

# Medieval Archaeology and Ethnicity: Where are We?

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## Abstract

During the last few decades, medieval archaeology has considerably grown into a respectable, and much needed academic discipline. Although no systematic reflection exists to date about ethnicity, the topic has dominated the field, primarily because of new claims (especially among German scholars) that ethnicity in the medieval past is beyond the conceptual reach of archaeologists interested in the Middle Ages. The recent contributions are however building upon theories of ethnicity developed in anthropology and sociology to approach the problem from an angle different from both the primordialist and the instrumentalist agendas. Issues of private vs. public, gender and ethnicity, and the role of the archaeological discourse in the construction of nationalist ideologies have been drawn much attention in recent years.

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As ethnicity increasingly becomes the politicization of culture, a decision people take to depict themselves or others symbolically as bearers of a certain cultural identity,<sup>1</sup> the old controversy over the role of ethnic interpretations in medieval archaeology refuses to die. A few decades ago, the debate was between those who argued that ethnicity was a matter of primordial attachments (primordialists) and those who regarded it as a means of political mobilization (instrumentalists), a debate replicating the perennial scholarly dichotomy between what the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies once called *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society).<sup>2</sup> Very few would now disagree with Max Weber that ethnic groups are 'human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists'.<sup>3</sup> In archaeology, however, the deeply rooted confusion between ethnic identity and biological group affiliation has long obscured an equally important debate opposing those who believed that ethnicity was directly reflected in material culture to those who saw the latter as simply the means by which ethnic identity was given a socially recognized form.<sup>4</sup> Some have gone as far as to argue that 'the nature of archaeology as a historical discipline does not rest upon and cannot be reduced to the question of ethnic interpretation, just like history cannot be reduced to the study of political aspects'.<sup>5</sup> In reply, others now maintain that to abandon the search for ethnicity in archaeology is to deny medieval archaeology its quality of a historical discipline.<sup>6</sup> Both sides seem to agree, however, with the advocates of a moderate version of instrumentalism: collective identities are social constructs. Following Weber, archaeologists seem to agree now that social identities (ethnic ones included) are not a direct reflection of social 'reality', even though they are themselves 'nothing less than real'.<sup>7</sup> This is turn mirrors the conclusions of recent studies of ethnicity as a mode of action and of representation.<sup>8</sup> Ethnicity may well be a matter of choice and cultural construction, as the instrumentalists consistently argued. Once in action, however, an ethnic group operates as a type of status group, the existence of which is represented through primordial attachments.<sup>9</sup> From an archaeological point of view, however, that is not the main problem. Far more important

is that, since all social identities are social constructs, any social identity – gender, class, or ethnicity – may be treated as a subjective belief in commonality or *Gemeinsamkeitsglauben*, to employ Weber's *bon mot*. Ethnic identity is therefore going to be theoretically quite difficult to distinguish from other forms of identity, all of which are subjective and 'constructed'. It is true that ethnicity is concocted out of a few cultural elements – and never of the entire 'culture' – but those elements are not arbitrarily chosen, to the extent that they are meant to mark the boundaries of the ethnic group as visibly as possible for outsiders to acknowledge the existence of that group.<sup>10</sup> Ethnicity can be, and often is truly represented by such things as dress elements, speech forms, lifestyles, food ways, and the like. But the ethnic group is not made up of the symbols used to mark it as distinct from others. As Walter Pohl put it, 'to make ethnicity happen, it is not enough just to be different'.<sup>11</sup> Selecting symbols to mark ethnic boundaries is a political strategy in the same way that choosing a certain dress style may be for the construction of social status. The boundary markers depend upon the capacity of symbols to encompass and condense a range of meanings. Symbolic displays are what Pierre Bourdieu once called 'marking one's place' in the social order and the naming of a 'sense of place for others'.<sup>12</sup> If social constructs such as ethnicity are not a mirror of 'social reality', they can certainly participate in its construction in accordance with the interests of those in power. As 'objects, concepts, or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of disparate meanings', symbols are indispensable for social action and communication.<sup>13</sup> They are therefore both objects of and for political action. Material culture with symbolic meaning is therefore an integral part of power relations, as symbols of ethnic identity appear primarily in collective rituals and other social activities aimed at group mobilization. One is reminded of the symbolist approach developed by Abner Cohen and Teun van Dijk, who were concerned with the analysis and interpretation of symbols, and the ideologies and discourses used by political groups and elites to sway mass support as well as to capture the public imagination in order to generate social action.<sup>14</sup> Paul Brass even defined ethnic identities as 'creations of elites who draw upon, distort, and sometimes *fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent*, in order to protect their well being or existence, or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups and for themselves (emphasis added)'.<sup>15</sup> The stylistic choice of cultural traits employed as symbols of group identity is therefore never arbitrary. What symbols are chosen at what moment, and by whom, is always a matter of power relations. Material culture cannot therefore be treated as a passive reflection of ethnic identity, but as an active element in its negotiation.<sup>16</sup>

