A thorough treatment of the issues in the title is not the task of an essay with special limitations but one of a monograph; the purpose of this text is thus not to present the historical dynamics and serious conceptual implications of the issues being considered. At most, we can offer viewpoints and propositions, if you will, that might help to create a theoretical frame of reference, which, though it still cannot be found in the literature, is crucial. Methodologically, theoretical and historical analysis mutually condition each other. That we begin here with a purely conceptual analysis and the historical research follows in a separate part is because reconstruction of the medieval phenomenological world does not in itself offer a sufficiently robust basis to situate such phenomena within our current classification framework.

A Conceptual Model

The historical precursors of the modern nation-state involve conditions which reach far back into the Middle Ages. They have been of major interest since the modern nations emerged and methods of historical scholarship were established around the turn of the nineteenth century. They appeared in the same period and were also genetically related, along with the evolution of a distinctive new framework for considering “national history” that could be read in various

* An abridged version of this study was originally presented to the Joint Committee of Hungarian–Czechoslovak historians at the May 4, 1971 meeting in Bratislava. It was published in its present form in the volume György Spira and Jenő Szűcs, eds., Nemzetiség a feudalizmus korában [Nationality in the Age of Feudalism] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972): 4–55.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

ways.1 However, there are few questions on which historical scholarship is so utterly divided as this: in what sense is it justified to use the label or term “national” (e.g., in “national consciousness” or similar notions)? How broadly or narrowly should it be applied? The absence of a generally accepted conceptual framework today is no less apparent than it was a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, even though the oldest historical layer of this problem—the issue of “national consciousness” during the Middle Ages—has been the object of ongoing historical investigations since the turn of the century.

There is hardly space for even a rough survey of the literature,2 thus, we are forced to make do with references to the types of responses which may serve as illustrations.

One type of response dates the emergence and continuous existence of “nations” to the moment when the names of nations as we know them today first appeared with an ethnonymic function in the sources. It qualifies without hesitation as an indication of “national consciousness” any manifestation of the differentiation from the outsider—or, to use a modern sociological expression—the appearance of “Wir-Bewußtsein” in the source material. If the “awakening of national sentiments” (as Ranke and Thierry conceived it) shattered the universal Carolingian unity over the course of the ninth and tenth centuries, a number of essays and monographs have sought to fill this historical and theoretical framework with as much source material as possible since the turn of the twentieth century. One branch of scholars who took this historiographical path, ranging from Franz Guntram Schultheiß’s attempt at an outline at the end of the nineteenth century to the sizable recent publications of Karl Gottfried Hugelmann, cannot disclaim its ideological bias, seeking to offer a historical apology to nationalism. Curiously, many historians with opposing ideological viewpoints came to quite similar conclusions. Even Johan Huizinga was of the opinion that in the so-called “longer prologue” of the Lex Salica (probably dating to the middle of the eighth century)

1 For a critical synopsis of the development of the concept of national history, see Eduard Fueter, Geschichte der neueren Historiographie (Munich and Berlin, 1936), passim esp. 415–21, 429–30, 535–49, and 557–75.
2 Two bibliographies on the subject are available which offer points of departure, though they are quite deficient with respect to their research on medieval antecedents: Koppel S. Pinson, A Bibliographical Introduction to Nationalism (New York, 1935); Karl W. Deutsch, An Interdisciplinary Bibliography of Nationalism, 1935–1953 (Cambridge, 1956).

“there suddenly sounded the clarion call of a new national awareness.”* With regard to the qualities of patriotism and nationalism he thought that “the only change in the two emotions in the course of time has actually been that they have become somewhat more clearly delineated. For the rest, they have remained what they always were: primitive instincts in human society.” As far as usage of the terms is concerned, Erich Zöllner’s characteristic point of departure was that the incontrovertible disparity between the conception of “people” in the Middle Ages and the modern age “does not in itself entitle us to construe national consciousness of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as paradigmatic,” nor to interpret comparable earlier phenomena as “antecedents.” Also widespread was the approach adopted by George Gordon Coulton, who said: “I try to use the term nationalism consistently within my own rough limits, but without attempt at scientific definition.”

3 For the views of Leopold von Ranke and Augustin Thierry, see, respectively, Leopold von Ranke, Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation, vol. 1 (Sämtliche Werke I) (Leipzig, 1867), 9; and Augustin Thierry, Lettres sur l’histoire de France (Paris, 1820), 10. Statements dating from the tenth century (“die europäischen Nationen standen einander in bewußter Abgeschlossenheit gegenüber”) are prevalent in the historical literature. See Albert Hauck, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1985), 388. Franz Guntram Schultheiß, Das deutsche Nationalbewußtsein in der Geschichte, Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Vorträge, 129 (Hamburg, 1891); Franz Guntram Schultheiß, Geschichte des deutschen Nationalgefühls, Eine historisch-psychologische Darstellung (Munich, 1893). With this interrupted undertaking the author intended to educate his nation: “unserer heranwachsenden Jugend . . . ein nationales Erbauungsbuch werden könnte” (Preface, viii). What is begun here in conceptualization and methodology will appear over the next half century in a whole interconnected series of works. Most recent is Karl Gottfried Hugelmann’s 500-page monograph, Stämme, Nation und Nationalstaat im deutschen Mittelalter (Würzburg, 1955). The work’s size, the literature referenced, the sources drawn upon, and the formal pedantry of its approach makes it the pinnacle of a half-century of historiographic development (for details, see the work’s bibliographical appendix). But its overly dense and illogical exposition and its glaringly ahistorical interpretations also give it a caricature-like quality. His conclusions include not only the claim that already in the mid-nineteenth century “das deutsche Volk sich als eine gegliederte Einheit formte und abgrenzte und ein deutsches Nationalbewußtsein einstand” (Hugelmann, Stämme, Nation und Nationalstaat, 194) but also the assertion that simultaneously “das deutsche Volk einen Nationalstaat gestaltete, in dem es sich als große geschichtliche Einheit fühlte und das Recht der Persönlichkeit, der Selbstbestimmung in Anspruch nahm . . . Ja man wird dann in gesteigertem Sinn von einem Nationalstaat sprechen können, von einem Staate, dessen Nationalcharakter auch—mindestens indirekt [!]—juristische Formulierung gefunden hat . . .” (Hugelmann, Stämme, Nation und Nationalstaat, 430). This work is a textbook example that shows how through the retrospective distorting lens of nationalism an impressive body of data can turn historical realities upside-down, for one of the elements of a historical reality—“German misery”—entails that behind the fantasy of a medieval Imperium there was not only the possibility for a “nation-state” to vanish but that of any kind of state. His vision of a “Nationalstaat” and “Nationalbewußtsein,” which, since the ninth century existed “kontinuierlich auf dem deutschen Volksboden” [!] (Hugelmann, Stämme, Nation und Nationalstaat, 377) represents nothing more than the distorted consolation of a nationalistic conception of history. In fairness, however, it should be noted that already in the 1920s there appeared within German historiography a more critical school of thought (see below), and Hugelmann’s work received sharp criticism, particularly from the German side;
"Nationality" and "National Consciousness" in the Middle Ages

According to the common conceptual foundations of these responses, formulated in different ways, the essence of the nation is a historical identity qualitatively similar to that of medieval times. Another type of answer abandons even the claim of historical continuity because in line with its historico-philosophical point of departure, “nation” is a supra-historical classification and historical evolution consists of alternations between “national” and “supranational” periods. Thus, there existed Jewish, Hellenic, and Roman nationalism (along with more cosmopolitan variants of these cultures) until the “Wiedereintritt des nationalen Prinzips in die Weltgeschichte,” as it is put characteristicaly by this type of literature from the end of the nineteenth century until today, referring to the triumph of the Germanic ethnic group-consciousness over the battered Roman Empire and the cosmopolitism of late antiquity.4

In contrast, a third type of response particularly emphasizes the essential difference between the European structures and periods which emerged after the end of the eighteenth century and the rather distant (pseudo-national) analogues of the nation or between the modern nation-state and earlier (pre-national) phenomena, even if in a sense they could be regarded as historical antecedents of modern national integration. The requirement of critical discernment in historical and conceptual analyses has appeared already in the nineteenth century: in the works of Fustel de Coulanges and Friedrich Julius Neumann, for example. It can be traced in the Western perspective—and above all in the American literature, which has recently begun to dominate the study of nationalism—but also in recent Soviet historiographical findings, though naturally they differ in important ways, and indeed conflict with respect to their method-

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4 For the perspective of Paul Barth and others, cf. Verhandlungen der deutschen Soziologentage, vol 2, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Schriften Ser. I. (Tübingen, 1913). This conception, in its most extreme form, however, largely remained a historico-philosophical precept; for an overview of such views, see Waldemar Mitscherlich, “Volk und Nation,” in Handwörterbuch der Soziologie (Stuttgart, 1959), 647. A dissertation that was modest in itself had much more influence over the conceptual approach: Alfred Dove, Der Wiedereintritt des nationalen Prinzips in die Weltgeschichte (Ausgewählte Schriften . . . ) (Leipzig, 1898), 1–19. Its title became a dictum and even served as a basis for analyses which—as Heinrich Finke and Halvdan Kohl, for instance (see Note 6 below)—do not link the genesis of nationalism in Europe to the fall of Rome. This view also recurs in more recent works, e.g., Salo Wittmayer Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion (New York and London, 1947), 13.
A Conceptual Model

ological underpinnings and many a detail. It is nevertheless possible to consider these responses as comparable inasmuch as they see the nation-state as a new kind of historical entity and try to articulate this with their terminology. Regardless of the etymology and historical connotations of the term nation (natsiya), according to our current classification framework it embraces a totality of notions, assumptions, and conceptual features which have only existed as such since the end of the eighteenth century. In recent literature there have been relatively consistent efforts to subsume earlier forms of integration under the heading of “nationality” (narodnost’). As Carlton Hayes, the doyen of American research, has written, nationality, as a “cultural group that speaks a common language (or closely related dialects) and who possess a community of historical traditions (religious, territorial, political, military, economic, artistic and intellectual)” is a very old construct which has served under many historical conditions. Historical expressions of patriotism are equally old, “but the fusion of patriotism and nationality and the predominance of national patriotism over all other human loyalties...which is nationalism...is modern, very modern.” The outlook of the Soviet research, as summarized by Lev V. Cherepnin, is that in contradistinction to the nation that emerged as a result of the formation of bourgeois relations, the narodnost’ is bound to pre-capitalist formations of ethnic community; it is located social-typologically somewhere between tribe and nation. From a historical point of view, it was the nation’s ethnic basis that possessed the typical national criteria in a rudimentary way (language, territory, economic life, and mentality manifested in common culture).

