

ARTICLE

Hermann Versus Varus at the Battle of Nations in Leipzig (1813): The Reception of the Hermann Myth during and after the Napoleonic Wars in Austria

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Abstract

The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest between the Germanic Cherusci chieftain Arminius, or Hermann, and the Roman armies under Varus (9 AD) had served as an analogy for German–French hereditary enmity since the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48). This analogy was particularly popular during the Napoleonic Wars as it symbolized the unity, independence, and identity of German lands that were previously united during the Holy Roman Empire (dissolved 1806). Little is known about the reception of the Hermann narrative in the Austrian Hereditary Lands (more or less present-day Austria) of the Habsburg Empire during the Napoleonic Wars. In Austria, Hermann also served as a symbol of the Austrian lands belonging to the German nation and as an expression of Habsburg hegemony over German lands. This article examines this specific narrative by analyzing its reception in Austrian newspapers, belles lettres, and paintings.

Keywords: Austrian identity; Napoleonic Wars; antique reception; identity construction; Battle of Nations; Battle of the Teutoburg Forest; German nationalism; Arminius; Austrian–French enmity

The story of the Cherusci chieftain Arminius, or Hermann, and his heroic victory in the Teutoburg Forest (northern Germany) over the Roman army under Varus’s command (46 BC–9 AD) is a fundamental element of the German *Kultur* nation.¹ Lesser known is that this narrative of “Hermann the Savior” was vivid in Austria too, and it was used during and after the Napoleonic Wars to express the belonging of the Habsburg dynasty and Austria (referring in this article exclusively to the German-speaking Hereditary Lands) to Germany. In particular, the myth of the heroic defeat of the Roman army by the united Germanic tribes under Hermann’s command became a popular motif in the political-patriotic and anti-Napoleonic poetry of the time.² In the visual arts, the image of Hermann’s rescue of a personified *Germania* became increasingly popular. The most prominent example is the Hermann Monument in the Teutoburg Forest near Detmold (planned since 1819 but only realized in 1875), which symbolizes German national identity and projects the political-historic desire for German unity and integrity.³

Although researchers have thoroughly studied the written and visual representations of the Hermann narrative as a constructive element of German identity during the early modern and later

¹The German *Kultur* nation is shaped by the emphasis of shared elements, such as language, history, and culture. Karen Hagemann, “‘Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!’ Patriotism and Masculinity in Texts of the ‘Political Romantics’ Written during Austria’s Anti-Napoleonic Wars,” *German Studies Review* 29, no. 1 (2006): 41–62, esp. 49.

²For the context of this article, the most fundamental works are Ernst Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege (1812–1815). Gesellschaftspolitische Meinungs- und Willensbildung durch Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1991) and Hagemann, “‘Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!’”

³Klaus Kösters, “Arminius und die Varusschlacht. Wie man einen Mythos macht,” in *Die Magie der Geschichte. Geschichtskultur und Museum*, ed. Martina Padberg and Martin Schmidt (Bielefeld, 2010), 152.

periods,⁴ they have left Austria out of consideration. Research has focused exclusively on what occurred within the borders of today's Federal Republic of Germany and has either regarded Austria as an unimportant "excursion" or—more commonly—has neglected Austria entirely. Austrian research also seems to have taken no interest in this battle that took place in northern Germany. In both cases, this lack of interest may be due to the perception that Hermann and the Teutoburg Forest are elements of German, not Austrian, identity. This article intends to show that Hermann was a part of the written and visual patriotic arts in Austria during the Wars of Liberation (*Befreiungskriege*).⁵

In Austria, Hermann served as he did in other German-speaking parts of the former Holy Roman Empire (dissolved 1806): as an element of an exclusive German national identity and a motivator for mobilizing men for war.⁶ This reception of Hermann was embedded in the general context of the Viennese court beginning to use the arts for propaganda in the time of the Napoleonic Wars.⁷ Therefore, this article regards the poetry studied in the following as part of the so-called Poetry of the Wars of Liberation (*Befreiungskriegslyrik*). This genre comprises a wide range of poems written from approximately 1806 to 1815, with a peak between 1813 and 1815, during the height of the wars.⁸ Common characteristics of this poetry are pragmatic attitudes of identity construction and mass mobilization. Both elements combine either a strong bourgeois or dynastic approach. The poetry also contains historical, mythological, and religious components.⁹ Being a study of the history of identity construction and concepts, this article asks how the idea of belonging to a collective (i.e., the German-speaking parts of the Austrian Hereditary Lands) and a specific identity (in this case, the German nation) was framed, phrased, and conveyed by the authors and artists during and after the Wars of Liberation.

To this end, the article is structured in three parts. The first section explains the basic concept behind constructing a Germanic–German identity in the early modern period and provides an understanding of the scholarly development of the Hermann narrative before 1800. The second section examines the analogy between the Germanic–Roman and Austrian–French enmity during the Wars of Liberation by analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical devices used in newspapers, journals, and books. The final section discusses the planning phase of the Hermann Monument in the Teutoburg Forest and the role the Habsburg dynasty played in constructing and financing the monument.

This study contributes to the understanding of identity construction in Austria. As such, it suggests that identity is not inherent. Following the three-phase model of Miroslav Hroch,¹⁰ in the first phase of the construction of an ethnolinguistic ("modern") national identity, the constructors of *imagined communities* (Benedict Anderson)¹¹—intellectuals such as scholars, artists, and writers—were eager to establish an *invented tradition* (Eric Hobsbawm)¹² and an image of a shared history and language. Although the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are generally seen as the period in

⁴Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im Sozialen Raum. Nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1995); Rainer Wiegels and Winfried Woesler, eds., *Arminius und die Varusschlacht. Geschichte, Mythos, Literatur*, 3rd ed. (Paderborn, 2003); Klaus Kösters, "Endlose Hermannsschlachten...", in *2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. Geschichte – Archäologie – Legenden*, ed. Ernst Baltrusch et al. (Berlin, 2012), 213–56; Anna-Lena Klaus, *Inszenierte Nation. Das Nationaldenkmal im 19. Jahrhundert. Die Walhalla und das Hermannsdenkmal* (Marburg, 2008); Gesa von Essen, "'Aber rathen Sie nur nicht den Arminius. Dieser ist mir zu sauvage.' Hermannsschlachten des 18. Jahrhunderts und die Debatte um ein deutsches Nationalepos," in *Hermanns Schlachten. Zur Literaturgeschichte eines nationalen Mythos*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Bielefeld, 2008), 17–40; Kösters, "Arminius und die Varusschlacht."

⁵The first thoughts on this topic were elaborated in the author's unpublished PhD thesis: Daniela Haarmann, "Sammeln und Graben für Herrscher und Vaterland. Altertumskunde, Archäologie und die Konstruktion von Identitäten in den österreichischen und ungarischen Ländern um 1800," (University of Vienna, 2018), 363–69.

