects and thoroughly modern in others, for the museum-going public.

Early Wagner admired the Nazarene interpretation of the *Nibelungenlied*. In his Dresden library during the 1840s, the title page from Cornelius's *Nibelungensage* engravings hung over his desk.[98] Events crowded Cornelius's first page. In the center foreground, a king morosely sits on a throne while all around him events take place. To his left men clad in medieval armor fight. On his right, a medieval hunting scene takes place. Above, one sees a courtly processional, led by a knight. At the top, a man and a woman wed in a Gothic chapel. The artist framed the riotous scene with Romanesque arches. Cornelius represented the saga as medieval pageant, and this interpretation of the poem hung above Wagner's desk in Dresden, guiding his medieval studies and historical operas.

Almost two decades later, his opinion had fundamentally altered. In July 1865, Wagner's patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria, gave him a painting of the *Tannhäuser* myth by Cornelius. Wagner's disgust with Cornelius's representation overcame even the customarily formal, flowery language he used when addressing the ruler. He thanked Ludwig II for the painting,

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[96] Ibid., np.

[97] Ibid., np.

[98] Cited in Magee, "The 'Ring' and its Medieval Sources," 30.

which "enthralled" him greatly.[99] Wagner deemed the painting typical of Cornelius's style, and criticized Cornelius and his disciples for trying to finish the work of the Middle Ages: "This style will never be free from the reproach of a certain affectation and artistic presence, and I believe that, with my own poems and stage directions, I have demonstrated that the objects of the middle Ages can be depicted in a more ideal, more purely human and more generally valid manner than this school of painting sets out to achieve." Wagner understood his task as he did during the 1840s: to improve on sagas preserved by medieval scribes and produce their ideal form. In those early decades, the Nazarenes had appeared as colleagues engaged in the same task. By the 1860s, however, Wagner saw them as merely archaizing, lost in the past rather than improving on it for the present. He minimized the sting of his comments to the king and ended his letter with thanks: "none the less, this water-color of the Tannhäuser Ballad, for ex., remains an enthralling and characterful work which I, for one, find uncommonly attractive. My most sincere thanks to its most affectionate donor for such a beautiful gift!"

Other documents suggest that his animus towards the Nazarenes, especially Cornelius and von Carolsfeld, was twofold. First, their style no longer resonated with him, despite their shared subjects. Second, the popularity of Cornelius and von Carolsfeld's representations of the *Nibelungenlied* made it difficult for him to realize his own, one that departed from their medievalizing aesthetic. Wagner wrote explicitly on the matter when trying to stage his *Ring* operas, particularly when hiring scenarists and costumers. He worried that no one would be able to portray the Germanic world as he saw it. In the same letter to Ludwig II in which he grudgingly thanked his patron for Cornelius's painting, Wagner argued that "the painter who can

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[99] Letter to King Ludwig II, dated 21/22 July 1865. Wagner, *Selected Letters*, 650.

match my own conception is therefore no doubt still to be found."[100] The composer had always supervised the production of his operas even from afar, but his instructions intensified. The worry that his vision for the staging of the *Ring* was more modern, or more relevant, than what another artist could realize haunted Wagner's production.

5. 'Against all pomp': Scenery and Costumes for the *Ring*'s Premiere

Wagner imparted his vision for the set of the *Ring* in writing. In 1872 he contacted the historical painter Josef Hoffmann, asking him whether he would provide the scenery for the Bayreuth premiere of the *Ring*. He sought out the painter because, "the character of [his work] appears to be very close to what I am wanting."[101] Wagner enclosed a copy of his libretto for Hoffmann's study, so that the artist would gain a deeper understanding of Wagner's wishes. He wrote to his patron only a few months later and described Hoffmann's sketches as a "truly inspired stroke of genius."[102] Wagner similarly tried to control the costumes for his production. In 1869 Ludwig II insisted, against the composer's wishes, on a performance of *Das Rheingold*. In reluctant preparation, Wagner sent his own sketches for costumes to the Royal Court Theater in Munich. He complained to a friend that the costume proposals he had seen "show no sense of invention." He criticized that "once again it is an occasion for regret that the author himself has not been consulted until so late a stage with regard to his wishes in so highly problematical a matter as that of designing costumes."[103] It was evident that the designers had not followed his instructions

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[100] Ibid., 650.

[101] Letter to Josef Hoffmann, dated 28 July 1872. Ibid., 810-11.

[102] Letter to King Ludwig II, dated 1 October, 1874. Ibid., 833. See Figure 3.

[103] Letter to Hans Richter, 26 July 1869. Ibid., 751.

to consult scholars and archeologists about Roman representations of the ancient Germanic world of gods.

Wagner expressly framed his guidelines for the 1876 costumes as a rejection of Nazarene representations of the *Nibelungenlied*. In 1874 he hired a costume designer from Berlin, Carl Emil Doepler. Wagner's letter included copies of his poem along with supplementary material, as for Hoffmann. He emphasized Doepler's creative license while also giving more explicit directions. He urged Doepler to consult Roman authors, but to avoid a miscellany of Nordic-Classical antiquity. Wagner required "a characteristic portrait made up of individual figures and depicting with strikingly vivid detail personal events from a period of culture not only remote from our own experience but having no association with any known experience." He elaborated further to make especially clear that Doepler would have to abandon all preconceptions and reimagine this period entirely. Wagner concluded, "you will soon discover that you have to ignore completely the sort of picture which, following the example of Cornelius, Schnorr & others, artists have tried to put forward in portraying the characters of the medieval Lay of the Nibelungs."[104] Wagner's pointed rejection of common alternatives reveals their prevalence. He wanted costumes that would instead communicate his vision of the mythical Germanic world.

Wagner's long obsession with costuming reflected the detail with which he planned his operas. Yet his interest can also be set in a broader context: the nineteenth-century belief that dress communicated the personal qualities of the wearer, as well as their national background and values. During the Napoleonic era, confronting foreign invasion, German patriots donned what they believed was medieval Germanic dress to signal their allegiances.[105] This practice

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[104] Letter to Carl Emil Doepler, dated 17. December 1874. Ibid., 845-46.

[105] See Chapter One.

continued throughout the early decades of the century and remains visible in paintings produced during this period. In Rome, the *Lukasbrüder* also wore old Germanic costume to signal their membership in an artistic fraternity, which may also explain why Italians delighted in mocking these eccentrics.[106] During Niebuhr's travels throughout the Netherlands in 1808, he meticulously noted variation in regional dress, just as he recorded changes in landscape and industry. In a letter to his father, he recounted a trip he and his wife took to northern Holland, "dieses schöne Käse- und Butterland."[107] His first remarks entirely concerned dress, for "the north Dutch traditional costume struck me as remarkable." He described the farmers' clothing in terms of shape, color, and impression, in detail too tedious to reproduce. Niebuhr added that for the women, "their headdress is the most original," and spent over half a page recounting it.[108] Like physiognomy, costume expressed ties to a place, for it had developed across generations. In the context of *Sattelzeit* geopolitical rupture, costume functioned as a stable medium that communicated historical communities and traditions, unaffected by change. Based on similarities in dress, Niebuhr even posited a relation between Dutch Frisians and Saxons from his birthplace Ditmarsch.[109] Costume offered information about people: their environment, their jobs, even long-lost kinships between different places.

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[106] On their dress, see Gossman, "Unwilling Moderns." Cordula Grewe has noted that the term "Nazarene" was in fact bestowed on the group by Italians, mocking their religious devotion and preference for a monk's uniform. See Grewe, *The Nazarenes*, 4.

[107] Letter to Carsten Niebuhr, dated 29 May 1808. *Nachgelassene Schriften B. G. Niebuhrs nichtphilologischen Inhalts*, ed. Marcus Niebuhr (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1842), 107.

[108] Ibid., 107.

[109] Ibid., 108.

Costume communicated specific political allegiances. In a revolutionary context, it conveyed radical politics. The *Burschenschaftler* at the Warburg in 1817 donned medieval dress because its usage in the Napoleonic era had endowed it with patriotic sentiment.[110] Yet by the 1876 Bayreuth premiere, old Germanic dress no longer communicated the beliefs of a radical minority. State officials had incorporated it into a range of public activities related to unification, especially commemorative parades and festivals associated with national monuments. As Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte have noted, nineteenth-century festivals for the middle classes became increasingly historical in content frequently emphasized the medieval origins of German unification.[111] The authors argue that during the parades, participants put on costumes to project a unified German identity based on historical precedent.[112] Medieval German dress had lost its earlier, radical connotations and gained a place in a statist narrative of German origin and belonging.

Celebrations at monuments constructed after 1871 functioned similarly. Karen Lang has noted that these official structures invoked the unified past. Planners also created festivals for their inauguration that heightened the emotional effects of the structures.[113] This entailed relating the past to the national present, often through pageants that included historical reenactments of

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[110] Though events at the Wartburg have recently been reevaluated, the use of costumes remains unchanged. See Steven Michael Press, "False Fire: The Wartburg Book-Burning of 1817," *Central European History* 42 (2009): 633. See also Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Über Sitte, Mode und Kleidertracht. Ein Wort aus der Zeit* (Frankfurt a/M: Bernhard Körner, 1813).

[111] Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte, "Bürgerliche Feste als symbolische Politik im 19. Jahrhundert," in Hettling and Nolte, eds., *Bürgerliche Feste. Symbolische Formen politischen Handelns im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 7.

[112] Ibid., 23.

[113] Karen Lang, "Monumental Unease: Monuments and the Making of National Identity in Germany," *Studies in the History of Art* 53 (1996): 281-85.

the events commemorated. These celebrations also referred to historical events from the national past, staged as *tableaux vivants*.[114] This latter activity was also the means by which less explicitly political costuming crossed between public and private spaces. The popularity of *tableaux vivants* during the nineteenth century is hard to overstate and they are regularly mentioned in private papers and literature. Photography recorded these otherwise ephemeral performances for the archive and documented its broad appeal for figures from Scheffel to the Wagners.[115]

Wagner's opera cycle resembled these festivals and parades. He tacitly acknowledged this likeness when he named the *Ring* a *Bühnenfestspiel*. The production at Bayreuth accords with Hettling and Nolte's description of the new bourgeois festivals. It required a journey closer to a pilgrimage than a vacation – or so Wagner hoped. Just as officials organized historical parades for an audience that was more passive than participatory, Wagner's viewers watched rather than contributed in any meaningful way. These similarities made it all the more necessary for Wagner to distinguish the cycle from official national celebrations, particularly since government representatives had often distanced themselves from his projects. Wagner focused on costumes and scenery in order to draw a visual distinction between his work and previous interpretations of the *Ring* and its source materials, as well as generic medieval costuming.

Despite Wagner's detailed descriptions for the costumes, the 1876 production was a disappointment, visually. Initially optimistic, Richard and Cosima Wagner found the new scenarist and costumier sympathetic, seemingly in agreement with Wagner's vision for the

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[114] Ibid., 69.

[115] Scheffel's paper contain numerous photos of historical *tableaux vivants*. Literarische Gesellschaft Scheffelbund Karlsruhe Nachlass Scheffel Nr 591.

cycle.[116] Closer to the premiere, these relationships deteriorated. Hoffmann's sketches for the scenery seemed promising, but the Wagners thought he intended to draw attention from the music. Cosima noted that it was all "much too ostentatious…R. is against all pomp, and explains how he turned his back on subjects such as *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* in order to do away entirely with outward pomp and present human beings without any conventional frills."[117] The decorations, when they arrived, "[looked] as if they had been concocted by a bookbinder and a confectioner combined!"[118] The costumes were no better. Cosima wrote that they revealed "an archeologist's fantasy, to the detriment of the tragic and mythical elements. I should like everything to be much simpler, more primitive. As it is, it is all mere pretense."[119] Her description only became more dismissive: they bore "all the marks of provincial tastelessness;"[120] "the costumes, particularly Alberich's, almost ludicrous."[121] Wagner managed to avoid replicating common Nazarene representations of the *Ring*, but he ended up with a different kind of primitivism, one that dressed Siegfried as a German barbarian, complete with short fur tunic and knee-high leather sandals (*fig. 4*).

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[116] See, for example, Richard Wagner, *Bayreuther Briefe, 1871-1883*, 2 vols, ed. Erich Kloss (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1907-08), 97, 100-01, and Cosima Wagner, *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, Vol. 1: 1869-1877, ed. Martin Gregor-Devlin and Dietrich Mack, trans. Geoffrey Skelton (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1976), 524, 555, 656.

[117] C. Wagner, *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, 704.

[118] Ibid., 866.

[119] Ibid., 915.

[120] Ibid., 917.

[121] Ibid., 918.

Even a month later the Wagners remained disappointed. They noted that all the costumes and scenery would have to be entirely recommissioned before further performances despite their enormous debt from the premiere.[122] Months later, nothing held under "even the simplest of examinations."[123] Wagner had tried to create a new visual motif for the *Nibelungenlied*, but he ended with a similarly caricatured set and costumes. His rejection of existing costuming only revealed its prevalence. Later events validated his fixation on the visual. After his death, opera houses closely reproduced the aesthetic precedents of Bayreuth, for the *Ring* and especially for *Parsifal*.[124] Visuals mattered and yet Wagner claimed that he was unable to produce an alternative to the *Nibelungenlied*'s medievalizing representational scheme.



Figure 4. Georg Unger in his "Siegfried" costume for the premiere of the Ring cycle in Bayreuth, 1876. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera Archive.

6. Conclusion

The *Ring*'s mythical landscape proved difficult and its setting was among the first elements its parodists changed, perhaps seeking a more relevant context for their predominantly urban

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[122] Ibid., 922.

[123] Ibid., 944.

