Linguistics and Nationalism: Henry d'Arbois de Jubainville and Cultural Hegemony

Bernard Mees recently completed his MA at the University of Melbourne. His thesis examined the Celtic and German cultural interrelations in the pre-modern period. This article examines how contemporary nationalistic concerns informed French and German historiographical approaches to the subject matter explored in his research.

French nationalism celebrates Vercingetorix, the defender of Gaul against Caesar, a figure in the French tradition who has come to stand with if not above Joan of Arc in popular sentiment. The propagandists of the Revolution liked to claim that their struggle was one of the native Gaulish populace against the Frankish (Germanic) monarchy. No matter how tenuous the linkage of French with ancient Gaulish or of the French monarchy with the ancient Franks, this identification has embedded itself in the discourse of French nationalism as is witnessed by the nineteenth century erection of a figurative memorial of Vercingetorix in Alise-Sainte-Reine (Gaulish Alesia), a person who, like the British heroine Boadicea, though a symbol of national resistance is also ultimately a symbol of failure.¹

Similarly, German national pride is personified in the figure of Arminius, or as he is popularly known, Hermann the Cheruscan. Unlike his ancient British and Gaulish counterparts, however, Arminius succeeded in his mission of freeing his country from the Roman yoke, only to die an ignoble death at the hands of one of his own. Yet while some voices in revolutionary France were demanding that their aristocratic overlords be banished to the wilds of Franconia, German writers were at the same time glorifying a national spirit that they saw, following the characterisation of the Baron de Montesquieu, had developed in the Germanic forests of antiquity.² It was this movement that was to herald the literary Sturm und Drang of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, and the birth of a truly German national literature.

This paper investigates the nineteenth century construction of a theory of the history of the time of Vercingetorix and Arminus that grew out of the then new science of linguistics. For the first time, the genetic relationships of the languages of Europe were firmly defined, and the histories of these languages could be seen to afford new evidence for the early relations between the groups that spoke them. This new emphasis on the linguistic definition of historical cultures reflects a similar process occurring in nineteenth century society. Eighteenth century
definitions of Frenchness and Germanness could not rely on linguistic identity as both countries included speakers of many different languages within their boundaries. A unifying social identity for each country was first derived from what was perceived to be a common past in antiquity, in ancient Gaul and Germany. The modern-day dominance of the dialect of the Île de France throughout France and of Chancery Saxon (misleadingly termed Hochdeutsch or the Hochsprache) throughout Germany as the superstrate speech of an educated elite is largely a development of the nineteenth century.  

Nationalism has its base in linguistic identity and language has often come to equate with nation. By the eighteenth century, before this equation was first made, the dialect of the French royal court had achieved somewhat of an international standing often replacing Latin as not only the language of diplomacy but also of culture. Already Voltaire, remarking on the Prussian court of his time, claimed that the French spoken there was of a standard unmatched even in parts of Paris. A logical consequence of this French cultural dominance was reached in the military ambitions of Napoleon who saw Paris as a new Rome, most symbolically identified in his attempt to relocate the Vatican archive to Paris, one of the greatest acts of archival vandalism witnessed since the Roman destruction of the Great Library of Alexandria.

In the aftermath of Waterloo, the use of the French language was soon to be extinguished in most of the courts and chanceries east of the Rhine. French loanwords were hunted out of the lexicon of German society, a process that although having its roots in the seventeenth century, became so ingrained in the tradition of the German language at this time that it continues to this day. East of the Rhine, anti-French feeling led to a corresponding rise in national consciousness, and the designation of Prussia as the guardian of the Rhineland (leaving Austria free to guard her borders with the Sultanate and with France on the Po) was responsible for tying German nationalist hopes with Berlin rather than old imperial Vienna. It is also this period between the Napoleonic and Franco-Prussian wars that provided the world with the foundations of the discipline of linguistics (originally termed philology or Sprachwissenschaft) in the form of works produced by Jacob Grimm and Eduard Franz Bopp.

Although the birth of modern linguistic study is usually traced to a famous observation of the Welsh Orientalist and jurist Sir William Jones, scientific linguistic inquiry was born with the comparative studies of Bopp and the more overtly historical contributions of the eldest of the Grimm brothers. There were important Danish contributions (Rasmus Rask, Karl Verner), but nineteenth century linguistic inquiry was centred in Germany. Indeed the leading role accorded to language in the writings of nationalistic nineteenth century German intellectuals clearly informed the intensity of the scientific effort brought to bear to the development of linguistics at the time. At the end of the nineteenth century with the German national state finally a reality, Karl Brugmann published an, or perhaps the, Indo-European grammar, an edifice of scholarship whose like has never been repeated. The arrival of Brugmann’s grammar signalled the fruition of the enterprise launched by Bopp. Within each branch of this Indo-European tradition the names of the principal contributors are overwhelmingly of German origin. The first comparative grammar of Germanic was that of Grimm, that of
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Celtic by Johann Kaspar Zeuss in 1856, and similar works followed for other Indo-European language groupings such as Slavic, Baltic, Italic, Greek, Albanian and Indo-Iranian (Persian and Sanskrit). When the Genevan linguist Ferdinand de Saussure wished to study with the foremost scholars in Europe a century ago, he travelled to Leipzig. Although Saussure and his students such as Antoine Meillet made Paris one of the main centres for linguistic study in the first half of the twentieth century, the French structuralists and the Prague theorists all depended on Brugmann's grammar and the German neogrammarian tradition centred about Leipzig of which it was the most celebrated product. Indeed despite the Celtic identities constructed for the French, Welsh, Scots and Irish, the leading experts in Celtic languages were nearly all Germans: Zeuss, Kuno Meyer, Ernst Windisch and Rudolf Thurneysen. Only the Danish Celticist Holger Pedersen and Windisch's collaborator Whitley Stokes produced linguistic scholarship equal to that of these men. Although Napoleon had founded the Académie Celtique in 1805, apart from disseminating national myths, its main achievement consisted of a collection of works in Breton and determining that the only surviving Celtic dialects spoken in France were not linguistically derived from Gaulish at all but were introduced with colonisation from sub-Roman Britain. 8

