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### From Teamchef Arminius to Hermann Junior: glocalised discourses about a national foundation myth

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## From *Teamchef Arminius* to *Hermann Junior*: glocalised discourses about a national foundation myth

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If for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ‘Battle of the Teutoburg Forest’, fought in 9 CE between Roman armies and Germanic tribes, was predominantly a reference point for nationalist and chauvinist discourses in Germany, the first decade of the twenty-first century has seen attempts to link public remembrance with local/regional identities on the one hand and international/intercultural contact on the other. In the run up to and during the ‘anniversary year’ of 2009, German media, sports institutions and various other official institutions articulating tourist, economic and political interests attempted to create a new ‘glocalised’ version of the public memory of the Teutoburg battle. Combining methods of Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, the paper analyses the narrative and argumentative *topoi* employed in this re-orientation of public memory, with a special emphasis on hybrid, post-national identity-construction.

Das zweitausendjährige Gedenkjahr der „Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald“ im Jahr 2009 bot eine günstige Gelegenheit, die bis in die zweite Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts dominante nationalistisch–chauvinistische Deutungen des Sieges von germanischen Stämmen über drei römische Legionen zu korrigieren und zu überwinden. Der Aufsatz analysiert mit Hilfe diskurslinguistischer Methoden die Anstrengungen regionaler Institutionen und Medien, die nationale Vereinnahmung des historischen Gedenkens kritisch zu thematisieren sowie neue, zum eine lokal situierte, zum ändern international orientierte Identifikationsangebote anzubieten. Die Analyse zeigt, dass solche „de-nationalisierten“ Identifikationsangebote zwar teilweise auch früher verwendet wurden, aber heutzutage rekontextualisiert und auf innovative Weise in den Vordergrund gestellt werden.

**Keywords:** discourse; conceptual integration; glocalisation; identity; memory culture

### 1. Battle memories past and present

Today, the Hermann monument is a symbol for Europe’s integration, cultural diversity, international understanding and peace. . . . Former enemies have become friends that have shared values: democracy, human rights and respect for the cultures of others. (Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG, 2009, quotations from German sources here and in the text are by the author)

With these words, the tourist agency of the Lippe-Detmold district in North-West Germany welcomed visitors to the of ‘Hermann monument’ (*Hermannsdenkmal*) in 2009, the year of the 2000th anniversary celebrations of the ‘Battle of the Teutoburg

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Forest' in which three Roman legions, commanded by Publius Quinctilius Varus, were defeated by Germanic tribes under the leadership of a Cheruscan warlord whose historical name is only recorded in the Latin form *Arminius*, which was later Germanised to *Hermann*. Such a presentation of the monument as a symbol of international understanding stands in marked contrast to its previous uses. During the Second German Empire (1871–1918), for instance, it had served to suggest a continuity of victorious German(ic) resistance against 'Western' domination over two millennia (Mellies, 2009b; Oergel, 1998), and in the 1930s the National Socialists used it as a rallying point for chauvinistic and racist election campaigns (Halle, 2009; Mellies, 2009a; Niebuhr & Ruppert, 1998, 2007).

Since the defeat of Nazi Germany, the public celebration of Germanic warrior culture as a model for nationalist expansion has become largely taboo. On the few occasions that right-wing extremists such as the 'National Democratic Party' (NPD) try to organise rallies at the Hermann monument near the town of Detmold, they receive only negative publicity in the press and banning orders from the local police (Pape, 2009a). In terms of public attention, the Hermann monument has become 'regiona-lised' as a local tourist attraction. In the absence of any significant archaeological findings of Roman presence in the vicinity, it is not considered to be a topographic indicator of the presumed battle locality. Instead, the village of Kalkriese in Lower Saxony has become a favourite 'contender' ever since finds of Roman coins in the 1980s led to the discovery of a Roman–Germanic battlefield from the first century CE (Clunn, 1999; Derks, 2009). The excavations of weaponry as well as of human and animal remains and battle ramparts in Kalkriese have been made publicly accessible in a museum park whose administration make the explicit claim that their site is the 'authentic' location of the battle between Varus and Arminius (*Varusschlacht im Osnabrücker Land GmbH* – Museum und Park Kalkriese, 2009a, 2009b).

