

*Gothicism and Early Modern
Historical Ethnography*

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GOTHICISM: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Early-modern Gothicism, or self-identification with the Gothic peoples described by classical authors, has usually been considered a Scandinavian, and particularly Swedish, affair. Particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Swedish court and universities insisted militantly that the kingdom was the Gothic homeland, and this has fostered an assumption that Gothicism represents a kind of embryonic nationalism. This interpretation was almost inevitable given the circumstances of modern interest in the phenomenon. Scandinavian scholars were the first to pick up the Gothic thread in the earlier twentieth century, and Swedes in particular have dominated the literature on Gothicism. At least in the early years, this may be

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related to a general trend to interpret the past in terms of a relatively inflexible, modern concept of nation. These earlier studies accordingly relied largely on the same, mostly Swedish, sources. Later work has generally not expanded the framework of the discourse, however.¹ A number of important early modern texts that show the much broader appeal of Gothicism are not accounted for in the standard narrative of the rise of the phenomenon in the early modern period. I will show that the Scandinavian interpretation has been allowed to overshadow a much broader Gothic tradition that encompassed a broad part of Europe, including the German lands and Spain. Gothicism has thus been reduced to just one aspect of its original scope, and the scholarly nuances and historical jockeying that shaped the narrative have largely been lost. This reduction has had consequences not only for the familiar version of the story, largely derived from Swedish texts, but also for our understanding of history writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Gothicism debate may be unique in its breadth and in the intensity of interest that it elicited. It is also remarkable for the variety of approaches to historical writing that scholars applied as each tried to develop a more impregnable argument than the last. Linguistic, geographical, archaeological, antiquarian, and textual methods intersected freely, inviting shifting and overlapping versions of the Gothic narrative that sometimes trace the linguistic legacy of the tribe, sometimes the ethnic legacy, and sometimes bind the two together. All of these narratives were basically concerned with the antiquity of the Goths and their legacy in early modern Europe. The implications of this were different for various regions and rulers, but most wanted to claim for themselves the strength, prestige, and antiquity of the tribe that toppled the Roman Empire, thus enhancing their own often dubious historical legitimacy.

¹ See, among others, Johan Nordström, *De yverbornes ö* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1934), Ernst Ekman, "Gothic Patriotism and Olof Rudbeck," *The Journal of Modern History* 34 (1962): 52–63, Sten Lindroth, "Der Gotizismus und seine Bedeutung in der schwedischen Wissenschaft" in *Studia Gotica. Die eisenzeitlichen Verbindungen zwischen Schweden und Südosteuropa*, ed. Ulf Erik Hagberg (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972), 12–19, Kurt Johannesson, "The Goths as Vision and Propaganda in Swedish History" in *I fratelli Giovanni e Olao Magno. Opera e cultura tra due mondi*, ed. Carlo Santini (Rome: il Calamo, 1999), 157–66. Ingmar Stenroth, *Mythen om goterna. Från antiken till romantiken* (Lund: Atlantis, 2002) has taken a broader view of Gothicism. The question of early-modern national consciousness is difficult, and has attracted a significant literature. For a useful introduction to the problem, see Orest Ranum, ed., *National Consciousness, History, and Political Culture in Early-Modern Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

This debate often took a polemical character, particularly in the political sphere, where there were fierce disputes over which region was the true homeland of the tribe, and thus which area (or people or ruling dynasty) could claim the greatest honor from their exploits and claim to be their most direct descendants. But there was also a very clear corollary to this contentious discourse. As scholars from across a wide area produced mountains of evidence pointing to the Gothic origins of their own regions, it became possible to think of Gothic origins not only in terms of difference—which kingdom, dynasty, or geographic region could claim the greatest antiquity and eminence—but also in terms of shared history and common identity across political, geographical, and linguistic boundaries. In general, the polemic was restricted to the *origins* of the Goths. Many writers seem to have accepted that the Gothic lands cumulatively formed a sort of historical unity that was lost through later political divisions, but which could still be traced through other means. Particularly in the Holy Roman Empire—a largely political boundary encompassing many smaller states ruled by famously fractious princes of different confessions and languages—the more conceptual notion of deep-seated Gothic origins opened the way for a different alignment of identity both within and without the boundaries of the Empire, and especially with Scandinavia, which contributed such rich arguments to the debate.

There are several significant problems in a study of the early-modern view of the Goths beyond the historiographical ones outlined above. They were widely associated with other tribes—often the Vandals—and these were frequently treated as closely related groups both in the literature and in legend.² This sort of composite approach to identity could take many forms, and it was not even considered contradictory to claim both Gothic and classical Roman heritages simultaneously. During his 1672 coronation, the Swedish king Carl XI dressed a number of his courtiers in ancient Roman costume, but very explicitly called them Goths.³ Both, however, were different facets of antiquity.⁴

² For association with the Vandals, see Roland Steinacher, *Studien zur vandalischen Geschichte. Die Gleichsetzung der Ethnonyme Wenden, Slaven und Vandalen vom Mittelalter bis ins 18. Jahrhundert* (Dissertation, University of Vienna, 2002).

³ The festivities were recorded in *Certamen Equestre. Das grosse Carrosel und Prächtige Ring = Rännen* (Stockholm, 1672). Facsimile with commentary by Jonas Nordin, Stockholm: Byggförlaget, 2005. See also Allan Ellenius, “Wiedergeburt, Erneuerung und die nordische Renaissance” in *Die Renaissance im Blick der Nationen Europas*, ed. Georg Kauffmann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), 263–64.

⁴ For Scandinavian antiquity and antiquarianism in an international context, see Peter Burke, “Images as Evidence in Seventeenth-Century Europe” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 273–96.

More problematic is that the classical sources underlying these legends provided confusing and conflicting information on the Goths. They were described most fully in the middle of the sixth century in Jordanes's *Getica*, which was based on a more expansive lost text by the Roman senator and consul Cassiodorus.⁵ The *Getica* is named after the Getes, however, and Jordanes's text is very different from Tacitus's *Germania*, which was the most broadly recognized source for ancient northern Europe.⁶ Where Tacitus gave the Goths a single passing mention, devoid of detail, Jordanes describes them at length, recounting their departure into Europe "like a swarm of bees" from the island of Scandza, roughly where Tacitus had placed the Suiones and Aestii.⁷ In the mid-sixteenth century, Sebastian Münster complained that, "up till now there have been many, both under the heathens and the Christians, who have undertaken to describe Germany. But there has been no one, so far as I know, who has reported the cities or lands . . . the people of the German nation correctly . . . the ancients and foreigners have described it almost by hearsay, but have not come."⁸ All of these conflicting sources allowed a variety of historical visions—and thus opportunities for exploitation by court historians—while citing ancient authority.

