

# Kilts and Lederhosen

## The Historical Archaeology of Nationalism in Scotland and Bavaria

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This volume stems from a 2014 Society for Historical Archaeology conference session in Quebec City, which in turn was originally inspired by a discussion between the two editors about comparisons between Scottish and Bavarian nationalism. Brooks is British, has a Glaswegian mother, and spent part of his childhood in Scotland, while Mehler is a Bavarian who recently returned to her home region (or country) after several years abroad. This provided us with common ground for a comparative discussion of these dual phenomena, which have taken very different paths since the end of the Second World War.

One political comparative fact made a particular impression on us during these initial discussions. In the 1949 West German Federal Election, the first after the end of the war, the pro-independence Bavaria Party (Bayernpartei, BP) won just over a fifth of the vote in its namesake state; in the 2009 German election, it won 0.7 percent of the vote (<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/bundestagswahlen/>). Although its vote in the 2013 state election was marginally better at 2.1 percent—the party's best result at any level since the 1960s—its chances of winning seats, never mind power, at either the state or national level are currently next to non-existent.

Scottish politics have gone in a very different direction. In the 1950 British national election, the Scottish National Party (SNP) won just 0.4 percent of the Scottish vote; in the 2010 British election, the party won just under a fifth of the vote—actually a slight decline from a peak of 22 percent in 1997. But the difference between Bavaria and Scotland

is even more remarkable at the local election level, where the SNP won 45 percent of the vote in the 2011 Scottish Parliament election, winning an outright majority of the seats in a Scottish legislature that was only re-established in 1997 (official records of both UK and Scottish past election results can be found at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums>). SNP control of the autonomous Scottish Parliament led to a referendum on Scottish independence in September of 2014; some 45 percent of the Scottish electorate voted for independence. This had an immediate impact on Scottish politics. The SNP won 56 of Scotland's 59 seats in the UK Parliament in the 2015 general election, winning 50% of the vote in Scotland. The SNP also won the 2016 Scottish Parliament election with over 40 percent of the vote, although it lost its overall majority of seats. Whether the 2016 referendum on British membership in the European Union—where every district in Scotland voted to remain, even though the UK as a whole voted to leave—will also have an impact remains to be seen. A strong sense of Bavarian identity has not led to anything resembling a serious separatist political nationalism in 2015, while in Scotland the post-war period has seen a gradual rise in political separatism alongside the existing strong sense of Scottish identity.

As will be explored in more detail, both Scotland and Bavaria have distinctive—and internationally famous—modes of national dress (Figure I.1). Scots and Bavarians both speak a distinctive version of their respective national languages (Bavarians arguably even more so than Scots), to the point that debate over whether they speak English and German or wholly distinct languages can be complicated by nationalist politics. Both Scotland and Bavaria have long, distinctive political histories. Scotland and England only became part of the same state in 1707 AD (although they had shared a monarch since 1603). Bavaria was part of the post-1871 German Empire, but the last Wittelsbach King of Bavaria only abdicated as recently as 1918, bringing to an end some 1300 years of a more or less autonomous Bavaria under its own separate ruling dynasties (Bosl 1969). And of course neither Scotland nor Bavaria is an independent state as of this writing, despite a strong sense of distinct identity.

An inevitable corollary of this comparative discussion between Scotland and Bavaria is the important point that national identity and



Figure I.1. The kilt (*left*) and lederhosen (*right*) in their modern forms (left photo from Wikimedia Commons, reproduced under Creative Commons license, right photo by N. Mehler).

nationalism are not quite the same thing; nor does the former inevitably lead to the latter, even in the European context where the two are often seen to go hand in hand. Instead national identity and nationalism are two separate sets, and while the intersection of those sets is often considerable, it is not total. This concept, and our related discussions on the role of material culture (large scale and small) in exploring post-medieval nationalism, subsequently came to form core elements of this volume, forming a key part of how we approached both author and subject inclusion.

### **Modern Nationalism and National Identity: The Role of Historical Archaeology**

Our main motivations for producing this volume lie in a sense that the volume is timely given the continued relevance of post-medieval

concepts of nationalism and national identity to international politics, and a sense that the potentially important role of historical archaeology (defined here in the New World sense of the archaeology of the post-1500 period) has hitherto been underappreciated in archaeological discussions of nationalism. In keeping with a self-critical “psycho-geographic phenomenology of the self” (Brooks 2013), we openly recognize our inevitable strong personal interest in the subject arising from our personal national backgrounds, but these issues are not just relevant to the Scottish and Bavarian contexts. While this volume has been in preparation, pro-independence Catalanian politicians have been making concerted efforts to push for independence from Spain, disputes between the Ukrainian government and ethnic Russian populations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine have often been in the news, the newly independent nation of South Sudan has been riven by ethnic conflict, and the Kurds of northern Iraq have often seemed to be on the verge of breaking away from a collapsing Iraqi state. For better or for worse, nationalism remains a potent force in the modern world; and if modern nationalism is, as per Hobsbawm (1991), Gellner (1983, 1997), and others, largely a product of the post-medieval period, then historical archaeology potentially has a contribution to make to the subject’s study.

It is difficult to imagine either the construction of nationalism without the help of archaeology, or the growth of archaeology as a discipline without nationalism (Ascherson 1996: vii). Past volumes on the intersection of archaeology and nationalism and national identity have tended to focus on how modern post-Enlightenment nationalist politics have impacted the study of the prehistoric through medieval past, and how this has resulted in a nationalistic archaeology. Many readers will be familiar with some of the more prominent examples, but a short list of selected examples might include:

- Attempts by Germany’s National Socialist government to misuse the archaeology of earlier periods to “prove” Nazi racial ideologies (for example, Arnold 1990; Härke 2002; Leube and Hegewisch 2001; Halle 2002).
- The use of archaeology by Romanian nationalists to draw a link between modern Romania and the supposed “golden age” of Roman Dacia (for example, Popa and Ó Ríagáin 2012: 59–63).