However, there is no general consensus among archaeologists and historians about the precise dating of the Kalkriese findings; hence, the location of the battle in which Varus and his legions perished cannot be regarded as having been fully established (Berke, 2009; Wolters, 2009, pp. 161–173). Whilst avoiding direct assertions that the Hermann monument marks the precise battlefield, the local tourist agency of the Detmold region regards itself still as in contention and presents their region as the place of the battle, with the monument as the main point of reference (Landesverband Lippe, Hermannsdenkmal-Stiftung, 2009). It is likely that economic motives play at least as important a role in this policy as questions of local pride and historical plausibility. The claim to battlefield status provides access to significant revenues from tourism as well as from public subventions and commercial sponsoring and has thus become a valuable commodity. The competition between Detmold and Kalkriese has even generated legal proceedings based on allegations about the allegedly fraudulent presentation of archaeological data (*Die Welt*, 2007; Pape, 2009b).

During the 'anniversary' year of 2009, the conflict between the battlefield contenders was temporarily appeased by the decision to share exhibition venues, resources (and revenues) among three sites, i.e., (1) Detmold and the Hermann monument, (2) Kalkriese, and (3) the site of a Roman fort and a museum at Haltern near the River Lippe (Aßkamp, 2009). All three exhibitions were opened by the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, together with the President of the EU parliament and the 'Minister Presidents' of the two relevant federal German states, i.e., North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The commemorative events were supported by a host of business sponsors and a massive marketing campaign and included

concerts, films, theatre and opera performances, educational events and public lectures on topics ranging from archaeological findings over the Roman perception of ancient *Germania* to ‘The Development of Peace in Europe’ (Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG, 2009, pp. 16, 36). The fraught relations between Arminius and his in-laws, which led to the capture of Arminius’s wife Thusnelda by the Romans as reported by Tacitus (2005, pp. 338–345), inspired the organisers to invite the public to presentations on feminist research about the ‘Woman behind Arminius’ and a children’s opera that dealt with the teenage Thusnelda’s rebellion against her father (Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG, 2009, pp. 16, 23). Another cabaret performance recounted the battle from the perspective of an ordinary Roman soldier, with the hindsight knowledge of 2000 years:

The Teutoburg Forest is dripping wet and dark. Barbarian lands, bearskin types. ‘Why do we have to bother with that lot?’ – that’s the question that many a freezing Roman legionary asks himself. Mama is far away, the pasta is gone and we are getting weaker by the day. How on earth are we to beat Hermann? (Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG, 2009)

Such ironical treatment of the Roman–Germanic conflict was also applied to other aspects of the anniversary celebrations. During her visit to the Detmold exhibition, the Chancellor was greeted by local citizens who had disguised themselves as a mock-Roman cohort (Brockmann & Althoff, 2009), and a ‘reconciliation banquet’ was organised by local restaurant chefs, which ‘matched’ Italian Parma ham with Westphalian ham, *Pizza* with *Currywurst*, and Parmesan cheese with a local cheese variety (Spiegel, 2009).

These latter initiatives combine a distinct appeal to local identities with an international and intercultural outlook. If the presumed descendants of the indigenous Germanic population of 2000 years ago celebrate the battle memory nowadays in the guise of the ‘enemy’ army, in sharp contrast to earlier occasions where locals dressed up as ‘Cheruscan’ warriors in bearskin costumes and winged helmets (Mellies, 2009a), the newly constructed identity is no longer either German(ic) or Roman but a hybrid one. Its discursive and social meaning transcends the historical ‘source’ identities and associated traditional narratives. It is also of a different epistemological status, for the publicly performed identification of modern Germans with ancient Roman legionaries or the reconciliation between modern Italian and German gastronomic culture cannot plausibly be construed as a true memory of historical events. Rather, it expresses imaginative associations triggered by the ‘battle anniversary’, which stand in a complex allusive and analogical relationship to the original recordings and interpretations.