THE GOTHIC TRADITION IN SCANDINAVIAN SCHOLARSHIP

There is a clear and rather linear development in the familiar narrative of the rise of Gothicism, which is worth recounting in a simplified form. The

⁵ Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3–111; Arne Søbø Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths. Studies in a Migration Myth* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002).

⁶ For the early-modern reception of Tacitus, see Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) and, recently, Christopher B. Krebs, *Negotiatio Germaniae: Tacitus' Germania und Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Giannantonio Campano, Conrad Celtis und Heinrich Bebel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2005). Although Jordanes was known in Spain, the more direct textual basis for Spanish Gothicism was Isidore of Seville's slightly later *Historia Gothorum, Vandalorum Sueborum*. See Johan Nordström, "Goter och Spanjorer. Till den spanska goticismens historia," *Lychnos* 1944–1945: 257–80, and *ibid.*, "Goter och Spanjorer. Till den spanska goticismens historia II," *Lychnos* 1971–1972: 171–78, and Rafael Garcia Serrano, ed., *Hispania Gothorum. San Ildefonso y el reino visigodo de Toledo* (Madrid: Empresa publica Don Quijote de la Mancha, 2007).

⁷ Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. M. Hutton, rev. R.M. Ogilvie (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1970), 44; Jordanes, *Getica*, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), 8–10.

⁸ Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographia* (Basel, 1550), 296.

first defining moment took place at the Council of Basel in 1434.⁹ There was a disagreement between the Castilian and the English delegates over seating priority, which reflected international standing and prestige. The Castilian representatives claimed precedence because of the antiquity of their Gothic heritage. Nicolaus Ragvaldi, a Swedish bishop and representative of the king of then-united Denmark, Norway and Sweden, rejected this argument, citing a tradition placing the homeland of the Goths in Sweden. Ragvaldi's argument was dismissed outright, but when he returned home his failed claim became part of local lore. Probably at Ragvaldi's initiative, the 1442 royal code included a notation that the Swedish kingdom consisted of the two ancient regions: Svea and Göta.¹⁰ His argument hung entirely on an identification of the latter geographical name as proof of an ancient connection with the Gothic people.

Ragvaldi was looking for a voice that would give some authority to the representatives of his small northern kingdom. As his claim was utterly ignored by the other representatives in Basel, he failed. But in another way, his idea and his method were remarkably successful, for his argument was the starting point for the Swedish crown's centuries-long claim to a Gothic heritage. Ragvaldi's philological argument took a more complex form in the following century in the works of the brothers Olaus and Johannes Magnus, the last two Catholic archbishops of Uppsala, who were sent into exile in Italy with the introduction of Lutheranism to Sweden. The Magnus brothers hoped to initiate a counter-Reformation effort in Scandinavia, but, like Ragvaldi, they needed a platform that would allow them to be heard and respected by the Roman church and others who could support their cause. Olaus Magnus wrote a general history of the northern European peoples, but it was Johannes Magnus's book on the lineage of Gothic kings that was most significant for the rise of Gothicism as a phenomenon. It lays out a lineage of Gothic rulers beginning with Magog, the grandson of Noah, who had been described as the first Goth already by Isidore of Seville, and culminating with the contemporary Swedish king Gustaf Vasa (r. 1523–60). Each ruler received a captivating biography that not only made excellent propaganda, but also entertaining reading.¹¹

⁹ The most complete account of this narrative is now Inken Schmidt-Voges, *De antiqua claritate et clara antiquitate Gothorum. Gotizismus als Identitätsmodell im frühneuzeitlichen Schweden* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2004), with historiographical criticism.

¹⁰ Johan Nordström, "Götisk historieromantik och stormaktstidens anda" in *De yverbornes ö* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1934), 62.

¹¹ Johannes Magnus, *De omnibus gothorum sveonumque regibus* (Rome, 1554); Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555). For the Magnus brothers, see Kurt Johannesson, *The Renaissance of the Goths in Sixteenth-Century Sweden. Johannes and Olaus Magnus as Politicians and Historians*, trans. James Larson (Berkeley:

For the Gothic tradition to bring any legitimacy to the Magnus brothers it was essential to change the widely-held image of the Goths as wild barbarians who spread violence and chaos wherever they went. Their works appeared soon after the publication of Giangiorgio Trissino's *La Italia liberata da Gotthi* (Italy Freed of Goths), which gives a sense of the sentiment they faced.¹² Thus Johannes Magnus described the Gothic migrations as divinely ordained movements undertaken with temperance and humility. Imperial belligerence forced conflicts with Rome; indeed it was this flaw—not Gothic aggression—that brought about the empire's fall. In his hands, the Goths became moral exempla to be studied and imitated, rather than the violent scourge of classical antiquity.¹³

It was Gustaf Vasa, the Swedish king who had expelled the brothers in 1524, who benefited most from Johannes Magnus's book. He took the title "King of the Goths and Vandals" and exploited its political potential in numerous ways. He added the title to coins and official images, and requested copies of portraits of Theodoric, Totilla, and other Gothic "forefathers" from the collection of the duke of Modena. When his son Erik succeeded him in 1560, he became Erik XIV, counting thirteen previous Gothic kings with that name listed by Magnus.¹⁴

Although fanciful, Johannes Magnus's claims were modest compared to what followed in the seventeenth century. Both Carl IX and Gustaf II Adolf fostered a cult of Gothicism. The latter dressed as the Gothic king Berik at his coronation in 1617, and when he and his troops landed on Usedom island off Pomerania in 1630 and proceeded to move south to Augsburg and Munich, comparisons to the ancient Gothic migrations were inevitable.¹⁵

In the later part of the century the rhetoric became ever more extreme, culminating in Olaus Rudbeck's *Atlantica*, in which the author claimed that Sweden was the homeland not only of the Gothic people, but of western culture generally.¹⁶ The basis for this was his identification of the Scandina-

University of California Press, 1991), and Carlo Santini, ed., *I fratelli Giovanni e Olovo Magno. Opera e cultura tra due mondi* (Rome: il Calamo, 1999).

¹² Giangiorgio Trissino, *La Italia liberata da Gotthi* (Rome, 1547).

¹³ Johannesson, *Renaissance of the Goths*, 80–102.

¹⁴ Ellenius, *Wiedergeburt*, 263–64.

¹⁵ Andreas Zellhuber, *Der gotische Weg in den deutschen Krieg. Gustav Adolf und der schwedische Gotizismus* (Augsburg: Wissner, 2002).