[124] Anthony J. Steinhoff, "Embracing the Grail: *Parsifal*, Richard Wagner and the German Nation," *German History* 30 (2012): 389-90.

audiences. The first spoof opened in Berlin only months after the summer premiere. The author Paul Pniower titled it, *Der Ring, der nie gelungen*, and transposed its events to the world of commerce in the capital.[125] Set in the depression after 1873, Wagner's gods and demigods become contractors, stock exchange speculators, and bankers. Wotan himself became a bankrupt who unsuccessfully sought political and economic stability.[126] Pniower reduced the four-night cycle to a four act opera and its success, possibly its brevity as well, guaranteed its replication in cities across Central Europe.[127] Some have argued that these parodies represented not an alternative to Wagner's project, but rather its affirmation. Myth, it seemed, did speak to nineteenth-century political and social concerns.[128]

Yet Wagner, creator of mythic worlds, had also earlier believed in the communicative power of medieval history. Early in his career the composer used the Middle Ages as a means to establish precedent for the radical politics he hoped to see realized in 1848/49. Yet with the failure of the revolution, Wagner no longer invoked the era as a utopian alternative. In terms of his music, he described this transition as a shift from monumentalism towards simplicity, from history to myth. Historical operas, according to the composer, always entailed grand ceremonial and ritual, which he was anxious to avoid. Almost every act of his sketch for *Friedrich I*

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[125] Andrea Schneider, *Die parodierten Musikdramen Richard Wagners. Geschichte und Documentation Wagnerscher Opernparodien im deutschsprachigen Raum von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Salzburg: Müller-Speiset, 1996), 221-30. See also Dieter Borchmeyer and Stephan Kohler, eds., *Wagner Parodien* (Frankfurt a/M: Insel, 1983). Pniower's rhyming title would be lost in translation: "Der Ring, der nie gelungen," rather than "Der Ring der Nibelungen."

[126] Schneider, *Die parodierten Musikdramen Richard Wagners*, 222.

[127] Ibid., 230-33.

[128] Borchmeyer and Kohler, *Wagner Parodien*, 292.

included a large crowd scene. By the 1850s Wagner found this requirement for medieval subjects artistically restrictive.

Wagner was prescient. Friedrich I became incorporated into a statist, national narrative during the second half of the nineteenth century that left little room for dissenting interpretation. Monuments celebrating German history frequently represented Friedrich Rotbart as an imperial predecessor to Kaiser Wilhelm I, referred to after his death as Kaiser Weißbart or Barbablanca, in acknowledgment of this kinship.[129] After unification, councilors from the city of Goslar received funding to restore an important early medieval palace, the *Kaiserpfalz*. Its renovation included the commissioning of a large set of murals. These frescos portrayed a teleological historical narrative leading to unification, moving from myth, to the Middle Ages, to Luther, to 1871. Two panels in particular framed this story. Over the entrance door, the artist, Hermann Wislicenus, painted a cycle depicting Friedrich I's slumber in the Kyffhäuser Mountain, followed by his awakening during the nineteenth century.[130] In the center of the room, above a throne, was an enormous painting of Wilhelm I, the fulfillment of imperial Germany's return. Friedrich I increasingly belonged to an unsophisticated narrative that united the mythical and the historical to legitimize Prussian Germany.

Monuments to Barbarossa proliferated across the unified nation with little variation in this message. A veterans' association funded a large monument for Kyffhäuser Mountain, the legendary resting place of Friedrich I, and it opened in 1896. The site included two large sculptures, one dedicated to Friedrich I and another to Wilhelm I. These late-century monuments

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[129] Arno Borst, "Barbarossas Erwachen," 54.

[130] For this description, see Monika Arndt, *Die Goslarer Kaiserpfalz als Nationaldenkmal. Eine ikonographische Untersuchung* (Hildesheim: August Lax, 1976), 179. The central panel with the Kaiser measures 7.1 x 7.2 meters.

flattened earlier understandings of Friedrich I, which accounted for both his historical and mythical identities.[131] During the second half of the nineteenth century, Friedrich I came to represent a generic promise for unification. This reading, in which the emperor embodied unification, erased his other, less conventional, interpretations. Barbarossa became less and less imaginable as the figure from Wagner's sketches, a means to suggest an alternative political system. Wagner anticipated Friedrich I's slow transformation into a figure who no longer resonated in a left-liberal milieu. The medieval emperor exemplified the very kind of nationalizing style that Wagner resisted during the 1840s and again in the 1870s, when he eschewed conventional representations of the *Ring* in search of a new idiom.

This chapter has had a dual argument. I have reconstructed transformations in Wagner's conception of the Middle Ages, as well as in its representation. Additionally, I have used Wagner to trace broader shifts in the political and artistic resonance of medieval subjects over the course of the nineteenth century. The figure of Friedrich I, and his correlating historical narrative, had revolutionary potential from the early 1800s through the failure of 1849. Afterward, Friedrich I entered a statist narrative far from his earlier interpretations. Previous chapters have focused on moments at which medievalism had a pliable quality. This example suggests how certain invocations developed an inflexible meaning. The following chapter returns to a more elastic understanding of the Middle Ages, and to the academy.

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[131] Borst, "Barbarossas Erwachen," 59.

Chapter 5. Middle Ages as Antitype: Organicism and Alienation in Early Sociology

1. Introduction

Other Germans could rhapsodize about the countryside, but Georg Simmel's natural habitat was the metropolis. When Simmel did write about landscape, he was at his most eloquent when describing it in relation to nearby cities.[1] He agreed with the founders of modern *Völkerpsychologie*, Moritz Lazarus and Hajim Steinthal, that those raised in the woods would be human only in appearance.[2] His 1903 essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," is both paean to and indictment of the fin-de-siècle *Großstadt*. The city exhibited the advantages and disadvantages of modernity. The center of commerce, its economic forces had reshaped traditional relations between the individual and society to match the cityscape.[3] Simmel argued that the modern mind had become more calculating. A brittle, mathematical exactness characterized the residents of the metropolis and their transactions.[4] People and objects alike became interchangeable, trapped in an evaluative framework that ultimately endowed city

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[1] See especially Simmel's three essays on Italian cities: "Rom: Eine ästhetische Analyse," *Die Zeit* 191 (1898): 137-39, "Florenz," *Der Tag* 111 (1906), and "Venedig," *Der Kunstwart* 20 (1907): 299-303.

[2] Moritz Lazarus and Hajim Steinthal, "Einleitende Gedanken über Völkerpsychologie. Als Einladung zu einer Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* 1 (1860): 1-73.

[3] "The Metropolis and Mental Life," trans. Edward A. Shils, in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 326-27.

[4] Ibid., 328-29.

dwellers with a curious freedom, born of anonymity and indifference.[5] Simmel identified the phenomenon of hyperindividualization, in which people developed "the strangest eccentricities" in order to assert difference or uniqueness.[6] This observation gestured towards the significance of his argument. In the modern individual, Simmel recognized "the predominance of what one can call the objective spirit over the subjective," when modern culture had grown so powerful that it inhibited true personality in favor of "caprice."[7]

Simmel presented the earlier expansion of small town life as a seemingly natural counterexample to the metropolis. Subsets in this community, including the state and Christianity, guilds and political parties, developed according to a formula. A small group's inner cohesion marked it off from other, often rival, parties. Its clear boundaries inhibited the development of the individual, yet over time these borders became porous, allowing the individual new freedom of movement.[8] The original group might try to reimpose its "centripetal unity," but the process of *Vergesellschaftung*, or sociation, had already begun.[9] Simmel carefully maintained that this model of society was not an alternative to the modern condition: it rested on a mental narrowness that the metropolitan would find unbearable.

The historical origins of social organization were remarkably characterless in Simmel's account, without detail or specificity. Simmel did not want for possible sources. At the essay's

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[5] Ibid., 334.

[6] Ibid., 336.

[7] Ibid., 336.

[8] Ibid., 332.

[9] Ibid., 332-33.

publication, medieval documents had never before been so accessible in such numbers.[10] Multi-volume studies provided rich representations of the medieval world.[11] Yet the medieval world was curiously flat in Simmel's writing and seemingly existed only to provide a clearer contrast to the difference of modernity. If modernity is x, then the medieval past is ~x. Simmel combined multiple scholarly discourses to produce this new, vaguer use of the Middle Ages. This phenomenon was not unique to him. Simmel and his fellow sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies integrated methodologies and concerns from history, psychology, political economy, and aesthetics, in order to reach a clearer sociological understanding of modern life – as well as its inverse. In this chapter, I argue that the past became valuable as the mirror image of modern life. I present examples of this process and, at the end, suggest why and how this shift mattered.

The first section examines Tönnies's influential *Community and Society* (1887) and the scholarly sources from which it borrows, before turning to *The Philosophy of Money* (1900, 1907).[12] In this manner, the chapter uses Simmel as a means to make broader arguments about

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[10] The *Monumenta Germaniae historica* published critical editions of medieval sources, as did the French series, *Patrologia Latina*. On the former, see Horst Fuhrmann, *"Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen." Gelehrtenleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996) and on the latter see, R. Howard Bloch, *God's Plagiarist: Being an Account of the Fabulous Industry and Irregular Commerce of the Abbé Migne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[11] Multi-volume histories of medieval Germany covered many perspectives, from Paul Hinschius's six-volume history of the Catholic Church in Germany, *System des katholischen Kirchenrechts mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Deutschland* (Berlin: I. Gattentag, 1869-1897), to Philipp Jaffé's studies of medieval German rulers, including *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches unter Lothar dem Sachsen* (Berlin: Veit & Comp., 1843) and *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches unter Conrad dem Dritten* (Hannover: Hahn, 1845).

[12] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society*, ed. Charles P. Loomis and intro. John Samples (1887; repr., New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988). Simmel first published his monograph in 1900 and released a second edition in 1907, both originally printed with Duncker & Humbolt in Leipzig. All quotations in this chapter taken from Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*,

the continued importance of origins in the new sciences. Sociology created a new kind of tension between medieval and modern. The Middle Ages came to be presented as a natural antitype to modernity. It differed from other origin narratives in that Tönnies and Simmel claimed to describe a generic occidental phenomenon, still bound to a notion of progress. This would have amounted to a kind of medievalism that could be deployed without concern for historical specificity or source-based hypotheses. Close consideration of their sources and historical examples, however, suggests that their conclusions were modeled on Germany's path from medieval to modern. Furthermore, as in other sections of this dissertation, their interpretation of the Middle Ages relied on fundamental distortions of the historical record, although neither Simmel nor Tönnies would have described their work as such. The final section of the chapter considers how Simmel applied this dichotomy of past and present to other spheres of analysis, and activism. His theoretical arguments against historical reproduction reached a broad audience, even influencing reformist alliances like the *Werkbund*. The model of medievalism as the antitype of modernity emerged in an academic setting, which lent it a scientific veneer that further attested its veracity.

2. "Many Paths to the Future:" Sociology in Context

Simmel had grown up in the urban milieu he described. Born in 1858 to a wealthy family in Berlin, the Simmels lived in an apartment at the intersection of Leipzig- and Friedrichstraße. Then, as now, this corner occupied a geographical midpoint between the cultural and intellectual

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trans. Tom Bottomore, David Frisby, and Kaethe Mengelberg (1907; repr., New York: Routledge, 2004).

life of the city, and its commercial hub.[13] To the northeast lay the *Museuminsel* and the university on Unter den Linden, known no longer as the University of Berlin but rather as Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität. To the south along Friedrichstraße were Berlin's prominent businesses, including the Simmel family firm. His parents, Eduard Simmel and Flora Bodstein, had moved from Breslau to Berlin in 1838 after they married. During youth, both spouses had converted from Judaism, he to Catholicism and she to Lutheranism. They opened an imports store in Berlin that sold luxury culinary goods and later founded a confectionery, Felix & Sarotti, which supplied the Prussian royal family.[14] Georg, the youngest of seven children, grew up in a privileged home from which he witnessed the profound changes to German life leading up to 1871 and beyond.

Unlike many of his peers, Simmel never left this environment. After *Gymnasium*, he enrolled in Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, where he studied history, *Völkerpsychologie*, philosophy and political economy. He wrote an award-winning thesis, as well as a *Habilitationsschrift*, on Kant, and in 1885 he became a *Privatdozent* in philosophy at the same university. A prolific writer and charismatic lecturer, he remained in this unsalaried position for the next fifteen years. With the publication of his book, *The Philosophy of Money*, in 1900, Simmel was finally promoted, though only to professor *Extraordinarius*, still an honorary title. Only in 1914 was he invited to the philosophy faculty at the University of Strasbourg. Opinion remains divided regarding his career's slow pace. Some argue convincingly that his family's Jewish background impeded his

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[13] Ralph M. Leck, *Georg Simmel and Avant-Garde Sociology: The Birth of Modernity, 1880-1920* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 33.

[14] Ibid., 29.

career.[15] Others, less conclusively, have suggested that other factors inhibited his advancement: his progressive politics; his unorthodox writing.[16] Though these latter reasons doubtless contributed to his institutional disfavor, letters among the faculty discussing Simmel's academic standing make it clear that his family's Jewish roots were a decisive reason for his slow promotion.[17]

Only three years older than Simmel, Tönnies was even more of an outsider. Like Niebuhr, Tönnies grew up in the northern German-Danish borderlands of Frisia. Born to a prosperous, large-scale farming family, Tönnies was one of the few early sociologists born and raised in the countryside. He moved to Jena for university before transferring to Leipzig, where he studied with the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, and then Tübingen, from which he received a doctorate in classical philology in 1877. Tönnies worked as a *Privatdozent* at the University of Kiel, but his academic career was erratic and he taught little, moving between towns and small villages in Northern Germany. His progressive politics also hindered his advancement and he published his first major work, *Community and Society*, essentially outside an institutional setting. Although Tönnies was appointed as full professor only in 1913, he worked tirelessly in Germany and abroad to create an international network of sociologists.[18]

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[15] On this interpretation, see Rudolf Weingartner, *Experience and Culture: The Philosophy of Georg Simmel* (Middletown: Wesleyan Press, 1962), Lewis Coser, ed., *Georg Simmel* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), Levine, *Georg Simmel*, and Klaus Christian Köhnke, "Georg Simmel als Jude," *Simmel Newsletter* 5 (1995): 53-72.