This conclusion has been at the center of the 'style debate' of the 1980s, in which a number of archaeologists argued over the communicative role of material culture.<sup>17</sup> Though the association between style and ethnicity had been suggested before, it was James Sackett who first linked the two by coining his 'isochrestic variation' to denote stylistic similarities and differences that could serve as ethnic markers.<sup>18</sup> According to Sackett, style was a passive property of material culture. As an intrinsic or adjunct function of artifacts, the isochrestic variation was to be found in all aspects of social and cultural life. In short, it was the attribute of material culture through which members of a group expressed their mutual identity, coordinated their actions, and bound themselves together.<sup>19</sup> But Sackett's isochrestic variation could not account for the fundamental intentionality of stylistic variations. According to Polly Wiessner, when style has a distinct referent and transmits clear messages to defined target populations about conscious affiliation or identity, it is 'emblemic (style)', not 'isochrestic variation'. Given that emblemic styles are supposed to carry distinct messages, they must be consistently uniform and clear

in order to make recognition and understanding possible. Since they are typically used to mark and maintain boundaries of group membership, they should therefore be easy to distinguish archaeologically.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, it appears that emblematic styles often appear at critical junctures in the regional political economy, namely at times of changing social relations, which call for stronger or broader displays of group identity. Emblematic styles are typically associated with attempts to mobilize members of a group in a situation of competition for resources with other groups. For example, Michael Graves has demonstrated that Kalinga potters in the Philippines use style (pottery decoration) to signal their community affiliation and to mark boundaries against other communities. Such signaling typically occurs when resources are scarce and the competition with potters from other communities increases.<sup>21</sup>

The 'style debate' has informed recent attempts to identify changing regional representations in the stylistic variability of everyday artifacts. Asbjørn Engevik's study of fifth- and early sixth-century bucket-shaped pots and cruciform brooches in southwestern Norway (Rogaland) is directly inspired by Polly Wiessner's idea of emblematic style. His conclusion is that both artifact categories were used to mark regional boundaries at a time of considerable social and political turmoil.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Engevik found a clear-cut regional distribution of bucket-shaped pots tempered with asbestos in the region north of the Hardangerfjord and of pots tempered with soapstone south of that fjord. According to him, this may indicate that the technological choice of temper served as a symbol of identity and regional belonging.<sup>23</sup>

But how can one be sure about the meaning of the symbols in the past? Can archaeologists truly get 'into the heads' of medieval people? Some archaeologists have been too quick to dismiss the connection between material culture and ethnicity.<sup>24</sup> Their main argument is that the 'floating gap' between the communicative and cultural memory of any social group prevents archaeologists from reconstructing the meanings initially attached to symbols manipulated to mark the boundaries of the group.<sup>25</sup> However, ethnoarchaeological studies have demonstrated that the use of material culture in distinguishing between self-conscious ethnic groups leads to discontinuities in material culture distributions that may be easily detected by archaeological means.<sup>26</sup> Cultural practices and representations that become objectified as symbols of group identity are derived from, and resonate with, habitual practices and experiences of the agents involved, but they also reflect the instrumental contingencies of a particular situation. Ethnic differences are constituted simultaneously in the mundane as well as in the decorative, and become 'naturalized' by continual repetition in both public and private. It is particularly that repetition, without which the material culture variation supposed to communicate about group identity cannot become an emblematic style, that is of crucial importance for archaeologists interested in ethnicity, especially for those working on medieval sites. For example, the so-called 'early glazed ware' was introduced to eleventh-century Lund by potters from Lincolnshire in eastern England, who were familiar with the wheel-made Stamford ware produced there until the middle of that century.<sup>27</sup> The 1979 and 1980 excavations in the Apotekaren block of Lund (Sweden) have also produced evidence of non-glazed cooking and storage pottery of Anglo-Scandinavian origin. To judge from those ceramic assemblages, a relatively large number of potters came to Lund from eastern England in the aftermath of the breakup of the North Sea empire after 1035. Like the minters who struck silver pennies in the name of Sven Forkbeard and Knut, those potters were most likely members of *familiae* of lords from the old Danelaw who moved to southern Sweden after Knut's death. The English-type pottery was therefore deliberately used to mark a group of population of English origin, which, although in minority, may have