¹⁶ Olaus Rudbeck, *Atlantica* (Uppsala, 1679–1702). Reprint Axel Nelson, ed., Uppsala: Lychnos Bibliotek, 1937–1939. For a summary and commentary on the text, see Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Atlantis and the Nations," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 300–325, and Gunnar Eriksson, *The Atlantic Vision. Olaus Rudbeck and Baroque Science* (Canton, Massachusetts: Science History Publications, 1994). For the legacy of this discourse,

vian half-island with the land of the Hyperboreans and, more importantly, the lost island of Atlantis described by Plato in *Timaeus*, both of which thus became intertwined with the Gothic legend. This fundamental “discovery” opened the path for a hugely inventive revisionist history based largely on philological arguments that shifted the focus of classical antiquity and the sources of western cultural culture north to Sweden. The Pillars of Hercules were not at the Strait of Gibraltar, but at the strait separating Sweden from Denmark. The golden temple of Poseidon on Atlantis was in fact the pagan temple at Old Uppsala, whose richness was documented in an eleventh-century text by Adam of Bremen. This temple was in turn promoted as a model for Roman architecture. He closed the second volume with a passage that distills his worldview:

. . . all philosophy or worldly wisdom, which has been written and found with the Egyptians, Asians and Europeans, comes wholly from our Hyperborean Northerners . . . moreover, the names of all Gods and Goddesses have come from our northern fathers, first to the Greeks, and then from them to the Romans.¹⁷

As Ragvaldi and Magnus had tried to give Sweden pedigree and respectability through the Gothic legend, Rudbeck sought to make all of western culture derive from his homeland, which would accordingly be the most ancient and venerable kingdom in Europe.

At each step in this progression we find the Swedish crown and its antiquarians appropriating and exploiting the Gothic legend. This was not without reason. The monarchy was a new arrival in the sixteenth century; Gustaf Vasa was the first king of an independent Sweden and a monarch of dubious legality. With the successes in the Thirty Years’ War in the seventeenth century the crown was widely considered *nouveau riche*, and was desperate for legitimacy.¹⁸ Despite dissent on the political interpretation of history even among the academics in Stockholm and Uppsala, many antiquarians within the court and at the university were happy to oblige this demand.¹⁹ It is not surprising, then, that scholars of this phenomenon have

see Klaus von See, “Nord-Glaube und Atlantis-Sehnsucht” in *Ideologie und Philologie. Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 91–117.

¹⁷ Rudbeck (Nelson ed.) vol. 2,2, 692.

¹⁸ Bengt Ankarloo, “Europe and the Glory of Sweden. The Emergence of a Swedish Self-Image in the Early 17th Century” in *Europe and Scandinavia. Aspects of the Process of Integration in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Göran Rystad (Lund: Esselte, 1983), 237–44.

¹⁹ Allan Ellenius, “Johannes Schefferus and Swedish Antiquity,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957): 59–74.

mostly seized on Swedish claims to be the homeland of the Goths, and interpreted this assertion as a sort of proto-nationalism. But modern historical research has too often focused only on the claims of the Swedish court, in some cases even taking it more or less at its word. An exhibition in 2001 set out to establish the birthplace of the Vandals—closely associated with the Goths in the early literature—in southern Sweden.²⁰

BEYOND SCANDINAVIA—GOTHICISM IN THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

In spite of the bluster and polemical edge to the claims of the Swedish monarchy, there is evidence of a much broader interest in and self-identification with the Goths outside of the circle of Swedish antiquarians. Johannes Magnus adapted a much more diffuse tradition present in some form across a wide region, focused it, infused it with a polemical edge, and linked it to the reigning Swedish dynasty. This naturally elicited a response, and much of the literature on the Goths in the century after 1550 can be considered a rebuttal or revision of the narrative produced by writers associated with the Swedish court.²¹

The Danish court historian, Johannes Svaning, responded almost immediately to Johannes Magnus. His *Refutation of the Calumnies of Johannes Magnus* did not dispute the significance of the Goths, but criticized him for appropriating them for his own ends, while disregarding sources that

²⁰ Pontus Hultén and Marie-Louise von Plessen, eds., *The True Story of the Vandals* (Värnamo, Sweden: Museum Vandalorum, 2001). My thanks to Dr. Anna Nilsén, Uppsala, for bringing this to my attention. An archaeological study in the 1940s set out to prove through a series of digs that the Gothic homeland was to be found in southern Sweden, justifying the arguments of Johannes Magnus, Rudbeck, *et al.* Eric Oxenstierna, *Die Urheimat der Goten* (Leipzig: Barth, 1945). Similarly, Gantscho Tzenoff, *Goten oder Bulgaren. Quellenkritische Untersuchung über die Geschichte der alten Skythen, Thrakier und Makedonier* (Leipzig: Verlag der Dyckschen Buchhandlung, 1915) attempts to place the Gothic homeland in Bulgaria. See also Rolf Hachmann, *Die Goten und Skandinavien* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), who attempts to reconcile the textual and archaeological records.

²¹ Many authors could be discussed, but only a few can be treated here. For instance, Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* recounts a Gothic tale more or less in accord with Johannes Magnus's, citing his work even before it was published. This must be attributed to the patronage and influence of Gustaf Vasa, the dedicatee of the book. Cyriacus Spangenberg was significant for the reception and transmission of interest in the Goths in the German lands, but he did not add much to the debate as it is outlined here. Both will be passed over. Münster, 970–84; Cyriacus Spangenberg, *AdelsSpiegel* (Schmalkalden, 1591).

would have given a more balanced picture.²² He identified Scandza as Gotland, an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea. Gotland was ruled by Denmark until 1645, but he seems to have considered it a relatively neutral site, part of a shared history. In his unfinished *Historia Danica*, which may have been intended as a full-length response to Johannes Magnus, he described the “migration of the Goths from Denmark and Sweden into Hungary, Thrace, and Italy.”²³

A century later the parameters of the discourse were essentially unchanged. In 1650, Hans Svaning the Younger produced a genealogy tracing the Danish kings to the sons of Noah. The beguiling biographies of each king are lacking, but Magnus’s genealogical structure—which was hardly unique—is very much in evidence, as is the linguistic or etymological method, which Svaning turned against the Swedish arguments. Dania, or Denmark, he explained, is the third of three successive names for the region. First it was called Cimbria, then Guthia or Gothia. The crucial basis for his argument lies in the etymology of Jutland, the Danish peninsula. Jutland, or Jutia, is presented as a permutation of Guthia, and the justification for his statement that “Goths are Danes, and Danes Goths.”²⁴

Early in the seventeenth century, and very likely also in response to the increasingly insistent Swedish claims to Gothic antiquity, two writers from the southern Baltic also rejected the Swedish vision of Gothic history. It was a relatively easy argument to make with the blessing of classical writers, for it was necessary only to give Tacitus and Pliny priority over Jordanes.

²² Petrus Parvus Rosefontanus [Johannes Svaning], *Refutatio calumniarum cuiusdam Ioannis Magni Gothi Upsalensis*. . . (S.l., 1561).

²³ The *Historia Danica* was never published, and is now known mostly through an outline. Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, *Historiography at the Court of Christian IV (1588–1648)* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 95–104.