[16] For this argument, see Levine, *Georg Simmel*, x-xi, and Leck, *Georg Simmel and Avant-Garde Sociology*, 36-38.

[17] See, for example, the exchange from May, 1894, in Georg Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe. Briefe 1880-1911* 22, ed. Otthein Rammstedt and Klaus Christian Köhnke (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 2005), 118-20.

[18] Werner J. Cahnman, ed., *Ferdinand Tönnies: A New Evaluation* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 24-25.

Certainly the new discipline was, and is, hard to classify. Though Simmel taught in philosophy, his writing was experimental in style, subject, and methodology. Often figured as one of sociology's founders, his papers suggest that he would never have restricted his work with one label. Furthermore, letters reveal how difficult it was to work in a discipline without institutional support. He wrote to a friend on the philosophy faculty at the German University in Prague, Friedrich Jodl, of his hopes to found a journal for sociology. It would necessarily be an international journal, for he intended to unite the geographically and intellectually isolated sociologists into a textual community.[19] Simmel himself sometimes had difficulty finding a forum for his own work. He first submitted an early essay on sociology to Friedrich Meinecke at the *Historische Zeitschrift*, before he found its eventual place of publication in Gustav Schmoller's journal for political economy.[20] Even though by 1895 he believed that sociology would eventually be officially recognized, he thought it would be unethical for him to accept any students until that happened.[21] Simmel acted as a modernizing agent. He sought to expand the university's course of offerings, but he tried to do so from within. A full professorship remained his goal and he tirelessly lobbied his extensive network to advocate on his behalf.

His immediate social circle reveals a man as progressive in his personal life as in his professional one. In 1890, he married Gertrud Kinel, a Berlin intellectual who published under the name Marie-Louise Enckendorff. Simmel, and his wife, supported women's political emancipation, which both promoted in their writing. Simmel hoped thereby to expose women's

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[19] Letter dated 19 January, 1893. *Gesamtausgabe* 22:83.

[20] Simmel, "Das Problem der Soziologie," *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich* 18 (1894): 1301-07.

[21] Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe* 22:146, 298.

roles as constructed rather than natural.[22] Colleagues – perhaps as a further slight against him – also referred to his practice of advising female students. His letters speak to his interest in political causes, but more generally they indicate the unconventional nature of his milieu. Simmel corresponded not only with his contemporaries in the academy, such as Edmund Husserl and Heinrich Rickert, but also with artists, such as Stefan George. Associations devoted to alternative lifestyles proliferated in Berlin and they overlapped with Simmel's intellectual world. With colleagues and friends alike, Simmel debated women's place in the modern world, Nietzsche's revolutionary philosophy, and the nature of art in an industrial age. Simmel lived in a transitional world, "in which the new and old coexisted." As Suzanne Marchand and David Lindenfeld have characterized the period between 1885 and 1914, this world produced experimental environments, not easily aligned according to left and right, "in which individuals and groups pursued multiple, and often non complementary, paths to the future."[23] Kevin Repp has emphasized that this Wilhelmine reform milieu represented a robust alternative culture that effected political change, sometimes through dialogue and sometimes through more acrimonious debate.[24]

Like the modern metropolis he analyzed, Simmel had many facets. Comfortable in a range of intellectual discourses, partisan arguments of his legacy are plentiful. Frederick Beiser has

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[22] Simmel, "Der Militarismus und die Stellung der Frau [1894]," in *Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie der Geschlechter*, ed. Heinz-Jürgen Dahme and Klaus Christian Köhnke (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1985).

[23] Suzanne Marchand and David Lindenfeld, "Germany at the Fin de Siècle: An Introduction," in Marchand and Lindenfeld, eds., *Germany at the Fin de Siècle: Culture, Politics, and Ideas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 5.

[24] Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 215-312.

recently, and compellingly, recovered Simmel as a historicist, noting that his sociological writing form only a subset of his publications.[25] Beiser suggests, moreover, that Simmel would not have described himself as a sociologist first and foremost. Rather, Simmel fell within historicism's critical tradition. He did not contribute to German historical understanding in detailed content, but in his philosophy of history that recognized the industrial age and refused to yearn for the past. In this telling, Simmel radicalized historicism and introduced "the relativity of all values and principles in the flux of history."[26] One might easily counter Beiser's claim, for Simmel surely would not have described himself as a historian. Though the historicist project had fractured into diverse schools by 1900, its focus remained the state. For Simmel, the state was ancillary, for it was the product of society, not its creator. Beiser's intervention serves nonetheless as an important reminder of the profound methodological influence of historicism well into the twentieth century.

Simmel and Tönnies surely experienced the influence of historicism through disciplines that emerged during the last third of the century. In 1876 Simmel began his university career with the great Roman historian Theodor Mommsen, though he soon switched fields to work with the founders of *Völkerpsychologie*, the brothers-in-law Moritz Lazarus and Hajim Steinthal, a transition that paralleled Tönnies's shift to study with Wilhelm Wundt.[27] Underrepresented in academic literature, *Völkerpsychologie* was as popular and influential at the time as it is ignored

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[25] Beiser locates Simmel's sociological period to the years between the late 1890s and 1908, a not altogether insubstantial bloc of time, although it remains less clear why Simmel's essays on sociology from the early 1890s do not count.

[26] Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 471.

[27] On Simmel's education, see "Afterword: The Constitution of the Text," in Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 523.

now. During the 1850s, the two men sought to expand the psychology of the individual to what they believed was its natural complement, the people. Some commentators have suggested that this research interest gained particular relevance as a means to differentiate between increasingly belligerent European nations.[28] Lazarus and Steinthal founded a journal, *Zeitschrift for Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, in order to encourage their research interests among a broader reading public.

In the introduction to their first volume, they posed the question that guided their research, namely whether it was possible to study collective mental phenomena.[29] The two scholars defined *Völkerpsychologie* more in terms of content than in methodology. The subject of the new psychology was the *Volksgeist* and they described this collective spirit as, "the inner activity, according to content as well as form, which each individual has in common with the *Volk*; or: that which each individual has in common in terms of inner activity."[30] The *Volksgeist* could be analyzed in the objective products of cognitive processes, including music, literature, and especially language. These cultural artifacts developed over time in a bidirectional process, *Wechselseitigkeit*, that influenced them and the community alike. The vast majority of articles in the *Zeitschrift* were a kind of psychologized linguistics. The two men even identified Wilhelm

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[28] Rainer Diriwächter, "Völkerpsychologie," in *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*, ed. Jaan Valsiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43.

[29] Lazarus and Steinthal, "Einleitende Gedanken," 45. See also Egbert Klautke, *The Mind of the Nation:* Völkerpsychologie *in Germany, 1851-1955* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).

[30] Lazarus and Steinthal, "Einleitende Gedanken," 1. On the *Volksgeist*, see also Diriwächter, "Völkerpsychologie," 45.

von Humboldt as their intellectual predecessor for his work with languages.[31] This intellectual genealogy reveals the historicist origins of *Völkerpsychologie*.

On graduating, Simmel thanked his advisor Lazarus for all his help and enthusiastically anticipated that "the psychological method" would transform philosophical inquiry.[32] Yet arguably the implicitly historicist framework of *Völkerpsychologie* had equal influence for his work. Lazarus and Steinthal based humanity's psychical laws on the historical record.[33] This process involved returning to a point of origins in an attempt to recover the long effects of generations. Forms of social life gained meaning only because they collected and, so, came to embody a culture's history.[34] *Völkerpsychologie* claimed a new research subject – the *Volksgeist* – and did indeed offer a new framework for analyzing the nation as a unit. Yet in doing so, Lazarus and Steinthal imported two key historicist assumptions: the organic unity of society and the importance of historical origin. *Völkerpsychologie* retained the explanatory relevance of origins as the root of modern phenomena. Merely observing social forms in the present was not sufficient. Only historical reconstruction in the past revealed their meaning.

Early German sociology remains hard to categorize given its complicated intellectual provenance. Beiser has framed it as a return to an older variant of historicism. This tradition dated to *Sattelzeit* scholars, including Möser, Herder and Humboldt, who pursued a "science of man."[35] Rooted in a historical social anthropology, late nineteenth-century sociology combined

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[31] Diriwächter, "Völkerpsychologie," 44 and Klautke, *Mind of the Nation*, ch. 1.

[32] Letter dated 6 August, 1880. Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, 22:9.

[33] Diriwächter, "Völkerpsychologie," 47.

[34] Beiser, *The Historicist Tradition*, 471.

[35] Ibid., 470.

this science of man with a social conception of human nature.[36] Beiser's revisionist account of sociology's formation in fact resembles an older historiographical narrative. Fritz Ringer, too, suggested that the discipline began as a philosophy of history among mandarin modernists and eventually developed into a new discipline. In this telling, a radical faction from the historicist tradition transformed their ambivalent responses to modernity into an accommodationist social analysis rather than reactionary politics: science as sublimated pessimism.[37] Though Ringer's reliance on biographical explanation somewhat weakened his original argument, this chapter follows the historicist interpretation rather than the opposing school, which argues that Simmel's oeuvre is fundamentally ahistorical.[38] Where this chapter departs from the historicist interpretation is in its acknowledgment that the influence of historicism was not linear, but rather came from a range of other disciplines, including psychology, the historical school of law, political economy, and even aesthetics.

I consider these two scholars not only as sociologists or as historicists, but as members of the broader Wilhelmine reform milieu. In this context, I examine how medievalism, and a notion of origins, were transformed when loosened from historicism and translated into the new sciences. Sociologists examined relations between the individual and society, as manifested in social forms. To narrow my account, I take as my starting point of analysis Max Weber's description of Simmel not as a general cultural critic, but as a sociologist and a theorist of the money

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[36] Ibid., 470.

[37] Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 162-64, 169.

[38] Beiser has argued that this latter interpretation developed only because Simmel scholarship focused on his career as a sociologist to the exclusion of everything else. See Beiser, *The Historicist Tradition*, 471.

economy.[39] This chapter draws upon *The Philosophy of Money*, as well as selected essays, to explore how Simmel understood the modern money economy. Many commentators have noted that Simmel's writing is unsystematic and aphoristic, and can only be analyzed with difficulty, yet themes recur, and sometimes take new form, across his writing. I suggest that although Simmel's account of the money economy rests on a specific historicist understanding of social evolution, the relation between past and present differs vastly from the narrative on which it draws. Moreover, his scheme of development from the Middle Ages to German modernity had an important precedent in Tönnies's first major monograph, as the following section examines.

3. The Influence and Effects of the Historical School of Law

The publication of Tönnies's *Community and Society* in 1887 has become a convenient date to mark the beginning of sociology. In this text, he explored the evolution of social organization from community to society, including what he considered to be their mental and physical correlates. Tönnies was not the first to endow these terms with significance. They belonged to a spectrum of words used to described belonging: guild, brotherhood, community, association. By the end of the nineteenth century, many of these historically legal designations had been dissolved and new ones formed in their place.[40] This process of replacement ensured that

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[39] Max Weber, "Georg Simmel as Sociologist," trans. D. Levine, *Social Research* 39 (1972): 155-63.

[40] This dissolution of the guilds began with the introduction of the French Civil Code at the beginning of the century and ended during the 1860s. The tempo of this legal process, as well as its reception, varied by location. As the century wore on, the breakup of traditional groups overlapped with the emergence and rapid development of modern associational life, a very different model of cultural organization. The seminal text for this transition remains Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648-1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). On the "affective language" of groups and associations, see

Community and Society betokened not only neutral change or even progress, but also loss and destabilization. The very title already contained a complicated semantic history, evidenced in the conjoining of these terms in earlier publications.[41]

This linguistic prehistory supports the argument that Tönnies's interlocutors included earlier generations of German philosophers and statesmen, not the positivists of the 1880s.[42] Broadly, Tönnies reconstructed the transition from an organic social order to one that resembled urbanized and industrialized Germany. Terms like 'organicism' and 'holism' relied on a vocabulary familiar from *Sattelzeit* Romanticism. Arndt and Fichte located the origins of modern life in a holistic, medieval social order. Novalis memorably described the people of medieval Germany as "one enormous guild," subservient to the sovereign.[43] This linguistic precedent serves as appropriate shorthand for Tönnies's intellectual task. Borrowing from contemporary scholarly debates in psychology and political economy, and especially from the historical school of law, Tönnies created a new dichotomy of ancient and modern that relied on older discourses.

Tönnies argued that human nature accounted for the differences between the community, or the *Gemeinschaft*, and the society, or the *Gesellschaft*. In the community, the *Wesenwille*, or natural will, dominated. The *Kürwille*, or rational will, dictated social relations in society. Tönnies differentiated the two as, "the will which includes the thinking and the thinking which

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Antony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (London: Methuen, 1984), xv.

[41] See Diriwächter, "Völkerpsychologie," 46.

[42] Charles P. Loomis and John C. McKinney, "Introduction," in Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 1.

[43] Novalis, "Christianity or Europe: A Fragment [1799; publ. 1826]," in *European Romanticism, A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Warren Breckmann (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 48.

encompasses the will."[44] One was what he described as real or natural, whereas the other was conceptual and artificial. As a natural pattern of thought, the *Wesenwille* entailed a principle of unity that applied equally to the individual and the community. Concord guided life in the *Gemeinschaft* and Tönnies represented this spirit with a biological metaphor. The natural will formed a psychological equivalent to the human body. According to this framework there was no division between thought and action; "natural will is immanent in activity."[45] The rational will, by contrast, was a product of thought and specific to each individual. As a result, it lacked the organicism of the *Wesenwille*. The *Kürwille* "possesses reality only with reference to its author…although this reality can be recognized and acknowledged as such by others." As a kind of instrumental thought, rational will had lost, also, its connection with activity. The will was prior to action and "maintain[ed] its separate identity."[46] Though Tönnies described these wills abstractly, there was an implicit evolution from one condition to the other. This historical account became clearer in his discussion of the social forms engendered by each psychological state. As in *Völkerpsychologie*, the mental patterns of groups were fundamentally historicized.