5 Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889) expressly opposed the above position epitomized by Ranke and Thierry: “this assertion...means that we are looking for the kind of sentiments in the ninth century which only appeared in humans centuries later.” Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, Histoire des institutions politiques de l’ancienne France (Paris, 1892), 617, “Man kann das Entstehen von Nationen in gewissem Sinne ein Werk der Neuzeit nennen”; Friedrich Julius Neumann, Volk und Nation (Leipzig, 1888), 95. The first serious attempt to analyze the historical semantic content of natio is at 115–43. For the most important comprehensive American works which today dominate bourgeois historiography, taking, to a greater or lesser extent, medieval antecedents into consideration, see: Carlton J. H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York, 1926); Carlton J. H. Hayes, The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism (New York, 1931); Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism: A study in its origins and background (New York, 1944); Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (New York and London, 1953); Louis Leo Snyder, The Meaning of Nationalism (New Brunswick, 1954); Boyd C. Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality (New York, 1955); Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (New York, 1961). In the area of systematic analysis and categorization of historical antecedents, one noteworthy attempt is Friedrich Hertz, “Wesen und Werden der Nation,” Jahrbuch für Soziologie, supplementary vol. 1 (1927): 1–88 and later Friedrich Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics: A Study of the Psychology and Sociology of National Sentiment and Character (London, 1944). Somewhat less successful than the abovementioned historical and theoretical syntheses, see the recent German study by Eugen Lemberg, Geschichte des Nationalismus in Europa (Stuttgart, 1950) and Eugen Lemberg, Nationalismus, 2
Of course, these three types of responses are rarely differentiated from each other in such an extreme and clear-cut way. It is more a matter of period-specific trends, for adherents of the first point of view also generally acknowledge that the modern nation was something “other” than the natio of the Middle Ages; the second point of view does not refute that there are differences between the modern European phenomena and, say, antiquity; and the third point of view also pays some degree of attention to historical antecedents. This does nothing to alter the deficiency in a uniform conceptual language. This deficiency remains troublesome even if in the historiography of the problem, under the heading of the “development of forms of national consciousness”—already present in the title of Karl Lamprecht’s attempt to produce a typology—or the medieval history of “nationalism,” or similar designations, remarkable achievements took place not only in terms of data collection from many centuries but in some cases also regarding systematization or periodization of social and intellectual history, and with respect to classification of “forms of manifestation.”  

6 Karl Gotthard Lamprecht’s introduction to his history of Germany (1st edition 1906) may be regarded as the first modern attempt at systematization, using a certain socio-historical perspective: see Karl Gotthard Lamprecht, “Entwicklung der Formen des Nationalbewußtseins,” in Deutsche Geschichte (6th ed. Berlin, 1920), 1–55. His categories are “Stammbewußtsein,” “Gemeinschaftsgefühl auf Grund der Reichsentwicklung (kein eigentlich politisches Nationsgefühl),” “soziales Nationsgefühl ritterlichen Charakters,” or “bürgerlichen Charakters” (als “integrierende Bestandteile des konventionellen Seelenlebens der Zeit”), etc., which according to his understanding of the concept does not agree with “Nationalbewußtsein des subjektiven Zeitalters” [i.e., the nineteenth century]. In contrast, the historical disquisition of Otto Bauer, Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie (Vienna, 1907) constitutes a step backwards. Detailed research flourished in the 1910s, as illustrated by the publication around this time of a series of works which were generally rich with data and advocated a more or less critical stance. Examples include Heinrich Finke, Weltimperialismus und nationale Regungen im späteren Mittelalter (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1916); Paul Joachimsen, Vom deutschen Volk zum deutschen Staat (Natur und Geisteswelt Series, No. 511) (Leipzig and Berlin, 1916); Henri Hauser, Le Principe des nationalités: Ses origines historiques (Paris 1916); Oskar Halecki, Das Nationalitätsproblem in alten Polen (Cracow, 1916), etc. For the most
Clearly the array of responses stems not simply from terminological differences but are caused by divergences in the theory and philosophy of history, as well as methodology. Where is the essence of a “nation” to be found? Is it typically a matter of specific social, political, cultural, or intellectual relationships? Or is it rooted rather in ancient, traditional historical content? It is widely recognized that this theoretical quandary has been with us since the appearance of the modern nation itself. These two types of responses or conflicting mental conceptions existed already in the late eighteenth century: on the one hand in the idea of the French Revolution, rising out of Voltairean enlightened rationalism, and, on the other hand, in the German Romantic stream of the Enlightenment, in Herder’s and Fichte’s response. According to the former school of thought, the nation was a completely innovative political association of the people who possessed a sovereignty derived from the volonté générale, whereas according to the latter it was an ancient historical organism rooted in the Volksgeist. However much the content of the beliefs and arguments behind the theory of nation may have changed, developed, transformed, and become differentiated over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is this oppositional dimension which has determined both the theoretical and historical facets of the question up to the present day. It would lead us astray to enter the details of the reciprocated influence of historiographic literature and the modern theory of nation. So, without further ado we can state that the myths which part these works concentrated on the historical antecedents of a single nation, but this upsurge in focused research highlighted the need for comparative investigation as well. This is reflected in the fact that one of the topics in the program of the Sixth International Congress on History at Oslo in 1918 was La nationalité et l’histoire. Summaries and reports of the debate were published in the Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, vol. 2 (Paris, 1919). Among the later works, those that stand out are the ones which considered the subject area as a problem of universal history. These include Richard von Wallach, Das abendländische Gemeinschaftsbewußtsein im Mittelalter (Leipzig and Berlin, 1928); Robert Michels, Der Patriotismus: Prologenena zu seiner soziologischen Analyse (Munich, 1929); Coulton, “Nationalism in the Middle Ages,” 1935; Eugen Lemberg, Wege und Wandlungen des Nationalbewußtseins (Münster, 1914); Huizinga, “Wachstum und Formen des nationalen Bewußtseins in Europa bis zum Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts”; Halvdan Koht, “The Dawn of Nationalism in Europe,” American History Review 52 (1947): 267–80. Paul Kirn, Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls (Leipzig, 1943) is a fundamental and, due to the copious data it contains, indispensable work, but one that is entirely misguided in its positions and in its “völkisch” interpretations. In any event, several elaborations of specialized topics not listed here (but cited later) show that since the 1930s this whole subject has become a major interest for medieval researchers and accounts for part of the upswing in research interest in nationalism (see Note 5). This applies doubly to the work published in the quarter century following the end of World War II. Its most important contribution—at least with respect to mainstream research—was to disregard biased data collection and, most particularly, apologetic essays and to imbed the subject area more deeply within the context of the history of political ideas. A brief synopsis of the results, which lays no claims to completeness, is offered by Jean Touchard, Histoire des idées politiques, vol. 1 (Paris, 1959), 219–27.
"Nationality" and "National Consciousness" in the Middle Ages

typically color national ideologies and their development according to period and region—be they of a “metaphysical,” “physical,” or cultural-historical nature—have blemished the way the question is posed within the field of history. But the two dominant trends—the so-called objectivist and subjectivist approaches—dividing the theoretical literature on the topic since the mid-nineteenth century, have not facilitated the historical perspective either.

It is well known that the first approach, by identifying a certain number of objective criteria, seeks to establish a formula: a clear and conclusive definition which expresses the nature of “the nation” which is generally accepted. This, however, is all but impossible. Even if one ignores the fact that most attempts at a definition have elements which are not, in fact, “objective criteria” but subjec-