⁶Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 3.

⁷Werner Telesko, *Kulturraum Österreich. Die Identität der Regionen in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 2008), 115.

⁸Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 36. Weber, however, sets the beginning of the *Befreiungskriegslyrik* in October 1812 (*Oktoberlyrik*) because that was when the process of the active shaping of a public opinion began; *ibid.*, 39.

⁹Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 3, 42.

¹⁰Miroslav Hroch, *Das Europa der Nationen. Die moderne Nationsbildung im europäischen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2005), 45–47.

¹¹Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2006), 6–7.

¹²Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 20th ed. (Cambridge, 2012), 1.

which the first phase of constructing modern national identities occurred, the roots of this development can be traced back to the Renaissance,¹³ as the next section shall further illustrate.

Constructing a Germanic–German Continuity

Since the beginning of Renaissance humanism, German scholars have referred to Hermann as a symbol of German(ic)ness.¹⁴ They interpreted the Hermann–Varus conflict as an analogy for contemporary military struggles and conflicting civilizations. The primary source these scholars used for the history of the Germanic tribes was Tacitus's (c. 58–120 AD) *Germania*.¹⁵ After rediscovering this work in the fifteenth century, early modern German scholars interpreted *Germania* as the main source of German origins.¹⁶ However, Tacitus never visited any Germanic tribes; he merely collected and repeated stereotypes from earlier authors. Nevertheless, these stereotypes still form today's perception of the supposed ancient Germans.¹⁷ Tacitus emphasized, on the one hand, that the Germanic values of freedom, courage, morality, and simplicity were antithetical to the decadent Roman life and politics characterized by terror and despotism. On the other hand, Tacitus depicted Germanic men and women as half-naked savages.¹⁸ In the centuries following *Germania*'s rediscovery, scholars disregarded Tacitus's sociopolitical context and treated his work as an ancient ethnographic study. Consequently, those scholars reproduced Tacitus's characterizations and values, and they interpreted the positive values as attributes of their fellow German contemporaries.

Coinciding with scholars' interpretation of Tacitus, the main characteristics of the Hermann narrative emerged. These characteristics would also shape the narrative's reception during the Napoleonic Wars and subsequent periods.¹⁹ Needing to construct a seamless history of the German people, scholars used the (hi)story of Hermann to create the role of a war hero who possessed the supposed original Germanic–German characteristics of virtue, bravery, and independence—the three keywords that were also the fundamental values of the *Befreiungskriegslyrik*.²⁰ It was in the period of Renaissance humanism that the humanist Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523) made the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest into a symbol of a free, independent, and united German nation and an early modern German national consciousness.

During the Reformation, scholars—likely from the circle of Martin Luther (1483–1546)—attributed the more German name *Hermann* to Arminius.²¹ Hermann also became a symbolic figure for

¹³This article loosely follows the theory of perennialists, who claim that nations and nationalism, or at least the basic elements of such, have been present in societies ever since the emergence of modernity. Because a debate regarding whether a historical narrative validates the approach of primordialists, perennialists, or modernists would be so complex, it shall be omitted. However, it would be worthwhile to address this issue in a separate study. For a summary of the discussion, see Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic* (Malden, 2008); and Florian Bieber, *Debating Nationalism: The Global Spread of Nations* (New York, 2020), 24–27.

¹⁴The term *Germanic* refers to the ancient peoples and tribes living in the area that various Roman authors identified as *Germania*. The term *German*, however, describes the distinctive modern forms of German identity and refers mainly to the German-speaking inhabitants of German lands in the early modern period. Although popular perception still views Germanic and German as being a stringent history of one *Volk*, various academic disciplines, such as ancient studies, archaeology, and linguistics, have disproven this idea of a biological continuity between ancient Germanics and modern Germans and have emphasized that the “history of one *Volk*” is instead an idea of cultural descent.

¹⁵See ch. 5, “Die schriftliche Überlieferung zur Varuskatastrophe,” in Reinhard Wolters, *Die Schlacht Im Teutoburger Wald: Arminius, Varus Und Das Römische Germanien* (Munich, 2017), 100–124.

¹⁶Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York, 2011), 56–80. Krebs explains at length the story of the hunt for Tacitus's lost books that spanned almost the entire fifteenth century.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 44–49.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹The only conclusive overview of the 500-year-long reception of Tacitus's *Germania* that includes the Hermann narrative can be found in Krebs's *A Most Dangerous Book*.

²⁰Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 118. For an overview of the early modern reception of Tacitus's work, see Christopher B. Krebs, “... Ihre alte Muttersprache ... unvermengt und unverdorben.’ Zur Rezeption der taciteischen Germania im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Philologus* 154, no. 1 (2010): 119–39; Kösters, “Endlose Hermannsschlachten.”

²¹Jacques Ridé, “Arminius aus der Sicht der deutschen Reformatoren,” in *Arminius und die Varusschlacht. Geschichte, Mythos, Literatur*, ed. Rainer Wiegels and Winfried Woessler, 3rd ed. (Paderborn, 2003), 239–48, esp. 240–41.

Protestants in their opposition to the Vatican. This religious aspect of the reception of Hermann may explain why the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest was of little interest in the Catholic Austrian Habsburg lands before and after the Napoleonic Wars.

In the context of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) and the emergence of French absolutism, the conflict between Arminius (Hermann) and Varus served as a parallel to French–German military enmity. It also symbolized the Ottoman threat to Germanism during the Siege of Vienna in 1683. Both interpretations were promoted by the posthumously published three-thousand-page novel *Großmüthiger Feldherr Arminius* (Noble chief-commander Arminius, 1689–90) by Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–83).²² The narrative spread further throughout the eighteenth century, and poets such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803) made Hermann into a model of the German *Kulturnation*. At the same time that the German interpretation of Hermann emerged, the classic stereotypes of the cultured and civilized Romans and the uncivilized wild Germanic barbarians were inverted.

Alongside themes of military strength, independence, and awareness of traditions and customs was the idea of the purity of blood. This concept was present in the writings of humanists, early nineteenth-century scholars, and, later, Nazi academics, all of whom based their ideas on Tacitus.²³ The concept of the purity of blood was also closely related to the purity of the German language. Therefore, during the early modern period an increasing number of German-speaking scholars, whose rhetoric was already motivated by the German–French–Italian conflict,²⁴ demanded that German be recognized as a scholarly language, like French and Italian.²⁵

As this section has demonstrated, the nineteenth-century reception of Hermann as an element of the history of Germanic–German continuity has its roots in the early modern period. Scholars created this narrative as an element of an invented German community. The same applies to the use of the Hermann narrative as an analogy for the hereditary French–German enmity, which broke with the traditional generalization of the Romans as “good” people and the Germanics as “bad” savages. Although the story of Hermann and the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest was of hardly any relevance in the Austrian lands before the Napoleonic Wars,²⁶ Austrian authors adapted and imitated German literature pertaining to Hermann to develop an Austrian Hermann narrative, as the next section will illustrate.