Not merely physic processes, these two kinds of wills entailed a specific pattern of spatial and economic growth, one that corresponded to the particular pathways of German modernization. The *Gemeinschaft* in particular had a linear development from the individual to the community that resulted in the town. The most basic unit of the *Gemeinschaft* was the family. Tönnies argued that blood relations were the natural extension of the individual. The physical embodiment of kinship was the family home. This expansionist logic, from individual to the

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[44] Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 103.

[45] Ibid., 103-04.

[46] Ibid., 103-04.

family and the home, produced ever-widening circles of affiliation. The house was multiplied into a neighborhood: "the *Gemeinschaft* by blood, denoting unity of being, is developed into *Gemeinschaft* of locality, which is based on a common habitat."[47] Tönnies identified a law of proximity. Just as the individual became the family, and the house the neighborhood, he argued for "intellectual proximity" within the rural village – friendship.[48] The town then developed from the rural village. "The town as a whole is conceived of as a community of guilds," linked by exchange with the country.[49] Tönnies maintained that all of these developments were "derived from an a priori and necessarily existing unity."[50] Although the *Wesenwille* itself was ahistorical, a kind of natural state, it produced a diversified community with increasingly complex relations. Tönnies's town is easily imagined on a map, the slow growth from village to town, with thickening trade networks connecting it to the farms beyond its walls, and even to other distant villages. Although he rarely provided specific examples of this phenomenon, it was manifestly a historical development, tracked through its spatial dynamic.

The transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* may have occurred in space, but economic relations drove this process. The town of the Gemeinschaft was holistic, in that there was no "outside." It functioned as a circulating unit of exchange. Tönnies quoted the political economist Gustav Schmoller, who had argued that "the village is a closed economic and trade system in itself."[51] According to Tönnies's scheme, trade was the agent that fractured the town's unity.

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[47] Ibid., 42.

[48] Ibid., 48.

[49] Ibid., 55.

[50] Ibid., 65.

[51] Ibid., 64.

Trade, and economic activity, existed on a spectrum and, at some point along this scale, the volume of trade increased enough to change it qualitatively. In a *Gemeinschaft*, agriculture predominated; a *Gesellschaft* was based on industry. The economy of the former was modeled on the household; the latter entailed a general trade economy. The *Gesellschaft* completed certain tendencies of the late-stage *Gemeinschaft*: "confining our attention to the economic sphere, we consider the advance of the *Gesellschaft* which takes place as the final culmination of the developed *Gemeinschaft*-like folk life."[52] This evolution from one form of social organization to the other was an economic history, described in terms of the mental life that dominated each system. Furthermore, Tönnies argued that this transformation was inevitable. The historical pattern from community to society would necessarily be repeated in any context. Yet this narrative would have sounded strikingly familiar to German readers. A unified community had transformed, through commerce and industrialization, into a fractured social world in which tension, even aggression, characterized social relations.

Tönnies also formulated this economic history as legal history. His book drew on legal history to describe the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* as a shift from customary law to contract law.[53] Though Tönnies mentioned few of his sources by name, this number did include the legal historians Carl Friedrich Savigny, Otto von Gierke, and Henry Maine.[54] The nineteenth-century secondary literature to which these men contributed could be characterized, at its

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[52] Ibid., 78-79.

[53] Ibid., 207-08.

[54] Their cited works include, Gierke, *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, 4 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1868-1913), Maine, *Village-Communities in the East and West*, Six Lectures Delivered at Oxford (London: J. Murray, 1871) and *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas* (London: J. Murray, 1861), and Savigny, *Das Obligationsrecht als Theil des heutigen römischen Rechts*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Veit, 1851-53).

broadest, as the history of legal rights accorded to the individual and the group.[55] The debate between Roman and German law had become increasingly complex since Niebuhr and Savigny's first contributions at the start of the century. Recent German political unification had reinvigorated this debate. Codification had changed from a scholarly debate to a public one, given the inevitability of new legal codes to match the new political entity. Tönnies cited only the most famous names in this scholarship. By the 1880s, Savigny had become shorthand for the Romanist historical school and Gierke for the Germanist.[56] In the context of the new constitution, moreover, the ideological commitments of each school became apparent even as they were transformed in public discussion. At issue in these arguments were many of the same concerns found in Tönnies, though he had reformulated them as correlates of the will.

Distinctions in associational life had a long legal pedigree. An older legal and philosophical tradition, dating to Hobbes, noted two variants of the association in Roman Law.[57] Hobbes identified these as the *societas* and the *universitas*, roughly, the partnership and the corporation. The former was a formal relationship, often described in mechanistic terms, while the latter was an association considered collectively as a unity, characterized as an organic entity often compared to the body.[58] Gierke's most important intervention was to argue that the *universitas* was no Roman concept, but rather a German one, the *Genossenschaft*. His argument was historical. With the revival of Roman law at the end of the eleventh century, its language

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[55] See Chapter One.

[56] Michael John, *Politics and the Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Origins of the Civil Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 22-23, 108-113.

[57] David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 14.

[58] Ibid., 14-15.

assimilated existing legal concepts and structures from the early Middle Ages, including the *Genossenschaft*. Gierke understood legal history as a tension between German and foreign elements. In this way, vocabularies of mechanism and organicism became a code for opposing Roman and Germanic traditions in the law code.[59] More than that; these words came to stand for an essentialist understanding of the two peoples, whereby a natural, associative tendency became a national German characteristic. Gierke followed this narrative throughout his four-volume legal history, *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (1868-1913), the third volume of which had been published in 1881, just before Tönnies began to work on *Community and Society*.

Read in tandem, the historical school's influence on Tönnies's narrative is clear. He described the *Gesellschaft*'s *Kürwille* as an artificial being, repurposing the mechanistic language of the *societas*.[60] Even the relations between wills signaled Tönnies's involvement with contemporary debate. In a community, wills existed in a unanimous union, whereas in society there was mere consensus.[61] Tönnies admitted this intellectual debt at the end of his text. He argued that "the assimilation of Roman law has served and still serves to further the development of *Gesellschaft*," for, as a scientific system, it was the product of the rational will. The Roman legal code had, additionally, "been instrumental in the disintegration of all *Gemeinschaften*."[62] He understood the legal system of the *Gemeinschaft* as one based on customary law, which, just as had happened in German history, would be erased by the rational law of the *Gesellschaft*. In

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[59] Black, *Guilds and Civil Society*, 196. For a detailed account of Gierke's jurisprudential rereading, see Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State*, 34-35.

[60] Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 66: "ens fictivum."

[61] Ibid., 223.

[62] Ibid., 203-04.

this respect, Tönnies's narrative departed from that of the legal school. Gierke suggested an ongoing dialectic between Roman and medieval elements in German law. Tönnies, by contrast, suggested a linear path from one system to another. *Gesellschaft* could not be undone; *Gemeinschaft*, once lost, was lost forever.

Tönnies's engagement with German jurisprudence provides insight for another question for his text, namely his narrative's applicability. He discussed this phenomenon in generalisms, making it clear that the transition from family life, to village life, to town life in the *Gemeinschaft*, followed by city life, to national life, to cosmopolitan life in the *Gesellschaft*, was a universal trend.[63] This progress was purportedly not tied to nationhood. His textual interlocutors, however, suggest otherwise. Germany clearly functioned as the model for this pattern of social development. Tönnies admitted as much at the end of his text. Although *Community and Society* held as a general account, the tendency described held especially true for Germany. Moreover, he anchored this development in a specific periodization:

> To this end, we conceive the whole development of Germanic culture, which rose upon the ruins of the Roman Empire and, as its heir, expanded under the beneficial influence of the Church, as in a state of constant progress as well as decay. The interplay of these conflicting tendencies gave rise to those very contrasts which form the basis of the theory outlined above.[64]

Tönnies's sociological narrative borrowed its medieval point of origins from legal history. As in that discipline, the contradiction between Roman society and German culture provided the dialectic for the development of social forms. The ahistorical nature of the *Wesenwille*, too, shared similarities with older legal traditions about German nature. Karl Friedrich Eichhorn had

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[63] Ibid., 231.

[64] Ibid., 235.

suggested a similar point in his work, *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*.[65] In this text, Eichhorn argued that an instinct towards community inhered in primal German nature. This early nineteenth-century legal scholar of course wrote in a very different intellectual and political context than Tönnies. Yet tracing these narratives and shared assumptions reveal the tenacity of certain arguments about German nature and its development. These accounts relied on medievalizing interpretations that rested not only on textual truth but on emotional power and intellectual tradition.

This argument by no means detracts from the originality of Tönnies's scholarly experiment. He adapted aspects of other disciplines in order to create a new framework to think about the development of social forms as generalizable laws. Despite this innovation, the medieval continued to function familiarly in one respect, namely as the origin of modern phenomena. Tönnies, however, more emphatically contrasted the Middle Ages with modernity and they came to represent a psychological and organizational dichotomy. This polarity retained a historicist narrative of progress that would have resonated with contemporaries. Halfway through the text, he approvingly cited Maine, who had written that the movement from status to contract, no matter its negative repercussions, was ultimately "a law of progress."[66] Though Tönnies's tone often became pessimistic when he described the transformation to *Gesellschaft*, it ultimately represented a kind of improvement, an ambivalence familiar to Germans during the 1880s. Tönnies differentiated between the psychology of social forms and their objective cultural products, preparing the way for other sociological research. For the purposes of this dissertation,

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[65] Karl Friedrich Eichhorn, *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1808-1812). On the primal German nature of community, see Black, *Guilds and Civil Society*, 196-97.

[66] Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 182.

he also revealed the ways in which new sciences incorporated older uses of the Middle Ages even as they adapted the medieval period to new ends.

4. Ambivalence and Progress in the Money Economy

Tönnies described *The Philosophy of Money* as intellectual theft. In an irate letter to Schmoller after the book's publication, he argued that Simmel had stolen "the fundamental principles" from *Community and Society*, as its author undoubtedly knew. Tönnies softened his accusation in a following letter, but maintained that there remained a great, unacknowledged debt.[67] What was it about money and how did it relate to Tönnies's 1887 work? Many had money on the mind in the decades before World War I. The urgency of the new cash economy of the metropolis, and the intense desperation it produced, were impressed on Simmel as a young man. In 1886 he had gone to collect the rent on a block of apartments in Berlin that his stepfather owned. A tenant, unable to pay, shot Simmel in response. This episode illustrated the inextricable connections between industrial modernity, currency, and urban poverty. Like many German cities in the decades before 1900, Berlin expanded rapidly. Its expansion reflected new social stratification and its wealthy inhabitants shared little with the new working poor of the city. Simmel witnessed this transformation of the capital, including the inequalities on which economic growth was founded. Economic cycles, including the collapse of 1873, revealed the instability of the market. Other scholars had already analyzed the development of money, notably Simmel's first mentor at

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[67] Letters dated 19 July, 1901 and 27 July, 1901. Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, 22:380-81.

Berlin, Theodor Mommsen, as well as prominent figures from the marginalist school of political economy during the 1880s.[68] By 1900, a study of money seemed almost overdetermined.

The Philosophy of Money had a long gestation. Though eventually described as a hybrid work between philosophy and sociology, it began as a series of lectures in economics. In 1889, Simmel delivered a talk to Gustav Schmoller's political science seminar, "On the Psychology of Money," which subsequently appeared as an essay in the journal that Schmoller edited.[69] Seven years later, Simmel gave another talk before Austrian economists on a related subject, "Money in Modern Culture," all the while publishing short studies on the subject.[70] The titles of these early works suggest that Simmel already perceived a special affinity between money and modernity, whereby money seemed a microcosm of the age. This section explores this compatibility, with an especial focus on Simmel's understanding of the genesis of modernity. Like Tönnies, he relied on a dichotomous understanding of past and present. Modernity revealed what the past was not, and vice versa. Though Simmel's scholarly debt to Tönnies was apparent, their intellectual backgrounds contributed to fundamental analytical differences. Simmel relied on psychological and economic analysis, which he used to make nominally universal suggestions about money, its

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[68] See Mommsen, "Das Geld [1863]," in *Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905) and *Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1860). The economists included, Karl Knies, *Das Geld* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885), Friedrich von Wieser, *Über den Ursprung und die Hauptgesetze des Wirschaftlichen Werthes* (Vienna: Hölder, 1884) and *Der natürliche Werth* (Vienna: Hölder, 1889), Part I. Also see Werner Sombart, "Der natürliche Werth," *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft* 13 (1889): 1488-90. For a more detailed discussion of these intellectual contributions, see "Afterword: The Constitution of the Text," in Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 513-34.

[69] G. Simmel, "Zur Psychologie des Geldes," *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft* 13 (1889): 1251-64.

[70] G. Simmel, "Das Geld in der modernen Kultur," *Zeitschrift des Oberschlessischen Berg- und Hüttenmannischen Vereins* 35 (1896): 319-24. Another variant of this talk appeared as, "Die Bedeutung des Geldes für das Tempo des Lebens," *Neue Deutsche Rundschau* 8 (1897): 111-22.

circulation, and its effects on mental life. He also supplied theories about the development of emotions, and about aesthetic regimes. He founded an entirely new research program based on the contrast between the Germanic past and present, one that distanced the two in order to make claims about progress and its meaning.

In *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel explored the modern economy's social and cultural impact. Money acted as a kind of nucleus around which orbited related phenomena. His analysis treated not only socio-economic relations, but also how money affected psychology and culture, institutions and individuals, alike. Commentators frequently divide the book into two halves, one analytical and one synthetic. In the first section, Simmel posited the relation between value and money, arguing that there existed a discrepancy between the subjectivity and objectivity of value. His next chapter provided a historical-philosophical theory of money's development. According to his narrative, money originally had a value based on its substance. Economic development will always tend to debase the material of money's construction until it transforms into a mere symbol of value and reaches "the pure concept of money." Economic transactions, per Simmel's general rule, proliferate, gaining momentum of their own. Simmel elaborated on this naturally occurring pattern. As a culture becomes increasingly complex, individuals will create as many additional steps as needed to reach a desired end. Over time, people will require an intermediate tool – money – to attain their results. The introduction of a currency will create equivalences between objects, even people. This dynamic will eventually reduce all quality to quantity, confusing means and ends. In the first half of the book, Simmel explored money's relation to value, its origins, and the rules of its development.