wielded some power in Lund during the second and third quarters of the eleventh century. A similar phenomenon is attested in Sigtuna, where a sudden change in pottery clay recipes (fine or medium clay with crushed granite as a temper and elements of grog) from *ca.* 1000 to *ca.* 1190 has been linked to the arrival of immigrants and merchants from Novgorod.<sup>28</sup> Neither the 'early glazed ware' of Lund nor the temper of crushed granite from Sigtuna can be treated as English or Rus' in themselves. That pots produced in both traditions appear in the private space of urban dwellings and in buildings associated with local markets speaks volumes about the circumstances in which ethnic boundaries were created over a relatively short period of time for a relatively small number of 'foreigners'. It is the pattern created by such repetition that lends itself for interpretation by archaeologists studying ethnicity. There are of course different ways to interpret that pattern, and the degree to which the context of social practice can be reconstructed varies considerably. However, to deny the possibility that ethnicity can explain such a pattern is at best an exaggeration and at worst evidence of theoretical malaise.

More than a decade ago, while studying the distribution of weapons, pottery, and glass vessels on either side of the early medieval frontier between Franks and Alamans, Frank Siegmund pointed to the importance for the construction of ethnic boundaries of daily activities and of what Irene Greverus once called *Alltagswelt*.<sup>29</sup> He noted that while there were many more swords in burial assemblages in the Alamannic than in those of the Frankish region, axes and spearheads dominated in the Frankish area. Within that area, most, if not all vessels deposited in graves were either wheel-made pots or glass beakers, while half of all pots deposited in graves in the Alamannic zone were handmade. He concluded from that that despite considerable variation within each category of artifacts, an ethnic boundary existed between the Franks and the Alamans from the fifth to the seventh century. In reply, Sebastian Brather rejected the idea that anyone could be 'made' a Frank or an Alaman by the deposition in his or her grave of a glass beaker or handmade pot, respectively.<sup>30</sup> According to Brather, Siegmund's distribution maps show only a difference of *habitus* between Franks and Alamans. Nonetheless, the distributions of weapons, pottery, or glassware in the area studied by Siegmund appears to coincide quite well with the expectations concerning the general location and the extent of both Franks and Alamans. Somebody buried with an axe in a cemetery in the Frankish zone or with a handmade pot in the Alamannic zone may not at all have been a Frank or an Alaman, respectively. In this case, mortuary dress and grave goods operate as 'metaphors'. Those were items that symbolized events in the life of the deceased, and were used by mourners as a means of memory and remembrance.<sup>31</sup>

However, it is precisely with such symbols that ethnic boundaries are usually built, for they evoke sentiments and emotions and impel people to action. Such was most likely the pottery with prick-like comb punch decoration (*Kammstich*) found in Avar-age graves. During the Avar age (*ca.* 570 to *ca.* 820), the deposition of ceramic pots in graves was a widespread phenomenon within the Carpathian Basin. Nonetheless, finds of pots with prick-like comb decoration cluster in the northwestern region, next to the present-day border between Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and the Czech Republic. Moreover, the distribution of finds overlaps with that of pottery with so-called potter's marks on pot bottoms. A combination of all traits pertaining to ceramic wares by means of the analysis of N-next neighbors produced a distribution map, which has indeed confirmed that both potter's marks and pot with prick-like comb punch decoration appear only in the northwestern region of the Carpathian Basin.<sup>32</sup> Both archaeological phenomena seem to be linked to the beginning of the Avar-age settlement in the region, which cannot apparently be dated earlier than the Middle Avar period (i.e., before *ca.* 630). Was this

just a local fashion? The answer, in my opinion, must be negative, primarily because neither potter's marks, nor prick-like comb punch decoration had any practical function. There is no reason for which such attributes could not have been adopted by communities elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin. Both potter's marks and prick-like comb punch decoration may thus be treated as stylistic variation, namely as emblematic styles. Since both also appear in post-Avar assemblages in the region associated with the rise of Great Moravia in the ninth century, Peter Stadler has suggested that such features contributed to the invention of a new ethnic identity out of the bits and pieces left in place in the northwestern region after the collapse of the Avar qaganate.<sup>33</sup>