Henry d'Arbois de Jubainville (born Marie-Henry d'Arbois de Jubainville, 1827-1910) was a leading French historian and the most noted French Celticist of the later nineteenth century. His monographic publications cover over seven pages of the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale and he was a frequent contributor to the pages of outstanding French historical periodicals such as the Revue celtique, Revue historique and the Revue archéologique, and his essays also appeared in the Comptes rendus des séances d'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He succeeded Henri Gaudioz as editor of the Revue celtique, and he held the foundation chair of Celtic languages and literature at the Collège de France. He is perhaps best known, however, for his Cours de littérature celtique, part of which was translated into English, and is still employed by some Celticists today.9 His lifetime evidenced the growth of what is referred to in historiographical works as Celtomania.10 The extinction of the Celtic tongues in most of Europe (where once they had been dominant from the British Isles to Anatolia) seemed a tragic fate in the minds of many writers. Numerous popular works extolling the greatness of this lost people appeared during his lifetime that were based more on fancy than on evidence. The Celtomania of this period was clearly not limited to Francophone authors, but d'Arbois de Jubainville and many other Celticists of the time were often influenced not by a romantic but rather a nationalistic Celtomania. For although most of Europe had been Celtic at one stage, France had been promoted from the time of the foundation of the Académie Celtique as the eldest daughter of 'La Celtique'.11

This Celtomania led to the construction of the grand fiction of a prehistoric Celtic empire based on a passage from the Roman historian Livy concerning the rule of the semi-mythical Gaulish king Ambigatus.12 Though based somewhat more soundly in notions of the official nationalism of La Celtique as described by the foundation members of the Académie Celtique than in historcal or linguistic inquiry, de Jubainville collected evidence that he claimed showed that
this Celtic empire incorporated the region considered to be the homeland of the ancient Germanic tribes, thought at that time to be in northern Germany. Onomastic studies had already established that a number of German hydronyms and toponyms were of Celtic ancestry, a suggestion that clearly contributed to the growth of Celtomania in Germany. Nineteenth century Celtomania also received impetus from impressive contemporary finds of Celtic artefacts such as those from Halstatt (excavated 1848-82) and La Tène (1857 and again from 1868-83). Consequently de Jubainville soon had his thesis of a Celtic hegemony over the ancient Germanic tribes (although based only on historical and philological evidence) appear in an elaborated form in the pages of the Revue archéologique, including references to suitably archaeological details such as habitation sites and cremation burials. De Jubainville also used evidence that indicated that many classical authors had considered the ancient Germans to be merely another brand of Celts. Indeed contemporary archaeology agreed with the comment of the Greek geographer Strabo that it was often difficult to distinguish any cultural differences between the practices of Germans and Celts.

French Celtomania reached its peak in the years immediately following the Franco-Prussian war. Already Napoleon III had ordered excavations of sites identified in his study of Caesar's account of his conquest of ancient Gaul, and these sites were soon to become ingrained in the national identity. (To this day they are favoured by politicians as sites to launch national campaigns). The French Emperor's commission of the statue of Vercingetorix at Alise-Sainte-Reine, replete with a quote attributed to the Gaulish leader by Caesar ringing its base, was followed by hundreds of similar works all celebrating the Gaulish past. A profusion of statuary, poetry, novels, dramas and histories appeared. As if as a mirror to the statue of Vercingetorix, however, a statue of Arminius had been erected facing the Rhine in the Rhenish possessions gained by Prussia after the Napoleonic wars (begun 1838, finished in 1875). This proud neo-classical memorial celebrates the ancient German leader who had defeated three legions under the command of the Roman general Varus in A. D. 9, ending the Roman campaign launched from Gaul that sought an annexation of ancient Germany as far east as the Elbe. The connection between contesting ancient histories had clearly become a matter of national pride.

Nevertheless, ever since the fifteenth century antiquarians had encountered difficulty in distinguishing the ancient Germans from the Celts. This was partly because the ancient term German was not a purely ethnic description but often stemmed from the geographical definition of Germany as Europe north of the Danube between the Rhine and Vistula. Yet this confusion not only stemmed from the inconsistent use by ancient authors of terms such as Celt, Gaul, Galatian and German (ancient Greek writers clearly thought of the Germanoi as merely another type of Galatoi), but also from incorrect assessments by previous modern authors. It was the birth of linguistics that finally separated the two ancient identities. Yet the criterion of language was to be used by de Jubainville in a way that was to develop separation into opposition.

D'Arbois de Jubainville in an influential article published in 1885 (and published in monographic form a year later), characterised the relationship between these peoples at this time as akin to that between the ancient Greeks and
Romans under the Empire. He reached this conclusion after considering two types of evidence. The first interpreted various ambiguous references to both peoples, such as the Greek geographic tradition that considered Germany to be part of Celtica, Livy's remembrance of a legendary pan-Celtic empire under the control of a Gaulish leader, Ambigatus, and the comment by Caesar that at one time the Gauls had been superior in arms to the Germans. The second was based in linguistics. The words shared by the Celtic and Germanic language groups, cognate to no other Indo-European languages, were mostly the terminologies of warfare, hierarchy and servitude. As at least two of the terms from this cognate vocabulary had previously been shown to be loanwords from Celtic into Germanic, de Jubainville rationalised that the other terms were also likely to be Celtic loans. Therefore, he concluded, the words 'were loaned from the language of the dominant race by the conquered race'.