The synthetic section turned from general rules of development to their ramifications. Simmel argued that the concept of individual freedom developed in tandem with the money

economy. He suggested that history's very pattern of development produced the former. A repetitious exchange between duty and freedom guided historical change. One generation might dissolve a traditional duty and in its place impose another act of service. Freedom was a negative value, always perceived as freedom from something rather than freedom of something. At a certain point in the Middle Ages, for example, lesser orders gained the ability to pay off their duty in money rather than in service. That service was, in turn, felt as a mandatory duty only decades later. The concept of freedom was originally a byproduct of Christianity. It introduced a notion of individual salvation that far outlasted the religion's original power. The last section of the book examined the inner quality of the money economy and, with it, of modern culture. The money economy reduced all interactions to exchange. Rationalization and equivalency informed purchases and personal relations alike. Simmel frequently described modernity as gray and characterless, as culture came to exhibit the same interchangeability of the age.

Simmel interspersed his dense sociological analysis with historical examples to show how money influenced legal and economic institutions. These anecdotes illustrated development and so he relied on cases from the medieval past as a contrast with the present. In one notable instance, he examined relations between money and sovereignty during the Middle Ages to construct his argument about the transformation of currency from substance to symbol. German feudalism, he argued, was ultimately destroyed by coins. Rulers had originally exercised a monopoly on the mint. Shortly after the Carolingian dynasty ended, however, the king granted rights of coinage to subjects and religious establishments as a privilege or reward. Simmel posited that this diffusion was also a dispersal of centralized authority, for persons other than the

king came to guarantee the currency's value.[71] Yet this decentralization also affected money itself. He argued that "the essential function of money declines the less strongly it is guaranteed by the largest sociological group or its central organ."[72] Money became a more symbolic intermediary when it was issued by more than a figure removed from central power.

Money acted as a catalyst of historical change, altering political relations with its introduction. Yet this process affected it, too. The medieval transformation in the meaning and function of money illustrated a general rule about its use: "The fact that the values that money is supposed to measure, and the mutual relations that it is supposed to express, are purely psychological makes such stability of measurement as exists in the case of space or weight impossible."[73] The value of money was unstable, even in the medieval context when its worth was based on its substance. It was enmeshed in a psychological relationship based on central authority. The transformations of money were far more predictable than its value: they occurred according to a rule of development.

Simmel's historical examples always remained quite general. Even his more detailed accounts provided trends rather than specifics. In a later chapter, shifts in punitive damages suggested the psychological and cultural effects of money over time. Murder, in 1900, was committed only by "corrupt and morally depraved persons." By contrast, in "rougher or more heroic ages," people with very different qualities committed murder. Their preservation was therefore in the interest of social order. He argued that in these early periods, society developed practices to excuse the culprit. Notable among these was the emergence of the monetary fine as

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[71] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 186-87.

[72] Ibid., 186.

[73] Ibid., 190.

compensation for damages. A thief, or murderer, might pay a set fee to his victim or their families. Yet in modern Germany, fines were no longer considered in a framework of compensation, but rather existed in order to inflict pain on the accused. Simmel argued that this shift revealed, ultimately, the very inadequacies of money. In an advanced society, money had become distanced from personal values, unlike in the past, and so the pain it inflicted was impersonal and often brief. The logic of money's development thwarted the actual intent of punishment. In a stratified society, moreover, there existed a large, wealthy class for whom these fines would not hurt at all. The development of currency had outpaced the use to which it had been put. Its efficacy in medieval Germany, by contrast, served to illustrate its ineffectiveness in the modern justice system.

Schmoller, a member of the historical school, published an enthusiastic review a year after the book's release. He emphasized the ambition of Simmel's work, which attempted to transcend political economy. Simmel sought to create a scholarly work that attended to the inner lives of individuals and to the inner workings of institutions, as affected by the modern money economy. The real goal of book, Schmoller suggested, was "to establish what the money economy, especially the modern one of the nineteenth century, has made out of men and society, from their relations and constitutions."[74] Simmel used established economic and historical knowledge in order to propose sociological and philosophical laws, based on psychological and cultural tendencies. He organized his argument as an interdisciplinary investigation. In this respect, the

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[74] Gustav Schmoller, "Simmels Philosophie des Geldes," *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich* 25 (1901): 800.

work was entirely unlike precedents in the study of money, including well-received volumes from economists.[75]

Despite his enthusiasm, Schmoller had two points of criticism, one analytical and one stylistic. In the second chapter, Simmel argued that the historical development of money revealed an evolutionary pattern, from money valued on substance to the abstraction of currency. Schmoller argued that what Simmel described as the emergence of "symbolic money" was really the phenomenon of credit.[76] He also criticized Simmel's style, which was linguistically and ideationally challenging. Simmel wrote in a scholarly language, the vocabulary for which would confound all but those with his training. Furthermore, his aphoristic writing yielded flashes of insight rather than steady illumination: "he provides more caviar than black bread, and illuminates more with the firework than with a desk lamp."[77] He warned that conservative and progressive readers alike would be likely to misinterpret Simmel's arguments, which would elude all but the most well-educated reader. Including himself in the latter category, he ended his long review voicing his pleasure that the work had been published in time for him to incorporate its conclusions into his *Grundriss der allgemeinen Volkswirtschaftslehre*, to be published the next year.

Simmel's academic peers were mostly enthusiastic despite its slow reception among a broader readership. On its publication, Weber anointed Simmel the "theorist of money." Georg Knapp, in an excited letter to Schmoller, said that he had read the book in only a few sittings and had immediately written three different letters of thanks to Simmel. He shared Schmoller's

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[75] Ibid., 813.

[76] Ibid., 802.

[77] Ibid., 816.

response, however, and noted that "in order to understand its content, one needs a similarly empathizing nature."[78] S.P. Altmann reviewed the text for American sociologists. He argued that the text's strength was Simmel's unorthodox perspective. He was a truth-seeker, who "exceeds the narrow district which belongs to him, and to him alone, in order to see more than this small world of his."[79] Critics alike agreed that Simmel's distance from traditional scientific questions transformed the book into more than its constituent parts. They recognized that although based on economic and historical knowledge, it transcended the specific to posit general laws of monetary, and therefore also cultural, development. In this respect Altmann praised in particular the first half of the book, in which Simmel plotted the transformation of money from a means to an end.[80] Its evolutionary laws constituted Simmel's major contribution.

Evolution, however, required a point of origin. Like the economic and legal histories from which Simmel drew, *The Philosophy of Money* included a plaintive tone. A large section of it focused on modernity and its particular pathologies. Simmel offered a developmental account of money's change, in which it also functioned as an agent of that change. His understanding of money – that a culture with currency would eventually orient itself towards it – was a historical theory.[81] It was a narrative of imperial conquest, whereby money became an end in itself, and society and culture assumed its attributes. These qualities included the tension and covetousness endemic to the metropolis.[82] Schmoller rightly emphasized the book's profoundly pessimistic

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[78] Letter dated 4 September, 1901. Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, 22:382.

[79] S.P. Altmann, "Simmel's Philosophy of Money," *American Journal of Sociology* 9 (1903): 46.

[80] Ibid., 48.

[81] Simmel, "Money in Modern Culture," 23, 25.

[82] Ibid., 26-27.

tone. Yet Simmel posited that there was always an original state, without these problems. He described its transformation as an inevitable, and universal, development, yet his examples indicated that he conceived of it as an occidental pattern, usually a specifically German one.[83]

As in *Community and Society*, the beginning and end of this story offered stark contrasts. He emphasized this comparison during his 1899 lecture before Austrian economists: "The rule of money takes its place in this great and uniform process of life, which the intellectual and social culture of modernity put in such decisive contrast to the Middle Ages as well as antiquity, supporting the process and supported by it."[84] The origin of his story illustrated the extent of change in money's meaning. Simmel's work relied on a familiar German historical narrative, based on early Germanic law and the decentralization of the Carolingian empire. Simmel suppressed details from these periods in order to maximize their illustrative function as the mirror image of modernity. His arguments, and Tönnies's, depended on the historical distortion of the Middle Ages so that it contained everything that nineteenth century did not.

Simmel was at his most pessimistic when describing money's psychological effects. Yet these observations appealed most to his readers. Knapp emphasized that *The Philosophy of Money* was not ultimately about money, but about its psychological repercussions. This perspective was precisely what made the book such a powerful critique.[85] Schmoller, too, noted that the book retained the general contours of Simmel's original 1889 lecture on the psychology

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[83] Simmel need not have limited himself to only Western examples. The fin-de-siècle produced a particularly rich catalogue of non-Western histories and ethnographies. See Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York: Cambridge University Press and the German Historical Institute, 2009), 157-473.

[84] Simmel, "Money in Modern Culture," 30.

[85] Knapp to Schmoller, 4 September, 1901. Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, 22:382.

of money.[86] Schmoller's observation was astute. Simmel originally described his project as an exploration of the money economy's "ethnopsychological transformation" and this characterization could have served as the subtitle of his later volume.[87] In the early lecture as in the book, money brought people and goods alike into equivalency. Money had specific psychological correlates. In a money economy, people would eventually confuse means and ends, and money itself would become that end. This entailed a psychological metamorphosis. It had to seem reasonable that any good or person could enter into an exchange based on monetary value.[88] Modernity's tension and irresolution were products of this psychological transformation. This next section explores how psychology enabled Simmel to make certain claims about historical development.

The confusion with means for ends produced a calculating mentality. In the modern money economy, people directed all their energies toward maximizing financial gain. Simmel characterized this as a "leveling process," whereby everything entered the economy and all activities related to profit.[89] Equivalency dissolved individual qualities because everything could enter into economic circulation. The mentality of modern society was estimation and mathematics became the language of competition. Simmel described his world as an epoch of the intellect, in which rationalization dominated the mental horizon. These qualities accounted for the atomization of modern society for "the ruthless assertion of individuality" was a correlate to competitive interaction. "Everyone seems to be an enclosed self sufficient element" in the

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[86] Schmoller, "Simmels Philosophie des Geldes," 799.

[87] Simmel, "Psychology of Money," 243.

[88] Ibid., 234-237.

[89] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 433.

intellectualized world.[90] This hyperindividualized civilization was paradoxically uniform at the same time. The uniformity arose from arose from money's "negative lack of character," which society adopted as its own characteristic.[91] The pursuit of means instead of ends became not just an activity, but a mindset, which resulted in a colorless world, undifferentiated despite an emphasis on the individual. Rationalization became synonymous with modernity and the tendency was totalizing. Like the *Volksgeist* of *Völkerpsychologie*, there was no way to escape this pathology, it applied to the era and all its people.

Medieval Europeans belonged to a different economic system and so behaved in an unfamiliar way. What Simmel referred to as "lower cultures" were economically undeveloped. As a result, these "primitive" people had not yet confused ends and means. Not only that. Their goals were simple, including shelter and food, and they did not encounter many intermediate steps between desire and fulfillment.[92] As a result, the Middle Ages represented true alterity, for its people had no experience, or concept, of the sophisticated calculations of modernity. Simmel emphasized this sense of psychological otherness. Even where premodern conventions remained, their meaning had fundamentally changed, as in the example regarding fines as compensation and as punishment. Simmel examined the economic and political structures of the past as a way to consider the mental horizons of previous eras. The "fiscalist" monetary policies of the Middle Ages emphasized acquiring maximum sums of money for immediate use. This strategy was a natural extension of the idea that the value of money lay in its substance, not its symbolism.[93]

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[90] Ibid., 438-39.

[91] Ibid., 432-33.

[92] Ibid., 360.

[93] Ibid., 172-73.

Medieval sovereigns therefore had an extractive understanding of rule. They intended only to accumulate money for use, not stimulate trade. The primitive medieval psychology was both a contrast with modern calculation and also a measure of this distance.

Yet medieval anecdotes also revealed the evolution of the modern money economy. Some of Simmel's examples featured persons or trends that struck a dissonant note. Simmel noted the use of leather money in the otherwise coin- or barter-based medieval economy. He argued that even then, the leather notes functioned as paper money's earliest predecessor, "the progressive dissolution of money value into purely functional value."[94] The Fugger banking family functioned similarly. Simmel suggested that the family business ultimately failed because their financial model was preemptive. They operated in a world that had outgrown the medieval barter economy, "but did not yet dispose of the communications, guarantee, or commercial practices that are an indispensable correlate of such transactions."[95] The Fuggers based their transactions on anticipated structures, but the institutions in which they operated changed at a slow pace, and the family could not realize their ambitions. Moments of historical dissonance or failure became a way to track the beginning of historical change. Medieval leather money, and the Fuggers' banking arrangements, revealed new modes of understanding economic relationships. This illustration depended on the contrast between individual and group psychology. During an era dominated by one mentality, these examples revealed another. They interrupted the psychological framework of their time and signaled what the future would look like. Yet Simmel did not account for this change, he merely tracked it. These individuals inhabited a mental

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[94] Ibid., 172.

[95] Ibid., 171.

horizon of the future and appeared out of place in their own era, but they were not causative agents of change. Against the backdrop of the Middle Ages, they merely indicated transition.