The discussion and examples above show that the second decade of the twenty-first century finds the archaeological research on ethnicity in good shape. Ethnicity in the past has frequently mobilized and divided scholarly opinion. Few are the topics in medieval archaeology that have created more debate in recent years than ethnicity. Despite a phase of devastating postwar and more recent critique, and the reticence on the part of archaeologists, as well as some historians as to whether ethnicity existed at all in the Middle Ages, the topic witnessed a remarkable comeback in recent years. This may be in part because scholars can now distinguish between the archaeological study of ethnicity in the past and the historiographic study of the uses and abuses of medieval ethnicity in more recent times. While much has been written on the influence of nationalist ideologies on the development of the discipline, there has been comparatively less preoccupation with how archaeologists participate in the production of the nationalist discourse. After all, land, symbolically saturated, intensifies ethnic identification by means of the reclamation of archaeological sites and the repatriation of ancestral remains, 'iconic residues in which to ground corporate identity by fusing past and future, physical substance and human agency, blood and enterprise'.<sup>34</sup> While there is to date no equivalent to the symbolic capital created and promoted by archaeologists studying Antiquity, a number of archaeological cultures of the early Middle Ages have been purposefully invented to serve the nationalist propaganda.<sup>35</sup> Specifically designed to demonstrate Polish rights to Silesia after World War II, the excavations in the Ostrówek stronghold were meant to show the Polish-ness of early medieval Opole, and the high degree of civilization in existence in the town long before the arrival of the first German-speaking settlers.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the exhibit organized for the celebration of the Polish Millennium in 1963 displayed 'typically Slavic wooden corner-jointed houses'. On the basis of such museumizing of the ethnic interpretation of the archaeological record, Edward Dąbrowski then labeled 'Polish' the thirteenth-century castle in Międzyrzecz, given that the lower parts of the wooden structures found in the city were built in the corner-jointed technique.<sup>37</sup> This example shows the transfer of ethnic meaning from archaeological artifacts in a museum to architectural monuments and thus points to the yet unexplored role of ethnicity in shows of 'staged authenticity', contrived presentations of sites as if they were authentic, which are the substance of heritage tourism.<sup>38</sup> It has recently been noted that tourists visiting, for example, the Jorvík Viking Center in York, do not contrast the staging of authenticity against direct experience of the original, but rather with a mental template of the past, which is largely shaped by mediating influences.<sup>39</sup> Very little is known about the contribution of medieval archaeology to those mediating influences. Nonetheless, ethnic differences definitely play a role in the organization of the Viking festival in Wolin (Poland), as Polish participants insist they are Slavs, not Vikings, while Lithuanians claim to play the part of the Curonians.<sup>40</sup> Both groups display artifacts – jewels, costumes, weapons – they believe best represent the ethnicity of their respective ancestors, as identified by professional archaeologists in their respective countries. That ethnically

specific artifacts are largely produced and worn at the festival by women, not men, brings to mind another line of current research on ethnicity in medieval archaeology.

After dwelling for years upon the mistakes of the past, especially the tendency in mortuary archaeology to 'read' in ethnic terms what could otherwise have been symbols of gender identity, scholars are now beginning to realize that just as in the modern world, women in the medieval past often symbolized ethnic collectives and were regularly regarded as biological reproducers of ethnic groups. Women were often given 'the social role of intergenerational transmitters of cultural traditions, customs, songs, cuisine, and, of course, the mother tongue'.<sup>41</sup> They were thus attributed the role of being ideological reproducers of their ethnic group, since the ethnic group's culture was structured around gendered institutions such as marriage, family, and sexuality. Those conclusions are particularly important for the analysis of gender representation through burial ritual, as ethnicity remains a topic more firmly attached to the archaeology of cemeteries than to the archaeology of settlement sites. For example, several recent studies have independently suggested a general concern throughout early medieval Europe with the representation of the age of marriage in the early medieval burial ceremony.<sup>42</sup> Others have pointed out that the stylistic variation which may be regarded as emblematic style and thus interpreted as symbolizing ethnicity is more often associated with the funerary dress of women of marriageable age.<sup>43</sup> This has recently prompted a shift in research emphasis to burial assemblages which stand out from their local and regional context by cultural elements – dress accessories or pottery – apparently signalling a different ethnic background. In principle, if emblematic styles may be identified on the basis of their repetitive nature at the level of a (cemetery) site, this can only mean that anomalies may equally be interpreted as stylistic variation in sharp contrast to the uniform background of the majority. For example, grave 421 of the large early medieval cemetery excavated in Alternerding (Bavaria) had a female skeleton with grave goods and style of dress radically different from those of the rest of the cemetery and entirely unique in southern Germany: two pins of the Nörrland type otherwise attested only in the Mälars region of Sweden; a Scandinavian neck ring; a brooch of the Ozingell class with analogies in northern Germany, but also in Sättra, in Öland; and a crossbow brooch of the Daumen/Tumiany type, analogies for which appear only in the eastern Baltic region (although a mould for the production of such brooches is known from Helgö). The fact that the two brooches were found on the shoulders strongly suggests that the woman was buried in a *peplos*-like dress, which at the time (late fifth or early sixth century) was common in Scandinavia, but not in southern Germany.<sup>44</sup> Equally unique female graves appear elsewhere in southern Germany and have also been interpreted as evidence of the 'nested identities' of women of 'foreign' origin.<sup>45</sup>