De Jubainville went much further than simply claiming that the ancient Germans had been a subject people in a Celtic empire. As he reconsidered and expanded his theory, he claimed that the evidence of the cognate vocabulary, where often a word of low status in Celtic corresponded with one of a higher status in Germanic, showed that the Germans had served as infantry to chariot-riding Celtic warlords and that practices reserved in Celtic society for slaves and criminals had been glorified in Germanic societies, no doubt as confused recollections of the period in which they had served Celtic overlords. Some terms he claimed showed that the building and agricultural practices of the Germans were copied from those of the Celts. Others included common designators for metals and metallcraft, suggesting a Celtic origin for much of Germanic metallurgy. Most of the common vocabulary related specifically, however, to the sphere of war, a fact that suggested a dependency of Germanic military culture on that of their overlords. Included among these were terms for fighting, charioteering and the names of weapons and armour. He also noted that a number of legal terms, such as those for 'oath', 'freedom', 'duty' and 'ban', were common only to Celtic and Germanic; possibly indicating that much of Germanic legal practice also derived from that of their Celtic overlords. De Jubainville further proposed that the ancient Germans were also indebted to their Celtic masters for their battle chant, the *barritus*. This he claimed mimicked those of the Celtic bards (a confusion that also appears in one of the two *Germania* manuscripts where *barritus* has been corrupted to *barditus*), the language of which, he noted, the Germanic infantry had perhaps not been able to comprehend. He even went so far as to insist that the language of the ancient Germans had been so affected by Celtic that the fixing of stress on the initial syllable common to all of the descendent Germanic languages had been caused by the accent of their Celtic overlords. Thus he argued that all Germanic verse, which depended on initial stress for its metre and was based in an epic martial tradition, was derived from that of the Celts. While some German linguists attempted to explain the prosodic features of Germanic as a reflection of the German(ic) will, de Jubainville's theory that even the Germanic sound shift had been caused through the dominance of a Celtic superstrate (as similar phonological developments occur in Irish and Welsh), along with the fixing of stress, suggested that the most distinctive features of the Germanic languages developed only under the
influence of the accent of Celtic overlords. Although the French had lost the Franco-Prussian war, de Jubainville opened a new front that attacked not just the tradition of ancient Germanic liberty, but also the most glorified part of the German intellectual tradition: culture as embodied in language.

One might expect that this overlordship theory based on somewhat flimsy evidence and considered in the light of the French Celtomania of the period would have been resoundingly rejected in German-speaking countries. This, however, was not the case. Not only did de Jubainville's theory begin to appear in the works of leading French writers of a younger generation such as his collaborator the Gaulish linguist Georges Dottin, the noted Gaulish historian Camille Jullian and the Gallo-Roman archaeologist Albert Grenier, but some German linguists adopted his linguistic analysis wholesale as can be seen in the influential works of Otto Bremer and Herman Hirt. Others developed his theories even further. Sigmund Feist, the noted etymologist of Gothic, proposed that the Celts had 'Indoeuropeanised' the ancient Germans, and even that most of the 'Germans' mentioned by Tacitus and Caesar were actually Celts.

The rejection of de Jubainville's hegemonic thesis, against the tide of linguistic opinion, and some years after the Frenchman's death, was argued by three linguists, none of them Germans. The Swede Torsten Karsten was critical of d'Arbois de Jubainville's interpretation of his linguistic evidence, summarily dismissing his theory; the Flemish Belgian author Jan Mansion was more circumspect describing his evidence as ambiguous; while the less cautious Austrian linguist and historian Rudolf Much actively sought to refute the hegemonic theory, without, however, much effect. It was an Englishman, Charles Elston, who in 1934 provided a comprehensive rejection of the hegemonic theory of de Jubainville. Yet Elston's work was not well received on the Continent at the time. Noted Celticists such as Marie-Louise Sjöstedt pointed out the many linguistic errors of Elston, and remained true to the theory of the founder of much of their discipline twenty-four years after the death of d'Arbois de Jubainville. Although the main thesis of Elston's work is generally accepted today (especially in light of the supporting contemporary publication of a more measured and more properly linguistic treatment of the common vocabulary by the American linguist George Lane), Celticists still echoed de Jubainville's theory throughout the forties. And so, through the influence of Myles Dillon, this theory appears in a somewhat diluted form in the most popular contemporary work on the Celts, that of Nora Chadwick. There is often a tacit assumption of superiority in Celtic studies today in characterisations of the Celts as culture-giving and that of the ancient Germans as culture-receiving. This assumption seems only to stem from the legacy of de Jubainville whose works on Celtic culture and Celtic literature were of such influence on a generation of Celticists, many of whom had at one time been his students or been instructed using his Cours.

There was another reaction against the thesis of de Jubainville, however, that was not rooted in a desire to refute his theory by direct historical or linguistic analysis. Assessments such as those of Karsten and Much were influenced by nationalism but for many contemporary works this influence soon became a dictation.
Interest in the Germanic past was clearly fanned by nationalistic concerns. In the eighteenth century, the young Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, to whom is credited the rebirth of nativism in German literature, resurrected an interest in the ancient Germany that had once been lauded by German humanists. The interest in this ancient identity rediscovered in the sixteenth century by historians such as Conradus Celtis, Franciscus Irenicus, Johannes Aventinus (Thurmair) and Johannes Cochlaeus (Dobneck) had since waned. So instead of looking to this German tradition as had earlier writers such as Ulrich von Hutten and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Klopstock turned to the tradition of Gothicism. A humanist fascination with the Goths was promoted not just by the attempt by Italian scholars to blame all northern barbarism and the fall of Rome on the ancient Goths. A number of countries owed their freedom from imperial Rome to Gothic kings, a fact not lost on Montesquieu and other enemies of absolutism. Most of all, however, pride in a Gothic identity was felt in Sweden, from where, according to the Gothic historian Jordanes, the Goths had sprung, a notion which seemed to be correlated by Swedish toponyms such as Gotland and Götland. This Gothic identity was glorified by a number of significant Scandinavian Gothics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first such work came from the pen of Johannes Magnus (Store), the last resident Catholic archbishop of Uppsala, an author from whom much of the impulse for Scandinavian antiquarianism stems. The heirs of Johannes Magnus and his brother Olaus studied the medieval sagas, local toponyms, monuments and epigraphical remains (i.e. runestones) and compared them with the classical accounts of ancient Germany and Scandinavia. Authors such as Olaus Wormianus (Ole Worm) and Olof Rudbeck the elder drew from Gothicism the fascination with antiquity that was subsequently to give birth to archaeology, runology and the study of medieval Nordic literature. Indeed, the arrival in Sweden in 1648 of the Codex Argenteus recension of the Gothic Bible of Wulfila, the first bishop of the Visigoths, was seen at the time as the return of a national treasure.