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7 The characteristic myths of modern theories of the nation were summarized by Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality, 16–56. Among the “metaphysical myths” is the idea formulated by Herder (1744–1803) and Fichte (1762–1814) that the nation is a manifestation of divinity and the ultimate purpose of Creation. The first phrase from the notes that the young Jakob Burckhardt made during Leopold Ranke’s lectures at the University of Berlin was: “Meine Herren, Völker sind Gedanken Gottes!” Werner Kaegi, Chronica mundi: Grundformen der Geschichtsschreibung seit dem Mittelalter (Einsiedeln, 1954), 74. An even more profound influence on theories of nationalism than religious mysticism was exerted by “natural law” and historical mysticism. This emerges already with the “Romantics” of the Enlightenment (i.e., Jean-Jacques Rousseau) and subsequently became expanded in the romantic notion that the nation is a product of loi naturelle or Naturtrieb, a natural community or società naturale (Mancini). Contributing to this was the romanticist argument that the nation was an ancient historical organism, a community of the Volksgesetz. This was not purely a Herderian legacy, and not peculiar to the Central and East European concept of linguistic and cultural nation. Both the Volkswille, in the Swiss Johann Caspar Bluntschli’s theory (1808–81), and the “spirit of the nation,” in the works of the British political theorist Edmund Burke (1729–97), are derived from a shared state framework, government, and institutions, and stand in a closer or looser connection with “physical” myths according to which the nation is a product of natural constraints, landscape, native land, climate and even race, common origin, etc. Yet, a good example of how such a historical mysticism can take shape even when physical myths have been rejected is the theory of Ernest Renan (1823–92). It is true that in his famous disquisition (Ernest Renan, Qu’est-ce qu’une nation? (Paris 1892)) he clearly states that man is neither a slave to his race, nor his language, religion, etc. (“l’homme n’est esclave ni de sa race, ni de sa langue, ni de sa religion...”). But with Renan the formerly revolutionary volonté générale is refined into an “intellectual principle” which now appears, together with memories of shared ancestors, sacrifices, and glories, as a natural constituent of a historical mysticism (Renan, Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?, 27). The material of national myths displays differences which partly correspond to the common intellectual trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and partly correspond to the specific traditions of individual national ideologies. But in all cases the national myth assumes an outlook which disregards historical categories whether they contain historicized myths (ancient ideas about the state, about institutions, about constitutionality) or are ethno-psychological theories (the character of an ancient people, community of fate), combinations of ancient history elevated to the sphere of an ideology (ethnic autochthony and the like), or a national ideology that has crystallized around something else. Correspondingly, the nation is something a priori, or at least a very ancient entity which was, is, and will be, based solely on its laws and characteristics which are valid for itself, whose existence, ageless and unbounded to time as it is, determine—and must determine—every part of the entity. Raising modern nationalism into the metaphysical sphere indicates, incidentally, that in many respects it has assumed the features of religious devotion. For more on this subject, see Carlton J. H. Hayes, Nationalism: A Religion (New York, 1960).
tive myths, such as “race,” the “spirit of the people,” and the like, contingent or incidental features such as religion, or intangible characteristics and scientifically unverifiable presumptions, such as “community of destiny,” “national psyche,” “national character,” this kind of a conceptual construction of the nation is necessarily imperfect and inadequate. Listing certain genuine factors, such as territory, language, culture, and economy, and defining the essence of nation as the sum total of these factors does not make it more accurate. For one thing, there are no common factors which would be equally valid for the inde-
individual forms or historical and regional types of national integration. A definition consisting of freely variable elements is not likely to stand up to logical scrutiny. For another, it is imperfect because the factors which appear as typical criteria are not criteria specific to national groupings but, to a significant extent, also to much more primitive communities. Thus, neither individually nor in arbitrary combination do such factors articulate the conceptual and historical specificity of national integration. But definitions of this type are also inadequate because they lack the precision necessary to indicate the degree of this conjunction of factors and criteria that would entail a *sine qua non* of a national grouping. Consequently, in and of themselves they are unsuitable for providing clear, unambiguous conceptual points of departure for the problem of nation with respect to history. A *certain degree* of territorial, linguistic, and cultural integration and even economic and state integration can be observed already in centuries past, whereas the depth of vertical integration (as well as the community characterizing the whole social configuration of the population) that can be expressed with these factors is frequently less a *precondition* than a *consequence* of modern national integration. Just like the nation-state itself, national

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9 The combination of factors differs from each other and form in various mixtures the criteria of a given nation according to the logic of national integration in the modern era, which is either a function of the development of the state or, on the contrary, proceeds along linguistic, and cultural interdependencies in opposition to the existing state framework. What holds true for the historical region of Western Europe or, on the other hand, of the evolution of Russia, where monarchies (or, in the former case, the early development of the bourgeoisie) had prepared the way for economic and political and territorial unity, and where state nationalities had formed early in the modern era, does not hold true for a large part of Eastern and Central Europe, and vice versa. In the former case, for example, the motif of language is either not emphasized (in 1793 one quarter of the French nation neither spoke nor understood French), it does not represent any sort of national criterion (see Belgium and Switzerland, for example), or languages are not specifically national languages (as with English, Spanish, and Portuguese). On the other hand, there are places where language represents the primary criterion, and economic and politico-territorial unity remains only a desire of the people for an extended period (and historically not a cause but a consequence of nation-formation). Naturally, this does not mean that an emphasis on economic factors in an analysis of the evolution of the modern nation is also mythical (see Shafer, *Nationalism: Myth and Reality*, 42–44), because a certain level of development of capitalist conditions is an essential condition for a modern national movement (for example, in East Central Europe), even if economic unity per se—the national markets of a large part of the nineteenth (and, indeed, here and there even in the twentieth) century—is not necessarily a criterion of national existence. In any event, in the case of the two basic structural models of Staatsnation and Kulturnation one must reckon with varying combinations of factors, or different combinations of criteria and orders of values; see Friedrich Meinecke, *Welthörfertum und Nationalstaat: Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaates* (Munich, 1922), 3ff, considering that this duality overall expresses ideal types, behind which lie a multiplicity of specific manifestations. Indeed, the region of East Central Europe is distinct as a third type, where the linguistic-cultural factor, mixed with a historicized “state-nation” concept, manifested in the nineteenth century. See the relatively recent article by Theodor Schieder, "Typologie und Erscheinungsformen des Nationalstaats in Europa," *Historische Zeitschrift* 202 (1966): 58–81.
A Conceptual Model

languages, which bridge dialects, or a “national culture,” which breaks down the isolated dualism of folk culture and high culture, and an emerging (already emerged) national market or “national economy,” as opposed to broader and narrower regional economic features, are in many cases more likely an outcome than a cause (or, for that matter, a “factor”) of the progression to nationhood and of the modern national movement. These can be understood as “historical factors” of national development only on the basis of a post hoc, ergo propter hoc logic. A nation is not merely a horizontal configuration of groups, limited to two dimensions, as it were, but also a social structure and historical formation that must be determined by its vertical integration, which for that very reason is circumscribed as well by a further dimension: time (the course of history); it is the specific historical result of these two types of integration.

An approach that is exhausted by a set of purely horizontal criteria is a precarious point of departure for historiography because such a formulation can never be “perfectly” suitable or equally valid for different types of processes. In addition, it contains no reliable conceptual foothold within this dimension. The historian is therefore forced to rely on critical acumen or subjective value judgments in order to interpret this “aggregate” of given factors. He must also define which other factors are playing a determining role; consequently, which age and which structure demarcates the nation’s terminus post quem (the nineteenth century, seventeenth century or, for that matter, the ninth century?). These definitions on strict interpretation would lead to the exclusion of a number of European nations existing in the nineteenth and even the twentieth century from the ranks of nation. On the other hand, by broadening the definition in a somewhat arbitrary way it would lead to the conclusion that the “essence” of certain nations had already emerged in much earlier times. If this route—one that is often seen in the literature on the subject—is taken ad absurdum, its conceptual precariousness becomes practically boundless; after all, sources like the dictum of Notker Balbulus (883): *apud nos, qui theuthonica sive teutisca lingua loquimur*, where the recognition of a language community at the Abbey of St. Gall is accompanied by a “we (nos) consciousness,” can be cumulated at will since very early times. This, together with the beginnings of the notion of “Germanness” may be interpreted as the early development of the German nation, as the genus

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* Notker the Stammerer: “We who read the Teutonic or Germanic language,” in Gesta Karoli Magni 1, 10, 14–25.
"Nationality" and "National Consciousness" in the Middle Ages

*Teutonicorum* has been referenced since 909. If the ahistorical blurring of the boundaries of the concept of nation is widespread and found not only in bourgeois historiography (especially within its nationalist-apologetic stream) but is discernable to some extent also in Marxist historiography, this means that the mechanistic measuring of "criteria" often substituted analysis. The criteria contributing to the definition were employed axiomatically, rendering further analysis unnecessary, being expressed in one of Stalin’s distinctive phrases. In its own place and read contextually this understanding served its objective, though it was no more than a typical nineteenth-century definition corrected with economic emphasis (and returning back to the nineteenth century with its emphasis on "national psyche"), which, however, can hardly replace the Marxist theoretical analysis of the concept of nation.11