Understanding ethnicity in the past presents a particular challenge. Medieval archaeology for the moment lacks a systematic reflection on the problem of ethnicity. Judging by the most recent publications, some consensus has begun to form around a few fundamental ideas, which will most likely direct research in the years to come. Ethnicity was socially and culturally constructed, a form of social mobilization used in order to reach certain political goals. However, ethnicity was also a matter of daily social practice, and as such it involved the manipulation of material culture. Since material culture embodies practices, emblematic style was the way of communicating by non-verbal means about relative identity. Because it carried a distinct message, it is theoretically possible that it was used to mark and maintain ethnic boundaries. Ethnicity was also a function of power relations. Emblematic styles became relevant particularly in contexts of changing power relations, which impelled displays of group identity.

### Short Biography

Florin Curta is professor of Medieval History and Archaeology at the University of Florida. His books include *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, ca. 500–700* (Cambridge, 2001), which received the Herbert Baxter Adams Award of the American Historical Association, and *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006). Curta is the editor of three collections of studies: *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 2005); *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis* (Turnhout, 2005); and *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2007). He is also the editor-in-chief of the Brill series 'East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450'. His most recent book is *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, c. 500 to 1050. The Early Middle Ages* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> As used in anthropology and sociology, the term 'identity' was borrowed from mathematics and introduced into the social sciences in the late 1950s and the 1960s to refer to the quality of being identical (or similar) to members of a group or category and, at the same time, different from members of another group or category. See S. Malešević, 'Identity: Conceptual, Operational, and Historical Critique', in S. Malešević and M. Haugaard (eds.), *Making Sense of Collectivity. Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalization* (London/Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002), 196–8; Antonia Davidovic, 'Identität – ein unscharfer Begriff. Identitätsdiskurse in den gegenwartsbezogenen Humanwissenschaften', in S. Burmeister and N. Müller-Schaeffel (eds.), *Soziale Gruppen – kulturelle Grenzen. Die Interpretation sozialer Identitäten in der prähistorischen Archäologie* (Münster: Waxmann, 2006), 39–40 and 53.

<sup>2</sup> F. Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie*, 2nd edn. (Berlin: K. Curtius, 1912). See John Rex, 'The Fundamentals of the Theory of Ethnicity', in S. Malešević and M. Haugaard (eds.), *Making Sense of Collectivity. Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalization* (London/Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002), 88–121, here 89–90.

<sup>3</sup> M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie*, 4th edn. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1956). English translation from *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, transl. by E. Fischoff et al. (Berkeley/London: University of California Press, 1968), 389. See V. M. Bader, 'Ethnische Identität und ethnische Kultur. Grenzen des Konstruktivismus und der Manipulation', *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegung*, 8 (1995), 32–45.

<sup>4</sup> S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997); I. M. Prezelj, 'Re-thinking Ethnicity in Archaeology', in P. Kos (ed.), *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karoliško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze* (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej Slovenije, 2000), 581–603; S. Brather, 'Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Germania*, 78 (2000): 139–77; P. Urbańczyk, 'Do We Need Archaeology of Ethnicity?' in M. Hardt, C. Lübke, and D. Schorkowitz (eds.), *Inventing the Pasts in North Central Europe. The National Perception of Early Medieval History and Archaeology* (Bern, etc.: Peter Lang, 2003), 43–49; S. Lucy, 'Ethnic and Cultural Identities', in M. Díaz-Andreu and S. Lucy (eds.), *The Archaeology of Identity. Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity, and Religion* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005), 86–109; F. Curta, 'Some Remarks on Ethnicity in Medieval Archaeology', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15/2 (2007): 159–85.

<sup>5</sup> S. Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie. Geschichte, Grundlagen und Alternativen* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 27; H. Mamzer, 'Ethnischer Mythos in der Archäologie', in G. Fusek (ed.), *Zbornik na počest Darina Bialekovej* (Nitra: Archeologický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2004), 223–7.

<sup>6</sup> V. Bierbrauer, *Ethnos und Mobilität im 5. Jahrhundert aus archäologischer Sicht. Vom Kaukasus bis Niederösterreich* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaftern, 2008), 6 with n. 6. The idea has been first put forward by H. J. Eggers, *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* (Munich: Piper, 1959), 200. See also F. Siegmund, review of S. Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen*, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 280 (2005): 707.

<sup>7</sup> Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen*, 100 and 106.

<sup>8</sup> G. C. Bentley, 'Ethnicity and Practice', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29 (1987): 25–55; K. Eder, B. Giesen, O. Schmidtke, and D. Tambiani, *Collective Identities in Action. A Sociological Approach to Ethnicity* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 14.