The Philosophy of Money shared a historical trajectory with *Community and Society*. Both texts described the modern subject in psychological terms, and focused on its emergence from a murky past. Simmel argued that the reigning mentality of modernity was calculation, with which Tönnies agreed:

> The money economy enforces the necessity of continuous mathematical operations in our daily transactions. The lives of many people are absorbed by such evaluating, weighing, calculating and reducing of qualitative values to quantitative ones. Gauging values in terms of money has taught us to determine and specify values down to the last farthing and has thus enforced a much great precision in the comparison of various contents of life.[96]

Tönnies's private accusation of plagiarism was understandable. Both sociologists contrasted the different mentalities of the past and of the present. The two texts were also diagnoses, searching for schematic representations of the pathologies of modernity. Yet Simmel devoted the majority of his text to cataloguing modern phenomena, whereas Tönnies analyzed both periods equally. Simmel's text focused on the present. His historical examples negatively clarified his conclusions about the present.

Furthermore, the psychological horizons of medieval and modern had emotional correlates in both texts. This emotional development functioned as an ancillary historical narrative in which feelings reinforced the dichotomy between past and present. In Simmel's modernity, "intellectual energy is the psychic energy which the specific phenomena of the money economy produces…above all, this is the consequence of money's character as a means."[97] Earlier

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[96] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 444.

[97] Ibid., 429.

"energies" were not less intellectual, but rather the opposite of the intellect, "those energies generally denoted as emotions or sentiments which prevail in periods and spheres and interest not permeated by the money economy."[98] With economic development, the intellect suppressed emotions and substituted for them. The primary feelings of modernity were negative, and included tension and irresolution, the emotional components of calculation. In his concluding section on style, Simmel went so far as to claim that rationality's sublimation of emotion existed "in a close causal relationship to the money economy."[99] The suppression of emotions was a necessary precondition for modernity. Restraining impulses was one aspect of modernization, and Simmel suggests its first step. His psychological analysis allowed him to identify emotions as they mapped onto the spectrum of modernization. Additionally, he posited that almost all intense emotions necessarily had no place in the money economy.

Simmel's description of the Middle Ages maintained this contrast. He repeated variants of rugged and heroic to describe medieval Germany, far from the intellectualized refinement of modernity. Emotions existed in an inverse relationship to complex social and economic forms. They were not only more common, they were more frequent during the Middle Ages. Simmel argued that feelings depended on a close relationship between means and ends. The intermediate steps to a goal were fewer and so gratification was common. Primitive people's emotional spectrum was intense, a sense that was deepened in comparison with the uniformity of modern desire and culture: "The peculiar leveling of emotional life that is ascribed to contemporary times in contrast to the forthrightness and ruggedness of earlier epochs."[100] Schmoller recognized this

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[98] Ibid., 429.

[99] Ibid., 444.

[100] Ibid., 432-33.

dichotomy in his review. Simmel "presents the psyche and the whole culture of primitive ages in opposition to modernity."[101] Simmel framed emotions, and their psychological horizon, in natural tension with the present. Yet his argument was historical. He framed emotion as something essentially prehistoric or natural, but in doing so actually historicized them. Overcoming emotions became a marker of civilization, no matter how ambivalent that progress might ultimately be.

The scholarly study of emotions has tended to focus on the matrix of feeling in which a historical actor operated. In their manifesto, Peter and Carol Stearns urged historians to engage with feelings. They coined the term emotionology to describe their new subfield. This approach focused on the collective emotional standards of a society, which they believed would link social history to social and psychological theories.[102] They hoped to reperiodize history according to an emotional regime.[103] Ute Frevert, the foremost historian of emotion for modern Germany, has interrogated, for example, how notions of honor produced class-based norms with specific behavioral component, even tracking how these norms were translated into different social groups.[104] The source base for these histories is necessarily diverse and includes pamphlets,

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[101] Ibid., 806.

[102] Peter N. Stearns with Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 813.

[103] Though the Stearnses understood emotions as ultimately a modern phenomenon, later historians have made a convincing case for emotions in earlier periods. See Daniel Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1434* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821-45; see also Rosenwein, *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) and *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[104] Ute Frevert, "Was haben Gefühle in der Geschichte zu suchen?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009): 183-208; *Learning How to Feel: Children's Literature and Emotional Socialization,*

poetry, diaries, letters, and art, among other options. Scholars of emotion argue that feelings can be powerful historical influences, determining social processes and even informing the development of institutions.

With all its technologies, the history of emotions remains focused on the actor in his or her historical context. One of the easiest emotional readings of Simmel's world would be to cast fin-de-siècle Germany as an age of anxiety, as indeed many historians have. Perhaps a more productive, and less methodologically fraught, use of this literature would be to examine how people conceptualized the emotional spectrum of other eras. Were past epochs emotionally similar to the present, and were their feelings recoverable or lost forever? This approach might have greater explanatory relevance than, say, the emotional boundaries of a nineteenth-century crowd. For example, was anxiety wholly negative in Simmel's writing, or does it assume more positive characteristics in comparison with a historical emotional register? In other words, the understanding of emotional difference might be more interesting.[105]

The heightened emotional register of Simmel's Middle Ages is familiar. Niebuhr, and his Napoleonic peers, invoked a similar medieval world, primitive and hearty. They hoped that its remembrance would elicit a replica of these same feelings and that this emotional response would foster a new attachment to the nation. Scheffel, too, located the emotions of the Middle

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1870-1970, ed. Ute Frevert, Pascal Eitler, Stephanie Olsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and *Emotions in History: Lost and Found*, The Natalie Zemon Davis Annual Lecture Series (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011).

[105] Historians and sociologists have long commented on the importance of emotion to Simmel's arguments in all of his work. Though not exhaustive, see B. Nedelmann, "Georg Simmel – Emotion und Wechselwirkung in intimen Gruppen," in F. Neidhardt, ed., *Gruppensoziologie* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983), 174-209 and "Georg Simmel als Klassiker soziologischer Prozessanalysen," in H. J. Dahme and O. Rammstedt, eds., *Georg Simmel und die Moderne*, 11-35, as well as J. Gerhards, "Georg Simmel's Contribution to a Theory of Emotions," *Social Science Information* 25 (1986): 901-24.

Ages as on a different register. These people were rougher, but more honest, especially in contrast with modern refinement. Recovering this more primitive state would be a kind of self-improvement, and Scheffel urged his readers to return to this rawer, more German, state.

Tönnies, like Simmel, reiterated this paradigm, though in a newly scientific language. Medieval Europe was coarser, but also more heroic, in their texts. Both men portrayed its effects on social forms and governing structures. Simmel argued that primitive cultures adhered, as a rule, to unanimous politics because only universal decisions could bind the community. Majority-rule democracy, by contrast, was an example of modernity's calculating character, for "the principle that the minority has to conform to the majority indicates that the absolute or qualitative value of the individual voice is reduced to an entity of purely quantitative significance."[106] This "ethnopsychological" dichotomy, as Simmel would have it, was a new, social-scientific, gloss on older claims. Neither Simmel nor Tönnies wanted to reanimate medieval Europe. Both theorists voiced their opposition to archaizing programs. They did, however, posit scientific claims about the kinds of emotions available in the Middle Ages, emotions that had been lost to modernity. They created a framework of emotional growth that correlated with a historical narrative of origins. If modernization was indeed a process of rationalization, as Tönnies and Simmel, and many German bureaucrats, would have argued, then this rationalization was necessarily also a development away from a more emotional past.

This dynamic of movement resembled conversations regarding *Fortschritt*. As Reinhart Koselleck has noted, *Fortschritt* transformed into a quasi-religious historical concept during the nineteenth century. It suggested constant linear improvement and the term's use accelerated in

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[106] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 444.

the contexts of German unification and industrialization.[107] Concerned with the destructive processes of modernization, the critics of progress were both leftist, concerned about the new working poor, and conservative, fixated on the erosion of traditional life.[108] Both sociologists identified as the former, and though they were committed to modernity, they also participated in social movements that intended to ameliorate inequalities. Despite their criticisms, neither espoused the desire to return to a past, however utopian.

Simmel, in particular, belonged to an urban Wilhelmine reform milieu that, whatever its reservations about the changes in society, nonetheless still subscribed to a broad ideology of improvement, or at least its possibility.[109] In this context, the Medieval functioned as a backdrop that threw modernity into sharp relief. Medievalists have noted this use of the Middle Ages, yet have often shied away from its broader implications.[110] The idea of a constantly improving present depended on an idealized past that could be improved upon. The Middle Ages, as primitive and unpolished, yet intense, were the necessary precondition for an evolutionary narrative. Within this framework, even negative analyses become more positive. The depth of Simmel's pessimism became a kind of engagement as he sought to clarify the problems of the present. No matter his pessimism, he never advocated a return to earlier conditions or social

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[107] Reinhart Koselleck, "Fortschritt," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* 2, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1975), 351-53.

[108] See Repp, *Paths of German Modernity*, 1-18 and selected essays in David Blackbourn, *Populists and Patricians: Essays in Modern German History* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

[109] Repp, *Paths of German Modernity*, 216.

[110] O.G. Oexle, "The Middle Ages through Modern Eyes: A Historical Problem," The Prothero Lecture, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 9 (1999): 121-142, "Das Mittelalter und das Unbehagen an der Moderne," in Oexle, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus. Studien zu Problemgeschichte der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

forms. He even chided those he described as "guild romantics" for misrepresenting the arbitrary social arrangements of the medieval guild in their effort to revive the concept for modern politics.[111] In his sense of unstoppable development, Simmel retained a sense of progress no matter his prognostications.

5. Modern Style and Simmel's Rejection of Historical Reproduction

This sense of progress, however ambivalent, extended as well to cultural production. Material products were ultimately the realization of desires and emotions, "the result of ideas that utilize the available possibilities of objects."[112] Once, production had entailed a simultaneous cultivation, of the object and of the creator, but the culture of money had interrupted this process. Simmel related this disturbance to the dominance of objective over subjective culture. Institutions and programs had encouraged this tendency. Education had remained more or less sound during the eighteenth century. It emphasized "the formation of man, that is…a personal internal value," a focus that was replaced during the nineteenth century by the concept of education as "a body of objective knowledge and behavioral patterns."[113] For Simmel, the switch from neo-humanism to positivism marked the prioritization of objectivity and the decisive break with previous modes of production

The division of labor deepened the rift between subjective and objective culture, an impermeable boundary between past and present. A finished product could no longer be described as the work of one person and it assumed a fragmentary character. It lacked "the

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[111] Simmel, "Money in Modern Culture," 20.

[112] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 447.

[113] Ibid., 449.

spiritual determinacy" of objects with one maker."[114] This decline narrative catalogued the means by which products took on the alienation of modern culture. This process of fragmentation implied a holistic starting point. Pre-industrial patterns of production necessarily entailed a different relationship between maker, consumer, and product. Custom work, "which predominated among medieval craftsmen and which rapidly declined only during the last century," produced links between consumer and commodity, linking him or her back to the producer.[115] This connection, between maker and buyer reached back to the Middle Ages, and had been broken. Factory goods could not reproduce this network. Instead, "it becomes an objective given entity which the consumer approaches externally and whose specific existence and quality is autonomous of him."[116]

Simmel argued that the eclecticism of nineteenth-century styles augmented this objectivity. An affinity for historical styles had only increased during the nineteenth century. Neo-Gothic or neo-Renaissance imitation initially had more exclusive origins in governmental or aristocratic projects. By 1900, these idioms had extended into mass-market goods. Simmel posited that this mania reflected not personal taste, but the general popularization of historical thought. As historical knowledge expanded during the nineteenth century, its modes of analysis had become widespread. This understanding required "a flexibility of the mind, a capacity to empathize with and reconstruct casts of mind altogether different from one's own."[117] History, Simmel argued, had meaning only if understood "as the history of the basic interests, emotions and strivings that

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[114] Ibid., 454.

[115] Ibid., 457.

[116] Ibid., 457.

[117] Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 462.

lie at its roots."[118] History was only psychological hypothesis. Yet this flexibility of mind, or plasticity, also stimulated a liking for change. Enthusiasm for stylistic reproduction became one aspect of mental mobility. Historicism encouraged an adaptability that deepened the fragmentation of modern style.

Eclecticism had further sins for which to answer. Simmel described style as a language, with laws of pronunciation and grammar. He argued that everyone had only one native style. As long as this held true, style and content were congruent. Only when multiple styles proliferated, introducing choice, did they gain an objective quality. Styles belonged to "a world of expressive possibilities" that gained an objective status beyond the subject. Simmel advocated a break with historical reproduction so that modern culture would have to develop a style of its own, one that would once more be united with content. This break with historical styles was itself a kind of utopian command, a belief that aesthetic progress could be regained, if only in the future.

Tönnies offered a similar narrative of the historical origins of the aesthetics and use of style. In *Community and Society*, style was a function of its holistic place in the community. The arts began as urban handicraft that served the needs of local medieval life. Architects designed town walls, churches, gates; artists decorated these buildings within and without.[119] Close relations developed between art and religion, not only through church design. First, craft knowledge was transmitted within families and professions, "like a creed, as if they were a dogma and a religious mystery."[120] Second, these closed networks of artistic training worked as a form of community regulation. Tönnies argued that, "the economic existence of a perfect town…in the Germanic

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[118] Ibid., 462.

[119] Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 62.

[120] Ibid., 63.

world, cannot be fully comprehended unless art as well as religion are taken as the highest and most important functions of the whole town and, consequently of its government, its estates, and its guilds."[121] A small group of people used to control the arts and their execution. This regulatory function, according to Tönnies, ensured that style remained embedded in the meaning of the community. The "perfect town," furthermore, was a product of the Middle Ages and one that could not be replicated in modernity

What Simmel called "The Problem of Style" was not limited to this monograph. In an essay published soon after the second edition of the *Philosophy of Money*, he made a similar argument about eclecticism's negative effects. He noted that "stylelessness" characterized the age, "for we say an object is devoid of style if it appears to have sprung from a momentary, isolated, temporary sentiment, without being based on a more general feeling, a non-contingent norm."[122] Historicized decoration reproduced the style, and with it the norms, of a long-gone era. Yet these no longer had any meaning for early twentieth-century Germany. A late essay from 1918 revealed a stable definition of style across this period. Style was ultimately "an unmistakable family resemblance" across artistic genre, so that "everything belonging to a particular epoch of a civilization or to a particular national life evokes a common tone or character for us, suffusing the most different kinds of things in a uniform manner."[123] The German Middle Ages exhibited stylistic coherence; nineteenth-century imperial Germany did not. Though Simmel criticized the nineteenth-century historical impulse, his definition of style was remarkably historicist. He believed that in a stylistically coherent era like the Middle Ages, all objects, great and small,

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[121] Ibid., 63-64.