²⁴ Johannes Svaning, *Chronologia Danica* (Copenhagen, 1650), II 1, 11. “Cimbria initio dicta, postea a Gutthii nomine nuncupata est Gothia, hodieque Jutia. A Guthio sexto Cimbrorum dynasta potentissimo, subditos, qui CCCLXX annos CIMBRI vocati sunt, GUTHOS vel GOTHOS appellatos esse, annales Gothlandiae testantur. Elapsis demum DCLXXX annis a primo Rege Dano, iidem DANORUM adepti sunt nomen. Historia Gothlandica testatur Cimbrov vocatos esse Gothos annis DCCX. adde itaque 20 annos priores regni, qui Dano attribuuntur, & habebis verum annorum numerum, quem expriment annales Gothland. Hinc petenda est vera origo vocabuli JUTIAE, quam antea Cimbrorum vocatam esse dicimus. Guthia sive Gutia vel Jutia soli Guthio nomen suum debet. Litteras G & J quis ignorat palato potissimum formari, & inter se facile permutari.” And: “Altera appellatio fuit Guthia vel Gothia, quae levi litterae initialis facta mutatione, hodie Jutia vocatur. Haec illi imposita est anno mundi 2220. a nomine Guthii sexti Cimbrorum, Gothorumque dynastae potentissimi. Veri itaque Cimbri & Gothi, rebus praeclare gestis celeberrimi, qui fuerint, jam non est aequo censori dubium. Gotthi sunt Dani; Dani Gotthique vocati.”

Thus as Pythius, who lived four and a half centuries before Tacitus, placed the Goths on the shore where amber is collected, and where Tacitus said the Aestii lived, it lay in that place where Eastern Pomerania . . . and Western Prussia [are], and from them [the Goths] the whole Baltic Sea was called the Meer Codanus or Gedanus by Pliny and Mela, even as Tacitus called it the *Suevicum Mare*. Indeed, many of these Goths were also found in the Danish and Swedish lands, and are called the Guten, Gutlender, or Gothen [Goths]. But nonetheless Pomerania and some of the neighboring regions are . . . the true, ancient fatherland of the Goths, who so harried the world.²⁵

This passage by Johann Micraelius in Stettin shared the elder Svaning's diffuse conception of the Gothic lands. His argument that the Gothic homeland was in Pomerania lacked the precise logic that would have given it more force, however. Philipp Clüver, a Leiden academic, wove a much more elaborate philological web as he argued that the homeland of the Goths was actually in West Prussia, in the region of the eastern Baltic around Danzig—his hometown, a fact that may have driven his argument. The Teutoni, we are told, were in various dialects called the Dani, Codani, and Godani, from which Pomponius Mela and Pliny derived the name of the *Sinus Codanus*—the Baltic Sea. Godanos or Godan was then contracted as Gdanos, which associated it—causally, in his mind—with Gdansk or Gdanskó, the common name for Danzig (now Gdańsk in Poland). He reconciled his view with Jordanes's text by equating "Gothiscanzia" (Scandza) with Godanske (Danzig), rather than Scania on the Scandinavian peninsula or Gotland in the Baltic sea.²⁶ Svaning, Clüver, and Micraelius all argued with more or less sophistication for a Gothic homeland outside of the region claimed by the writers associated with the Swedish court. The nature

²⁵ Johann Micraelius, *Erstes Buch deß Alten Pommerlandes* (Stettin, 1640), unpaginated introduction.

²⁶ Philipp Clüver, *Germaniae antiquae libri tres*, book 3 (Leiden, 1616), 139–41. ". . . nomen THEUTH in varias dialectos eo usque tractum fuisse, donec inde tandem & DAN, & CODAN, & Godan, voces efficerentur. unde etiam Germanica gens *Teutoni*, alia dialecto dicti fuere *Dani*; quae vox etaimnunc durat: & alia iterum *Codani*; unde mare, quod adcolebant, Melae & Plinio vocatur *Sinus Codanus* . . . *Godanus* quoque fuisse dictos, ex adpellatione aeterni numinis *Godan*, unde etiam *Deus* nobis vocatur *God*; & contracte *Gdanos*; dubium nullum esse potest. Ab eodem igitur vocabulo *Godan*, sive *Gdan*, praedictum quoque opidum *Danzke* nomen traxit." Clüver's thesis was rebutted forcefully in Georg Stiernhielm, *Georgi Stiernhielmi anticluverius* (Stockholm, 1685), published posthumously.

of their responses suggests that they were not formulated simply as belligerent replies to the claims of the court, but grew out of a broader Gothic tradition that, until the publication of Johannes Magnus's work, had not been articulated in such a polemical way.

There was indeed an awareness of a Gothic tradition in the Holy Roman Empire before the Magnus brothers. A better starting point for antiquarian interest in this subject may thus be Franciscus Irenicus's *Germaniae exegesis*. Published half a century before the Magnus brothers' books, this was among the first monumental Renaissance works on German antiquity.²⁷ At Willibald Pirckheimer's suggestion, the Goths were included among other Germanic tribes quite independently of the Swedes and their nascent claims. Irenicus relied heavily on Jordanes, which had just been published for the first time by Conrad Peutinger in Augsburg, and the Goths accordingly play a leading role in his explication of Germany.²⁸ He accepted Scandza as the Gothic homeland, and identified it as Gotland, but insisted that it was an integral part of the German lands. "The Goths came from the German island Scandza. The island, which is called Gotlandia by others, is under the Danish king, and is Germanic."²⁹ A linguistic argument underlies all of this, and is at the center of his essential point: "We see in Jordanes that many German words were then used by the Goths, and, finally, their own names reveal that Goths were Germans. Their kings were always called Berich, Filmer, Valamir [etc.]. Those names are German. They are therefore German."³⁰ The Goths became a component part of his conception of German heritage, but with the Magnus brothers still decades away,

²⁷ Franciscus Irenicus, *Germaniae exegesis* (Nuremberg, 1518). There is a large literature on early-modern German investigations of their own origins. See, *inter alia*, Paul Joachimsen, *Geschichtsauffassung und Geschichtsschreibung in Deutschland unter dem Einfluss des Humanismus* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1910), Gerald Strauss, *Sixteenth-Century Germany. Its Topography and Topographers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), Frank Borchart, *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), and, most relevant to this essay, Sonia Brough, *The Goths and the Concept of Gothic in Germany from 1500 to 1750: Culture, Language, and Architecture* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1985).

²⁸ Peutinger first published Jordanes as *De rebus gothorum* (Augsburg, 1515).

²⁹ Irenicus, fol. 17r. "Ignoravit Stephanus Scandiam insulam septentrionalem, unde quia cum a septentrione profectus fuisse Gotthos egregie sciret, quandam terram septentrionalem, eorum patriam Maeotim fuisse asseruit. Caeterum ut modum orationi nostrae faciam, e Scandia insula Germanica Gotthi derivati sunt, insula adhuc secundum alios gotlandia dicitur, sub Daniae regibus, & illa germanica est."