<sup>9</sup> S. Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: Sage, 2004), 25.

<sup>10</sup> Lucy, 'Ethnic and Cultural Identities', 96–7.

- <sup>11</sup> W. Pohl, 'Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity', in W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden/Boston/Cologne: Brill, 1998), 21–2.
- <sup>12</sup> P. Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1989): 19.
- <sup>13</sup> A. Cohen, *Two-Dimensional Man. An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Societies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 23; Malešević, *Sociology of Ethnicity*, 115.
- <sup>14</sup> A. Cohen, *The Politics of Elite Culture. Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); T. A. van Dijk, *Communicating Racism. Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1987).
- <sup>15</sup> P. Brass, 'Elite Competition and the Origins of Ethnic Nationalism', in J. G. Beramini, R. Maiz, and X. Nuñez (eds.), *Nationalism in Europe. Past and Present* (Santiago de Compostella: University of Santiago de Compostella, 1993), 111. In his *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison* (London: Sage, 1991), and *Theft of an Idol. Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Paul Brass has shown how selected symbols such as the Urdu language, cow sacrifice or Shari'a have been consciously used by Hindu and Muslim elites in political competition with each other, and with elites within their own ethnic groups.
- <sup>16</sup> I. Hodder, *Reading the Past. Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.
- <sup>17</sup> For a review of the debate, see M. Hegmon, 'Archaeological Research on Style', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21 (1992): 517–36; H. M. Wobst, 'Style in Archaeology and Archaeologists in Style', in E. Chilton (ed.), *Material Meanings: Critical Approaches to the Interpretation of Material Culture* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 118–32. For emblematic styles in medieval archaeology, see Curta, 'Some Remarks', 172–6.
- <sup>18</sup> J. R. Sackett, 'The Meaning of Style in Archaeology. A General Model', *American Antiquity*, 42/3 (1977): 369–80; 'Style and Ethnicity in Archaeology: The Case for Isochrestism', in M. W. Conkey and C. A. Hastorf (eds.), *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 32–43. See also J. Buikstra, 'Discussion: Ethnogenesis and Ethnicity in the Andes', in R. M. Reycraft (ed.), *Us and Them. Archaeology and Ethnicity in the Andes* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2005), 233–42, here 234.
- <sup>19</sup> J. R. Sackett, 'Style and Ethnicity in the Kalahari: A Reply to Wiessner', *American Antiquity*, 50 (1985): 154–9; 'Isochrestism and Style: A Clarification', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 5 (1986): 266–77.
- <sup>20</sup> P. Wiessner, 'Style and Social Information in Kalahari San Projectile Points', *American Antiquity*, 48 (1983): 253–76; 'Style or Isochrestic Variation? A Reply to Sackett', *American Antiquity*, 50 (1985): 160–6; 'Is There Unity to Style?' in M. W. Conkey and C. A. Hastorf (eds.), *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 105–21.
- <sup>21</sup> Michael W. Graves, 'Kalinga Social and Material Culture Boundaries: A Case of Spatial Convergence', in W. A. Longacre and J. M. Skibo (eds.), *Kalinga Ethnoarchaeology. Expanding Archaeological Method and Theory* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 13–49.
- <sup>22</sup> A. Engevik, *Bucket-Shaped Pots. Style, Chronology and Regional Diversity in Norway in the Late Roman and Migration Periods* (Oxford: Archeopress, 2008).
- <sup>23</sup> A. Engevik, 'Technological Style, Regional Diversity and Identity. Asbestos Regions and Soapstone Regions in Norway in the Late Roman and Migration Periods', in R. Barndon, A. Engevik, and I. Øye (eds.), *The Archaeology of Regional Technologies. Case Studies from the Palaeolithic to the Age of the Vikings* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 225–41, here 238.
- <sup>24</sup> J. Moreland, *Archaeology, Theory, and the Middle Ages. Understanding the Early Medieval Past* (London: Duckworth, 2010), 184.
- <sup>25</sup> Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen*, 369.
- <sup>26</sup> I. Hodder, *Symbols in Action. Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 187 and 205.
- <sup>27</sup> M. Roslund, *Guests in the House. Cultural Transmission between Slavs and Scandinavians 900 to 1300 AD* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 145.
- <sup>28</sup> Roslund, *Guests*, 427.
- <sup>29</sup> F. Siegmund, 'Alemannen und Franken. Archäologische Überlegungen zu ethnischen Strukturen in der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts', in D. Geuenich (ed.), *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur „Schlacht bei Zülpich“ (496/497)* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1998), 560–1 and 574; F. Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2000). See also I. Greverus, *Kultur und Alltagswelt. Eine Einführung in Fragen der Kulturanthropologie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1978).
- <sup>30</sup> Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen*, 29; S. Brather and H.-P. Wotzka, 'Alemannen und Franken? Bestattungsmodi, ethnische Identitäten und wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse zur Merowingerzeit', in S. Burmeister and N. Müller-Scheeßel (eds.), *Soziale Gruppen – kulturelle Grenzen. Die Interpretation sozialer Identitäten in der prähistorischen Archäologie* (Münster: Waxmann, 2006), 139–224. Brather believes that Frankish axes, Saxon swords, and the like were social, not ethnic boundary markers (*Ethnische Interpretationen*, 622).
- <sup>31</sup> H. Härke, 'Ethnicity, "Race" and Migration in Mortuary Archaeology: An Attempt at a Short Answer', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2007): 13–4.