[122] Simmel, "The Problem of Style," 216-17.

[123] Simmel, "Germanischer und klassisch-romanischer Stil," *Gesamtausgabe*, 13:313.

would exhibit that period's tendencies. His definition of style included an internal critique of reproduction, using historicism to undermine its popularity.

Simmel wrote for a broad, educated audience, and artists were one group of many that responded to his text. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, for one, expressed his wish to adapt the book into a libretto.[124] Simmel had long supported the reform of the arts in Germany. His circles included trained artists, like Melchior Lechter, the graphic designer, as well as authors, such as Hofmannsthal and Stefan George. He knew the latter as well, referring to him as "St. George" in letters to friends.[125] Shortly after the publication of *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel, with his friends, hoped to found a club devoted to the appreciation and reform of the arts. He recruited among his acquaintances, even sending an invitation to George. The great poet was unenthusiastic to the point of rudeness and informed Simmel that they must have deeply misunderstood one another if Simmel believed that he would be interested in such an endeavor.[126] Yet George's response revealed more than just the elitism of the circle he patronized.[127] His avant-garde artistic disciples were committed to a cultural renewal that would begin with them, from high culture. Simmel's concerns intersected instead with more inclusive conversations about style, philosophy, production, and social concerns.

Simmel joined a discussion that at its broadest amounted to a Romantic critique of capitalism. Artists and theorists debated how the modern consumerist culture had affected the

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[124] David Frisby, "Preface," in Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*.

[125] Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, 22:316.

[126] February-March, 1903. Ibid., 449, 453.

[127] On the politics of the *George-Kreis*, see *A Poet's Reich: Politics and Culture in the George Circle*, ed. Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl (Rochester: Camden House, 2011).

expressivist subject.[128] According to these critics, modern commercial life had restricted the individual's ability to assert autonomy over objects.[129] Simmel's contribution was his suggestion that one could reimpose a subject-based dominance through new patterns of consumption and, ultimately, recreate coherent self-expression with these goods.[130] The *Werkbund*, formed in 1907, was a movement of artists and industrialists who tried to realize this program. Unlike the English arts and crafts movement, the *Werkbund* looked decidedly forward, not backward. Its leaders sought to reestablish the production of goods in Germany through a closer alliance with industrialists and manufacturers, rather than a return to small-scale, localized production. They aimed not only to reform practices of production, but also to discover a new unified national style that reflected the needs and concerns of modernity, rather than look to the past for inspiration.[131] The academy provided the *Werkbund*'s intellectual foundations and scholars have argued that Simmel, together with the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl, were its most important sources.[132] Members of the *Werkbund* believed that the path to the future of production lay not in the abandonment of capitalism, but rather in its manipulation and reshaping.[133]

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[128] David Hamlin, "Romanticism, Spectacle, and a Critique of Wilhelmine Consumer Capitalism," *Central European History* 38 (2005): 250-68.

[129] Ibid., 263.

[130] Ibid., 264.

[131] See Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and John Heskett, *Design in Germany, 1870-1918* (London: Trefoil Books Ltd, 1986) for a broad description of the *Werkbund*'s program.

[132] For more detail, see Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 6-17. Margaret Olin's seminal work on Riegl describes his relation to the academy, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

[133] Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, 6.

Simmel's importance for the *Werkbund* reveals how notions of progress, and its historical narrative, continued to affect organizations, policy, and ideals. The abandonment of historicizing styles was a clear theoretical articulation of progress. This progress, moreover, was founded on the opposition between past and present. The scientific bona fides of this dichotomy meant that medievalizing styles could no longer be thought to express something true about the present, for they could only represent a meaning, even a function, that was irretrievably lost. The eventual resolution of an origins narrative was to abandon, finally, the medieval past as stylistic inspiration. Reproduction contributed not only to stylistic confusion, but to the increased autonomy of objects. Like Simmel, the *Werkbund* sought to create the context in which a new and fundamentally modern style could originate. Simmel hoped to witness a respiritualized German manufacturing process that would produce goods for a new harmonious culture.

6. Conclusion

These early experiments in sociology revealed, among other influences, the tenacity of historical origins as an explanatory framework. The search for Germanic origins gained influence during the early part of the nineteenth century, as patriots and intellectuals attempted to develop a distinctively German account of the creation, and character, of their nation. Even late-century new sciences, like sociology, continued this tradition, which it had inherited from fields like the historical schools of law and economics. Yet the idea of origins developed a complicated relationship with progress during the nineteenth century. No matter how spiritual, or glorious, the historical beginning was, in some readings the nation had continuously improved from that point. When Maine argued that the movement from status to contract was a "law of progress," he articulated a generally agreed upon position, even among medievalizing utopians. As progress

became a more ambivalent concept, reproducing or even invoking that medieval starting point seemed more and more archaizing fantasy. As the Medieval transformed into a lost past, however, some theorists placed it into an oppositional dynamic with the present, illustrating what modernity was not, in ways good and bad.

This continued interest in national origins undermined some of the commitments of early sociologists to universalism. Both Tönnies and Simmel framed their conclusions as generally applicable laws even though they based their narratives on German history. Their social-scientific arguments were not merely occidental; they were German. Their acceptance of national origins, moreover, endowed their texts with an ideological flexibility that they themselves might have contested. Tönnies's text functioned as a diagnosis. He hoped to identify the logic of modernization, not to reverse it but to understand its sources. Yet his terminology had a far longer afterlife than the subtleties of his narrative may have suggested. *Gemeinschaft*, like *Heimat*, became an easily manipulable term on the right. Transformed into a lost utopia, perhaps encouraged by the nostalgic tone of Tönnies's text, it was easily read as a nativist account of origins, far from Tönnies's own progressive political commitments or intentions. It became a recoverable utopia modeled on the racially homogeneous conditions of Germany's supposed birth.

The influence of psychology on sociology informed its focus on group interiority. Though its practitioners used psychology to discover laws guiding social organization, these structures necessarily framed historical emotional responses. Tönnies, in particular, reconstructed the affective ties that united the *Gemeinschaft*. Yet in both authors, the Middle Ages was no longer a prompt for modern emotion, as it had been earlier in the century, and continued to be, in popular culture. Instead, the Middle Ages entailed a spectrum of emotion that, like the period itself,

ought not to be resurrected. Its intense feelings were lost to modernity. They also revealed the shallowness of modern emotional responses. Simmel and Tönnies grafted together stories of social and emotional development. They suggested that this evolution was also a civilizing narrative, endowing a more popular narrative about the ambivalences of refinement with a scientific gloss. Their distorting logic, furthermore, distanced the Middle Ages. Whereas some figures, like Niebuhr and Scheffel, stressed the similarities between medieval and modern, these early sociologists rejected this notion of proximity.

Simmel and Tönnies believed that analysis would precisely identify the problems of modernity, how they had arisen, and potentially how they could be fixed. They hoped, moreover, that eventually a modern culture would develop, free from the fracture and alienation of the money economy. In this utopia, style and content would once more align; the expressivist subject would be able to establish dominance over goods once more. Both believed in the salvific potential of this holistic culture to come. Yet with this faith in organicism, they fell prey to a historicizing conceit despite their best intentions to cast off narrative tropes from that tradition. Holistic society remained an archaizing concept. Only the *Gemeinschaft* exhibited the unity they wished for modernity. Simmel and Tönnies resisted a simplistic solution to modernization's problems, such as a return to an idealized past. Despite their progressive positions, their purpose, ultimately, had a conservative, and particularly nineteenth-century cast: to restore a lost unitary German culture.

Conclusion

In 1946 Ernst Kantorowicz published a book about medieval liturgical acclamations, the *laudes regiae*. The chant had fallen out of use after the Middle Ages, but Kantorowicz devoted the last chapter of his text to its modern revival in Fascist Italy. The Vatican reintroduced the chant to its services in response to the power struggles between Pope Pius XI and Mussolini in the 1920s. Kantorowicz argued that despite the religious context, this was a political act, for "the totalitarian aims of Italian Fascism were capped by the no less totalitarian…ideal of the "Universal Empire" of [Christendom]."[1] After the two leaders reconciled, the medieval text was adapted yet further, for the regime. As in the Middle Ages, the chant included the names of the pope and king, the two offices that represented Christ's power on earth. Anonymous editors also added Mussolini's name, an emendation without precedent, for officials did not have a function in medieval political theology.[2]

Kantorowicz provided his gloss on the phenomenon, which he described as "a caricature" of the text's "former life" as a theological and political invocation.[3] He noted, "ancient forms and rites might be restored; but the rhythm of life that had vouched for the inner truth of ceremonies

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[1] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 184.

[2] The updated text read: "Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat! | Pio summo pontifici et universali patri pax, vita et salus perpetua! | Regi nostro Victorio Dei gratia feliciter regnanti pax, vita et salus perpetua! | Duci Benito Mussolini italicae gentis gloriae, *pax*, vita et sales perpetua! | TEMPORA BONA VENIANT!" The first line, proclaiming Christ's power, was the chant's standard introductory line. The next line, too, was repeated in all medieval variants, with the name of the pope substituted in; ditto the third line, for the king. The *laudes* for Mussolini was unprecedented. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 186.

[3] Ibid., 180.

in bygone days cannot be conjured up again."[4] Yet caricatures, he added, "are instructive."[5] He traced its revival from nineteenth-century musicologists, to the Vatican, to the Italian regime. He argued that the chant's "emotionalism" became "indispensable" to Fascist government and public spectacle, tracing its spread to Franco's Spanish supporters, radical Mexican youth, and the Belgian "Rexist" party.[6] Kantorowicz suggested that aspects of the text – the sense of cultural patrimony, its religious and political fervor – made it especially productive for ideological manipulation. He ended his monograph cautioning that his job as a historian, an "excavator of the past," had implicit dangers, as this example proved.[7] This moment is richly suggestive for this dissertation. Kantorowicz revealed the artificiality of a medievalizing political revival, describing the ways in which the modern use of the chant differed from its medieval function. He argued that the Mussolini *laudes* were not a continuation of a long tradition, but rather a thoroughly modern practice, "untrue" to precedent. His book, among its other arguments, exposed this disjuncture.

Merely two decades earlier, Kantorowicz had participated in similarly medievalizing historical debates in Germany. In 1927, he published his great biography of the Hohenstaufen ruler, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite*.[8] This was an unconventional monograph, initially produced without footnotes to such disapprobation that he released a lengthy *Ergänzungsband* only four

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[4] Ibid., 180.

[5] Ibid., 180.

[6] Ibid., 185.

[7] Ibid., 186.

[8] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: G. Bondi, 1927).

years later.[9] His text revived the same nineteenth-century historiographical debates about Ghibellinism discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Like many before him, Kantorowicz described the *Stauferzeit* as a Golden Age of German expansion. His revisionist interpretation, however, represented Friedrich II's expansionary aims as not directed towards Italy and the south, but rather eastwards. During the thirty years spanning World War One and Two, writers and politicians focused on Germany's eastern neighbors, which many portrayed as an empty space into which Germany, and its civilization, could spread and flourish.[10] Like other projects that medievalists researched in the 1920s, Kantorowicz transformed Friedrich II into a historical precedent for Germany's Eastern European mission.[11] The emperor became a medieval Bismarck: canny, ambitious, and powerful.[12] Crucially, too, the medieval Reich operated as a kind of "total rulership," with Kaiser Friedrich exercising unbounded sovereignty over the hearts

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[9] Ernst Kantorowciz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite. Ergänzungsband. Quellennachweise und Exkurse* (Berlin: G. Bondi, 1931).

[10] On this phenomenon, see Vejas Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). His second book on the subject, which adopts a longer frame, is also helpful: *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also Michael Burleigh's monograph about the German study of Eastern Europe, *Germany turns Eastwards: A Study of* Ostforschung *in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Wolfgang Wippermann's treatment of German expansionism, *Der "deutsche Drang nach Osten." Ideologie und Wirklichkeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981).

[11] Martin Ruehl, "'In this time without emperors': The Politics of Ernst Kantorowicz's *Kaiser Friedreich der Zweite* Reconsidered," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 214. See also Carl Landauer, "Ernst Kantorowicz and the Sacralization of the Past." *Central European History* 27 (1994): 1-25.

[12] Ibid., 215-16.

and minds of his subjects.[13] Through the filter of the national past, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* contributed to intensely ideological debates about the direction of Germany during the 1920s.

Only fifteen years separated the book's second edition and *Laudes Regiae*. With the former, Kantorowicz still participated in the kinds of medievalizing narratives that he condemned in 1946. It is nearly meaningless to say that during this same period much changed in Europe, and yet it remains true. When Kantorowicz wrote *Kaiser Friedrich* in the 1920s, he belonged to a nationalist intellectual and artistic circle named after its leader, Stefan George, to whom his disciplines referred as "*Der Meister*." This charismatic poet had created a cultic and secretive society around 1900, but the ethos of the *Georgekreis*, always attuned its leader, changed dramatically after World War One.[14] Once cosmopolitan, George became "*deutschnational*," with an especial focus on race and racial difference. As Martin Ruehl has noted, the conception of *Deutschtum* among the poet's acolytes shifted as well to a new, aggressive key.[15] Kantorowicz produced *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* in this intellectual context, where jingoism became scholarly and artistic inspiration.[16] Yet in one of those inconsistencies so frequent during the *fin de siècle* and into the Weimar Republic, the *Georgekreis* admitted Kantorowicz as a member despite the vehement anti-Semitism of the group. He left for England only in 1938 and emigrated

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[13] Ibid., 224.