## 2. Analysing historical blends

Such an interpretative approach builds on theories developed in the contexts of Cognitive Linguistics, i.e. ‘Conceptual Integration’ theory (Fauconnier & Turner 1998, 2002), as applied in Critical Discourse Analysis and Cultural History (Charteris-Black, 2005; Musolff, 2010b; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2009). Conceptual integration theory aims to account for the creativity of the human mind in constructing ‘blends’ of concepts that are more than the sums of their conceptual inputs, e.g. in figurative and conditional/hypothetical statements: ‘[the input spaces and their] organizing frames make central contributions to the blend, and

their sharp differences offer the possibilities of rich clashes' that present 'challenges to the imagination' (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 131). They discuss, for instance, the witty counterfactual statement 'If Clinton were the Titanic, the iceberg would sink', coined with respect to the former US President Clinton's ability to survive (politically) his 'collision' with opponents who attempted to impeach him. The counterfactual statement creates, rather than merely represents, an analogy: it is more than just the mapping of knowledge about the Titanic disaster onto the story of Clinton's near-impeachment (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, pp. 218–222). Its 'blended space' gives rise to new inferences about Clinton's political status as being unbelievably adept at surviving political scandal.

Similarly, the commemoration of a battle that cost tens of thousands of lives as a symbol of intercultural understanding and reconciliation cannot be derived from its conceptual source inputs (in this case, traditional discourses of popular commemoration of events in ancient Germany). In the following sections we shall focus on investigating the source narratives that have been associated with the popular memory of the Teutoburg battle and ask which conceptual blendings, analogies and reinterpretations have enabled them to be integrated in the new post-2000 perspective that combines a distinctively local identity-construction with an intercultural outlook. The material for the analysis consists of a corpus of historical and contemporary texts: articles from eight German newspapers, magazines and weblogs from 2009, totalling 90,000 words, 12 main websites of public and private organisations that advertise battle-related events (30,000 words), 'wiki'-pages (35,000 words), 28 collections of primary (Latin and Greek) historical sources and translations, plus another 19 literary texts, 13 of which represent stages in the 400-year tradition of fictional and essayistic treatment of the battle narrative; the remaining six illustrate contemporary uses of it in detective novels and children's literature. The following sections provide exemplary analyses of those discourse traditions that have remained topical in the documented public debate until today and can provide the basis for an assessment of the major discourse-historical changes in the dominant commemoration narratives. The main focus will be on linguistic and literary techniques that express the shift from a regionally based but nationally oriented and often chauvinistically exploited master narrative towards a new 'blend' of local/regional and global/internationalist conceptual inputs.

### 3. *Arminius* aka *Hermann*: from 'liberator Germaniae' to local hero

One of the main sources of the regional references in the memory of the Teutoburg battle are Tacitus's *Annals*, which were written c.115–117 CE and were rediscovered in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the first book of the *Annals*, the Roman historian recounts the Roman procurator and general, Caesar Germanicus's commemorative visit to the battlefield during his campaign of 15 CE against the Germanic tribes that were still fighting under the command of Arminius. Here we find the reference to the 'Teutoburg Forest' (*teutoburgiensis saltus*) as the location of the battle, which was reached by the Roman army after it had passed through the 'country between the Ems and the Lippe' (Tacitus, 2005, pp. 344–347). Tacitus gives a graphic account of Germanicus's efforts to bury the remains of the fallen soldiers before pursuing Arminius (2005, pp. 346–347). The *Annals* go on to relate subsequent Roman–Germanic battles, the fate of the Germanic warlord's family, including his betrayal by his father-in-law and the capture of his wife, as well as a

debate with his brother Flavus who remained a loyal officer in the Roman army. Finally, after reporting Arminius's end through murder by relatives, Tacitus judges him to have been 'undoubtedly the liberator of Germany' (2005, pp. 338–347, 396–401, 518–519).