Transferring the Past into the Present: Germanic–Roman and Austrian–French Conflicts

Despite being present for centuries, the concept of “Hermann the Savior” did not become popular in all German lands of the former Holy Roman Empire, including Austria, until the Wars of Liberation in the early nineteenth century. Beyond the connection to traditional German–French enmity, one reason

²²Thomas Borgstedt, “Nationaler Roman als universale Topik. Die Hermannsschlacht Daniel Caspers von Lohenstein,” in *Hermanns Schlachten. Zur Literaturgeschichte eines nationalen Mythos*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Bielefeld, 2008), 153–74; Krebs, “Jhre alte Muttersprache,” 120; Kösters, “Arminius und die Varusschlacht,” 155; Roth, *2000 Jahre Varusschlacht*, 30–31; Kösters, “Endlose Hermannsschlachten,” 227–30.

²³Krebs, “Jhre alte Muttersprache,” 126–27, 131, 133.

²⁴Hermann’s military service in the Roman army, however, did not fit into the mold of the Hermann narrative, and scholars gladly concealed this detail in Hermann’s biography. It was not until D. Timpe’s (1970s) studies of Arminius and his thesis on the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest as an internal Roman mutiny led by Arminius that differing discourses emerged about the events of 9 AD. Wolters, *Die Schlacht Im Teutoburger Wald*, 92–93; Dieter Timpe, *Arminius-Studien* (Heidelberg, 1970); Dieter Timpe, *Römisch-germanische Begegnung in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit. Voraussetzungen – Konfrontationen – Wirkungen. Gesammelte Studien* (Munich, 2006).

²⁵Krebs, “Jhre alte Muttersprache,” 126–34.

²⁶Regarding the relevance of Hermann to Austria before the Wars of Liberation, only a small scholarly dispute about the location of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest is noteworthy. Some scholars argued that the battle occurred not in northern Germany but in southern Styrian Sachsenfeld (today Žalec in Slovenia). Deducing from the linguistic references to “Saxons” (*Sachsen*, *Saxones* being a medieval exonym for German tribes and settlers) and *Feld* (battlefield), in combination with the long history of Roman colonies in southern Styria, scholars argued that the battle must have taken place in Sachsenfeld. However, the theory did not receive much attention or support. For this discussion, see Aquilin Julius Caesar, *Beschreibung des Herzogthums Steyermark. Erster Theil. In sich enthaltend die Merkwürdigkeiten des alten und neuen Grätz* (Graz, 1773), 37–38.

for this eventual popularity might have been that the need for alliances in the fight against Napoleon surpassed confessional boundaries. This political development might have helped to transform Hermann into a pan-German motif.

The common purpose of Hermann as a historical and mythological motif was to form a historical consciousness and impart allegedly shared German values to create the image of a mutual and continuous Germanic–German identity. The Austrian interpretation of Hermann was similar to those of the other German lands. Its context, however, was distinctive in two ways. First, Austrian authors were “professional” artists who worked for the government and were closely linked to either a governmental institution or a representative of the House of Habsburg,²⁷ whereas in Germany many authors remained anonymous and often served bourgeois or even democratic ideals.²⁸ Second, Austrian poetry focused on the dynasty and the emperor, emphasizing that the paternalistic relationship between the sovereign and his subjects was historically legitimate. It did so by referring to the *Dei Gratia* and *Pietas Austriaca*, which described the close boundaries between the Habsburg dynasty and the Roman Catholic Church. In Germany, however, poetry often propagated the concept of people as self-responsible compatriots (though it also, of course, served as propaganda for the ruling dynasties).²⁹ All these distinctions are essential to remember when analyzing the reception of the Hermann narrative or similar motifs that were produced and published in the context of the Napoleonic Wars, as the following intends to do.

This section explores how nineteenth-century authors and artists interpreted the Hermann narrative as an expression of an Austrian–German and Habsburg–German identity by underscoring the supranational *Patria* and the dynasty. It also contextualizes the narrative within the Austrian literature of the time that generally sought to identify itself with the German nation that was built “on the basis of the unity of [Austria’s] plurinational components and its function of ‘governance’—not dominance—over the German heartland.”³⁰

The most important media in the distribution of the Hermann narrative were periodicals: newspapers and journals for a curious readership. In news articles, scholarly explanations, and poetic elaborations, authors spread the narrative, connected it to a wide range of motifs, and used it to expound upon the topic of *being German*. By identifying Emperor Francis II/I as Hermann and Napoleon as Varus, the emperor was seen as the savior of Germany. Regarding Hermann and the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest as symbols for the unity of German lands, this identification implied that the contemporary German lands were united under the hegemony of the Habsburg dynasty. This political statement is perhaps the most essential message of the Hermann narrative, particularly because it concerns the “German question” (*Deutsche Frage*) regarding the Habsburg presence and hegemony in the German lands that arose after the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806,³¹ which will be of further relevance in the next section.

One of the earliest examples of the presence of the Hermann narrative in Austria is an excerpt from the biography *Arminius, oder der Teutschen und der Römer Kampf* (Arminius, or the fight of the Germans and the Romans, 1808) by the medical student Friedrich Fröhlich (1780–1812) from Cieszyn (Austria–Silesia). The excerpt was printed in two issues of *Carinthia*, a journal for patriotic studies of the Austrian land of the same name. This was the only monograph published in Austria that treated the topic of Hermann, but it is of neither historical nor literary value.

²⁷Eduard Wertheimer, “Wien und das Kriegsjahr 1813. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Befreiungskriege. Nach ungedruckten Quellen,” *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 79 (1893): 372; Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 355–400, esp. 325–27; Hagemann, “Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!,” 49.

²⁸Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 3, 48, 66. It is, however, true that in the context of other leitmotifs of the Habsburg patriotic literature, bourgeois authors published anonymously, as Karin Schneider has emphasized for the Rudolf narrative. Karin Schneider, “King Rudolf I in Austrian Literature around 1820: Historical Reversion and Legitimization of Rule,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 51 (2020): 140.

²⁹Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 331; Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 19.

³⁰Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur*, 5th ed. (Vienna, 2000), 51: “die Vision eines Österreich auf der Grundlage der Einheit seiner pluri-nationalen Komponenten und seiner ‘Führungs’-, nicht Beherrschungsfunktion des deutschen Kernraums.”

³¹Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), 250.

Instead of its full 152 pages, only a twenty-two-page selection of the biography was printed in *Carinthia* in December 1813, shortly after the Battle of the Nations in Leipzig (16–19 October 1813) took place, with minor alterations.³² This editorial selection already indicates that the editors wanted to transfer a specific message to their readers. Accordingly, the title *Hermann, Deutschlands erster Retter* (Hermann, Germany's first savior), which is a loose adaptation of Tacitus's description of Arminius as "*liberator haud dubiae Germaniae*,"³³ reveals the editors' intention to create momentum for German patriotism.