³⁰ Irenicus, fol. 17r. "Plura etiam vocabula germanica tunc in gotthorum usu fuisse apud Iornandem videmus: & demum propria eorum nomina, germanos gotthos fuisse produunt. Eorum enim semper reges Berich, Filmer, Valamir [. . .] appellabantur: Quae nomina . . . germanica sunt. Sunt ergo germani."

it was relatively untroubled by political issues of who could claim the most glory from them.

Irenicus's discussion of the Goths was different from those that would come later. One senses that he was excited by Jordanes's recently-published text, and wanted to incorporate it in the new literature seeking to recover German antiquity in a positive light through the classical sources. Unlike Clüver or Micraelius, he had no personal stake in the placement of the Gothic homeland, and specifying a region for it was not his primary goal. Rather, he integrated the Goths into a general discussion of ancient *Germania*, presenting them in a very flattering way through tales of their exploits against the Romans.

Irenicus's broad approach to the Gothic question opened it to associations with the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (to give the formal name), which the Habsburgs ruled with varying degrees of authority from the sixteenth century, and Habsburg history writers were quick to recognize the opportunity. At mid-century, Wolfgang Lazius, the Viennese geographer, humanist and personal physician to the emperor (and thus on the court payroll), developed Irenicus's approach in *De gentium aliquot migrationibus*.³¹ He accepted Jordanes's description of Scandza as the birthplace of the Goths, and, like Irenicus, considered it part of the German world, based both on geographical delineations by ancient authors and on a philological argument that the German and Scandinavian dialects are so closely related that a meaningful distinction between them cannot be made.³² His book is largely about migrations, and he traced the Goths' movement through a number of "seats" stretching through a broad swath of central Europe. In Silesia, the town of Gotha indicated a Gothic origin, as did Guttenberg and Gutensteyn in Bohemia, and places farther afield in Dacia, Hungary, and elsewhere.³³ These fell largely around the southeastern part of Holy Roman Empire, and it seems that Lazius's interest in the Goths was primarily to describe a much broader Gothic region that roughly coincided with the Habsburg hereditary lands, though it extended elsewhere as well. The importance of the Habsburg-Gothic linkage is abundantly clear in his genealogies of the Gothic rulers. Nowhere do we find the Swedish or

³¹ Wolfgang Lazius, *De gentium aliquot migrationibus* (Basel, 1557), 676–745. For Lazius, see Arno Strohmeyer, "Geschichtsbilder im Kulturtransfer: Die Hofhistoriographie in Wien im Zeitalter des Humanismus als Rezipient und Multiplikator" in *Metropolen und Kulturtransfer im 15./16. Jahrhundert. Prag–Krakau–Danzig–Wien*, ed. Andrea Langer and Georg Michels (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2001), 65–84, with further references.

³² Lazius, 687, 693.

³³ Lazius, 692–718.

Danish kings, but the lineage of the Gothic kings of Spain extends to Emperor Charles V.³⁴

Like the Swedish kings, the Habsburgs saw no contradiction in claiming both a Gothic and a Roman heritage. Bringing the notion of *translatio imperii* and the Germanic Gothic tradition into alignment, they presented themselves as the natural heirs both of the Roman emperors and the Gothic kings. One was a political identity and one a cultural or ethnic one, and whether or not the distinction was recognized, both were among the most powerful lineages imaginable. Lazius himself was involved in the preparation of a chronologically-organized catalog of the imperial numismatic collections spanning the Roman and Holy Roman emperors up to Charles V, overtly stressing the continuity between the two. The work, which paralleled and complemented the Habsburg-Gothic lineages, was appropriately called *The Roman Emperors from Julius the First to the Great Emperor Charles [V]*.³⁵

Lazius's description of the Goths as Germans survived in Habsburg history writing and was taken up at the end of the seventeenth century by Hans Jakob Wagner von Wagenfels, who now faced a more challenging task as a court historian in his *Ehrenruff Teutschlands* ("Germany's Call to Honor"). He had not only to present the Empire in a very flattering light, but to do so in an explicit comparison with France and Louis XIV.³⁶ Whole sections of the work are duly devoted to an unflattering history of France and its rulers, with chapters such as "How the Merovingian kings in France acted against Christianity," which, by comparison, place the emperor in a favorable light. Although more restrained than his slander of the French monarchy, Wagner also set out to show that German culture had now equaled that of Italy.³⁷

A problem of definition of German or Germanic culture was inherent in these claims, particularly as he invited comparison with the more centralized French state. This was of course an enormously complex question, but

³⁴ Lazius, 736.

³⁵ For the Roman presentation of the Habsburgs with further references, see Friedrich Polleroß, "Romanitas in der habsburgischen Repräsentation von Karl V. bis Maximilian II.," in *Kaiserhof-Papsthof (16.-18. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Richard Bösel et al. (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 207–23.

³⁶ Hans Jakob Wagner von Wagenfels, *Ehrenruff Teutschlands, der Teutschen und ihres Reiches* (Vienna: Verlag für Architektur, 1691). For Habsburg history writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Anna Coreth, *Österreichische Geschichtschreibung in der Barockzeit (1620–1740)* (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1950).

³⁷ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister & City. The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 290–91.

Wagner answered it relatively bluntly with a general equation of Germans and Goths. Once again, it was a linguistic argument that brought the disparate political states in and around the Holy Roman Empire into a more or less coherent unity. Simultaneously, he turned a shared linguistic heritage into an argument for Gothic ethnic unity:

Goths is thus a good German word, and essentially means good or pious. At that time there were many German dialects, for which we now use an “u,” which were said with an “o.” [This is] precisely as today in the northern lands, from which the old Goths came (as one says), one does not say Altenburg, Kreyspurg, [or] Dinckburg, but Altenborg, Kreysporg, Dinckborg, and so on . . . From this it follows that the little words Goth and good [gut] have only one meaning, and the Goths and the Germans [Teutschen] . . . are held as a single people.³⁸

This argument for Gothic unity introduced another set of issues for Wagner, for one legacy of the Thirty Years' War was a deep antipathy between the Swedish and Austrian courts. He could not simply ignore the Swedish claims, for by the later seventeenth century the Gothic tradition was closely associated with the Swedish court, even if it was also firmly established elsewhere. Rather, he seems to have accepted the inclusion of the Scandinavian peninsula in his equation of Goths and Germans. Certainly the linguistic mutations he describes are precisely those that distinguish Scandinavian place names from German ones (one thinks immediately of Gothenburg (Göteborg) and, e.g., Lüneburg in northern Germany). This aspect of his argument is in any case nearly identical to that of the Swedish philologist Samuel Columbus, who wrote in the 1670s that Swedish and German were constituents of a single language spoken in Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, with minor regional variations due to the varying formations of the mouth.³⁹ These men had different goals in mind, but Wagner seems to have been claiming a broader and richer geographic and cultural scope in his contrast of Gallic and Germanic Europe.