11 Iossif V. Stalin’s famous 1913 definition, "a nation [natsiya] is . . . a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, and manifested in a common culture," was subject to criticism in debates in *Voprosy istorii* (1966, no. 1) for several reasons. It was criticized partly with respect to individual elements and partly based on its approach, though what was evidenced in the end was only the need for minor corrections. Some especially noteworthy methodological standpoints were offered through the contributions of M.S. Dzhunusov in *Voprosy istorii*, no. 4 (1966): 16–30; and V.N. Kozlov in *Voprosy istorii*, no. 1 (1967): 88–99. The necessity for critical Marxist reevaluations of the entire subject area has frequently been voiced over the past decade, with especially constructive contributions from Erik Molnár, "A nemzeti kérdés" [The national question], *Magyar Tudomány* 67 (1960): 571–87; Miroslav Hroch, "Az európai újkori nemzet kialakulásának kérdéséhez" [On the emergence of modern nations in Europe], *Századok* 96 (1962): 627–44 (translation of a paper originally published in *Československý časopis historický*, 1961). As an illustration of the kind of antedatings to which a "mechanistic and formalistic interpretation" of the four criteria can lead, one might mention, for instance, the reasoning of S.S. Dimitriev, in whose view "a bourgeois-type nation" emerged in Russia basically over the course of the seventeenth century: "Obrazovanie russkoi natsii" [The formation of the Russian nation], *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7 (1955): 59. It is even more frequent within Marxist historiography that the category of national (national independence, national consciousness, etc.) has essentially lost its relation to the modern concept of nation and, without the need for stronger precision, can be projected as technical vocabulary (a matter of perspective indeed) onto any earlier era. A model of a nationalist view of history could be reproduced with seemingly Marxist arguments according to which the oppressed classes were the vehicles and repositories of true patriotism and national independence within every historical era in the same way that, for instance, a latent national principle finds expression in early class wars or peasant movements. For a critique of this internationally common model, see, besides what is cited above, Erik Molnár, "Ideológiai kérdések a feudalizmusban" [Ideological questions in the feudal era], *Történelsmi Szemle* 4 (1961): 261–68, and Erik Molnár, "A hazafias nemzeti ideológájáról" [On national patriotic ideology], *MTA II. OK* 15 (1965): 301–13; more recently Jenő Szűcs, *A nemzet historikuma és a történetszemlélet nemzeti látószöge* [The historicity of the nation and the nationalistic viewing angle of history] (Budapest, 1970). The internal content of the concept of conscience nationale or Nationalbewußtsein is usually very slippery, as is its applicability under the conditions of the Middle Ages. See e.g., Eugen Stănescu, "Mittelalterliche Voraussetzungen des rumänischen Nationalbewußtseins," *Studii* (1964): 967–1000; František Graus, "Die Entstehung der mittelalterlichen Staaten in Mitteleuropa," *Historia* 10 (1965): 60–65; František Graus, *CISH 22nd International Congress*, vol. 4 (Vienna, 1965), 108–9.
We do not advance towards a more robust conceptual foundation with a “subjectivist” approach either. Partly in response to the mechanistic and static attempts at a definition, it can be regarded since the latter half of the nineteenth century as the dominant trend in the bourgeois academic literature. Already according to Pasquale Mancini’s (1851) formulation objective features represent no more than “dead material” only “brought to life” by the coscienza della nazionalità, while Ernest Renan (1882) completely rejected the objectivist approach. For him, the nation was a “spiritual principle” intrinsic to a community of shared memories and feelings, self-awareness, and will. The basic principle of methodology is not always quite as absurd as Franz Oppenheimer’s exaggerated formulation (“Wir müssen nicht aus der Nation das Nationalbewußtsein, sondern umgekehrt aus dem Nationalbewußtsein die Nation ableiten”); indeed, the research of recent decades has striven to see the approaches of history, sociology, economics, and psychology applied with versatility when investigating the factors that created the modern nation. Today it is generally thought that such factors cannot be molded into a comprehensive formula but are contingent in their entirety, as contrasted to the factor of self-awareness, that is nationalism itself. This explanation implies that the focus of modern bourgeois research deals not so much with national evolution as it does the phenomenon of nationalism (in the English use of the word, widely accepted as non-judgmental and merely descriptive). This type of research contains important details about the “criterion” of “national consciousness,” which was lacking in the previous “objectivist” definitions (although without it one can hardly speak about a nation). However, a vicious circle is apparent in such an approach inasmuch as it posits a condition to be fundamental which is itself conditioned by other factors and developments. Apart from this, this notion is no less volatile as a point of depar-

12 Mancini, Della nazionalità come fondamento del diritto delle genti; Ernest Renan, Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?, 27: “Une nation est une âme, un principe spirituel. . . . Deux choses . . . constituent cette âme, ce principe spirituel. . . . L’une est la possession en commun d’un riche legs de souvenirs, l’autre est le consentement actuel, le désir de vivre ensemble, la volonté de continuer à faire valoir l’héritage qu’on a reçu indivis . . .” Franz Oppenheimer, System der Soziologie, vol. 1 (Jena, 1923), 644. One typical formulation is that of Georg Jellinek: “Ist es demnach unmöglich, ein einziges sicheres objekitives Kriterium der Nation anzugeben, so kann ein solches auch nicht durch eine feststehende Kombination mehrerer Elemente gefunden werden. Daraus ergibt sich, daß die Nation nichts Objektives im Sinne des äußerlich Existierenden ist . . . Nation ist vielmehr etwas wesentlich Subjektives, d.h. das Merkmal eines bestimmten Bewußtseininhaltes . . .” Georg Jellinek, Allgemeines Staatslehre (1929), 119. For a survey of subjectivism, see the above-listed references (see Note 8). A summary of the dual modes of modern research—psychological (or functional) and institutional (or formalistic)—with critical comments is provided by David M. Potter, “The Historian’s Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa,” American Historical Review 67 (1962): 914–50.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

ture for historical investigation than the previous ones, since some degree of awareness of national belonging can be substantiated even in relatively early periods, already in the ninth or tenth century, for instance. These are features of an objective integration, so that even here the historian’s point of view determines whether the existence of this consciousness is cited as evidence of national consciousness to explain an immanent “national principle.”

To again draw attention to an example where this is carried to the point of absurdity (and one often employed in this context in the literature): the fact that the gentes ultra Rhenum—the high-ranking members of the Bavarian, Aleman, (Eastern) Frank, Thuringian, and Saxon tribes—elected Arnulf as their common ruler in 887 can be read as the expression of the will to become a nation. One can also interpret as a sign of the awakening of “national” consciousness such sources as Richer of Reims’ description of an encounter between King Henry I and Charles the Simple (921) to conclude a treaty, where the young Eastern and Western Frank knights mix company and begin to mock one another’s language, which was turning into insults and tussles—ut eorum mos est, the chronicler adds.13

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The purpose of this rough outline was simply to highlight problems rather than to expound on them in any thorough fashion. Still less is the aim, in what is to follow, to “solve” this complex matter or cut through the Gordian knot with a new definition which is superior to all previous ones. Incidentally, it is likely that such a definition does not exist in principle. We will almost certainly have to forego tidy, clear-cut, one-phrase formulas. We are not in any event concerned with the subject matter on the whole but with the confrontation that arises between historical and modern content that fall under the classification of “nation” and specifically with its conceptual analysis. It is of course unlikely from the outset that a conceptual analysis, however finely formulated, will in itself succeed, as semantics, methodology, historical approaches, and even philosophy of history, are woven together here in a complex manner.

13 Such references evidencing “völkische Bewußtsein,” “nationale Regungen” in the work by Paul Kirn are on p. 43, 74 and 110; “Eben dies scheint uns im gegensatz zu Lamprechts Betrachtungsweise unbestreitbar zu sein; daß man ein geistiges Anderssein des mittelalterlichen Menschen, verglichen mit dem neuzeitlichen, aus einem Verhalten zu Volk und Vaterland nicht wird erweisen können” (Kirn, Aus der Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls, 79).
As we indicated previously, the semantic difficulty lies in the modern classification framework, as the term “nation” comprises a sum of notions, conjectures, and conceptual features which have only existed in concert since the eighteenth or nineteenth century, though it is not an easy task to define the exact boundaries of a conceptual field; in other words, due to an inherent “tyranny of words,” it is difficult to apply modern notions to phenomena of earlier centuries without risking, consciously or unconsciously, a carry-over effect. Nevertheless, the word itself, natio in the original Latin, has had derivatives in most European languages since the twelfth–fourteenth centuries (nation, nazione, etc.), or precise archaic equivalents (for example, with the Hungarian nemzet or the Czech and Slovak národ). These denoted those forms of integration—albeit not in principle, nor consistently, and by no means solely these ones—that might be considered the historical antecedents of the modern nation. This case, there-

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14 This fitting expression was used in a similar context (along with a diagnosis of “corruption of words”) by Snyder (Snyder, The Meaning of Nationalism, 3–11). “An oft-committed error of students is to tear generic words like nation and nationalism from their historical contexts, to read their contemporary substance back into the past, and thus to see in the past the generalities and universals evident actually and only in contemporary life.” Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality, 5. No matter how many times the topic has been raised in international forums on recent history, the divergence in the use of the concept has virtually always been apparent, and again and again warnings have been sounded in connection with the dangers of an overly general or too broad use of the word. At the International Congress in Rome there were several papers which spoke about nations in connection with the tenth and eleventh centuries; Atti del X. Congresso Internazionale di scienze storiche, Rome, September 4–11, 1955 (Rome, 1957), 310ff and 415ff, but on the other hand they also included several comments, especially from Walther Holtzmann, cautioning about use of the term: “wenn es sich um Stämme oder allenfalls Völker mit einem noch gar nicht, oder erst sehr schwach ausgeprägten und quellenmäßig gar nicht faßbaren Selbstbewußtsein handelt.” Atti del X. Congresso Internazionale di scienze storiche, 337. See also Rudolf Buchner: “Man sollte überhaupt Ausdrücke Nationalbewußtsein, sentiment national und dergleichen für jene Zeit [d.h. für das frühere Mittelalter] vermeiden, weil sie unwillkurlich Assoziationen hervorrufen, die völlig unhistorisch” Settimane di Spoleto, vol. 5/2 (Spoleto 1958), 689. See also CISH XII Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, V. Actes, (Vienna, 1965), 613ff, e.g., Gotthold Rhode: “Auf diesem Gebiet der Bewußtseinsbildung, auf dem frühere Forschergenerationen allzu leicht die Begriffe und Vorstellungen der eigenen Zeit ins hohe Mittelalter übertragen haben, bedarf es wohl ganz besonders neuer eingehender Untersuchungen,” 612.