This acknowledgement together with his apparent praise of Germanic warrior society in a separate treatise, *Germania*, made Tacitus the author of choice for humanist German writers in the sixteenth century who demanded a (re-)legitimisation of indigenous political authority in Germany against 'Roman' (= the Vatican's) rule (Krebs, 2011, pp. 81–128; Ottomeyer, 2009). Tacitus's *Germania* presented the Germans as a nation of unspoilt, exotic barbarians, i.e. as the antithesis to supposedly corrupting tendencies in the ancient Roman civilisation of his day (i.e. that of the first century CE). Among the positive characteristics that Tacitus accorded the Germans were bravery in battle, honesty, generosity and hospitality to strangers, and a lack of the vices of luxury and sexual promiscuity (Tacitus, 1980, pp. 139–167). The ancient nation and its 'liberator' as described by Tacitus now became models for new political visions for the 'Holy Roman Empire of German Nation'. As early as 1520, the poet laureate and anti-Papal campaigner, Ulrich von Hutten, appealed to the Saxon Elector, Frederic, to lead the fight against 'Roman' domination by linking him to the ancient Germanic hero. Hutten first praised the 'Saxons' of Frederic's territory as having 'at all times fought for German liberty' and never having been subjugated by foreigners (Hutten 1970, p. 190), then, via a metonymic link to the more specific regional group of 'Westphalians', he connected them to the Germanic tribes that had been mentioned by Tacitus:

In this account of the Saxons, I include the Westphalians, and those who were once called Cheruscos and Caucos . . . They were the nation of the unsurpassed valiant hero Arminius who liberated the whole German nation from the hands of the Romans at the time when they were most powerful and in their heyday, and who caused great and incomparable damage to the Romans and eventually drove them out completely. (Hutten, 1970, pp. 190–191)

By way of the speculative ethnographic links, 'Cheruscos'/'Caucos'–'Westphalians'–'Saxons', Hutten connected tribal and territorial identities across 1500 years in order to encourage Frederic, as leader of the most 'freedom-loving' part of the German nation, to drive back the perceived new 'Roman' attack. The identification of ancient 'Rome' with the 'Roman' Catholic Church in the 1520s was, of course, as speculative as the equations of Germanic tribes and sixteenth-century Germans, but Hutten's argumentation appears to have helped to persuade the Saxon Elector to protect the 'anti-Roman' Church reformer Martin Luther from Papal (and imperial) persecution. The battle and its hero became the starting point for a narrative that amounted to a foundation myth for the German nation. It provided proof of an ancient German nation that had been united, and thus victorious, in their resistance against foreign invasion; by analogy, it was hoped that renewed national unity would make similar feats possible in the future. Hutten also composed a learned dialogue in Latin in which Arminius's fame as a war hero was discussed in the underworld (Roloff, 1995). In the same period the Cheruscan leader was further popularised as a 'German' hero by the folk-etymological 'translation' of his recorded Latin name 'Arminius' into modern German 'Hermann' in circles around the Reformer Martin Luther (Wolters, 2009, pp. 180–181).