Although he accepted their shared Gothic origins, Wagner was unwilling to cede the argument over the Gothic homeland to the Swedish court

³⁸ Wagner von Wagenfels, 6.

³⁹ Samuel Columbus, *En Svensk ordeskötsel*, ed. Sylvia Boström (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963), *passim*, especially 92–93.

and its historians. He cites Philipp Clüver and other writers, but makes no mention of Johannes Magnus. More pointedly, he interpolates a clever passage into the story of the Gothic descent from Noah's heirs Japhet, Gomer, and Ashkenaz. Gomer (who in his version replaced Magog as the first Goth) traveled north-west upon leaving his tribe in Asia Minor, and Ashkenaz continued this route until he reached the Danube. He followed the Danube west until he reached the Rhine, which he followed northwards to the sea. Wagner thus had the ur-father of the Goths trace the traditional boundaries of *Germania*—which were conspicuously similar to the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire—on his way to Scandza, where the tribe incubated and multiplied until it moved south in the migrations that ended Roman hegemony in Europe. He was thus able to work within the strictures of the classical sources, but still to place the Goths in the Empire even before their presence in Scandza.⁴⁰ Although it was a somewhat strained relationship, Wagner used a linguistic argument to bind the Germans of the Empire, the Scandinavians, and the Goths into one ethnic group—"a single people"—that could be contrasted to the other major populations of Europe.

The writings of Irenicus, Lazius, Svaning, Clüver, Micraelius, and Wagner von Wagenfels—spanning the early sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth—are all essential to the Gothic discourse. Their works demonstrate the broader international importance of these arguments and of identification with these ancient peoples shrouded in legend. Moreover, they take identification with the Goths out of Sweden and into Germany, taking the debate out of a setting or context in which it can be interpreted as an early outburst of nationalism by bringing it down to a local level (in the writings of Clüver and Micraelius) or a much broader level (in Irenicus,

⁴⁰ Wagner von Wagenfels, 2–3. "Alsdann ist der Edle und tapffere Gomer, deß frommen Japhets Sohn / und deß gerechten Noe Enickel / mit seinem gewaltigen hauß auffgebrochen / halb West- und halb Nord-werts fortgerucket / und sich erstlich umb die Gegend / wo der Donn / oder Tanais ins Meer fließet / niedergelassen. Von dannen nachmahls sein Sohn Aschenaz / der auch bey erbauung deß Babylonischen Thurns mit gewesen / sambt den Seinigen wiederumb auffgebrochen / über besagten Fluß herüber gesetzt / und in seinen nachkommen alle Landschafften linker Hand / neben dem Meer hinab / biß an die Donau / und wiederumb neben der Donau herauff / gar über den Rhein hinüber / biß ans Meer (ausser was die vorAlters genante Kyneter / anjetzo Frantzosen / ihres Orts besessen) von Zeit zu Zeit eingenommen/ und sich eben gegen Mitnächtiger Seiten / biß in die Nord-Länder nach Verfliessung etlicher hundert Jahren / die so benahmsete Gothen/ gleich wie auch vom Niedergang die Kelter / wegen überflüssiger Menge deß Volcks / außgewandert / welche ihren Zug gegen Auffgang genommen / und endlich in die noch nicht allerdings bewohnte Morgenländische Landschafften gelangen seynd."

Lazius, and Wagner). Once we look beyond the claims of the Stockholm and Uppsala historians, the phenomenon can no longer be about a distinctly Swedish people or nation, but was rather a much larger phenomenon with many local facets.

There is another important strand of discourse on this subject in writers who associated a given region with a Gothic past without pushing a claim to the homeland, or origin, of the Gothic people. Caspar Sagittarius, a professor at Jena and historian to the Saxon court in Dresden, argued in 1700 that Gotha in Saxony and Göttingen in Braunschweig-Lüneburg had been founded by the Goths, and pointed to similar arguments by a number of other writers.⁴¹ This claim was quite obviously based on the names of the cities, and he would likely have made this argument for any city or place whose name began with Got-. In this respect he was no different from his colleagues, from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, who found significant support for their theses in geographical names. There is however very little in his text to suggest that this assumption was tied to larger political or cultural arguments.

With Sagittarius's very neutral example in mind, we recognize that none of these partisan writers claimed exclusive rights to a Gothic heritage. Rather, they argued primarily over the point of origin, and therefore over which region could claim the honor of greatest antiquity and to be the progenitor of the others. For most of these writers, the essential point of Gothicism was much the same at the beginning of the eighteenth century as it had been in the fifteenth: legitimacy through antiquity and a share in the magnificent Gothic legacy.

SARMATISM, BATAVIANISM, AND ALTERNATIVES TO THE GOTHS

One notices immediately that, with the exception of the Spanish, all those identifying themselves with Gothic ancestry were Scandinavian and German. On either side of the Holy Roman Empire people pointed to other traditions. Although some German writers claimed that Poland—or at least parts of it—could be considered part of the historical, larger Germany, Poles and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Hungarians, preferred to associate

⁴¹ Caspar Sagittarius, *Historia Gothana* (Jena, 1700), 1.

themselves with the Sarmatians mentioned in numerous classical texts.⁴² But just as the Swedish court could parade “Gothic” soldiers in Roman costume and the Habsburgs could claim both a Gothic and a Roman heritage, there was a Gothic tradition in Poland that lived in the shadow of the Sarmatian one, occasionally intertwining with and enriching it.⁴³

Likewise, the Dutch pointed to the Batavian people living between the Rhine and Maas rivers, seeing in them heroic models for emulation in the ongoing struggle against the Spanish.⁴⁴ Hugo Grotius provided a textual basis for this principle in his text on the antiquity of the Batavian republic, in which he emphasized the continuity between the supposed ancient republic and contemporary circumstances.⁴⁵ Philological arguments emphasizing the antiquity of language as evidence of the antiquity of Netherlandish culture paralleled those taking place in Scandinavia and the Empire. In a sixteenth-century counterpart to Rudbeck’s fantastic claims that Sweden provided the cradle of western culture, Johannes Goropius Becanus wrote that Adam and Eve spoke Flemish in the Garden of Eden, which was itself to have been found in the Netherlands. The Low Countries were accordingly claimed as the birthplace of humanity and also the progenitor of all ancient and modern languages.⁴⁶ Later Netherlandish writers

⁴² Janusz Tazbir, “Polish National Consciousness in the 16th-18th Centuries,” *Acta Polonica Historica* 46 (1982): 47–72; idem, *La République nobiliaire et le monde. Etudes sur l’histoire de la culture polonaise à l’époque du baroque* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1986).