The published excerpt creates a specific image of the Roman and Germanic peoples during the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, characterizing the Romans negatively and the Germanic people positively, and thus following the patterns of Renaissance humanist scholars. For example, a sentence in the first paragraph of the first issue contrasts "Roman softness" (*Weichlichkeit*) with "German strength" (*Kraft*).³⁴ In the following passage, Fröhlich further develops this juxtaposition linguistically by underscoring the degeneration of the Romans in contrast to the proud and traditional Germanics.³⁵ Another antithetical image Fröhlich creates is in his description of the Romans as suppressors and slaveholders and the Germans as freedom-loving and peaceful people who are still fully aware of their martial skills. Being a freedom-loving people, the Germans were determined to confront any who threatened their liberty and independence.³⁶ These examples also reflect the inversion of the concept of Romans as civilized and barbarians as savages.

Fröhlich's introduction of Hermann repeats the traditional narrative of "Hermann the Savior": "Germany's salvation and revenge ... rested on the young prince; his name was Arminius, or Hermann."³⁷ The following characterizations of Hermann and Varus are also antithetical. While Hermann is described as the strong German hero, Varus is labeled a dull, emasculated, greedy blabbermouth.³⁸ Again, it is worth remembering that to the contemporary readers of *Carinthia* in late 1813, Fröhlich's allusion of the Napoleonic Wars and the Battle of the Nations was most likely evident; readers would have understood that this characterization of Varus and the Roman army referred to Napoleon and the French army. Moreover, by idolizing the Germanic people and Hermann, Fröhlich creates moments of identification for the German–Austrian compatriots. The work was not meant to point to one specific Austrian identity but to a greater German one.

Fröhlich's description of the united Germanic forces victorious over the Roman army ends with the famous dictum that Augustus, according to his biographer Suetonius (70–122 AD), shouted: "Varus, give me back my legions!"³⁹ The anniversary of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest became a day of grief in the Roman Empire, but for the Germanic people, and later the Germans, it served as a moment of identity construction.

Beyond the extract printed in *Carinthia*, there are some further noteworthy portions of Fröhlich's writing, such as his preanthropologic descriptions of the Germanic people, including their clothing, customs, economy, and warfare. The concept of blood purity also appears in his work: "The Germans themselves are indigenous people and least mingled through the arrival and wandering of

³²Friedrich Fröhlich, *Arminius, Oder Der Teutschen Und Der Römer Kampf* (Vienna, 1808), 74–96; Fröhlich, "Hermann, Deutschlands Erster Retter," *Carinthia* 18 (December 1813): 1–4; Fröhlich, "Hermann, Deutschlands Erster Retter (Beschluß)," *Carinthia* 24 (December 1813): 1–2.

³³Tac. An. II, 88: "Germania's savior beyond any doubt."

³⁴Fröhlich, "Hermann, Deutschlands Erster Retter," 1: "Die Römische Weichlichkeit glaubte bereits über die Teutsche Kraft zu triumphiren."

³⁵Fröhlich, "Hermann, Deutschlands Erster Retter," 1: "Doch so schnell entartet kein Volk. Nur der gänzlich verdorbene Römer... [A]ber ihrer Väter Sitte, die heiligen Landesgebräuche, ihr Gefühl der Freyheit und auf die Waffen gegründeten Macht hatten [die Deutschen] nicht vergessen." (But no people group degenerates that fast. Only the completely debauched Roman [B]ut the German had not forgot their forefathers' traditions, their holy country's customs, their sense for freedom and their power which they had built upon weapons.)

³⁶Fröhlich, "Hermann, Deutschlands Erster Retter," 2.

³⁷Ibid., 1: "In dem jungen Fürsten ... ruhte Teuschlands Rettung und Rache; er hieß Arminius oder Hermann."

³⁸Ibid., 2: "Varus also, ein blödsinniger, entmannter, habsüchtiger Schwelger."

³⁹Ibid., 2: "Varus, gib' mir meine Legionen zurück!" The original text reads "*Quintili Vare, legiones redde!*" (Suetonius, Divus Augustus 23, 2.)

other peoples.”⁴⁰ In its October 1814 issue, the *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst* also propagated this idea of the purity of Germanic blood: “In the ancient days, our ancestors lived in Germany unmingled and individually in small communities, in which they enjoyed the domestic and personal freedom in the most pleasant way.... In their way of living, they might have been different, but in their language and customs were no significant differences; they all belonged to One [*sic*] nation. But the Romans spelled doom to all those smaller communities.”⁴¹

The journal and article were both written and edited by the historian and former Tyrolean freedom fighter Joseph von Hormayr (1782–1848), whose intention was not to provide historically accurate studies in his works but rather to use history to transmit moral and patriotic messages.⁴² By calling the ancient Germanic people “our ancestors,” Hormayr identifies them as the forebears of the German–Austrian people and supports the idea of greater German unity. Furthermore, Hormayr understood the term *Volk* as a community that shares historical, linguistic, and customary features, and thus as an ethnolinguistic *nation*. In addition, Hormayr depicts the Romans as the invading suppressors of a peaceful people.

German identity was further propagated in the song “Die Steyermärker an ihren geliebten Landesvater Franz” (The Styrians to their beloved father Francis) by the Styrian author and painter Ignaz Kollmann (1775–1837), who was also a personal associate of Archduke Johann (1782–1859), Emperor Francis’s brother. The song was performed in Graz, Styria, on the first Christmas Day of 1813, and it was published in *Theater-Zeitung* in March 1814. The song contains the following lyrics:

There in the high triumvirate
Of Great Princes the spirit of Rudolph
Graces the forefront of his grandson Francis
With Arminius’s oak wreath.⁴³

These four lines contain many different allusions, the first being *Dreygestirne* (translated literally as “three stars,” but figuratively as “triumvirate”). This refers to the transcendental image of a celestial afterlife for former regents and heroes and to the Roman concept of three men of power. In this case, those three men are Arminius (Hermann); King Rudolf (1218–91), the Habsburgs’ first king of the Holy Roman Empire and a popular motif of Habsburg continuity in the nineteenth century;⁴⁴ and the then-current Habsburg emperor, Francis II/I. Regarding the contemporary relevance, “triumvirate” may also refer to the alliance between Tsar Alexander I (1777–1825), King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (1770–1840), and Emperor Francis. This triad is a common motif, as further examples show.

Another important allusion in the lyrics is the metaphor of the oak wreath (*Eichenkranz*). Like the more famous laurel wreath, the oak wreath was a symbol of military merit. Oak is also a specific metaphor for being German. Beginning in the early modern period, the oak tree symbolized alleged German characteristics such as loyalty, stability, strength, and unity. Scholars, including Klopstock and other German compatriots, propagated the oak as the national tree of Germany during the

⁴⁰Fröhlich, *Arminius*, 10: “Die Teutschen selbst sind Eingebornhe, und am wenigsten durch anderer Völker Ankunft und Wanderung vermischt.”