- <sup>32</sup> P. Stadler, 'Avar Archaeology Revisited, and the Question of Ethnicity in the Avar qaganate', in F. Curta (ed.), *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages. Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 73. For early medieval potter's marks, see V. D. Gupalo, 'Rannesrednevekoveyve ochornarnye kleima', *Rossiiskaia Arkheologiya* (2001), no. 1, 27–36; A. Buko, 'O zagadkovykh znakach na dnach naczyn' wczesnosredniowiecznych z Kalisza', in M. Dulnicz (ed.), *Słowianie i ich sąsiedzi we wczesnym średniowieczu* (Lublin/Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2003), 423–9; C. Paraschiv-Talmatchi, 'New Methods Concerning the Problem of Approaching the Potter's Mark "Phenomenon"', *Studia antiqua et archaeologica*, 10–11 (2004–2005): 133–46.; S. Lusuardi Siena and A. Negri, 'A proposito del vasellame friulano con marchio a rilievo sul fondo tra tarda antichità e medioevo', in S. Gelichi and C. Negrelli (eds.), *La circolazione delle ceramiche nell'Adriatico tra tarda antichità e altomedioevo. III Incontro di studio CER.AM.IS* (Mantova: SAP, 2007), 183–214; I. Vlkolinská, 'The Cemetery Nitra-Lupka and the Marks on the Vessel's Bottoms', in V. Grigorov, M. Daskalov, and E. Komatarova-Balinova (eds.), *In honorem Ludmiliae Donchevae-Petkovae* (Sofia: Nacionalen Arkheologicheski Institut s Muzei, 2009), 267–74.
- <sup>33</sup> Stadler, 'Avar Chronology Revisited', p. 78. Because the only analogies for the prick-like comb punch ornament within the Avar qaganate are those from southern Hungary (the area around the modern city of Pécs), Stadler explains the formation of the northwestern group by means of a(n) internal migration from the south. For the rise of Great Moravia, see now J. Macháček, 'Großmähren, das Ostfränkische Reich und der Beginn des Staatsbildungsprozesses in Ostmitteleuropa – archäologische Perspektiven', *Mitteilungen aus dem niederösterreichischen Landesarchiv*, 13 (2008): 249–82.
- <sup>34</sup> J. L. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 81.
- <sup>35</sup> E.g., the Komani culture in Albania, as promoted by S. Anamali and M. Korkuti, 'Les Illyriens et la genèse des Albanais à la lumière des recherches archéologiques albanaises', *Studia Albanica*, 1 (1970): 123–55; S. Anamali, 'Des Illyriens aux Albanais', *Studia Albanica*, 9/2 (1972): 153–72; S. Anamali, 'Problemi i formimit të populit shqiptar në dritën e të dhënave arkeologjike', *Studime Historike*, 36/3 (1982): 115–34. For the contribution of local archaeologists studying the early Middle Ages to the creation and promotion of Albanian nationalism, see W. Bowden, 'The Construction of Identities in Post-Roman Albania', in L. Lavan and W. Bowden (eds.), *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 57–78. For the similarly pernicious contribution of Romanian archaeologists studying the Middle Ages to the nationalist agenda of the Communist regime in Romania, see A. Madgearu, 'The Dridu Culture and the Changing Position of Romania among the Communist States', *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 11/2 (2007): 51–9; B. Ciupercă, 'Conceptul de cultură Dridu în arheologia românească. Apariție, evoluție și controverse', *Istros*, 15 (2009): 133–62. For antiquities as symbolic capital in Greece, see Y. Hamilakis and E. Yalouri, 'Antiquities as Symbolic Capital in Modern Greek Society', *Antiquity*, 70 (1996): 117–29.
- <sup>36</sup> Z. Kobyliński and G. Rutkowska, 'Propagandist Use of History and Archaeology in Justification of Polish Rights to the "Recovered Territories" after World War II', *Archaeologia Polona*, 43(2005): 51–124, here 107. For the excavations in Opole-Ostrówek, see J. Bukowska-Gedigowa and B. Gediga, *Wczesnosredniowieczny gród na Ostrówku w Opolu* (Wrocław/Warsaw/Cracow/Gdańsk/Łódź: Ossolineum/Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1986); B. Gediga, 'Bemerkungen zu den langjährigen Ausgrabungen auf der Burg Opole-Ostrówek, einem frühen Machtzentrum des Stammes Opolini', in Č. Staňa and L. Poláček (eds.), *Frühmittelalterliche Machtzentren in Mitteleuropa. Mehrjährige Grabungen und ihre Auswertung. Symposium Mikulčice, 5.-9. September 1994* (Brno: Archäologisches Institut der Akademie der Wissenschaften der Tschechischen Republik, 1996), 61–7.
- <sup>37</sup> Kobyliński and G. Rutkowska, 'Propagandist Use', 111. See also S. Kurmatowski, 'Early Medieval Międzyrzecz', in P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Polish Lands at the Turn of the First and the Second Millennia* (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, 2004), 89–124.
- <sup>38</sup> D. MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- <sup>39</sup> C. Halewood and K. Hannam, 'Viking Heritage Tourism: Authenticity and Commodification', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28 (2001): 565–80, here 567.
- <sup>40</sup> A. Curry, 'The Viking Experiment', *Archaeology*, 60/3 (2007): 45–9. For the Viking theme park in Wolin, which is called 'Center for the Slavs and the Vikings', see G. Cattaneo, 'The Scandinavians in Poland: A Re-evaluation of Perceptions of the Vikings', *Brathair*, 9/2 (2009): 2–14.
- <sup>41</sup> N. Yuval-Davis, 'Gender and Nation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 16/4 (1993): 621–32, here 627. See also P. Charvát, 'De Theutonicis uxorisque eorum: etnicita v archeologii středověkých Čech', *Listy filologické*, 117/1–2 (1994): 32–6.
- <sup>42</sup> B. Sasse, 'Frauengräber im frühmittelalterlichen Alamannien', in W. Affeldt (ed.), *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter (Lebensbedingungen-Lebensnormen-Lebensformen). Beiträge zu einer internationalen Tagung am Fachbereich Geschichtswissenschaften der Freien Universität Berlin 18. bis 21. Februar 1987* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990), 45–64; T. Vida, 'Bemerkungen zur awarenzeitlichen Frauentracht', in D. Bialeková and J. Zábajník (eds.), *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*. Symposium Nitra 6. bis 10. November 1994 (Bratislava: VEDA, 1996), 107–24. For problems associated with the identification of gender differences in mortuary archaeology, see H. Härke, 'Die Darstellung von Geschlechtergrenzen im frühmittelalterlichen Grabritual: Normalität oder Problem?' in W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Grenze und Differenz in frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 180–96.