15 On the details of this question, see the latter part of the present study. There is no adequate comprehensive work on the history of the concept. Guido Zernatto, “Nation: The history of a word,” Review of Politics 6 (1944): 351–66, is no more than a perfunctory outline but it does offer passages that show the transformations in the eighteenth century in relief. Surveys that are useful in relation to the Middle Ages, among the works already cited, include esp. Neumann, Volk und Nation, 111–19; Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics, 3–14; Hugelmann, Stämme, Nation und Nationalstaat, 186–91 and passim. Fundamental for a specific period are the richly informative historical enquiries by Kurt Heissenbüttel (1920), Karl Bierbach (1938), and Eugen Ewig (1958), as well as Franz Walter Müller’s (1947) exemplary philological elaboration of the history of Old and Middle French “nation” (see the second part below). Basic sources for the vulgar linguistic derivatives of “natio” are Frédéric Godefroy, Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVIIe siècle, vol. 5 (Paris 1888), 4622; Walther von Wartburg, Französisches Eynymologisches Wörterbuch, vol. 7 (Basel, 1955), 41–45; Töbler-Lommatzsch, Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch, vol. 6 (Wiesbaden, 1965), 471;
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

fore, is of the variety that Otto Brunner wrote about so aptly.16 Contributing to the tense contradiction existing between the demand for a “source-based conceptual language” and the dangers which stem from the “tyranny of words” is the practical necessity that entails the articulation of distinct contrasts when referring to past centuries; for want of a better expression—against one’s better judgment, that is—we cannot avoid making use of the adjective “national.” It would bring us closer to resolving, or being able to bridge, these difficulties if we could manage to clearly, conceptually grasp the distinctive dichotomy—the historical connection and phenomenological antithesis—of the contradictory relationship between the modern nation and its historical antecedents, and if we were to succeed—in the form of intellectual compromise—in expressing it terminologically. A historical analysis, of course, would be a necessary condition for this, but in the absence of conceptual elements a historical analysis may easily fall off course; this is the most serious methodological difficulty, amounting at times to a “magic circle,” and ultimately expressing itself in the fundamental divergence of historiographical answers. In the end, the greatest theoretical difficulty is that all historical and conceptual analysis will be in vain if a common denominator is absent in the philosophical interpretation of the category of “national history.” If this is the case, there is no hope of generating a common conceptual language. There is, however, another way of looking at things according to which the appearance of the modern nation is the intrinsic principle and “final aim” of the historical process. No type of analysis can help this position, which might create the “infrastructure,” so to speak, for various (possibly contradictory) historiographic trends, because each fragment of data becomes automatically imbued with “meaning” in such a context. It is different if we conceive of history as a sovereign process, one possible facet and retrospective organizing


Nicolò Tommaso and Bernardo Bellini, Dizionario della lingua italiana, vol. 3/1, 451; The Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1933), 30–31; Otto Basler, Deutsches Fremdwörterbuch, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1942), 177–84; Friedrich Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (Berlin, 1957), 812. Nacion (nassion, nacion) in Old French has been referenced since the twelfth century, but its use in the wider sense of “people”—in parallel with other references—and likewise the English nacion or nacioun occurs only in the late thirteenth century; the German Nation appears at the end of the fourteenth century. The Hungarian nemzet can be substantiated since the early fourteenth century; see A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótár [A Historical and Etymological Dictionary of the Hungarian Language], vol. 2, ed. Loránd Benkő et al. (Budapest, 1970), 1012.
principle of which is the “national history.” It would be impossible to harmonize these two perspectives.

By excluding this possibility from the very outset, we shall attempt in what follows to outline as succinctly as possible potential semantical and methodological solutions for these conceptual and terminological difficulties. We may start from the indisputable fact that modern nations did not arise in a vacuum but have their own historical preconditions and antecedents: (albeit non-linear) centuries of development and integrational patterns (albeit different from the modern ones) which have begun to take form since the Middle Ages. Incidentally, the source-based term for the latter was often “nation,” albeit not by default and not consistently, as indicated previously. That is to say, the continuity of the linguistic expression in itself reflects the continuity of the phenomenon to a degree. Modern nations, however, are not simply the extension of preconditions and antecedents—a pinnacle of development or elevation to a higher level, so to say—but simultaneously surpass these, emerging as entirely novel historical configurations. In our age, it is axiomatic that “humanity is made up of nations”; namely that there are three and a half billion people who are “naturally,” but at the same time also in a sociopolitical sense, divided into groups of humans whose identity can be expressed primarily in the category of their nationality. This is one of those precepts that was (along with its implications) not recognized before the eighteenth century. Prior to the eighteenth century, the genus humanum was divided primarily into religions, states, social estates, and local groups. For these, the category of nationality was irrelevant, or else the connection was tenuous, transposed, or secondary.17 The reason why nationality

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17 Cf. Potter, “The Historian’s Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa,” 924–25. Naturally, earlier periods were acquainted with some sort of notion of “people” (gens, natio), which changed from one age to the next, and they took note of the diversitas gentium; nor was the idea that humanity was made up of unities—peoples—divided up according to various languages and customs unknown. This was not just an empirical fact, as already in the ethnography of antiquity the characteristics (criteria) of a people crystallized around the conceptual features of lingua and mores (Gerold Walser, Rom, das Reich und die fremden Völker in der Geschichtsschreibung der früheren Kaiserzeit (Basel, 1951), 72–85). Yet in a sense it was also a theoretical point of view insofar as, ever since the high cultures of the Ancient Orient, language and ethnogenesis formed an organic unity in notions related to the origin of man. One version of these theories was the linking of the confusion of languages at Babel in the Old Testament with the theory of seventy-two ancient languages and peoples in antiquity. (On theories about the emergence and development of languages and ethnogenesis with extensive references, see Arno Borst, Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1957–1963). In the latter half of the Middle Ages the larger nationalities that had emerged—gentes et nationes—began to be placed into this theoretical framework. “Aber erst in der Neuzeit wird das Nationale in einem vielschichtigen historischen Vorgang die bestimmende Ordnungsvorstellung, die Nation zu einer vorherrschenden, alle anderen Bedeutung übertreffenden Gruppenform. Im diesen Sinn kann man von einem Zeitalter des Nationalismus
played such a dominant role in nineteenth-century Europe was not because century-long forms and processes of integration were “realized naturally,” but because an entirely novel process found an applicable framework within historical concepts that were centuries old. Only thus was the third estate, the bourgeoisie (or the societal stratum fulfilling this function), able to achieve social, political, economic, and intellectual emancipation. Fighting against the feudal social structure, the feudal-absolutist political sphere, and the unfavorable regional and power balance in the economic sphere—and in spite of the binding ideological forces which reflected all of this—it declared all individuals, “the people,” a sovereign human community, a united “society” independent of all higher authority and free from internal feudal division. This unfolded within the framework of integration which possessed features, in its social layers and traditional associations, that were historically given and had been described in terms of a nation already for centuries. This historically novel form—the “national society”—became the framework and theoretical source retrospectively for the past and prospectively for the present and future political, economic, and cultural relations (whether actual or aspired).

It is unquestionably significant that with regard to the components of this metamorphosis the historical form of integration was already given, but no less significant is the fact that the features of this metamorphosis differed from the outset. They depended, for example, on whether the “state-nationality” that since the Middle Ages had been referred to as nation or nation (as was generally the case in Western Europe) had been forged primarily by a territorial and institutional evolution of the monarchies, or the historical unifying forces crystallized around primarily linguistic and cultural elements, working in opposition to the existing state frameworks (as was generally the case in Central and Eastern Europe), or the linguistic factor was combined with a legal and historical argument derived from a former medieval state framework triggering the nation-formation (as in the regions of Central and Eastern Europe belonging to the conglomerate Habsburg and Ottoman Empires). As it happens, these vectors or crystallization points were not new; indeed, they had already become crystal-
lized centuries prior to the formation of the modern nation. Let it suffice here to quote from a disquisition of the Council of Constance in 1417: “A natio may be conceived of as a community of people (gens) distinct from others, with a common ancestry, or according to the diversity of languages, which is the principle hallmark of a natio, its very essence according to divine right and the province of the human law alike, or it may be conceived ... in a territorial sense, as befitting ...” 18 It can also be understood as the pinnacle of many centuries of evolution, as the archetype of the modern Staatsnation-Kulturnation duality. Just prior to the emergence of modern national movements, the conceptual features of nation (what we would today refer to as “historical nationality”) were furnished by Diderot and d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie (1778), associating it with community of political territory and government, while the lexicographer Johann Christoph Adelung’s dictionary of High German (1798) associated it with community of origin and language. To illustrate the third variety, we could refer to the appearance of a Hungarian conception in the first half of the nineteenth century which, apart from language, designated historical elements relating to a once independent state framework, and the legal claims that were derived from it, as the constitutive features of nationality (nemzetiség or Nationalität). 19

18 “Sive sumatur natio ut gens secundum cognationem et collectionem ab alia distincta, sive secundum diversitatem linguarum, que maximam et verissimam probant nationem et ipsius essentiam iure divino pariter et humano ... sive etiam sumatur natio pro provincia equali Gallicane, sicut sumi debetur.” Heinrich Finke, “Die Nation in den spätmittelalterlichen allgemeinen Konzilien,” Historisches Jahrbuch 17 (1937): 338. Of course, the polemical text of the English conciliar natio presented on March 31, 1417, was extremely far from being a self-serving conceptual definition or an exposition of the principles of a modern nation. The background of this event was that there was an attempt to reconcile the clashing interests of the English and French monarchies (the Battle of Agincourt in 1415) in the sphere of ecclesiastical policy and broader politics. See Finke, “Die Nation in den spätmittelalterlichen allgemeinen Konzilien,” 333–38, as well as Louise R. Loomis, “Nationality at the Council of Constance,” American Historical Review 44 (1939): 508–17. All the same, behind the specific reference to the scope of representation at the Council, the tone of the arguments and the way they are formulated indicate that the broader meaning of natio was already lurking behind this: “state-nation” and linguistic nationality were notions that were maturing in the late Middle Ages. The submission argues that the Scots, for instance, were part of the natio Britannica since Scotland was territorially part of Britain and their language was similar to English; if, on the other hand, the principle had been that multilingualism enhanced the splendor of a nation, then as the English natio at the Council spoke five different languages, it could form five “nations.” The closing argument, the ultima ratio, is typically medieval: let the Council’s quadripartite segmentation remain, but let its present names be done away with “because the naming of nationes according to kingdoms is injurious to other kingdoms.” Neither, however, should they be named after languages, because there are so many of them; the arrangement should be worked out in accordance with the four quarters of the compass.