Whilst the *national* agenda of a renewed ‘liberation from Rome’ may have been the most important conclusion for Hutten and Luther, the *regional* identification of Arminius as a specifically ‘Saxon’ and ‘Westphalian’ hero was also highlighted in genealogies, political pamphlets and pictorial emblems throughout the sixteenth century (Hutter, 2009, pp. 168–171). Over the following centuries the ‘Saxon’ link was gradually backgrounded because the respective territories ceased to be attached to the Saxon Electorate. The ‘Westphalian’ index of the ancient battle was, however, maintained: Tacitus’s hint in the *Annals* at the *teutoburgiensis saltus* as the locality of the battle was translated as *Teutoburg Forest* (German: *Teutoburger Wald*) and identified with the ‘Osning’ forest ridge near Detmold in the ‘modern’ Westphalian region in 1669 (Berke, 2009, p. 135). This localisation was not implausible, as Detmold was situated in the vicinity of the Rivers Weser and Lippe, as mentioned by Tacitus. The ancient battle was from now on predominantly allocated a Westphalian regional setting.

When, after the demise of the ‘Holy Roman Empire’ and the Napoleonic wars, symbols of national unity and identity were once again in high demand in a Germany that was divided into 39 separate states, the sculptor Ernst von Bandel planned erecting a monument of Arminius near Detmold on the *Grottenburg* hill. Due to funding problems, it took more than 50 years to finish. Its inauguration in 1875, four years after the latest unification of Germany following the Franco-Prussian/German war, was attended by Emperor Wilhelm I and generated a considerable tourist and public relations boom, including early forms of merchandising, for instance, in the form of beer tankards, biscuit tins and sewing machines that were ornamented with pictures of the battle triumph and its Germanic hero *Arminius/Hermann* (Mellies, 2009b, pp. 224–228). The regional aspect was not excluded from these forms of popular imagination but the main emphasis lay on their national symbolism: the Cheruscan leader was seen as a model figure for the project of (re-)creating national unity.

When the name for the new football team of the nearby town of Bielefeld was chosen in 1905, the founders followed the then fashionable trend of adopting ‘patriotic’-sounding names (e.g. *Alemannia*, *Burgundia*, *Teutonia* for student societies and sports associations) by settling on *Arminia Bielefeld*. The club still exists today under this name and the ‘Arminius’ connection is still invoked in its public relations work, but it is being used in a decidedly de-nationalised and de-militarised form. Their club fanzine *Halbvier*, for instance, relates the Cheruscan victory in the style of a match commentary:

Team captain Arminius had home advantage. There was no umpire, cheating was permitted and bad weather also favoured the home team ... (*Halbvier*, no. 15, 2006)

Whilst the historical battle is clearly used as a reference point for twenty-first-century local identification with the ‘winning side’ in 9 CE, the rendering of the ancient massacre as a football report arguably eliminates almost any serious aspect from the implied comparison between ancient and modern ‘combatants’. The admission that ‘cheating was permitted’ (which is wholly apposite, given that Arminius, nominally a ‘knight’ of the Roman army, feigned allegiance to the Roman commander before leading him and his troops into the Teutoburg trap) removes any notion of the ancient warrior as a stereotypical ‘hero’.

Similar ‘tongue-in-cheek’ references to the memory of the Teutoburg battle during 2009 included an election slogan attacking the Lippe–Detmold council leader, which alluded to Emperor Augustus’ lament on the news of Varus’ defeat, ‘Quintili Vare, legiones redde!’, as reported by Suetonius in his *Lives of the Caesars* (Suetonius, 1998, pp. 180–181) by demanding: ‘Friedel, Friedel [= name of council leader], give us back our millions’ (FDP Detmold, 2009). A comic strip introduced children to local history by featuring as its hero ‘Hermann Junior’: the cheeky ‘great-great-great-great grandson’ of Arminius, who travels through the towns and villages of the region and learns about their history (Pfaff, 2008). Even the Detmold–Kalkriese feud over battlefield status became the target of mockery, as several further local places facetiously insisted on being the ‘true’ location of the ancient victory. A village choir, the *Blotenbergamseln*, demanded that the Detmold monument be relocated to their hamlet (*Westfalenblatt*, 2009), and an amateur archaeologist purported to have found a ‘Roman highway’ in another location (Hille-Priebe, 2009). Whilst none of these claims is meant to be taken 100% seriously, they clearly show a strong desire to re-appropriate the narrative of the battle and its hero as a focus for regional self-affirmation. The significance of the battle for ‘national’ German history and identity, on the other hand, received mostly critical attention in the media and historical monographs (Bendikowski, 2008; Demandt, 2008; Husemann, 2009; Münkler, 2009; Seewald, 2009a, 2009b; Wolters, 2009, pp. 174–198). New popular novels that set out to familiarise the general public and younger readers with the ancient narrative largely eschewed any one-dimensional identification with or defence of either side of the ancient conflict (Kammerer, 2008; Multhaupt, 2009; Raidt & Haußner, 2008).