[14] Ruehl, "In this time without emperors," 190-96. See as well the essays in Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl, eds., *A Poet's Reich: Politics and Culture in the George Circle* (Rochester: Camden House, 2011).

[15] Ibid., 195.

[16] To say nothing of his service as a *Freikorps* member on the Eastern Front in World War One, and his help in suppressing the Spartacist Uprising in 1919.

to the United States the year after, even though he had been forced into early retirement in 1933.[17]

During the war years abroad Kantorowicz taught at Berkeley, after convincing the American government he was not, in fact, a National Socialist.[18] He also served as an instructor on German history for the army special training program in 1943 and 1944. His first lecture, "Prehistory and Nazism," began at the beginning – or at least what many actors from this dissertation would regard as the beginning: the early Middle Ages. In a six-lecture series, he devoted the first two to the Middle Ages.[19] He emphasized its social, political, and cultural development: he outlined the geographical boundaries of the medieval German empire, and the importance of the east; the territorial princes and courtly culture; peasants and social unrest; and the development of cities in the high and late Middle Ages. Kantorowicz discussed early modern Germany in his third lecture and the eighteenth century in the next, leaving only one each to review the long nineteenth century, and World War One and National Socialism. The army deemed German historical identity a component of knowing the wartime enemy, but Kantorowicz himself produced this narrative. He replicated an accepted narrative that began with the medieval origins of Germany and continued to the present. The focus of his lectures reveals the continued importance of the Middle Ages as an explanatory framework for Germany's development in the 1940s.

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[17] As Ruehl points out, this late departure has fascinated Kantorowicz's biographers and resulted in a polarized debate, Ruehl "In this time without emperors," 189. Norman Cantor, for example has referred to the historian's "impeccable Nazi credentials," *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: W. Morrow, 1991), 95. Others have chosen a more hagiographical approach, see Ruehl "In this time without emperors," 189, for additional references.

[18] This was the first of two struggles with the government. In 1951 he resigned from Berkeley after refusing to sign the Loyalty Oath.

[19] Leo Baeck Institute AR 7216 / MF 561 III/8/2 1122.

At some point during this period, Kantorowicz's understanding of the Middle Ages and its modern uses changed. This transformation cannot be reduced to the merely biographical; his estrangement from Germany does not meaningfully explain his intellectual evolution. Perhaps, however, we might consider his unwanted exile as the start of an intellectual shift, for which his dislocation functioned as the embodiment of his growing alienation from the German historical narratives that he had long accepted. This brief, concluding case study is significant for this dissertation for two reasons. First, it shows the long influence of nineteenth-century debates. Highly political research programs – about Germany's relations to Rome, or the contours of unified Germany – continued well into the twentieth century. Historians still regarded these discussions as representations of the medieval world as it had actually appeared, rather than as interpretations framed by thoroughly nineteenth-century categories and concerns. The quest for German origins had produced a familiar Middle Ages, one that shared structures, institutions, and geographies with the present, separated only by time. Kantorowicz's intellectual development is further instructive because it shows the rapidity with which the artificiality of "medieval" practices could be revealed. In only a few pages, the Mussolini *laudes* became ridiculous – still sinister, but absurd. Kantorowicz lifted the enchantment of supposed historical veracity and revealed that Fascist ritual was merely pantomime.

This sense of medievalism as theater forms one of the connective tendons of my dissertation. In some instances the theater involved scholarly performance. Barthold Niebuhr and others from his milieu delivered lectures on the Middle Ages. Witnesses to a dramatic moment in German history, these men hoped to use the medieval past to transform the heightened emotions of their audiences into a focused patriotism. In other parts of this dissertation, we have found Germans inhabiting the Middle Ages through costume. Medieval dress communicated different messages

across my dissertation. In the early nineteenth century German men wore an "old Germanic style" to signal their affiliation with various patriotic movements, from *Turnvater Jahn* to the *Burschenschaftler*. In this context medievalism was a bid for a radical politics that state governments often forcibly repressed, understanding unification as a challenge to local power. Paintings preserved these costumes and represented them for new museum-going publics. Yet as the chapter on Wagner argued, old Germanic dress had become standardized, even maudlin, by the 1870s. Far from its earliest, relatively narrow usage, costume had come to represent general German nationhood by the second half of the century, with none of the urgency, or malleability, of the 1810s. Parades for national festivals and monuments included medieval Germanic dress, in the procession itself or in plays and *tableaux vivants* staged nearby. By the end of the century costuming contributed to an aggressively nationalistic culture that many social commentators, from Max Weber to Alois Riegl, deplored as meaningless.

During the nineteenth century the Medieval accrued a material culture beyond costumes. Reichensperger sought to rebuild the Rhineland in an idiom that would assert its historically Catholic regional identity. He joined a European discussion about conservation, but he joined a distinctly Catholic variant of it in which the Middle Ages represented not merely a holistic society, but a religious one. He advocated for a utopian program in which the act of rebuilding Gothic architecture would reproduce medieval society. Restoration was not superficial; it entailed remodeling society. Reichensperger contributed to a conversation that endowed architectural markers with distinct meaning. For him, a medieval townscape functioned as the backdrop against which actors resisted centralizing pressures.[20] This physical backdrop often

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[20] Sometimes, these towns functioned as actual backdrops, such as for the Passion Play at Oberammergau, or more generally as the historical background for tourists, such as Rothenburg

corresponded to an intellectual one, as in Reichensperger's writings. With varying degrees of success Wagner, too, tried to realize an opera that matched his artistic vision and the message of his essays. Many of these backdrops, both visual and intellectual, shared an interest in origins. The monumental fresco cycle at Goslar recast myth and history alike as a story of German might during the Middle Ages that Kaiser Wilhelm replicated again in 1871. Medieval histories, especially those produced during the second half of the century, reiterated similar narratives.

In this dissertation medievalism has also functioned as a measure of the importance of the *Sattelzeit* as a formative period. During the Napoleonic period in particular, accepted truths gave way to new uncertainties. Rapid political change produced intense social and cultural unrest. Niebuhr spent ten years traveling between 1805 and 1815, during which time his loyalties and preferences shifted rapidly. Born a Dane, he felt most Prussian after the state's defeat; yet less than a year later he considered permanently taking a post in Russia. Niebuhr's experience was not unique and serves as reminder of the ways in which intellectual shifts can accompany physical dislocation. In this period of instability, German intellectuals turned to their origins to explain nineteenth-century disappointment and also to cure it. Many historians have commented on the importance of origins during this period but have rarely explored it in detail. Niebuhr's training in Roman legal history directed him and his colleague Savigny toward the intersection of Roman and medieval law, particularly as these laws affected early German institutions. Many projects, like legal scholarship, were initiated during the period and only came to fruition much later. The *MGH*, for example, to which the two men contributed, only gained financial and institutional stability after unification. Its cultural presence, however, influenced historians and

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ob der Tauber. For the latter, see Joshua Hagen, *Preservation, Tourism and Nationalism: The Jewel of the German Past* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 57-144.

novelists, such as Scheffel, all the while. Nineteenth-century institutional medievalism affirms the importance of the *Sattelzeit* in understanding later developments, including even debates about German constitutionalism. The intellectual genealogy of medievalism reveals that many of these projects were superseded only late in the century, if at all.

This dissertation has questioned the "naturalness" of nineteenth-century assumptions about the ways in which the German Middle Ages functioned as the origins of German modernity. Many supposed that the past was inherently knowable because they considered it cultural patrimony; the medieval period was a domestic product. Germans learned to connect with the past through what seemed like a tribal loyalty. This accounts for the assumption at the start of the century among Prussian reformers that patriotism needed a prompt, like a speech, and that mention of the Middle Ages would elicit a latent response. This naturalness had a geographical component that often disguised, or minimized, the claim's ideological grounding. Reichensperger described the Rhineland as the heartland of German culture as a retort to Prussian political and cultural centralization. This project linked his writing on architecture and religion with his political career. Reichensperger often insisted that geographical and architectural markers, like the Cologne cathedral, had a stable meaning, or at least an original one that could be recreated. He confused, no doubt sincerely, continuity in location with continuity in import.

The founders of the *MGH*, by contrast, had a more ambitious program for Germany. They claimed all of Central Europe, even extending westward, too, as medieval Germanic territory. Perhaps the very scope of their project explains why its institutional existence was so precarious. The scope of its research agenda anticipated a political unification that would guarantee support for national projects like this one. Few individual state governments supported a German

national project. International German scholarly networks had existed for centuries, but without a centralized administrative and financial system, no state was prepared to support the organization at the scale initially envisioned. The *MGH* serves as an example of a different kind of naturalization, how an institution that was not a natural fit for early and mid nineteenth-century funding structures slowly became so as these changed with unification.

Emotions were the means by which some, including Niebuhr, attempted to naturalize a modern affinity for the German Middle Ages. His Charlemagne speech portrayed an era that was the inverse of 1808, when Germans were the conquerors not the conquered. Like his colleagues, Niebuhr hoped to transform the already intense feelings of his audience into pride in the past, in order to prompt a renewed patriotism. This emotional connection between a historical sense of Germanness and patriotism persisted throughout the century and gradually assumed a more practiced or conventional component. Medievalizing festivals and parades included historical pageantry to inspire a sense of pride and unity, without any of the unscripted demonstrations from the Napoleonic era. Kantorowicz, too, commented on the particular emotional frenzy associated with medievalizing state spectacle.

The Middle Ages functioned as a prompt for emotions, but numerous figures from my dissertation also portrayed it as an emotional time. Medieval feelings supposedly existed on a different spectrum than modern ones. Often these emotions were more primitive, but positively so. Scheffel represented medieval hale and hearty emotions as a healthier alternative to nineteenth-century refined etiquette. Without the manners of modern society, the Middle Ages were more violent, but this, too, received a positive gloss. Conflicts were frequent, but they ended quickly and definitively. Late century sociologists similarly represented a medieval world bound by affective ties and an emotional intensity no longer accessible to modernity. They

contrasted early Germanic emotion with the shallowness of modern feeling, positing a linear evolution from the former to the latter. In their texts, historical development became a civilizing narrative about the evolution of social rules. These arguments about medieval emotionalism gained further importance in the first half of twentieth century. Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process* is the clearest example of its tenacious hold on scholarly study. Emotions, medieval and modern, account for one of the many imprecisions of medievalism. Authors and scholars referred to the more profound feelings of the Middle Ages, but they did not locate them in time or space, suggesting instead that emotions generally inhered to the thousand-year epoch. Even though a range of figures emphasized the emotional superficiality of modernity, they also deployed the Middle Ages – in speeches, parades, theater, novels, art – as a means to produce feelings.

Many authors described medieval manly emotions. Female emotion, by contrast, was transhistorical. Medieval women were narrowly concerned with home and family, just as in the nineteenth century. In *Ekkehard* female characters were secondary and also flatly, even cruelly, portrayed. This distinction suggests a broader trend about medievalism in Germany. Medieval ideals were often masculine ideals. Reichensperger described medieval society as a guild of workers, implicitly male. Niebuhr portrayed Charlemagne as a martial ideal far from the Prussian male cowardice that he regularly lamented in his letters. Even his speech was delivered largely to a male audience. More generally, the statist and constitutional histories that typified nineteenth-century historicism had little room for women. Hagiographical accounts of Hohenstaufen rulers only furthered a narrative of masculine medieval society that emphasized a single-sex expansionary government. Historians reiterated that Charlemagne and the two Friedrichs were above all successful warriors. Though more speculative, this notion of soldierly masculinity

contributed to notions of honor later in the century, yet without the courtly ideals that created a modern British chivalric culture.[21]

I have discussed medievalism as sets of concepts and practices that became both ubiquitous and differentiated over the course of the century. They came to function as a mise en scène, a repertoire of narratives, poems, images, costumes, and even vocabulary that related ultimately not to the Middle Ages but to modern German life. Kantorowicz's modern *laudes* belonged to a broader phenomenon, in which fascist regimes appropriated medievalizing ceremonial for their own political purposes. Yet it also resembled similar nineteenth-century adaptations that used bids for historical continuity, or renewal, to suggest dynastic or ideational congruence between past and present, legitimizing the latter. Sometimes Germans physically assumed the Middle Ages in clothing; at other moments medievalism became a participatory ritual. If the medieval imaginary served as a mise en scène, its artificiality was either forgotten or unknown, even as individuals contested, and shifted, the scenery and their lines.

This dissertation has explored how certain aspects of the medieval past became authoritative, and for whom. Friedrich I ("Rotbart," or Barbarossa) first gained resonance as emblem of a unified Germany in the late eighteenth century, an interpretation popular among radical patriotic movements through the 1840s. Yet this affinity changed before and after unification. Friedrich I became instead part of an accepted historical narrative about the nation, in the process erasing the figure's earlier, more marginal, status. Yet I have not argued that transformations in Friedrich I's representation was a matter of invention or memory, even as actors debated the importance of the emperor for modern Germany. I have argued that medievalism entailed a set of assumptions

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[21] Mark Girouard's broad thesis about how medievalism affected notions of masculinity among England's upper classes in the nineteenth-century England: *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

and practices about nineteenth-century Germany. The Middle Ages assumed particular importance in defining how German modernity differed from the trajectory and experience of other nations. At the heart of my dissertation is the sense, among its protagonists, that their portrayals of the past were true, rather than purely opportunistic bids to shape the present. This argument affirms the importance of historicism and historical understanding to traditional definitions of modernity. I define this historical understanding, however, at its broadest, not limited to scholarly writing, but encompassing fiction, too; as well as painting, architecture, opera, theory, social science, law, and politics. Medievalism retained a profound eclecticism even as history, and the history of art and architecture, became more precise. Its invocation, as a result, entailed an unpredictability over the roughly one hundred years of this dissertation. As Kantorowicz cautioned about the *laudes*' recovery among musicologists, "it is interesting to watch History setting, as it were, her traps," for he understood from his research and from his experiences, that "any revival of the past…is two-edged and cuts both ways."[22]

[22] Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 183, 185.

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