- Saddam Hussein's attempt to rebuild Babylon, with bricks inscribed "Rebuilt in the Era of Saddam Hussein" in a deliberate attempt to copy and appropriate an ancient Mesopotamian tradition (for example, Abdi 2008: 19–21).
- The Japanese Palaeolithic Hoax, where a prominent amateur archaeologist successfully planted artifacts over a period of decades in an attempt, at least in part, to prove the remote antiquity of the indigenous Japanese population (for example, Hudson 2005).

As important as these examples are to any overall discussion of the intersection of archaeology, nationalism, and national identity, historical archaeology is particularly well placed to make an important contribution to the study of this topic because it is also the archaeology of the period where national identity and political nationalism evolved into their modern forms. This is the contribution of the present volume: instead of focusing primarily on the impact of modern political nationalism on the study of the past (although this important subject certainly features), the chapters here offer different perspectives on how historical archaeologists are uniquely placed to study how the growth of modern nationalism and national identity is reflected in the post-medieval archaeological record.

Before addressing the specific historical forces that make historical archaeology such a potentially important part of the archaeological study of nationalism and national identity, it would be useful to offer a definition of both terms within the specific context of the present volume. To attempt to do so is to enter into difficult territory over both the structural use of terminology within academic debate and the subjectivity thereof. Geary, for example, notes that "the very tools of analysis by which we pretend to practice scientific history were invented and perfected within a wider climate of nationalism and nationalist preoccupations . . . the modern methods of researching and writing history were developed specifically to further nationalist aims" (Geary 2002: 16). The contributions to the present volume by Belasus and Dikkaya offer specific examples of how this is as much the case with historical archaeology as it is with history. Further complicating the issue is the extent to which many of the related and supporting concepts are subjective; some anthropologists have gone so far as to

call for the elimination of underlying categories such as “ethnicity” as meaningful analytical concepts, on the basis that they are so subjective as to be meaningless in academic discussion (Banks 1996: 188–190).

Despite these problems, a basic definition is possible for the purposes of the present volume. Here “national identity” is defined as the development of a sense of shared identity and collective belonging within a state or geographical region; this need not necessarily be based on ethnicity, although the latter often forms an important component. “Nationalism” is the political use of national identity; in Gellner’s classic formulation, it rests on the assumption that “the political and national unit should be congruent” (Gellner 1983: 1). If it seems that neither the political nor the national unit is necessarily easily defined given the subjective nature of what constitutes national identity, then therein lies the source of considerable conflict; as twentieth-century history so amply demonstrated, by no means was all of that conflict metaphorical.

We deliberately draw a distinction between “national identity” and “ethnicity” by the recognition that the two are often closely related but also distinct (see also Hobsbawm 1991: 63–71). National identity rests on a complex interaction of culture, political power, language, religion, history, tradition, and both internal and external perception of a group that defy simple definition. A nation with a strong sense of identity can be built out of multiple ethnic and cultural groups, regardless of whether or not those groups continue to speak their own languages within geographically coherent units (as in Switzerland), or accept a common culture and language while often maintaining a sense of past distinctiveness (as in the United States). Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia meanwhile amply demonstrate that shared language and a recent shared national state need not necessarily generate a shared sense of identity where religion and historical political borders differed. Our own case study of Scotland and Bavaria in this introduction is deliberately designed to elaborate on some of these themes.

If the natural conclusion of these initial observations is that national identity—and therefore the basis of its political manifestation as nationalism—is wholly subjective, then we stress that to recognize that something is subjective and/or artificially created is not to argue that it lacks political, cultural, and emotional power. This is indeed a core theme implicit in, and uniting most of, the chapters in the present

volume: recognizing and examining the artificial and subjective origins of a particular form of nationalism and national identity often go hand in hand with studying and understanding why the latter continue to hold so much power in the modern world.

The specific historical forces contributing to the development of modern nationalism as explored in the present volume are worth addressing in more detail. There are—broadly speaking—two separate but closely related principles at work here. The first is the European formulation of the concept of the sovereign state via the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, the sequence of peace treaties that ended the catastrophic Thirty Years' War (Schulze 1994: 144–145; Duchhardt 1998)—although note that Croxton (1999: 588–589) strongly argues that Westphalia was an important stage on the road to modern political concepts of sovereignty rather than the final definition thereof. The principles of Westphalian sovereignty held that states were sovereign, legally equal, and should not interfere in the internal affairs of other sovereign states (Schulze 1994: 66–68). Subsequent European history has amply demonstrated that these principles have hardly been rigidly adhered to without exception, but they nonetheless set the basic legal framework that was then extended to the rest of the globe—with greater and lesser success—by European colonialism, and that underpins much international law to this day.

The second principle, the post-French Revolution formulation of the modern concept of nationalism and national identity based on reified ethnic identities (for example, Hobsbawm 1991), is both more controversial and harder to pin down, but the direct consequences are a far more common subject of study within the broader panoply of historical archaeology than are the direct consequences of Westphalian sovereignty, interlinked though the topics are. As the chapters in the present volume help to demonstrate, historical archaeologists are far more likely to study how a specific ethnic group might consciously or unconsciously manifest its national identity within the archaeological record, or to compare that group's material manifestation of identity in a broader trans-national context, than they are to study how material manifestations of state sovereignty might be studied via the archaeological record. The latter is not wholly unknown, and the present volume's contributions from Eichert, Comer, and Mytum arguably examine both topics, but material culture of national identity has