Yet while the Germanic past was being rediscovered, this past was often confused with that of the ancient Celts. This is evident in historical works, such as those of Simon Pelloutier and especially in the widely circulated publications of the Genevan antiquarian Paul Henri Mallet. Pelloutier and Mallet claimed the ancient north as described by Rudbeck and others was Celtic, as Celtic as was Gaul. It is this identity that prompted Klopstock to call his stories of ancient Germany and Scandinavia Bardengedichte, bardic poetry. Indeed the association of bard with the description of an ancient German barritus in Tacitus and Ammianus first appears in a popular seventeenth century Dutch commentary on Tacitus, two and a half centuries before de Jubainville was to make a similar connection. This ambiguity in identity, whether Celtic or purely Germanic, however, was not to last.

The literary heirs of Klopstock such as Johann Gottfried von Herder were more securely to link language with this ancient past. Although Klopstock had liberated German prosody from the confines of a classical tradition not well suited to that of German, it was the call of Herder that was to lay the foundations for the new nationalistic Germany that followed Waterloo. Berndt Heinrich von Kleist, following the example of Klopstock, resurrected the spirit of Arminius
from the unread poetry of the German humanists as a call for the political unity of what was still only a *Kulturnation*. Johann Gottfried von Fichte in his *Reden an der deutscher Nation* (Addresses to the German Nation, 1807–8) made clearer the appeal to language that Wilhelm von Humboldt was to characterise as the finest expression of a national culture. This new patriotism was finally rewarded with nationhood in 1871 only after Prussian military prowess had humiliated France. Yet an interest in the ancient Celts in Germany did not wane. Indeed when James MacPherson published his Ossian forgeries, they made an immediate impact in German literary circles. The Germanic identity, following the reaction of the Gothicists against the Italian derision of everything north of the Alps, and indeed mirroring an ancient historical opposition of German and Roman, had already been defined in German cultural circles. Yet this definition was made only in contrast to everything Mediterranean. The separation of Germanic from Celtic had only just begun.  

The first grammarian of the Celtic languages was also the first historian to study the relations between the ancient Celts and Germans. Zeuss' *Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme* was the first in a number of similar surveys to which de Jubainville's was the only major French contribution. In 1855, Adolf Holtzmann could still see the Celtic and Germanic peoples as essentially of the same stock. Yet as Heinrich Brandes was to elucidate in his critique of Holtzmann's survey, the essential division between Celtic and Germanic was one of language. Within the Indo-European language family, Celtic and Germanic, though geographically proximate in the historical period, are philologically quite removed; in their morphology, syntax, phonology, even in vocabulary. As Herder and his heirs had stated, the Germanic identity was unique. In much of the literature that followed Herder, the ancient Germanic identity was to be merged with the German, just as Celtic was to become French on the other side of the Rhine. 

Yet the question of the continuity of a Germanicity as found in ancient sources in the contemporary German identity could be approached in ways other than philological. In the same period as the term *linguistics* (*linguistique*) was coined, modern archaeology was born. Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, the curator of the collection of the Danish Royal Antiquities Commission (which was to form the basis of the collection of the National Museum at Copenhagen), was the first in a line of prominent Scandinavian archaeologists who were to map out Germanic prehistory. This Nordic dominance ended only with the appearance at the turn of the last century of the studies of Gustav Kossinna. This formerly seminal figure in German archaeology is most famous for his declaration derived from the idea stemming from Humboldt that language was an expression of the spirit of a people: ‘Sharply defined archaeological cultures coincide in all periods with certain peoples and tribes’.  

From this principle he confidently proceeded to associate archaeological finds with tribal names as they appeared in the accounts of classical authors such as Tacitus and Ptolemy. Where other archaeologists employed non-ethnic descriptive terms based on find locations (Jastorf culture, Seedorf culture) or characteristic find types (band-ceramic culture, battle-axe culture), Kossinna preferred ethnic identifiers such as Marcomannic or Rugian. As his work developed, he soon made the jump from tribes to nations, and the archaeological
finds were thus appropriated by his nationalism. This reached a high point in his popular and populist *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte* (German Prehistory) subtitled 'a pre-eminently national concern', in which each chapter is headed by a nationalistic quotation, even including lines written for the character of Arminius from Kleist's *Hermannschlacht*. Archaeological evidence could now be construed as historical proof of a German identity reaching back into the Stone Age. Johannes Magnus had argued that the Swedes were the oldest people in Europe. Rudbeck had even connected his ancestors with the inhabitants of Plato's Atlantis. Similarly, Kossinna gave the Germans a pedigree that predated that of Gaul or Rome. Predictably, his reaction to the theory of de Jubainville was similar to that of Much: Kossinna was appalled. Indeed the German scholar must have been aware that de Jubainville had already criticised some of his early historical publications. Kossinna in return argued that the archaeological record contained no evidence that supported the Celticism's theory. Yet following generations of archaeologists were not only to dispute Kossinna's method, many were to agree that there is archaeological evidence for a significant Celtic influence on early Germanic society; one similar to that proposed by de Jubainville. Celtic weapons and armour have been found in Denmark, and in limited amounts further north in Sweden and Norway. Indeed most of Kossinna's work was later shown by Ernst Wahle to be quite flawed, and based entirely in his German chauvinism, a quite remarkable attack for Wahle to launch in a presentation to the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences in 1940.

Clearly, Kossinna's works exhibit a Germanomania. This chauvinistic approach to the study of Germanic antiquity was shared by a number of his contemporaries, and even more so by the next generation of German scholars. Of course, at the same time, Much, the son of the famous prehistorian Matthäus Much, was promoting similar views in Vienna. His student Otto Höfler would expand upon these views in his attempts to prove that a greater Germany was the true heir to Germanic antiquity in a number of infamous essays published in the 30s and 40s. The direct link between Celtomania and Germanomania in the period between the wars, however, is best evidenced in a monograph penned by Gustav Neckel, a German scholar of medieval Scandinavian literature most famous for his masterful treatments of the Old Norse Eddas.