#### 4. Westphalians as literary descendants of Arminius/Hermann

Among the upsurge in topical publications of 2008–2009, several detective novels picked up on the Detmold–Kalkriese competition as the setting for local whodunits. One of these, entitled *The Deadly Hermann Marathon*, has as its protagonists two archaeologists who work respectively for the Detmold and Kalkriese authorities and are under pressure to produce tangible proofs for the rival claims to battlefield status (Pleyter, 2009). In the novel, the Detmold archaeologist stumbles on a piece of a Roman helmet with the inscription ‘LEG XIX’ at the start of the run, which proves to him the presence of Varus’ legions at the Grotenburg; then his competitor tries to grab the find and they pursue each other, with deadly outcome. Reitemeier and Tewes’ *The Curse of Varus* (2008) also starts with an archaeological find of Roman weaponry and an unexplained murder, which is subsequently solved by inspector Jupp Schulte from Detmold. Here, the main ‘villains’ are not archaeologists but politicians and media representatives from Kalkriese and Detmold who do not shy away from murder to prove ‘their’ battlefield to be the correct one.

The resolution crucially involves the help of Jupp Schulte’s landlord and friend, the retired farmer Anton Fritzmeier. Whereas most of the novel’s characters speak standard German, Fritzmeier’s idiolect is rendered in a standardised Westphalian dialect, which opens up otherwise closed channels of information. Fritzmeier is the second, perhaps even more important, hero of *The Curse of Varus* besides Inspector Schulte. He represents the ‘down-to-earth’ local people of the Lippe region who are characterised by a ‘live-and-let live’ mentality. They are neither over-friendly nor particularly astute but have common sense and a well-attuned moral compass.

They resemble in central aspects the hero of a popular epic, *Dreizehnlinden*, written by the Westphalian doctor and amateur poet Friedrich Wilhelm Weber in the 1870s, at the time of the Hermann monument's completion, in which he depicted life in Westphalia in the ninth century after the conquest of the early medieval 'Saxon' tribes by the Frankish King and Emperor Charlemagne. Weber's hero is the pagan Saxon nobleman Elmar, who after having been wrongly convicted on the false testimony of a mendacious Frankish knight, resists the temptation to take revenge and instead converts to Christianity and waits patiently for an annulment of his conviction. During all his tribulations, he retains his honesty and love for the *Heimat*, which, according to Weber, is typical of the Westphalians who are portrayed by the author as 'tough but malleable, rough, but honest [...] just like the iron of your hills and the oaks of your forests' (Weber, 1878, p. 5).

Weber did not project this retrospective hero-worship onto the ancient Cherusans, as Ulrich von Hutten had done, but, like Hutten's historical parallels, the supposedly 'eternal' Saxon–Westphalian characteristics that Weber highlighted, i.e., honesty, courage, steadfastness, love of freedom and of the fatherland, showed an uncanny resemblance to the stereotyping description of the ancient Germans as a 'pure', unspoiled warrior people, so beloved by the nationalist interpreters of Tacitus's *Germania*. Weber explicitly referred to Tacitus as 'the last Roman' and his work is quoted in the author's explanatory notes to *Dreizehnlinden*; the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest is mentioned as a model battle that was, 'unfortunately', not emulated by the Saxons in their wars against the Franks under Charlemagne (see Weber, 1878, pp. 15, 363, 372). The 'Saxons' of *Dreizehnlinden* could thus be viewed as a (tragically unsuccessful) link between the ancient 'Germans' who had won the battle victory over imperial Rome in 9 CE and the late nineteenth-century Germans who had just won their national unity in the war of 1870–71 against France.