⁴³ This is present already in Mathias a Michovia [Maciej z Miechowa], *De Sarmatia Asiatica et Europaea* (Krakow, 1517). In the late seventeenth century, Matthaeus Praetorius, historian to King Jan III Sobieski of Poland, could write of “Gotho-Sarmatians.” Matthaeus Praetorius, *Orbis Gothicus* (Oliva, 1688).

⁴⁴ Ivo Schöffer, “The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” in *Geschiedschrijving in Nederland. Studies over de historiografie van de Nieuwe Tijd*, ed. P.A.M. Geurts and A.E.M. Janssen (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981), 2: 85–109; Louis Swinkels, ed., *De Bataven. Verhalen van een verdwenen volk* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 2004). For comparison to the Goths, see Olaf Mörke, “Bataver, Eidgenossen und Goten: Gründungs- und Begründungsmythen in den Niederlanden, der Schweiz und Schweden in der Frühen Neuzeit,” in *Mythos und Nation. Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewußtseins in der Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Berding (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996), 104–32.

⁴⁵ Hugo Grotius, *De antiquitate reipublicae batavae* (Leiden, 1610); recently edited by Jan Waszink, *The Antiquity of the Batavian Republic* (Assen: van Goram, 2000).

⁴⁶ Johannes Goropius Becanus, *Origines Antverpianae* (Antwerp, 1569). For Goropius Becanus, see Eduard Frederickx, *Ioannes Goropius Becanus (1519–1573): leven en werk* (Dissertation, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1973). The basic source for the search for the original language—the language of Adam, lost in the debacle of the Tower of Babel—is Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1957–1963). For useful recent introductions, see Maurice Olender, “Europe, or How to Escape Babel” in *Proof and Persuasion in History*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Suzanne L. Marchand (Mid-

reluctantly ceded this position to Hebrew, but traced the Flemish language to Gomer, son of Japhet, thus making the language antedate both Greek and Roman, and the originator of the Germanic languages.⁴⁷ Similarly, the French tended to point to Frankish or Gallic beginnings.⁴⁸ Somewhat less coherently, southern Germans could point to Swabian or other ancestry, although we have seen significant interest in Gothicism in southern Germany and Austria in Wolfgang Lazius and Hans Jakob Wagner von Wagenfels.

COMMON ORIGINS

We thus find Scandinavians and Germans identifying themselves very closely with one another, both pointing to a relatively recent common bond, in spite of resentment of the Swedish occupation of parts of Northern Germany during and after the Thirty Years' War. How, then, did these areas come to be distinct? Why are the Scandinavian kingdoms not comparable to large and powerful territories like Saxony, Brandenburg, and Bohemia, part of an unbroken network of semi-independent lands stretching from the Alps to the Arctic Circle?

Philipp Clüver, who argued that the Gothic homeland was to be found around Danzig, wrote that Scandinavia and Germany were in fact once a single land. With the advent of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 AD, Charlemagne cut off the northern part of Germany (i.e., Scandinavia) at the Baltic by force. Although Clüver does not elaborate on the reasons for this, it is understood to be an arbitrary division; it did not represent a cultural division, but a political one:

. . . Around the Gulf of Codan [Baltic Sea] there were then two large kingdoms, the *Sitons* in Norway and the *Sueones* in Sweden, who remain to this day, although the empire of the Norwegians has been transported to the Danes. To this was adjoined the

dletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 5–25 (special issue of *History and Theory*), and Hans Aarsleff, “The Rise and Decline of Adam and his *Ursprache* in Seventeenth-Century Thought” in *The Language of Adam/ Die Sprache Adams*, ed. Allison P. Coudert (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 277–99.

⁴⁷ Abraham Mylius, *Lingua Belgica, sive de linguae illius communitate tum cum plerisque alijs, tum praesertim cum Latina, Graeca, Persica* (Leiden, 1612). For commentary, see George J. Metcalf, “Abraham Mylius on Historical Linguistics,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 68 (1953): 535–54.

⁴⁸ See recently Daniel Droixhe, *L'Étymon des dieux. Mythologie gauloise, archéologie et linguistique à l'âge classique* (Geneva: Droz, 2002).

Czechs in Bohemia, and the Poles along the Vistula; but the Saxons, Thuringians, eastern French, Sueuves inhabiting the tributaries of the Danube, and Bavarians . . . were extinguished by time and the arms of Charlemagne, who, having transferred the Roman Empire in Italy [to northern Europe] divided these peoples into diverse provinces and duchies: Norway, Sweden and Denmark . . . and Poland along the Vistula, were then torn off and separated from Germany.⁴⁹

Since Clüver had never accepted Sweden or Scandinavia as the homeland of the Goths, and seems in general to have had a rather restricted view of their legacy, his taxonomy of the peoples living in the complex patchwork of the Holy Roman Empire is rather different than that of other writers we have encountered. Nonetheless, we must ask if the division he described had become a reality of experience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or if it was still simply a political line left over from the formation of the Holy Roman Empire. If it was initially a political division, had it become a significant cultural division by the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries? And was there any interest in the unifying potential of an international Gothicism?

There is some evidence that Gothicism was understood as a potentially unifying force, but it comes primarily from contacts between Spain and Sweden, rather than Germany and Scandinavia, as Wagner von Wagenfels had described.⁵⁰ In the mid-sixteenth century, Charles V is supposed to have said, “we, too, are of the Gothic people.” As this comment came during the course of negotiations with king Gustaf Vasa of Sweden, it seems clear that Charles was hoping to establish a friendly and advantageous relationship with the king by pointing to a sort of Gothic kinship.⁵¹ It was also representative of general Habsburg interest in the Gothic peoples as expressed by Lazius at precisely this time, however, and supported by genealogies comparable to Johannes Magnus’s tracing the Spanish Gothic line from the Habsburg kings through Magog to Noah.⁵²

⁴⁹ Philipp Clüver, *Introduction à la géographie universelle, tant nouvelle, qu’ancienne* [1624] (Rouen, 1649), 176–79. This was a standard work, reprinted in many editions.

⁵⁰ For contacts between Spain and Sweden generally, see Enrique Martínez Ruiz and Magdalena de Pazzis pi Corrales, eds., *Spain & Sweden in the Baroque Era (1600–1660)* (Madrid: Fundación Berndt Wistedt, 2000).

⁵¹ “*Et nos de gente Gothorum sumus,*” quoted in Nordström, *Goter och Spanjorer II*, 172.