In his *Germanen und Kelten*, published in 1929, Neckel produced a rambling diatribe against the suggestion of (and those who would suggest) a Celtic dependency or indeed any influence in German(ic) society. He clearly thought it was necessary to define what was Germanic in opposition to that which was Celtic. He does not mention de Jubainville specifically, but there is no doubt that he intended to criticise linguists who were influenced by his work such as Bremer, Hirt, and especially Feist. Neckel's monograph appeared at the time that negative reactions were appearing against the Celtic theses of Feist, an eminent German Indo-Europeanist of Jewish ancestry. Not only did Feist claim that there was proof that Arminius and the other Germans described by Caesar and Tacitus were linguistically not Germanic, he had also borrowed from de Jubainville's theory in order to explain how the North had first been Indo-Europeanised. In agreement with archaeological finds, he maintained that a group of Indo-European speakers had come into the North, and based on the commonly held
assertion that one third of the Germanic lexicon was indigenous and etymologically opaque (i.e. non Indo-European), argued that they had linguistically Indo-Europeanised the original neolithic inhabitants of the North, the prehistoric Germanic tribes. Building on de Jubainville's hegemonic thesis, Feist argued that these Indo-European conquerors were probably Celts.34

Feist's theories were attacked by Much in Vienna and the Austrian-Czech Celticist Julius Pokorny who had inherited Meyer's chair in Celtic studies at Humboldt University in Berlin.35 Feist had long been lauded for his clarity of composition and healthy scepticism, and by 1914 had become famous for his biting criticisms of the speculative works of earlier theorists.36 When he himself ventured too far, however, his enemies struck surely. Soon after the appearance of personal attacks by Much, he lost the position which he had held for over twenty years as reviewer of Indo-European and Germanic publications for the prestigious philological review journal, the Jahresbericht über die Erscheinung auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie of the Berlin-based Gesellschaft für Deutsche Philologie (German Philological Society). Much branded Feist a Celtomaniac (as he had similarly labelled Bremer and Hirt), and, ignoring Feist's outstanding contribution to Gothic etymology, claimed he was hostile to everything Germanic.37 Feist's last publication on the subject appeared in a leading American periodical in 1932 where he complained that the editors of journals in his own country took his theories to be unpatriotic.38 More sober voices were no longer able or were unwilling to support Feist.39 Indeed Wilhelm Wissmann, the reviewer who replaced Feist at the Jahresbericht, sought fit to join in the attacks on his predecessor.40 Although clearly one of the leading Germanic philologists of his time, Feist's name was blackened by the labels Celtomaniac, traitor and Jew. By the early 1930s, leading scholars such as Hermann Güntert sought fit to dedicate their works to the new patriotism that seemed to have become a requirement in academic publication. Yet Güntert's endorsement of National Socialism that prefaces his otherwise wholly credible work cannot be classed with the nationalism of other writers whose contributions became wholly subservient to the nationalism of Hitler's Reich.41 The attacks on Feist and other enemies of the growing Germanic-Aryan ideal of the Teutonic State of the German Nation (germanischen Staat deutscher Nation) were eventually to reach their peak in a publication of the Nazi Aryan scholar and propagandist Walther Wüst, a curator of the historical-cultural division of the SS, the Ahnenerbe, which had been formed under the patronage of Heinrich Himmler in 1935.42 Some years earlier, however, Germanomania had already become apparent in the monograph of Neckel, the professor of Nordic literature at Humboldt University in Berlin.43

Neckel's Germanomania is indicated early in Germanen und Kelten where he attempts to find a Germanic identity in the ancient Picts of Northern Britain (whom Tacitus indicated bore physical similarities to the ancient Germans) and the Persian Kirmanioi of Herodotus (whom most authors considered rather as Kirmanoi, the inhabitants of Persian Kirman). Neckel clearly considered that the definition Germanic was both linguistic and racial, and defended the geographic displacement of these tribes through analogy to the Völkerwanderung. Although mentioning discussions with Pokorny, he is more obviously influenced by Much,
whom he cites at length, a long time enemy of the hegemonic theory, and early Germanomaniac. He even pre-emptorily denies for himself the label Germanomanic, but prefers to be seen, rather, as an enemy of Celtomania. Leaving aside classical references, however, Neckel betrays his true intentions by turning to an assessment of Germanic character. German, Scandinavian and especially English character is lauded as Neckel clearly understands Germanic to be greater than just German. As if in a mirror of the mores of the Germans described by Madame de Staël a hundred years previously, he proposes distinctive Germanic traits of loyalty (*Treue*), seriousness (*Ernst*), and taciturnity (*Wortkargheit*). In contrast, Celts tend to hyperbolise. As Neckel's nationalism becomes more apparent, his tone becomes shrill and dismissive. The work culminates with an attack on the essay of the French linguist Meillet, his exemplary *General Characteristics of the Germanic Languages*, first published at the height of the German offensive in World War I, and which Neckel decries as 'a choice piece of war literature' merely because Meillet supports the views of Feist. (Neckel even unfavourably contrasts Meillet's work with the exhortations of Fichte.) On the other hand, a few years earlier, the Austrian-born American linguist Eduard Prokosch, while supporting Karsten's position on the linguistic evidence, had attacked the Swede for his summary dismissal of the theories of de Jubainville and Feist, and praised Meillet for a lack of national chauvinism. Neckel's assessments are clearly directed almost entirely by his nationalism and increasingly read like the polemics of a eulogist. What starts as a meandering and inconclusive refutation of later reflexes of the hegemonic theory ends as a work of patriotism, bigotry and Francophobia.44

In the earlier assessment of Much, the fate of the Continental Celts had been judged with some sympathy:

The Celtic provinces [of the Empire] were quick to adopt the spirit of Roman life ... already before their subjugation they [the Celts] had shown that they possessed a nimble mind receptive to all kinds of foreign influences ... thereby they were brought to the situation where the morally superior, deeper, steadier Germanic peoples, their opposite in many ways, were to act as their masters.45