⁴¹Joseph von Hormayr, “Das Vaterland, oder Staat und Volk (Beschluss),” *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst* 5, nos. 118/119 (1814): 503–4, esp. 503: “In Deutschland lebten in alten Tagen unsere Vorfahren unvermischt und eigenthümlich in kleinen Gemeinheiten [*sic*], in welchen sie sich der häuslichen und persönlichen Freyheit auf die schönste Weise erfreuten.... In der Lebensart mochten sie verschieden seyn; in Sprache und Brauch aber war kein bedeutender Unterschied; sie gehörten alle zu Einem [*sic*] Volke. Aber allen jenen kleinen Gemeinheiten drohten die Römer den Untergang.”

⁴²Schneider, “King Rudolf I in Austrian Literature around 1820,” 138.

⁴³Ignaz Kollmann, “Die Steyermärker an ihren geliebten Landesvater Franz. Ein Gesang mit Chor von Kollmann,” *Theater-Zeitung* 16 (Mar. 1814): 127–28, esp. 128: “Dort im hohen Dreygestirne / Großer Fürsten schmückt die Stirne / Rudolphs Geist dem Enkel Franz / Mit Arminius Eichenkranz.”

⁴⁴For examples of the Rudolf narrative in art and literature, see Werner Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich. Die Habsburger und ihre Geschichte in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 2006), 255–312; and most recently Schneider, “King Rudolf I in Austrian Literature around 1820.”

Napoleonic Wars.⁴⁵ Therefore, King Rudolf crowning Emperor Francis II/I with Arminius's oak wreath reinforces Francis's and the Habsburgs' status as the only legitimate rulers of the German lands. It is important to remember that this message referred not only to Napoleon's claim to the Roman-German crown but also to the inner German conflicts between the Habsburg and other German rulers, especially the House of Hohenzollern. Furthermore, in the context of the "German question," the oak wreath identifies the Habsburgs as a German dynasty. However, this German identity caused significant conflict with the other non-German lands of the Habsburg Empire, particularly because the dynasty had staged itself as the combining element of all the different peoples, ethnicities, and nations living in the Habsburg Empire.

Another poem, titled "Rückerinnerung auf das Jahr 1813" (Reminiscence of the year 1813), was published in *Der Aufmerksame* (a supplement to the Styrian newspaper *Grätzer Zeitung*, edited by Kollmann and supported by Archduke Johann) in January 1814. The poem's author, Andreas von Buzzi (1779–1864), was a writer and local politician in Carinthia and Carniola. The poem consists of twelve stanzas, each with a different number of lines. The Hermann–Varus conflict is just one of many various allusions in the poem. Other allusions are derived from ancient history and mythology, such as Buzzi's comparison of the German–Austrian soldiers to the defeated Spartan army at the Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC) under the command of King Leonidas I (c. 540–480 BC).⁴⁶ Buzzi also equates the German people to the "brave, bold people of Tuiscon."⁴⁷ Tuiscon (Germanized: Thuiskon) was a German god also known under the names Tuisto, Tuysco, and Teuto. Only Tacitus transliterated the name as "Thuiskon" in his *Germania*. Together with the Hermann narrative, Tuiscon became popular during the German Renaissance. He was interpreted as the primary god and as an allegedly unknown son of Noah, the primogenitor of the Germanic and German peoples.⁴⁸

In the stanza that directly addresses the Hermann narrative, Buzzi refers to another Germanic god: Wotan (in the poem, Wodan), who is also known as Odin. He is the god of war and lives, according to the poem, in the Teutoburg Forest.⁴⁹ This interpretation of Wotan—which was popularized by Klopstock to propagate German culture and customs⁵⁰—gives Hermann's victory over Varus a touch of divine will, and in newspapers the success of the coalition armies at the Battle of the Nations was depicted as divine providence. Furthermore, the location of Wotan in the Teutoburg Forest identifies this region as rightfully belonging to the Germanic people, just as the contemporary German lands of the nineteenth century belonged conclusively to the Germans and not to Napoleon.

Buzzi also elaborates on this divine intervention in the next stanza with contemporary relevance. The poem states that Emperor Francis II/I, wearing an oak wreath as the symbol of victory, stood below God's sky/heaven⁵¹ and thanked God for the victory. In these lines, Buzzi calls on readers to praise God as the emperor did for allowing him to triumph over Napoleon.⁵²

The likening of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest to the Battle of Nations and of Varus to Napoleon is further enforced by Buzzi's calling the Roman army *Welteroberer* (conqueror of the world). The

⁴⁵Paul Schoenen and Hans Martin von Erffa, "Eiche," in *Reallexikon der deutschen Kunstgeschichte/RDK Labor* (Munich, 1956), accessed 14 Mar. 2021, <http://www.rdklabor.de/w/?oldid=93129>.

⁴⁶Andreas von Buzzi, "Rückerinnerung auf das Jahr 1813," *Der Aufmerksame*, 18 (Jan. 1814): 1–4, esp. 2. One might debate whether this comparison is convincing because Leonidas lost his life during the battle and Sparta was defeated.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 4: "Thuiscons tapfres, kühnes Volk!"

⁴⁸Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book*, 98, 102–3, 139; Krebs, "Jhre alte Muttersprache," 124–25. A prominent supporter of this origin of Tuisto was Clüver. He linguistically derived *Teutsch* from *Teuto*, which according to him was the proper name of the German god. For an early example, see Burkhard Waldis, *Ursprung und Herkum(m)en der zwölff ersten alten König und Fürsten deutscher Nation, wie und zu welchen Zeyten ir yeder regiert hat* (Nuremberg, 1543), fol. Aiii r; D r. Here, Tuisto and Arminius were two of those twelve, which indicates that the conqueror of the Roman armies was of godly descent.

⁴⁹Buzzi, "Rückerinnerung auf das Jahr 1813," 3: "So fielen in den Thälern Teutoburgs, / In Wodans' heil'gem Hain, durch Hermanns Schwert / Der hohen Roma stolze Legionen."

⁵⁰Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book*, 175.

⁵¹In German, the term *Himmel* can mean both the physical sky and the transcendental heaven.

⁵²Buzzi, "Rückerinnerung auf das Jahr 1813," 3: "So lasset Herz und Hand auch uns erheben, / Und von der Andacht heiligstem Gefühl / Durchglüht ihm danken, der den Sieg gegeben! / Erführe ferner uns zum großen Ziel! / Das große Werk—er half es uns vollbringen; / Durch seine Gnade kann es nur gelingen."

anti-Napoleon media commonly used epithets such as *Welteroberer* and Antichrist⁵³ to demonize Napoleon in historical and religious contexts.