19 Hertz, “Wesen und Werden,” 23. One of the definitions from Pesti Hírlap [Pest Herald] in Reform Age Hungary (1842): “Nationality is a historical fact, of which language is not the only factor, for in order that a people should have a nation it is also necessary to be connected by a common constitution, common sentiments, common interests, a common need for progress and development, and common memories of
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

Additional benchmarks that some theories of the nation have grouped around these conceptual features since the nineteenth century may be authentic enough or may themselves be the products of national myths, but in truth they are only adjunct notions, not merely because they are unsuitable for defining “the nation,” as they are precluded from possessing a general validity, but also because they are not specifically suited to the modern nation but in some respects for the preceding historical forms of integration as well. The essence of the modern nation as an objective reality (as a historically specific form of integration) is only partially expressed, as it were, in horizontal cross section by the abovementioned criteria (which in themselves are in any case extremely variable). At least part of its essence lies in the internal cohesion of a given society, that is to say, its vertical integration, as measured by political, cultural, economic, psychological, or ideological features of the configuration bounded by the “horizontal” criteria. In this respect it is not enough to restrict ourselves to pointing out the “common features.” While the modern nation and the principle of equality of citizens before the law are inseparable, as are modern conceptions of “society,” “economy,” “culture,” and “state” (that is, conceptions emerging in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), it also bears the inherent contradictions of all the above. The modern nation is a complex formula of a historically constituted community of interests and its inherent social conflicts of interests. Thus, for precisely this reason, the Marxist theoretical definition cannot be confined to an interpretation of a particular definition and its reiterations. It would be preferable to work out a typology of national development which does not employ the usual structural models (such as Staatsnation-Kulturnation) and addresses the inherent social standards and historical dynamics of integration, with particular regard to the evolutionary or revolutionary nature of the bourgeois national transformation, its economic preconditions, its leading class, and so on. The essence of such a point of departure was declared by Lenin already in 1894, who said that “the creation of these national ties was nothing else than the creation of bourgeois ties.”

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a collectively experienced great age”; see Domokos Kosáry, “A Pesti Hírlap nacionalizmusa 1841–1844” [The nationalism of Pest Herald, 1841–44], Századok 76 (1945): 384. About the contradictory nature of this concept of nation, see the recent analysis by László Péter, “A magyar nacionalizmus” [Hungarian nationalism], in Ezzmek nyomában [On the trace of ideas], ed. Sándor Németh, (Munich, 1965), 199ff.

If the modern nation is something greater than what may be defined acceptably through any given model using static criteria, it is a result of the complexity of “bourgeois ties” and the fundamentally new model of the “national society” that is sustained by them. The turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represents the start of something new, not only insofar as earlier unifying processes speeded up on the basis of the modern bourgeois transformation, creating superior and closer forms. It is also in this period that the objective reality (group), which came to be termed nation—defined and supported theoretically in various ways, often by poorly considered arguments, criteria, and factors—assumed the status of an ideological entity abstracted from its concrete components. Since the end of the eighteenth century (and only since then), “nation” became a vehicle or pinnacle of standard values, defined for members of a given group. Consequently, it became a fundamental organizing principle of the economic, social, political, and cultural sphere (whether this was real or merely hoped for). And as such it became a significant (the dominant or, at least, a dominant) object of group loyalty. This is what the conceptual model of a “national society” boils down to. The modern nation is, in reality, a functional association of the elements listed above (objective and subjective) and exists in connection with the creation of bourgeois ties.

These are the elements and tenets which are suitable for facilitating a clear and unambiguous understanding of what, beyond all of the diverse criteria, is common to the modern concept of “nation,” abruptly parting company with historical content. If we restrict ourselves to the three most important ones, they would consist of the tenet (or requirement) that every person belongs (or should belong) to a particular nation, and vice versa: that the individuals who form the nation are, in principle, equal members. (Prior to the eighteenth century, according to various conceptions of natio, an individual could simultaneously be a member of more than one nation, in the linguistic, regional, or feudal sense, while the concept of formal equality before the law was unheard of.)

The second tenet represents an entirely new notion of national sovereignty in which the political structure and political authority—the state itself—is a derivative of the concept of the nation; the state is legitimate only when it embodies national sovereignty. If sovereignty does not already exist, then it must be created. (Prior to the eighteenth century, the categories of regnum and natio were either completely independent or, if they were in some way interdependent, in contrast to the modern age, their relationship was inverted: the natio was a function of the regnum inasmuch as the view held at the time—broadly speaking—
"Nationality" and "National Consciousness" in the Middle Ages

regarded the subjects of one political territory as members of the same nation. The abstraction which is a condition of the modern concept of national sovereignty would have been incomprehensible, indeed senseless, within the pre-eighteenth century conceptual structure.)

Lastly, the nation according to this model is the object of political loyalty par excellence; indeed, it occupies a dominant position among all these relations. In the event of a conflict of loyalties (for example, if the state does not express the national concept), in theory civil allegiance may be legitimately violated in the spirit of national loyalty. (Prior to the eighteenth century, affiliation to nationality, per se, was generally not a political obligation and as one aspect of group loyalty it was typically subordinated to multiple forms of political fidelitas which bound the individual.)

The grouping of the points of view outlined above is by itself, of course, no more than a kind of notional model; it does not encompass all details and does not make claims with respect to historical explanation or assessment. In any case, this was not even its objective. Nor was it an objective to further nuance this outline. A historical phenomenon is often best understood through its contrasts. In my opinion, with the aid of this model such contrasts can be brought to light more clearly than with customary models. What then, is the question at hand?

In various historical periods and within various social structures larger groups of humans living in largely delineable shared spaces play a role which, irrespective of their internal social structure and current political or organizational frameworks, form a unit as a result of their shared historical past and on the basis of linguistic and cultural interdependencies in the broadest sense. Their association with or differentiation (“secondary in-group” or “we-group” nature) from other groups is explicitly considered according to these relationships. If these most widely recognized features of nationality are projected onto a historical context, with each perceived separately and interpreted appropriately according to their mutual relationship, it becomes obvious that “nation-

21 The constituent elements of the model, whether taken individually or taken together, are not especially original as they have arisen frequently and were articulated, with greater or lesser emphasis, in the modern literature on the question. At the same time, one cannot emphasize strongly enough that these considerations generally remained alien to the entire viewpoint and practice of—and even the usage of concepts in—historiography. The purpose here was more to blur historical and conceptual boundaries than it was to seek contrasts.

22 Having an autonomous political territory or organization (statehood), or economic unity is not a criterion, nor necessarily a requirement, of a nationality; its criterion and main constitutive element is a historico-cultural tradition that is passed on in a common language, and its awareness of relatedness based on this.
A Conceptual Model

"Nationality" is a quite general and very old historical phenomenon. For instance, it cannot be limited to European history or limited to recent centuries. Indeed, many ethnic groups entering history—the Ancient Greeks, for example—could be perceived in this sense as nationalities, though not every "people" is concurrently also a nationality.23 The unity of the Greek "nation" (ethnos) was defined by Herodotus as "a community of blood and language, temples and ritual; our common way of life...". However, the awareness and reality of such "national" affinity did not stand inherently in relation to the primary groups and frameworks of the social and political structure, or with the loyalties which sustained them. "Society" was constituted by the fellowship or community (koinonia) of free citizens, which within the framework of city-states was bound to the idea, constitution, and organization of the polis (the politeia) with a sort of charged "political ethos." European history marked its beginnings in Hellas with society, as a sovereign political community, and the very concept of politics distinguished itself sharply from the category of ethnos at both the level of reality and abstraction. Other historical periods and structures also adhered, in their own fashion, to this separation.24 It was left to the modern age to form a "natural" fusion out of these three categories.

23 It would be problematic to perceive, for example, tribal groupings as being "primitive nationalities" even though in linguistic and cultural respects they generally form a coherent unit, and indeed in this sense may be more homogeneous than more highly socially differentiated societies. On the other hand, it is not possible to speak of an Egyptian or Babylonian "nationality" even though these are both instances of larger human groups and/or peoples with some degree of cultural coherence who lived on shared territory. In order that one may speak of nationality, it is, in any event a condition that the community in question should not be a primitive blood-kinship or local formation (face-to-face group), but a clan in the sociological sense of a "secondary ingroup" that keeps track of its relatedness through its own inherent characteristics. A group of this kind is automatically the product of a more prolonged (artificial) historical integration and, to a significant degree, political factors as well (even when it does not necessarily form an autonomous political framework). But on the other hand, the main subjective condition of its relatedness is generally the group's organic inception, a belief in a community of origin (although the group itself does not precisely form a genuine "community of blood"). The fictive community of origin is only a characteristic expression of historical interdependence, and the linguistic community is not something a priori but, as a tool of communication and vehicle of historicocultural tradition, is itself a historical construct, being no more than an aggregate of loosely linked dialects. A community of culture should, of course, be understood in the broadest sense encompassing a great variety of things—from functions of material culture (mode of production, lifestyle, etc.) to a community of traditions, customs, moral and behavioral norms, to religious concepts and high culture (visual arts, literature, etc.), to the institutional frameworks for all these; it depends on the given structure which of these elements stand in the forefront of which grouping. In this respect a static definition is not possible as different features may stand out under different social conditions and in different periods; indeed, even the characteristics of the selfsame nationality may change while the identity of the group remains the same.

24 It is not our objective here to go into the fine details of the ramifications of these issues. The relationships themselves show a multiplicity of historical formulations, but they agree that nationality, for all the social,

“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

With respect to the topic under discussion, the difference between the Middle Ages and the modern age appears in much clearer relief if the functional associations of the three categories are taken as a basis than if we say that the incipient nationalities in the Middle Ages developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to fully fledged nations. In fact, the nationes et gentes (insofar as these designations genuinely do relate to the antecedents of modern nations) were important historical realities in the latter half of the Middle Ages and the early modern period. They were usually acknowledged in a conceptually adequate manner as a community of “language, customs, and manners,” lingua et mores (consuetudines), with the latter conceptual mark also used in reference to what today would be classified under the heading of law, culture, or historical and cultural traditions, etc. Accordingly, people in the Middle Ages related to these frameworks with certain group emotions, though naturally both the objective reality of the nationality and the quality of the emotions changed over time, bearing no resemblance to the modern age. The decisive structural difference, however, is not here but in the fact that, while it is true that a person in the Middle Ages kept in mind his “national” affiliation, this did not represent “society” for him, at least not society as “Gesellschaft” (as understood by Ferdinand Tönnies), and only very rarely as Gemeinschaft; and it was not the focus of political loyalty.