Neckel's words seem to build upon the earlier assessment of Much, but at the same time echo a recurrent theme of Gothicism and nineteenth century German nationalism: 'The mass of the Gallic people stood ... in the condition of oppressed slaves without any rights ... while Germanic society lived in the signs of freedom.'46

Meillet, the leading French Indo-European philologist of the time, was sympathetic to the plight of Feist. He supported Feist's struggle against the association of race and language and promoted his theories on the origin of the Germanic tribes. For this accommodation, Neckel branded Meillet, as others were to brand Feist, an enemy of Aryan-Germanic Germany. Although Feist made lasting contributions to Indo-European, Germanic and especially Gothic linguistics, he and his theories, following the fate of the thesis of de Jubainville,
had been, as Much said, 'thrown out of the temple'; the temple of Germanic antiquity. 47

Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, the expositor of MacPherson's Ossian forgeries, was strident in his nationalism, chiding German scholars for their xenophilia and lack of national spirit. Rather, as Much was later to do, he refuted the classical title 'barbarian' given to the ancient Germans, and following Montesquieu, painted them instead as defenders of liberty against Roman tyranny. As Gerstenberg said:

We are a characteristic people, we have a characteristic language, we have characteristic themes before us in our history, in our mythology, in our customs, in the local countryside, and in the climate of our ancestors; we have always had important influences on the great European nations: what a disgrace are our scholars then when only they remain without feeling for German values, and concern themselves with nothing but foreign learning, foreign wit, and foreign modes of thought. 48

His contemporary the Lutheran churchman Herder went further drawing on the anti-Catholic propaganda of the Reformation, and attacking the 'monks and hordes of Frankish priests [who] introduced ... the idolatry of the Pope, the worst wreckage of the Roman sciences'. 'Read Tacitus', he exhorted his fellow Germans, 'there you will find your (national) character'. Herder looked not south or west, but rather to 'what Tacitus described ... the new man born in the North'. 49

It was this attitude that found its way into the works of the most important German national figures such as Goethe and the brothers Grimm. As Goethe wrote:

The Germans, who freed themselves of the Roman oppression, were portrayed as masterly and strong, and this image is well-suited to the awakening of the self esteem of the nation. 50

These were the expressions of the German Kulturnation of the preceding centuries, the nation defined by an identification with a literary and cultural tradition, not a state. The Germanomania that grew from the exhortations of the advocates of the Kulturnation infiltrated the works of prominent archaeologists, linguists and historians. On the other hand, the hegemonic theory of d'Arbois de Jubainville fitted well into a French discourse of educating barbarians. Just as the German mission had been portrayed since Ottonian times to be the bulwark of western European civilisation against the barbarian Slavs and Huns, many Frenchmen characterised their relationship with the Germans as tutelary. 51 The predominance of French culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries justified Napoleon's abolition of the Holy Roman Empire and its replacement with the French-sponsored Confederation of the Rhine. It also justified the Napoleonic annexation of German territory such as the Rhineland, no doubt partly inspired by an ancient separation of Germany and Gaul by the Rhine. 52 Meanwhile, influential figures such as Humboldt and Herder had linked
the German language and an imagined national past with their political ambition for a reborn, national Germany. The theory of d'Arbois de Jubainville, however, denied an indigenous German poetic and musical tradition; it even denied the Germans the pride of being unconquered, the one item of national pride so well represented by Arminius (and not by Vercingetorix who had been paraded at Rome, and then, as part of Caesar's victory parade, ritually executed).

German pride in their language, the essential ingredient of the Kulturnation, was felt to have been impugned by de Jubainville. This leading French Celticist, and those who followed him, had attacked the idea of a cultural separateness of the Germanic Germans. In the attacks on the hegemonic theory of de Jubainville, it was language and culture that were considered to be the essential ingredients of Germanicity. Although an acquaintance with anthropological concepts is evident in Hitler's Mein Kampf, the influence of academic racial studies (Rassenkunde) seems to have been marginal at best in the rise of the academic Germanomania of the 20s and 30s. How else could Neckel approvingly quote the opinion of one Jew (Pokorny) against that of another (Feist)? Clearly Hitler, Walter Darré and Hans K. F. Gunther derived much of their anti-Semitic science from the racial theories of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and the Count de Gobineau. Yet other Nazi propagandists such as Wüst and Alfred Rosenberg were equally as influenced by the works of German and Austrian academics such as Much, Kossinna and Neckel. Although the influence of Feist, demonised as a wrecker and enemy of the Germanic identity, was expunged from academic discourse by the servants of the Ahnenerbe in the late 30s, before then the title of 'Jew' was only one in a long list of accusations made against the noted linguist of Gothic. Although there is an underlying tone of anti-Semitism in the attacks of Much, and younger scholars such as Höfler and Güntert made no secret of their racial prejudice, other Jewish academics reading in Old Germanic studies such as Eduard Norden or even Pokorny were not hounded in the same manner as was Feist. Indeed Pokorny's work was still being promoted for publication well after his suspension from his chair at Berlin. Most German and Austrian academics steered well clear of the Aryan-German identity promoted by amateurs such as Chamberlain and the Ario-sophists. Although younger scholars such as Hirt's protégé the runologist Helmut Arntz could be personally slighted for their birthright, their scholarship was not denied its worth as is evident by the publication of Arntz's most significant work in 1944. (Indeed Arntz's works were scoured for evidence of the pernicious influence of Feist). Feist's sin was that he was judged a Celtomaniac.

The nationalism of Much, Neckel and Kossinna was based in nineteenth century German theories of language and culture. Their lauding of the Germanic past, though, was also a symptom of the antithetical definition of Germanicity that became focussed by the legacy of an earlier Celtomania as realised in the hegemonic theory of d'Arbois de Jubainville. Indeed Neckel was well aware that Germanomania had affected the judgements of many amateur Germanicists. He was less aware that it had also affected his own. The Germanomania of German historiography in Old Germanic studies of the inter-war period appeared as a reflection of a similar French Celtomania. Although the force of nationalism in German historiography is often criticised by modern writers, it should be
recognised that this was often a reaction against a neighbour who had historically dominated German intellectual life, and a neighbour whose histories belittled a fragile national identity. The academic Germanomania of the 1920s and 30s, unlike that of the humanists and Gothicists, reacted against and was defined by a hegemony from the west—that found in the theory of d’Arbois de Jubainville when he used history and linguistics to attack the imagined ancient foundations of the German Kulturnation.