Most of the allusions in “Rückerinnerung auf das Jahr 1813” are also present in the poem “Patriotische Wünsche” (Patriotic wishes). This poem was published in *Vaterländische Blätter für den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* by the Habsburg-devoted historian and politician Johann von Kalchberg (1765–1827). Kalchberg expressed the following wish one year after the Battle of the Nations in Leipzig (16 November 1814):

Now the lucky moment arrived where the Genius of Germania calls to its children to return to the customs of their forefathers and medieval ancestor with the purpose of immortalizing the noble appearance of the present through songs, brushes, and chisels. Hermann’s victory over Varus stayed the theme in the songs of the bards of our fathers; even the feats of Rudolph of Habsburg found their singers; shall not the heroes of our time and their immortal feats merit the immortalization by the art of poetry?⁵⁴

Kalchberg’s main point is that the victors over Napoleon would be immortalized by the arts, as the phrases “immortalize ... through songs, brushes and chisels” and “immortalization by the art of poetry” suggest. To bolster his claim, Kalchberg uses historical references, such as the triad of Hermann, Rudolf, and Francis. By referring to Hermann and his defeat of Varus, Kalchberg equates the Battle of the Nations with the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. Thereby, the Battle of the Nations becomes an expression of another German battle for independence successfully led, of course, by the Habsburg army under the supreme command of Emperor Francis. Once more, the House of Habsburg is identified as a German dynasty, and the Austrian lands and their people likewise as German.

The German connection grows even stronger with the expression “Genius of Germania,” in which “Germania” is personified—a popular allegory among Austrian painters that was more common than pictorial representations of Austria. A prime example for this article’s purpose is the painting “Hermann befreit Germania” (Hermann frees Germania, 1818), by Karl Ruß (1779–1843), the personal painter of Archduke Johann.⁵⁵ Following classic gender stereotypes, this painting depicts Hermann breaking the chains of the enslaved Germania, personified as a young woman.⁵⁶ On the ground before Hermann lies the broken standard of the Romans, signifying their defeat. Next to Germania, however, resides an unscratched shield with the inscription “GERMANIA. // LEIPZIG. 1813.” This detail portrays the Battle of Nations as the “second Hermann Battle” (*zweite Hermannsschlacht*).⁵⁷

The expression of German identity by Austrian intellectuals was not uncommon for this time. While the examples discussed so far have addressed a general audience, poetry that targeted the military was also written. This kind of poetry intended to boost enthusiasm for war among soldiers and to motivate men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to join the *Landwehr* voluntarily.⁵⁸

⁵³Wertheimer, “Wien und das Kriegsjahr 1813,” 375; Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 81.

⁵⁴Johann von Kalchberg, “Patriotische Wünsche,” *Vaterländische Blätter für den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*, 16 Nov. 1814, sec. I, pp. 545–49, 548: “Nun ist der glückliche Zeitpunkt gekommen, wo der Genius Germaniens seinen Kindern zuruft, zur Bitter ihrer Urväter, und ihrer Altvorden des Mittelalters zurück zu kehren, und die so erhabene Erscheinung der Gegenwart durch Gesang, durch den Pinsel und durch den Meißel zu verewigen. Hermanns Sieg über den Varus war so lange der Gegenstand des Gesanges der Barden unserer Väter; sogar die Großthaten Rudolphs von Habsburg fanden ihre gleichzeitigen Sänger; sollen die Helden unserer Zeit und ihre unsterblichen Thaten keine Verewigung durch die Dichtkunst verdienen?”

⁵⁵Telesko, *Kulturraum Österreich*, 367.

⁵⁶Regarding gender-specific aspects of Hermann’s reception (which cannot be further discussed here but should be a topic of a separate study), see Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 44–50; Hagemann, “‘Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!’”

⁵⁷Rainer Wiegels, “‘Varusschlacht’ und ‘Hermann’-Mythos.’ Historie und Historisierung eines römisch-germanischen Kampfes im Gedächtnis der Zeiten,” in *Erinnerungsorte der Antike*, ed. Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp and Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, vol. 1, *Die römische Welt* (Munich, 2006), 523.

⁵⁸Hagemann, “‘Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!’” 43.

Most notable among this poetry are the so-called *Wehrmannslieder* (carols for militiamen) of Heinrich J. Collin (1771–1811) and Ignaz Franz Castelli (1780–1862), who composed their songs in 1808–9.⁵⁹ Because it was the intention of Collin’s work to propagate a Habsburg patriotism that embraced all peoples of the monarchy,⁶⁰ these works were also translated into the different languages of the Habsburg Empire and copied thousands of times.⁶¹

Despite this multilingual translation of the carols,⁶² the theme of German identity remained dominant in their work. In their songs they referred to “Prince Charles, the brave German Hero” fighting for “Austria / for the German fatherland” in the Battle of Aspern (1809); “the old splendor of the heroes of the Germans”; and the “German Emperor Francis.”⁶³ Even in the later 1829 version of the “*Kaiserhymne*” (Emperor’s hymn), the motif of Francis being “the Savior” of Germany from Napoleon is present.⁶⁴

A friend of Collin constructed a more specific linkage between the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and the Napoleonic Wars. In 1808, the Austrian officer Leonhard von Rothkirch und Panthen (1773–1842) wrote his poem “An die deutsche Sprache” (To the German language).⁶⁵ In this work, Rothkirch und Panthen integrates all the motifs, analogies, and juxtapositions discussed so far: the oak, Thuisikon, Teutonia, Teutoburg Forest, the Cherusci and the Romans, slavery and freedom, and ancestors and descendants. The poem’s invocation of the German language also frames these historical and mythological references.⁶⁶ The resulting message is clear: a German nation, constituted by shared language, history, values, and laws, must fight united against the French invaders. A noteworthy aspect of the poem is that, unlike most other songs and poems, Rothkirch und Panthen focuses on the German *Volk*. In this manner he follows the patterns of northern German poetry, most of all Prussian *Befreiungskriegslyrik*, and neglects dynastic-imperial aspects.⁶⁷

This section has illustrated how Austrian scholars and authors adapted the Hermann narrative to construct a German–Austrian identity to emphasize Austria’s and the Habsburgs’ belonging to an imagined German *Kulturnation*. Furthermore, they promoted the political statement that the Austrian emperor was the leader in Germany. The analysis of the text examples has shown that these authors used traditional elements of the Hermann narrative (e.g., Hermann as savior, warrior, and unifier of German peoples) and combined them with specific motifs from Habsburg propaganda, such as King Rudolf—apotheosis of the emperors—and the *Pietas Austriaca*.

Nonetheless, this article can only partly agree with Weber’s statement that poetry as a medium of shaping of a public opinion was unimportant in Austria.⁶⁸ Though Hermann as a motif was popular only during the Napoleonic Wars, the reason for this may be that the (hi)story of the Cherusian hero was traditionally a Protestant narrative, as shown in the first part of this text. This reason seems even more likely when considering that the northern German lands—where the *Befreiungskriegslyrik* had

⁵⁹It is noteworthy that Collin’s work was commissioned by the Viennese government, while Castelli’s work was commissioned by Archduke Charles (1771–1847). Charles commanded the armies during the Battle of Aspern (1809), which was the first defeat of Napoleon and the French army.