In general, during the greater part of the Middle Ages, it was impossible for a clear notion of “society” as a category of human community, intrinsic, sovereign, and independent of higher authority, to emerge as it was caught between St. Augustine’s universal societas fidelium, regarded as the only perfect Gesellschaft, and the narrow, local forms of Gemeinschaft. What existed between the political, and cultural factors which played a decisive role in its inception, did not exist in any natural relationship or connection with either the primary groups of social affiliation (classes, estates, casts, local communities) nor the basic formulations of political organization (city-states, empires), nor with the primary frameworks of religious-cultural devotion (local or imperial political cults, world religions). Cf. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, 9–22. On the frameworks of antiquity, see Tadeusz Walek-Czernecki, “Le rôle de la nationalité dans l’histoire de l’antiquité,” Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences 1 (1929–30): 303–20. On categories of Greek political thought, see Charles Howard McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West from the Greeks to the Middle Ages (New York, 1915), 3–80 (esp. 8–10 and 61–68); see also Louis Krattinger, Der Begriff des Vaterlandes im republikanischen Rom (Immensee, 1944), passim (esp. 27, 40, 59 and 69).


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two during the early feudal and vassalage periods was partly the bonds of bare subordination (*populus subditus*) and partly the registry of a complex network of diversified personal fealty obligations (*fidelitas*). All these stood in diametric opposition to any sort of cohesive social organization. As a believer (*fidelis Christianus*), an individual was indeed considered a “citizen,” in the Augustinian sense, of “society” understood broadly (*populus Christianus*), but only in his capacity as a believer and in the spiritual sense. Even the mundane organization of this virtual *res publica*, the Church, did not recognize the notion of *civis*. Every believer was classed here too as a subordinate (*fidelis subditus*). In the earthly sphere, however, the ancient concept and organization of sovereign human association, the *populus*, was not even recognized in a theoretical way. For the first 700–800 years of the Middle Ages, the “politically organized people,” or *populus*, meant submission to an authority legitimized by God (*populus a deo imperatori* [regi, duci, comiti, etc.] *subiectus*) and mediated by the Church. Its cohesion was not guaranteed by constitutive and inherent social, legal, political, or cultural factors (as was the case with the *populus Romanus* of antiquity) but solely by this relationship of subjection. But the vectors of feudal allegiance that cut willy-nilly through the social model rendered this relationship illusory. Within this structure the category of “political loyalty” was identified with the concept of fidelity (*fides-fidelitas*), mixed with elements of the barbarian retinue relationship and the Christian faith. This concept was ethicized through this vassalage and assumed an ideological character, and the political relationship of the individual became crystallized around the quality of *fidelis subditus*. The fidelity of allegiance towards the person of the king, or the *regnum*, was essentially nothing more than the transposition of this model to the civil law relationships that served as a surrogate for the concept of state.26

Accordingly, the major changes in European history commenced with the advent of a second feudal age (Marc Bloch), particularly in the wake of the es-

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tablishment of towns and the appearance of corporate (estate) organisms in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At this time when ancient theories of political and social organization were revived—principally though the rediscovery of Roman law and Aristotle’s *Politics*—categories suitable to express theoretically the changes materialized. In addition to *fidelis subditus*, the concept of *civis*, and the category of the sovereign political society, *civilis societas* emerged—with characteristic medieval content, of course. The outward forms of a free and legitimate human community and of a sovereign society (*populus liber, societas publica*), derived from the principle of *ius gentium* and existing independently of higher authority (*absque autoritate principis, sine licentia superioris*), were naturally part and parcel of the existing or emerging forms of estate-corporate organizations (*universitates, communitates*). The medieval “social theorists,” from the glossators through to the scholastics and from Dante to the early modern period, by and large knew five basic types of human coexistence. The “societies” of the lower four, the village, town, province, and kingdom (*universitas vici, civitatis, provinciae, regni*), fitted naturally under the highest social organism and supreme *societas publica*: the *universitas populi Christiani* embodied by the Church. The nature of this “society” was shaped by the return to the models of antiquity; through them it would surface from the shadow of earlier centuries when its constitutive features were discovered as the inherent forms of “law and public utility,” *unitatis iuris et communis utilitatis* (Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum* II, 2, 42, 4.). However, unlike the modern view of society, this one never encompassed the entire community of people (*multitudo hominum*) living within a given border, but denoted a feudally structured organism.

Among these, the broadest secular political society, the *universitas (communitas) regni*, was identified specifically with the estate pole of the state and as both the sphere of the person and as *persona ficta*. In the Thomist formula, the concept of “society” as personal sphere characteristically merges with the quasi-abstract concept of the “state”: *societas civilis sive res publica sive populus*. If we were to outline the developments which were initiated during the final third of the Middle Ages in very broad strokes in relation to these categories, then we might speak about a tendency of the state moving increasingly to the forefront in the institutional reality of the monarchy and in the minds of people. It confronted earlier local and narrowly regional (feudal or corporate) structures as well as universal Christian ties and structures. But this tendency altered the existing forms of “political loyalty” and “social” cohesion in terms of the fundamental dualism of the late medieval “state” (*status regis—status regni*). On the
A Conceptual Model

one hand, it not only reinforced the subject’s loyalty but it also gradually tied it to more abstract symbols and concepts (*corona regni*, *communis utilitas*, *patria*, etc.); on the other hand, however, it simultaneously deepened and consolidated the intrinsic feudal-cohesive development of “society,” *civilis societas*, as a *communitas regni*, thereby, the concept of society and people’s awareness of it became firmly cemented.

These conceptual schemes reflect, in a highly abstract form, of course, something of the diversity of the medieval world. This is precisely what makes them so suitable for demonstrating something crucial in a concise manner, namely, that there is no place in this system of classification for *natio*. This is not because “nationality” did not exist for the medieval person as an objective reality or as the object of group sentiments (as has previously been emphasized and will be shown again in detail later on), but because the social and political sphere was thrust into the background objectively and conceptually, and became almost completely irrelevant as compared to the primary (broader, i.e., Christian-universal, or monarchic-territorial, and more narrow, i.e., feudal-provincial, local, and estate-corporate) models. And even if these spheres had more or less coincided, the group sentiments associated with nationhood were of a character that was *different* from the dominant forms of social-political loyalty. Whether an individual’s social and political status was determined by his/her status as *fidelis subditus* to a higher authority (Church or empire, king, or liege lord) or could claim membership (*membrum universitatis*) in a corporate entity (a feudal *socieetas publica*), the dimensions of these loyalties were usually not associated with the framework of nationality. The loyalties themselves were stronger, more ethi-

“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

that were generally recognized as the cohesive force of *natio*. It is a natural organizational element of medieval thought that a person who is faithful (*fidelis*), possesses service obligations (*servitium*), and in some cases achieves merit by the “shedding of his own blood” or, if it comes to that, by sacrificing his life *pro domino, pro rege or regno, pro corona* or even *patria*, but in all such cases the idea of a *pro natione* or *gente* duty was completely alien, and any attempt to find it in sources would be fruitless.28

Just as alien from the medieval classification system was the notion that a person’s *natio* would stand for “society.” As we have seen, ever since the notion—in the sense of Tönnies’ *Gesellschaft*—was acknowledged in the Middle Ages, it found a place within the category of *civilis*, a legacy of antiquity. This was, in fact, a category of neo-Stoic origin which had served to summarize “civic relations,” as it were, in antiquity, while in scholasticism and according to medieval theories of society and jurisprudence it came to designate the “social and political sphere” par excellence (“*Politica, id est civilis scientia*,” Aquinas, *Com. Pol.* 5). Within this system, the conceptual counterpart to *civilis* was *naturalis*; and *civilis societas* was the conceptual counterpart to the *status naturalis*. In line with medieval thinking, *natio* belonged to the latter sphere of activity. The notion itself preserved its original etymological and semantic connections to the word *nascor* (*natus*, *natura*, etc.), or “birth,” suggesting a “natural” state, until early modern times. Thus, it did not primarily express a social or political (*civilis*) relationship but a natural endowment, so to speak. All who by reason of birth or natural origin belonged to an ethnic framework, or *gens*, were members of one and the same *natio*. It was not so much the changes in the content and framework of *natio* as it was the *gens* which generated fluctuation of the notion of “nationality” to such a large degree over the course of the Middle Ages, according to the narrower provincial, regional, and “tribal” or broader linguistic or constitutional frameworks and “peoples” (*gentes*). With regard to