⁵² Julian del Castillo, *Historia de los reyes godos que vinieron dela Scitia de Europa, contra el Imperio Romano, y a España: y la succession dellos hasta el Catholico y potentissimo don Philippe segund Rey de España* (Burgos, 1582). For the longstanding Habs-

A century later, the Swede Schering Rosenhane and the Spaniard Diego Saavedra Fajardo met in Münster during the negotiations for the Peace of Westphalia. They quickly became close friends, and each took an interest in the other's kingdom. Saavedra Fajardo had a great deal to offer the younger Rosenhane. He was one of the foremost emblematisers of his generation and an inspiration for Rosenhane, who wrote an emblem book dedicated to Queen Christina while in Münster.⁵³ Probably in the same year that Rosenhane composed his manuscript, Saavedra Fajardo finished his book on the Gothic kingdoms in Castile and Austria, that is, in the Habsburg lands.⁵⁴ This book is essentially a chronological description of the Gothic kings, beginning with Alaric and continuing through the Castilian lineage. The biographical form is fairly standard for this type of historical text, but it may well have been taken most directly from Johannes Magnus, who is present everywhere in the notes of this heavily annotated work.⁵⁵ In the life of Alaric, he outlines the division of the Scandinavian and the Spanish Gothic zones of the "Ostrogoths, who inhabit the eastern part, and the Visigoths the western," but a fundamental relationship is presumed.⁵⁶

It seems that Saavedra Fajardo and Rosenhane discussed the possibility of a marriage between Queen Christina of Sweden and King Philip IV of Spain. Although this was never a realistic plan, the idea was to make contemporary political reality reflect the supposed reality of their common Gothic

burgs use of ancient genealogies, see Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendent of Aeneas. The Habsburgs and the Mythic Power of the Emperor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), and Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian. The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁵³ Schering Rosenhane, *Hortus Regius* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1978).

⁵⁴ Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Corona Gothica Castellana y Austriaca* (Münster, 1646).

⁵⁵ For the Spanish interest in the work of the Magnus brothers, see Johan Nordström, "Bröderna Johannes och Olaus Magnus i Spaniens lärda litteratur" in *Studier tillägnade Anton Blanck*, ed. Gunnar Svanfeldt (Uppsala: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1946), 38–53.

⁵⁶ Saavedra Fajardo, 1. "A quel divino Artifice, quya voz fué instrumento de sus fabricas, criò la tierra para habitacion del Hombre, y aunque este derecho competia à cada uno dellos, se adelantaron los Hijos, y descendientes de Noe, y como primeros pobladores hizieron propias con la posesion las Provincias que ocupavan, eligiendo aquellos Climax apacibles, donde mas benignamente repartiã sus rayos el Sol. Crecieron las Familias secunda la tierra con la renovacion del dilubio, y con el castigo de la desobediencia al Criador, y ya por la estrechez, o por la ambicion de establecer Dominios donde el Ceptro fuese particular, se dilataron con nuevos descubrimientos, sin perdonar à lo destemplado de las Zonas, ni à lo estrecho de los Circulos de la Esphera, ocupando (fuera ya de los caminos del Sol) en la Provincia de Scandia (ilustre por su extension, y por los Reyes que dió al Mundo) la Suecia, la Norvegia, y la Gothia. Esta se dividiò en Ostrogodos que habitaron à la parte Oriente, y en Visigodos à la de Poniente. . . ."

origins.⁵⁷ In this case there was no discussion of which kingdom could claim to be the first homeland of the Goths. Indeed, the Swedish crown embraced Spanish interest in their common heritage. Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld, who in 1688 was sent by the Swedish king in search of Gothic antiquities in Spain and elsewhere, prepared a Swedish translation of Saavedra Fajardo's *Corona Gothica y Austriaca*. This was to have been published in a rich edition with a large number of engravings, but was never finished.⁵⁸

Although in this dream of a supra-national Gothic union, the focus was on Sweden and Spain, rather than Germany, Saavedra Fajardo's book treats Spain and Austria equally. Charles V wrote to Gustaf Vasa of their common Gothic origins in his dual capacity as Spanish king and Holy Roman Emperor—in a sense, a Gothic union already realized in Habsburg rule of both regions. Both of these sources are really about the Habsburg lands generally—lineages concern dynasties, not geography, although many of the works in question attempt to bridge the gap—and they can therefore relate the German, Spanish, and Scandinavian lands. A comment by Leibniz, who had watched the debate with great interest, though with considerable skepticism, can refocus our attention squarely on a common cultural heritage in Germany and Scandinavia. After identifying the Goths as ancient Germans, he wrote:

Everything about the Goths and the Runes that the Swedes, Norwegians and Icelanders boast about is ours, and they work with all their praiseworthy efforts for us, because they can be considered nothing other than North Germans. This was also understood by Tacitus and all ancient and Medieval writers. Even their language demonstrates this, however much they squirm and struggle [against this argument].⁵⁹

Leibniz's rather tongue-in-cheek comment essentially repeats Wagner von Wagenfels's argument, as well as many of its prejudices.⁶⁰ Like Wagner, he

⁵⁷ Ingmar Söhrman, "The Gothic Tradition. Its Presence in the Baroque Period" in Martínez Ruiz and de Pazzis pi Corrales, eds., 944.

⁵⁸ Carl Vilhelm Jacobowsky, *J.G. Sparwenfeld: bidrag till en biografi* (Stockholm: Lindberg, 1932), 79–237.

⁵⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Collectanea etymologica, illustrationi linguarum, veteris celticae, germanicae, gallicae, aliarumque inservientia* (Hanover, 1717), 280.

⁶⁰ D.P. Walker, "Leibniz and Language," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 294–307 points out some of the interpretive problems in Leibniz's *Collectanea etymologica*. For Leibniz as a philologist, see Sigrid von der Schulenburg, *Leibniz als Sprachforscher* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1973), Klaus D. Dutz, "Lingua Adamica

uses a linguistic method to make an ethnic argument. He also collapses the diffuse notion of Germany and the complex problem of Gothic origins too simply into one entity. The passage summarizes much of the debate on national origins and the Goths as it had developed in the preceding two centuries, however. First, the Swedish court, struggling for a history and an identity as a new European power, sought to appropriate and exploit the longstanding tradition of Gothic origins. Second, antiquarians elsewhere, but primarily in the Germanic lands, rejected this narrow, extremely politicized vision of Gothicism and pointed instead to a much broader Gothic tradition, though this was frequently tailored to their own ends. Their work, drawing on the same sort of etymological and linguistic evidence as the Swedish historians, and complemented by cooler heads at the Swedish court, laid the foundation for Gothicism as a unifying tradition. The most extreme writers have come to represent the discussion, however, which has accordingly been seen as a proto-nationalist trumpet associated with the Swedish court—a natural conclusion for the history writers of the earlier twentieth century, who frequently thought in such terms. Far from a narrowly ideological Swedish phenomenon, identification with the Goths provided a framework for a more conceptual unity that transcended the limits of state ideology, even as various rulers tried to harness the Gothic legacy for themselves.

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nobis certe ignotis est.' Die Sprachursprungsdebatte und Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz" in *Theorien vom Ursprung der Sprache*, ed. Joachim Gessinger and Wolfert von Rahden (Berlin, 1989), 1: 204–40, and Stefano Gensini, "De linguis in universum." *On Leibniz's Ideas on Language* (Münster: Nodus, 2000).