- <sup>43</sup> A. Distelberger, 'Arme "reiche" Mädchen? Altersabhängiger Schmuckerwerb der Awarinnen des Gräberfeldes von Mödling, Österreich', *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift*, 38/3–4 (1997): 551–65; I. Barbiera, 'Il sesso svelato degli antenati. Strategie funerarie di rappresentazione dei generi a Kranj Lajh e Iskra in Slovenia (VI–XI secolo)', in C. La Rocca (ed.), *Agire da donna. Modelli e pratiche di rappresentazione (secoli VI–X). Atti del convegno (Padova, 18–19 febbraio 2005)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 23–52; V. Ia. Petrukhin, 'Viking Women in Rus': Wives, Slaves or "Valkyries"?' in U. Fransson, M. Svedin, S. Bergerbrant, and F. O. Androshchuk (eds.), *Cultural Interaction Between East and West. Archaeology, Artefacts, and Human Contacts in Northern Europe* (Stockholm: Institutionen för Arkeologi och Antikens Kultur, 2007), 66–9.
- <sup>44</sup> H. Losert and A. Pleterski, *Altermerding in Oberbayern. Struktur des frühmittelalterlichen Gräberfeldes und die „Ethnogenese“ der Bayern* (Berlin/Ljubljana: Scripvaz Verlag/Založba ZRC, 2003), 91–3.
- <sup>45</sup> S. E. Hakenbeck, 'Situation Ethnicity and Nested Identities: New Approaches to an Old Problem', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2007), 19–27, with further examples from Munich-Ramersdorf, Neresheim (grave 20), and Schretzheim (grave 177), the latter two dated between 525 and 550.

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