ENDNOTES

1 Poll of primary school children in 'Mesrine et Jean d'Arc', Le Monde, 17 October 1979, p. 14. The popular spelling 'Boadicea' derives from a scribal error for Boudicca, the Queen of the Iceni who rebelled against the Roman occupation of Britain. Vercingetorix rebelled against the Roman annexation of Gaul in the last years of the famous campaign of Caesar, making his last stand at the Gaulish oppidum of Alesia.

2 C. L. de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, Lettres Persanes, Amsterdam, 1721, no. 136; idem, De l'Esprit des Lois, Genève 1748, XI, 8; E. I. (Abbé de) Sieyès, Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-États? (pamphlet), Paris, 1789.


4 Or rather, in today's parlance, haute couture, a notion previously identified with culture until anthropology took the term 'culture' from its erstwhile partner 'civilisation'.

5 Indeed Heinrich Friedrich Karl Reichsfreiherr vom und zum Stein, some time Prussian Chief Minister, and a feted German nationalist of the Napoleonic period, disliked everything French except their language which he used for both private and public correspondence.

6 A significant portion of the archive was lost en route to Paris. Of course later European authors were to blame the 7th century Arab conquerors of Egypt for the destruction of the Great Library, much to the chagrin of Islamic scholars.


10 The term Celtomanie was coined to describe the mania for everything Celtic of eighteenth century French historians such as Paul Pezron, and was subsequently applied to German enthusiasts such as Christian Keferstein; P. Pezron, Antiquité de la nation et de la langue des Celtes, autrement appelez Gaulois, Paris, 1703; C. Keferstein, Ueber die Halloran als eine wahrscheinlich keltische Colonie, Halle 1843; idem, Ansichten über die keltischen Alterthümer, 3 vols, Halle, 1846-51.

11 E. Johanneau, 'Discours d'ouverture sur l'établissement de l'Académie Celtique, les objets de ses recherches et le plan de ses travaux', Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique 1, 1807, p. 42.
peoples on the Celts, Much was still willing to countenance a cultural dependency of Slavs on Germans evidenced by loaned terminologies (Stammeskunde, p. 32).


25J. Magnus, Historia ... de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus, Roma, 1554; O. Magnus, Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus, Roma, 1555; O. Worm, Danicorum monumentum libri sex, Hafnia (Copenhagen), 1643; O. Rudbeck, Atland eller Manheim, 4 vols, Upsala, 1679-1702.

26The sixth century Codex Argenteus contains the first recension to be rediscovered and contains the principal text of the fourth century Bible of Wulfila. This philological treasure is the only testament of the Gothic language in manuscript form, and thus is the first major testimony of any Germanic language. Its decipherment led to the first comparative study of Germanic, Lambert ten Kate’s Gemeenschap tusschen de gottische spraekte en de nederduytsche vertoont, Amsterdam, 1710.

27P. Cluver, Germaniae antiques libri tres, Lugdunum Batavorum (Leiden), 1616; S. Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes et particulièrement des Gaulois et des Germaines, 2 vols, Paris, 1741; P. H. Mallet, Monuments de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves, Copenhagen, 1756; idem, Histoire de Dannemarc, Copenhagen, 1758.


30Scharf umgrenzte archäologische Kulturprovinzen decken sich zu allen Zeiten mit ganz bestimmten Völkern und Volkerstämmen’; G. Kossinna, Die Herkunft der Germanen: Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie, Würzburg, 1911, p. 3.

31G. Kossinna, Die deutsche Vorgeschichte: Eine hervorragende nationale Wissenschaft, 6th ed., Leipzig, 1934. Indeed Kossinna’s periodical, Mannus: Zeitschrift für Vorgeschichte (Mannus is the
legendary ancestor of the Germanic peoples in Tacitus), was to publish many articles whose motivation was nationalistic rather than scholarly and thus was one of the many that did not survive the war.


34 The theory first appears in his Kultur, Ausbreitung und Herkunft der Indogermanen. It was his Germanen und Kelten in der antiken Überlieferung, however, that caused the most ire among his opponents as this work completely denied the link of Germani to Deutschen. Feist was later to retreat from this position somewhat, but by this time he was suffering from both academic and racial persecution. For the story of Feist, whose theories were soon to be dismissed as 'alles nur jüdische Tendenz', see R. !Omer, 'Sigmund Feist: Deuscher - Germanist - Jude', Muttersprache 91, 1981, pp. 249-308. Notably, Feist's theory of a non-Indo-European substrate, borrowed from de Jubainville's work on Ligurian (subsequently also employed by Julius Pokorny), is now generally accepted in Indo-European studies, especially his theory on the cause of the philological innovations of Germanic.

35 Much began his attack on Feist in 1926, but, following the publication of the latter's Germanen und Kelten in 1927, he seems to have spent most of the next year attacking Feist. The bulk of his arguments stem merely from undisguised chauvinism, and introduced anti-Semitism to the attacks on Feist that continued until the end of the war: R. Much, 'Die angebliche Keltenherrschaft in Germanien', Volk und Rasse 1, 1926, pp. 100-5; idem, 'Kelten und Germanen', Volk und Rasse 3, 1928, pp. 193-201; idem, 'Waren die Germanen des Caesar und Tacitus Kelten?', Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur 65, 1928, pp. 1-50; idem, 'Sigmund Feist und das germanische Altertum', Wiener prähistorische Zeitschrift 15, 1928, pp. 1-19; idem, 'Bemerkung zur Feists „Entgegnung“, Wiener prähistorische Zeitschrift 15, 1928, pp. 72-81. Pokorny's attack was more surely based on linguistic grounds. J. Pokorny, review of Feist, Germanen und Kelten, Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 53, 1928, pp. 383-85.