⁶⁰Brian Vick, “The Vienna Congress as an Event in Austrian History: Civil Society and Politics in the Habsburg Empire at the End of the Wars against Napoleon,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 128.

⁶¹Hagemann, “Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!,” 48, 50.

⁶²Vick, “The Vienna Congress,” 127.

⁶³Cited in Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus (1770–1840)* (Frankfurt, 1998), 198–99: “Prinz Carl, der deutsche tapfere Held’ für Österreich, / Fürs deutsche Vaterland,” “der Deutschen alter Helden-Glanz,” “deutsche Kaiser Franz.”

⁶⁴1829 version: “Er zerbrach der Knechtschaft Band, / hob zur Freiheit uns empor. / Früh erleb’ er deutscher Lande, / deutscher Völker höchsten Flor / und vernehme noch am Rande / später Gruft der Enkel Chor: Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser, / unsern guten Kaiser Franz!”

⁶⁵Hagemann, “Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!,” 49, 60n52.

⁶⁶Leonhard Rothkirch und Panthen, *Gedichte* (Vienna, 1848), 149–54.

⁶⁷Weber, *Lyrik der Befreiungskriege*, 12. Still missing in Rothkirch und Panthen’s poem is the expression of a democratic will of the bourgeoisie. The theme is a central aspect of the *Befreiungskriegslyrik*, next to the call for a united fight against Napoleon, as Weber emphasizes.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 325.

the most substantial influence—were Protestant.⁶⁹ This tradition then raises the question of how Hermann as a motif further developed after the Wars of Liberation.

Postreception: Hermann, Habsburg, and Hohenzollern

The enthusiasm for Hermann was short-lived in Austria and came to a halt in late 1814, after the (temporary) defeat of Napoleon. However, the narrative of “Hermann the Savior” who united the German(ic) peoples was soon revived in the German lands when plans were made to build a monument to Hermann in the Teutoburg Forest. Preparations for this monument began in 1819, and the drafts were prepared by nineteen-year-old Ernst von Bandel (1800–76). The statue was meant to represent both the unity of Germany and the victory over Napoleon.⁷⁰

Projects like this were common at this time in Europe.⁷¹ Be they monuments or museums, such projects were intended to build national *lieux de mémoire*, “vivid place[s] of national remembrance.” The goal was to create the feeling of historical continuity between the heroic compatriots of the past and present⁷² and establish an *invented tradition* to legitimize the nation.⁷³ These projects were collective efforts to which every citizen was encouraged to donate either money or—in the case of museums—objects.⁷⁴ Thus, the initiators of these projects promoted an *imagined community* in two ways: first, they established a symbol of the nation,⁷⁵ and second, they cultivated the feeling that the projects were the result of a collective effort of all members of the community.

The realization of the monument to Hermann followed these patterns. Although the monument’s history has been thoroughly researched from multiple angles, the Austrian perspective has been neglected. However, during the planning stages, the supporters of the monument saw and treated the Habsburgs and the Austrian people as potential donors to the German cause, as this final section will show.⁷⁶ For this purpose, the historical context of the “German question” must be kept in mind. Since the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, the Prussian Hohenzollern dynasty challenged Austria’s hegemony over the German Confederation.⁷⁷ However, the challenge was not a question of Austria’s belonging to a German *Kulturnation* but rather a contest of political power.⁷⁸

Despite the planning of the monument having begun already in 1819, it was not until 1838 that the Committee for the Hermann Monument (Verein für das Hermanns-Denkmal) searched for ways to finance the monument’s construction. Determined to realize the monument, the committee, with its more than thirty subcommittees throughout Germany (but none in Austria),⁷⁹ wrote to German dynasties, rulers, princes, and art patrons within and beyond the German Confederation. The then-ruling emperor, Ferdinand I (1793–1875), donated 1,000 forints, or 685 reichstaler, out of his own pocket to support the monument, which was more than what most other donors were willing to spend.⁸⁰

⁶⁹Ibid.; Hagemann, “Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!,” 45. Hagemann even states that the *Befreiungskriegslyrik* was nonexistent in the Southern German lands and Austria.

⁷⁰Martin M. Winkler, *Arminius the Liberator: Myth and Ideology* (New York, 2016), 65, 67; Landesverband Lippe, “Die Vorgeschichte zum Hermannsdenkmal,” accessed 14 Mar. 2021, <http://www.hermannsdenkmal.de/wissenswertes/vorgeschichte/>.

⁷¹For this article’s purpose, the comparison between the Hermann Monument and the monument to the Gaul hero Vercingetorix (82–46 BC) drawn in Tacke’s *Denkmal im sozialen Raum* is most relevant.

⁷²Mona Ouzof, “Le Panthéon. L’école normale des morts,” in *Les Lieux de mémoire. La République*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris, 1984), 139: “lieu vivant de la mémoire nationale.”

⁷³Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 298n17.

⁷⁴This behavior was so common that in 1869 the Austrian writer Ferdinand Kürnberg (1821–79) spoke of “terrorism of monument mendicity” (Terrorismus des Denkmal-Bettelns); quoted in Tacke, *Denkmal im Sozialen Raum*, 138.

⁷⁵Ibid., 18.

⁷⁶This case was no exception. The Germanisches Nationalmuseum, founded in 1853, also asked the Austrian emperor for donations and used similar lines of argumentation and persuasion; see Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Oesta), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchive (HHStA), Staatskanzlei (Stk), Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur 9-42.

⁷⁷Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 250. See also note 31.

⁷⁸John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and the Making of Modern Germany* (Harlow, 2002), 50.

⁷⁹Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 80. In general, Tacke offers the most detailed analysis of the Hermann committee(s) and the systems that they utilized for donations.

⁸⁰Letter from Special Cash Director Ritter von Scharff to State Chancellor Wenzel von Metternich, 18 Nov. 1841; Oesta, HHStA, Stk, Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur 9-6.