Weber employed largely one-dimensional stereotyping of brave, honest Westphalians vs. mendacious, cowardly Franks as predecessors of the modern French, as well as an epigonal, pseudo-archaic style (e.g. by intensive use of alliteration), which fitted well the chauvinistic trends of public opinion in late nineteenth-century Germany. However, there were also alternative popular poetic uses of the battle narrative. A generation earlier, Heinrich Heine in his political poem *Germany: A Winter's Tale* had depicted an imaginary journey through pre (1848)-revolutionary Germany in a much more complex poetic form and with a critical 'message' of denouncing parochial and chauvinistic interpretations. In Cantos X–XII of the poem, the narrator passes through the Westphalian region, and in Canto XI he ironically praises Arminius/Hermann for having 'saved' the Germans from the 'decadent' effects of Roman civilisation, only to foreground the fact that despite this 'liberation' they are still subjects of tyrants who are no better than Roman Emperors. The 'typical' down-to-earth Westphalians appear in Heine's German tale, too, but they are shown in a different light compared with the nationalist interpretation. In Canto X, the narrator fondly remembers his student days among Westphalians at the University of Göttingen:

I have always liked them, the dear Westphalians: a people so firm, so certain, so honest: devoid of any pomp. They fight hard, they drink hard, and when they become your friends, they start to cry: they are oaks with feelings! (Heine, 1975–97, vol. 4, p. 113)

Heine, the Rhinelander's, depiction of his 'dear Westphalians' is not without irony but largely sympathetic. He, too, applies the Tacitean stereotypes about the simple, brave and hospitable inhabitants of *Germania* to the Westphalians but he makes no attempt to elevate them to model Germans. Nor does he approve of their alleged inborn belligerence, which nationalists and racists used to read into Tacitus. By contrast, his wish for the Westphalian student friends was that they might be spared 'war and fame, heroes and heroic deeds', as well as hard exam questions (Heine, 1975–97, vol. 4, p. 114). By thus deflating and mildly mocking typical Westphalian character traits, Heine tries to free the presumed descendants of the ancient Cheruskans and Saxons from the exaggerated claims of heroic pre-eminence amongst the Germanic tribes. Still, his 'sentimental oaks' fit into a discourse tradition that extends from Ulrich von Hutten's hero through Weber's noble Saxon Elmar to the straight-talking inspectors and local sages who solve Westphalian murder mysteries in the twenty-first century.

In modern media coverage and weblogs attached to it, Heine's verses are still being quoted whilst Weber and most of the nationalist literary and political discourse tradition are either glossed over or strongly questioned (Musolff, 2010a). The classic authority, however, is still Tacitus, who is relied upon in debating historiographical details, interpretative perspectives and the general historical/ideological significance of the events in question. In some cases, bloggers even adopt the 'voice' of 'Tacitus' et al. for themselves by way of extensive quoting or assuming the historical names as their own weblog identities. Other participants in the Internet debates pass themselves off as 'Arminius', 'Hermann', or 'Thusnelda', speaking, as it were, from 'beyond the grave'. The authors thus play with the parts of the historical and literary tradition that are still popularly remembered, but none of their re-appropriations simply reasserts the national identification patterns that dominated public discourse until 1945.