36 Most notably in his 1913 work Kultur, Ausbreitung und Herkunft der Indogermanen and in the next year in the first edition of his Indogermanen und Germanen. By 1915 he was already speaking of an Aryan myth (arische Mythos); Feist, 'Das Arierproblem', Sokrates 3, 1915, pp. 417-32.

37 See especially Much's 'Sigmund Feist und das germanische Altertum', where he invokes the spirit of Grimm and even Arminius against Feist; Feist is best known for his Etymologisches Wörterbuch der gothischen Sprache, 2nd ed., Halle an der Saale, 1923. The third edition of this standard work was published in Leiden (Holland) in 1939.


39 Hirt had, for example, chastised a younger Much for his chauvinistic use of etymology, Much in return claiming that Hirt was a Celtomaniac; Much, 'Die deutung der germanischen vólkernamen', Pauls und Braunes Beiträge zur geschichte der deutschen sprache und literatur 20, 1895, pp. 1-19; Hirt, 'Nochmals zur deutung der germanischen vólkernamen', Pauls und Braunes, Beiträge zur
Hirt was also an opponent of the anthropological equation of Aryan with Caucasian which had become so confused by this period that many ethnologists used the term Aryan only to mean 'not Jewish'; Hirt, *Die Indogermanen*, p. 549; R. Römer, *Sprachwissenschaft und Rassendideologie in Deutschland*, München, 1985, pp. 62-84. Other authors who were more supportive of Feist's views, such as Carl Schuchhardt and Gustav Stümpel, were unable to help him, although reviewers such as Gunther Ipsen and Joseph Schwartz had attacked Much for his excessively nationalistic approach to the study of Germanic antiquity. Notably Much called for an Anschluss of his country in 1929, only to die in 1936 (the same year as Hirt), two years before the Nazis took control in Vienna; C. Schuchhardt, 'Neue kelto-germanische Fragen', in *Cimbria, Beiträge zur Geschichte, Altertumskunde, Kunst und Erziehungslehre*, Dortmund, 1926, pp. 31-6; G. Ipsen, review of the journal *Volk und Rasse, Indogermanische Forschungen* 46, 1928, pp. 269-73; G. Stümpel, *Name und Nationalität der Germanen*, Wiesbaden, 1932; J. Schnetz, review of *Germanen und Indogermanen. Festschrift für Herman Hirt*, Zeitschrift für Ortsnamenforschung 12, 1938, pp. 163-78; Römer, 'Sigmund Feist', p. 287.

40Römer, 'Sigmund Feist', p. 290.


43Of course this growing interest with Indo-European studies had dovetailed into the growing anti-Semitism of the 1920s. Feist had even tried to counter some of this bigotry with his *Stammeskunde der deutschen Juden* (Leipzig, 1925), but without much success. The main thrust of this work is to try to show that the connection of language to race (e.g. Aryan to Nordic) is false, yet it only helped accelerate the process of vilification which culminated in his immigration to Denmark in 1939.


Note that Neckel has, following Feist, inverted the more usual order of 'Celts and Germans' that had appeared since Holzmann's *Kelten und Germanen* and Georg Grupp's *Kultur der alten Kelten und Germanen*, München, 1905. It is perhaps worth noting that Neckel also fell prey to some of the more ridiculous excesses of German runological studies in the 1930s. Neckel, retreatting from his earlier more reasoned approach, became one of the main proponents of the theory that the runes were the ancestor of all European scripts, a theory that had been developed in the 1910s but received further backing in the 1920s and 1930s; G. Neckel, 'Zur Einführung in die Runenforschung', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 1, 1909, p. 10; K. Wartenberg, 'Die Buchstaben als indogermanisches Erbgut', *Hammer* 10, 1911, pp. 508-13; H. Wirth, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der atlantische-nordischen Rasse*, Jena, 1928; G. Neckel, 'Die Herkunft der Runenschrift', *Die Runenkunde im Dritten Reich*, Lang, Frankfurt am Main 1984. Neckel was also associated before his death in 1940 with journals that served merely as organs of Nazi propaganda such as *Die Sonne, Volk und Rasse, Deutschlands Erneuerung* and the *Nationalsozialistische Mädchenerziehung*. 

63
45 Die keltischen Provinzen ... nahmen lebhaften Anteil am römischen Geistesleben ... schon vor ihrer Unterwerfung erweckte sich ihr beweglicher Geist, empfänglich für fremde Kultureinflüsse aller Art ... dadurch wurden sie in die Lage gebracht, den sittlich höher stehenden, tieferen, beständigeren Germanen gegenüber in vieler Beziehung als Lehrmeister aufzutreten'; Much, Stammeskunde, pp. 41-42.

46 Die Masse des Galliervolkes stand ... in dem Verhältnis rechtloser, gedrückter Sklaven ... während die germanische Gesellschaft im Zeichen der Freiheit lebt'; Neckel, Germanen und Kelten, p. 11.

47 Hinauswurf aus dem Tempel'; Much, 'Bemerkung zu Sigmund Feists „Entgegnung“', p. 72. Much declared that Feist's theories had been plucked out (ausgeheckt) from de Jubainville's theory, a theory he ascribed to the latter's arrogance (gloire). He even dismissed the representation of the ancient Germans by the great German Roman historian Theodor Mommsen as a betrayal of their forefathers; Much, 'Die Germanen bei Theodor Mommsen', Volk und Rasse 3, 1928, pp. 101-4.


49 Mönche und Fränkische Priesterhorden führten ... den Götzendienst des Pabsts, die schlechtesten Trümmer der Römischen Wissenschaften ... ein' ... 'Lies Tacitus, da findest du ihren Charakter' .... 'was Tacitus beschreibt ... da ward in Norden neuer Mensch gebohren'; J. G. v. Herder, Werke, ed. B. Suphan, 33 vols, Berlin, 1877-1913, vol. 1, pp. 365-66; vol. 5, pp. 514-15.


52 Other traditionally German territories such as the German-speaking Alsace (Alsace) and Lotharingia (Lorraine) had previously been annexed by the French Kingdom in 1648 and 1766, territory that again became German from 1871-1918, and of course from 1941-44.