Although the committee collected a considerable sum, it was not enough to finish the project. In 1843 the committee wrote three new, nearly identical letters to Emperor Ferdinand to ask for a new donation. These letters argued the same points that some newspaper articles had made thirty years earlier: this monument for the German liberator, the hero of the German nation, and the uniter of the German peoples should be financed by a common engagement. If only the emperor would again make a donation, the other German princes and rulers would follow the example set by the Habsburg emperor and also donate money. However, the committee's hope was in vain; the Viennese court refused the request.⁸¹

Another issue that plagued the construction of the Hermann Monument was the many years that passed between each step. As previously discussed, the Hermann narrative was popular in Austria, but only so long as it served as an analogy for the Wars of Liberation.⁸² By 1819, however, some time had passed since the final defeat of Napoleon, and when the committee for the Hermann Monument began its work, the Napoleonic Wars had ended almost a quarter of a century earlier. Consequently, financing the project was a lost cause, and, therefore, the committee had already ceased its work in 1843. The monument was not inaugurated until 1875.⁸³ Notably, 1875 was only nine years after the Battle of Königgrätz and the decision for a Lesser German solution (*Kleindeutsche Lösung*) was put forward, which excluded the Habsburg dynasty from German affairs. Therefore, the monument's concept of unity and victory had changed drastically by then, and the Hermann narrative exclusively propagated the idea of a German Empire founded in 1871 under the hegemony of the Protestant Hohenzollern dynasty.⁸⁴

Another problem that hindered the monument's realization was again the confessional border between the northern Protestant and southern Catholic parts of Germany (and Austria). The first two sections of this article have demonstrated that Hermann was traditionally received by Protestant circles. During the 1850s and 1860s especially, Catholicism was strengthened in Austria by the ultramontane movement that created another antithesis to Prussian Protestantism at the edge of the German culture war (*Kulturkampf*).⁸⁵

To summarize, the Hermann Monument showed that, during the construction of German *lieux de mémoire*, the Austrian emperor's support was requested. The letters addressed to the emperor demanding support were rhetorically based on the challenged position of the Habsburg dynasty in the German Confederation. However, the Habsburgs had little interest in supporting this project,⁸⁶ irrespective of the substantial donation made by Ferdinand I. When the Hermann Monument reached its implementation phase around 1870, the structure of power in Germany had changed drastically. It was then the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) that provided fruitful soil for the revival of the Hermann myth as a symbol of German-French enmity,⁸⁷ while the Hermann narrative became unimportant to Austria after its defeat in the Austrian-Prussian War and the end of the German Confederation in 1866.⁸⁸

Conclusion

The historical-mythological story of Hermann and his heroic defeat of the allegedly superior Roman army served as an identity constructing and morale-boosting narrative in Austria as much as it did in

⁸¹Verein für das Hermanns-Denkmal, Fortgesetzte Nachricht über das Hermanns-Denkmal im Teutoburger Walde, 4; Oesta, HHStA, Stk, Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur 9-6.

⁸²The same was true for other Austrian state propaganda of this time; see Hagemann, "Be Proud and Firm, Citizens of Austria!" 51–52.

⁸³Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 80; Winkler, *Arminius the Liberator*, 68.

⁸⁴Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum*, 40.

⁸⁵Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 284–88. Judson emphasizes that the disputes arising from *Ultramontanism* were hardly comparable to the culture war that evolved only after the founding of the German Empire (287).

⁸⁶The same was true regarding preparations for the foundation of the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum* in Nuremberg in 1853. In this case, too, then-emperor Francis Joseph I was asked for support, but he refused; see Haarmann, *Sammeln und Graben für Herrscher und Vaterland*, 370–73.

⁸⁷Kösters, "Arminius und die Varusschlacht," 156.

⁸⁸Notably, the Hermann Monument was important for German immigrants in New Ulm, Minnesota, and they erected a copy of the statue there in 1897. Wolters also emphasizes the visual similarities between the Hermann Monument and the Statue of Liberty. Wolters, *Die Schlacht Im Teutoburger Wald*, 189–90.

other German-speaking parts of the former Holy Roman Empire—at least for a short time. Fröhlich was the first to propagate this idea in 1808, and it prospered after the Battle of Nations for about one year. After 1814, the popularity of the narrative diminished quickly. Nonetheless, the Austrian interpretation of Hermann was a way of expressing belonging to an imagined German *Kulturnation*. In the context of the end of the Holy Roman Empire, the analogy of Emperor Francis as Hermann and Napoleon as Varus expressed the idea of not only a final defeat but also the unity of the German Confederation under the hegemony of the House of Habsburg. Given the ephemerality of the Hermann narrative in Austria, the attempt to establish this myth as an *invented tradition* ultimately failed.

An important reason for the fleeting nature of the reception of Hermann in Austria and the southern German states lies in the confessional border between Protestant northern Germany and Catholic southern Germany and Austria. Since the beginning of the Reformation, Protestants had turned Hermann into a Protestant symbol. Only in times of serious danger for the German *Kulturnation* during the anti-Napoleonic movement did the narrative seem to be able to surpass its confessional limitations. This confessional issue was amplified again during the increasing conflict between the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns and the enforcement of Catholicism in Austria in the 1850s and 1860s.

Austrian intellectuals, like their German counterparts, actively constructed the narrative of Hermann. Thus, they supported the idea of an *imagined* German nation by emphasizing the continuity between the Germanic and Austrian peoples. Unlike the authors of some works of the German *Befreiungskriegslyrik* in support of the democratic values of the bourgeoisie, Austrian authors did not publish anonymously. They were also devoted to the House of Habsburg and usually built a connection between the Austrian dynasty and Hermann.

Simultaneously, the commitment of the artists, actors, and the Habsburg dynasty to the German identity was an increasing problem and paradox in the multiethnic empire. The visible pluralistic concept of Habsburg patriotism placed the German nation in a position of power that required other nations of the empire to subordinate themselves to this power. Although the “German question” demanded that the Austrian emperor take a definite stance, the Habsburgs’ self-portrayal as a German dynasty was paradoxical to their other self-staging as a supranational dynasty that united all peoples in its multilingual and multiethnic empire. During the nineteenth century, this problem increased and came to be insoluble.

The contradiction was also visible in the Hermann Monument. From the start, this monument was planned as a shared *lieu de mémoire* for the different German peoples and rulers. When it came to financial support, the Habsburg emperor was an important figure to solicit for a donation. Petitioners used the “German question” and the controversial position of the House of Habsburg in Germany to persuade Habsburg emperors to support the project. However, apart from his onetime donation, Emperor Ferdinand was not eager to do so. His later rejections of solicitations may have been tied to the growing conflict regarding the “German question” and the increasing issue of the pluralistic concept of the Habsburg Empire.

Today, the Hermann narrative and the reception of Germania are of no particular importance to Austrian identity (except, perhaps, only to right-wing student leagues and fraternities that still emphasize an alleged German[ic] descent). In the German consciousness, Hermann is still present as a symbol of national identity construction, but his persona is not as crucial as it was during the early modern period. After World War II, German–French enmity changed into a partnership of exchange and peacekeeping, leaving Hermann to the periphery of the Teutoburg Forest.

The battle between Hermann and Varus was a popular analogy for the German and the Austrian lands during the Napoleonic Wars. For research purposes, this narrative still holds much information about the construction of Austrian identity. It would be worthwhile to pose similar questions and study similar aspects of Austrian identity as German research has done for decades regarding the reception of Hermann. Such an undertaking may help to further understand the intersections between the German and Austrian identities. This article has hopefully provided the first step, albeit a small one, toward advancing that understanding.

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