### **5. The reframing of a national foundation myth as a narrative of local identity and intercultural contact**

The regional and local dimensions of identity-constructions associated with the Teutoburg battle have been part of the discourse traditions in Germany since the days when the ancient historical accounts by Tacitus and other classical authors were rediscovered. For almost five centuries they were predominantly used to provide a 'localised' backdrop to a master narrative of the 'national' liberation from Roman occupation, which could then be mapped analogically onto the respective contemporary political contexts of fights against the Roman Church, the Habsburg Empire, France, or Western influence in general. Heine's attempt to liberate the memory of the ancient Cheruskans and the self-perception of his contemporary Westphalians from this nationalist 'model' function in the middle of the nineteenth century had all too little impact on the public consciousness in Germany until the second half of the twentieth century.

Perhaps even Heine might have found it strange to 'celebrate' the 2000th anniversary of the ancient battle as a symbol for intercultural diversity and international reconciliation, which was the main agenda of public commemoration in 2009, with its EU-sponsored exhibitions, reconciliation banquets, feminist celebrations of Thusnelda and children-friendly representations of Arminius. This agenda changed the battle narrative drastically by foregrounding its regional and

local associations at the expense of its significance for national(ist) identity-constructions. In the re-regionalised frame, the battle, the traditional hero-figure of Arminius and further aspects of popular historical knowledge (e.g. Arminius's family, Augustus's reaction, ancient Germanic customs and character traits reported by Tacitus) were 'recycled' as reference points for humorous characterisations of the modern inhabitants of Westphalia.

At the same time, the global/international appeal was strengthened by a new emphasis on cultural exchanges in the scholarly and popular representations of Roman–Germanic encounters in Antiquity (Lippe Tourismus & Marketing AG, 2009; LWL-Römermuseum in Haltern am See, 2009) and the nationalist–chauvinist narrative tradition was explicitly criticised and exposed in its historical implausibility and its disastrous political/ideological consequences (Landesverband Lippe, 2009; Seewald, 2009a, 2009b). It is a measure of the high degree of denationalisation and de-militarisation of the *Arminius/Hermann* figure that even *Amnesty International* (AI) used him in 2009 in their appeals for prisoners of war. An AI-sponsored postcard showed a montage of the Hermann monument figure with its hero in shackles (instead of raising a sword) and asked: 'What would have happened if the battle had been lost by the Cheruskans?' The answer was: 'if things had gone wrong, AI would have pleaded for a fair and humanitarian treatment of Arminius' (Amnesty International, 2009). The scenario of a defeated Arminius whose human rights are defended by AI is as much of a counterfactual 'blend' as the non-sinking 'Titanic–Clinton' example mentioned earlier. In contrast to the latter, the 'emergent' meaning of the AI–Arminius construction is not a witty commentary but instead an emotive appeal to pity or solidarity with a captured warrior, which can be transferred to prisoners of war in general. In order to understand the new conceptual blend, readers must abstract from the traditional figure of the victorious Germanic leader as a national hero. However, they are still expected to access knowledge of the battle narrative and Arminius's role in it and feel some residual sympathy for his character, in order to be able to draw the conclusion that prisoners of war deserve humane treatment. Arminius/Hermann is still recognisable as the local hero but at the same time carries a global/universal humanitarian appeal.

This particular counterfactual version of the Teutoburg battle narrative is hardly likely to become a dominant aspect of public discourse but does provide an indication of how far its national identity-building aspect has receded. The battle commemoration in monuments, museums and popular literature today is only conceivable in 'glocalised' terms. As a regional event, it has emotional appeal and local features that are largely devoid of any chauvinistic overtones, and it can be of European and world-historical significance only in the narrative framework of a long-term, optimistic perspective on intercultural encounters. Extending the 'blending' metaphor of conceptual integration theory, we might speak of a 'grafting' of the glocalised (re-)interpretation onto the remnants of the narrative tradition by way of multiple (local and international) reframing. Further research on the reception of the 2009 commemoration events, e.g. in outcome reports by the organisers and spontaneous reactions from the audiences, is necessary to show what degree this retelling of the battle narrative has impacted on the public perception of the former national foundation myth.

### Notes on contributor

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