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28 On the ethical value of the concept of fealty, see Graus, “Über die sogenannte germanische Treue,” 91ff.
In the ethics of chivalry loyalty to one’s liege was stronger than any other bond, including the parent-child relationship; the elevation of the bond of allegiance to the religious and ethical sphere is well illustrated by the words of the Duke of Gascony to a vassal at the Council of Limoges in 1031: “Debueras pro seniore tuo morte, suscipere ... et martyr dei pro tali fide fieres.” Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), 482. On the matter of the *membrum universitatis*: Gierke, *Die Staats- und Korporationslehre des Altertums und des Mittelalters* 433–34. On the problem of loyalty to *corona, regnum*, etc. see *Corona regni: Studien über die Kröne als Symbol des Staates in späteren Mittelalter*, ed. Manfred Hellmann, (Weimar, 1961), passim. The way in which more abstract ideas, formulated in the languages of jurisprudence and “political theology,” ended up as the focus of loyalty was analyzed in a masterly style by Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies.*
A Conceptual Model

the dominant understanding of this notion, the definition offered by Isidore of Seville in the eighth century retained its validity until the early modern period: “natio a nascendo (est appellata),” that is, “multitudo ab uno principio orta,” or, in other words, “nationes, quae propriis cognitionibus terminatae, gentes appellantur” (Etymologiae, IX, 2 and IX, 6). The greatest change to take place since the early Middle Ages was the “territorialization” of the way things were perceived. If at the end of the Middle Ages natio meant little more than an aggregate of naturales, the latter concept was a synonym for indigenae. In contrast, the basis for the conceptual definition of “political society” rooted in civilis relationships was a Ciceronian formulation which was resuscitated after the twelfth century: “Populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multituidinis iuris consensus et utilitatis communione sociatus [But the people is not every association of men, however congregated, but the association of the entire number, bound together by the compact of justice and the communication of utility].” (Cicero, De re publica I. 25, 39). The degree of contrast between the two concepts is obvious. To this one only needs to add the rather well-known aspect that language and lifestyle, cultural and historical tradition, behavioral and moral norms, dress, food and drink, everyday customs and all things encompassed by the topos of lingua et mores, together with the notion of the common origo (genus), were generally understood to be the community of a natio within the medieval conceptual framework. In contrast to the classification and value system radically transformed in the eighteenth century, the medieval nation was not considered a “cultural value” but a “natural,” indeed, innate—naturalis—attribute.29

29 Another definition of society in St. Thomas Aquinas: “Societas nihil aliud esse [videtur], quam adunatio hominum ad unum aliquum communiter agendum”—a society means a union of men, assembled together for one and the same purpose—in Contra impugnantes, Bk. 3; Thomas Eschmann, “Studies on the Notion of Society in St. Thomas Aquinas,” 16. On the antithesis of civilis and naturalis, see: Schmölz, “Societas civilis sive Republica sive Populus,” 37). On the origins of this concept of society in Antiquity, see McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West from the Greeks to the Middle Ages, 107ff. In fact, this is the model of the Augustinian concept of populus Christianus, which is also not a “natural” but “coetus multituidinis rationalis rerum, quas diligit, concordi communione sociatus”—an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love. “De Civitate Dei Bk. XIX, Ch. 24,” in Corpus Scriptorum Eccl. Lat., vol. 40, no. 2 (Prague, Vienna, and Leipzig, 1900), 419. On the concept of natio in Antiquity (e.g., Sextus Pompeius Festus, De verborum significatu, see “Natio est genus hominum, qui non aliunde venerunt, sed ibi nati sunt”) Gustav Meyer, ed., Thesaurus linguae Latinae, vol. 6, no. 2 (Leipzig), 1, 915–34. 1, 842–48. For Isidore’s definitions, see Migne, Patr. Lat., vol. 82 (Paris, 1878), 328 and 349. On the history of the concept in the Middle Ages, see below. On the discovery of the cultural value of the mother tongue, see Karl-Otto Apel, “Die Idee der Sprache in der Tradition des Humanismus von Dante bis Vico,” Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 8 (1963): esp. 104–19.
The extent to which the concepts of “society” and “nationality” consisted of different, quite unrelated qualities according to the cognitive framework of the Middle Ages is illuminated in the most succinct way by *De regimine principum* (book 1, Ch. 10), a disquisition by Aquinas, who is one of the most consequent theoreticians of this framework. According to this text, the guiding principle for every large human grouping is *amicitia*. A simple translation meaning friendship, friendly circle, or the like is inadequate as it signifies something much closer to what we would today refer to as social cohesion or alliance, with every *amicitia* being consolidated on the basis of some community (*communio*). In Aquinas’s view *amicitia* united human groups as a result of either the similarity of natural origins or “customs” (*vel per naturae originem, vel per morum similitudinem*) or through community by association (*per cuiuscunque societatis communioem*). The latter is clearly a difficult term to “translate” into modern terms because according to this framework “society” is precluded from being a *naturalis* endowment but is from the outset regarded as a *civilis* association or *societas*. This is what Aquinas, following Cicero, considered “not a human community which has come to be associated in just any manner” but “coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitas communione sociatus” (*De regimine principum*, Bk. 1, Ch. 2, 105), that is, one that agreement and similar interests produces based on solid legal principles, going beyond the general factor of *amicitia*. What is more, there is a fourth condition—*virtus*—which consists of *prudentia politica* “directed towards the common good of the city or kingdom” (“Quae ordinatur ad bonum commune civitatis vel regni”; *De regimine principum*, Bk. 2, Ch. 2, 47, 11). This is a clear conceptual model of medieval society, of *societas civilis sive populus*—the feudal estate cohesion of the Middle Ages. This, incidentally, differs clearly and pointedly from another kind of human community which is also united by cohesion or *amicitia*—an emotional one, one might say. It is not the *civilis* form of association and therefore not *societas* (*Gesellschaft*), but a community of “natural” origin and tradition; that is, a form of community that according to medieval definitions also encompasses the additional element of language, to which the category of *natio* (“nationality”) belongs.

Nuancing this picture further is the task of historical analysis. The structure outlined above changed, of course, absorbing new elements and becoming more...
fluid, but it did not break up altogether until the eighteenth century. Over the
course of France’s development, rightly considered classical, the medieval heri-
tage of provincial nationalities, nationalités provinciales (or as they are referred
to according to the language used in the sources: nations de Burgund, Cham-
pagne, Normandie, etc.) was gradually forged into the French nationalité d’État
by the monarchy itself. Even in the eighteenth century this nation française was
no more than the “aggregate of subjects of the monarchy” (for instance, les Bour-
guignons, les Champenois, les Picards, les Normands, les Bretons sont autant des
peuples qui forment la nation française), or to use the terminology of absolutism,
simply mes peuples. Qu’est-ce qu’une nation? The French Revolution posed the
question in a new manner, with the answer offered in a famous pamphlet enti-
tled “What Is the Third Estate?”, written by Abbé Sieyès in January of 1789 on
the eve of the Revolution: Un corps d’associés vivant sous une loi commune et
représenté par la même legislature. The year 1789 can be regarded as the birth of
the modern nation inasmuch as the Revolution declared a principle out loud for
the first time which had been maturing within the Enlightenment’s world of
ideas and in the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. According to this principle
the nation was a form of corps politique, a historical configuration based partly
on a community of language, partly on common institutions, historical tradi-
tions, customs, and manners. A novel political association of citizens, united by
a historical framework and represented by the “national assembly” (in itself a
conceptually new institution born at this historic moment), who possess sover-
eignty and serve as the theoretical source of the nation-state. Thus, the historical
formula, “nationality,” which already existed in a society’s horizontal relations,
now acquired a vertical principle, turning it into the modern nation. These cir-

The form peuple des nations françaises also occurs. In parallel, the concept also had a feudal-corporate
character (with antecedents which, as will be seen, stretched back to the thirteenth century). It was still
possible, even in the early eighteenth century, for one representative of the feudal opposition to argue that
the French nation was to be identified with the nobility who descended from the Frankish conquerors,
whereas the people, descendants of the subservient Gallic masses, had never belonged to the nation. An
anonymous leaflet of 1758, however, was already branding as unjust that writers and artists, merchants and
financiers were subsumed under the concept of the people when, in reality, they ought to belong to a more
elevated stratum of nation. The absolutist perspective, in contrast, rejected any corporate concept; as Louis
XIV said: “La nation ne fait pas un corps en France, elle réside tout entière dans la personne du roi.” See
Zernatto, “Nation: The History of a Word”; Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics, 314–35; Robert R.

It is symbolic, in a way, that an assembly of the third estate of June 1789 opened with a terminological
dispute. Mirabeau proposed that they call themselves représentants du peuple français, but the majority
objected to an ambiguous, indeed unsavory word like peuple being co–opted for higher purposes, which
is how, in the end, the term assemblée nationale came to be accepted (Zernatto, “Nation: The history of a
cumstances legitimized an entirely new form of argumentation, so that already within the first year of the Revolution soldiers refused to obey certain orders given by their superiors; “nous sommes les soldats de la Nation,” they declared. Only the notion of a “national society” was able to position the nation at the heart of political loyalty.

The proportion of fiction and reality in the notion of a “national society” is a different matter, but it is a question relating to the Janus face of the modern nation, concerning the side which doesn’t turn towards the past but gazes into the future, and therefore points beyond the question’s original scope. It is also a different matter that the theoretical “model” of the nation which the Revolution gave birth to was distorted within a short time. In practice, the young French nationalism became aggressively expansionist. Thus, the French Revolution became a fountainhead for European nationalism in a double sense: conceiving it and triggering a reaction. For this reason, and due to the differences in historical antecedents and social structures that arose, there is more than one type of process leading to the birth of a modern nation. The concept of nation has engendered a great many variants, from revolutionary rationalism to conservative mysticism. Therefore, to speak of a uniform “concept of nation” is impossible in precisely the same way that attempts at a definition which become exhausted by enumerating static criteria will necessarily be unattainable. It is impossible to generate conceptual features which express something that is undeniably common in the concept of “nation per se.”

word,” 564–66). It was for similar reasons that in England Disraeli proposed that the traditional formula “people of England” be replaced by the designation “English nation,” given that the former applied merely to a form of natural unity; by contrast “the civilised community is a nation.” (It is not hard to see not only the distinction, medieval in origin, between naturalis and civilis, but equally the characteristic modern conceptual fusion of civilis societas and natio.) Gerhard A. Ritter, “Nation und Gesellschaft in England,” Historische Zeitschrift 198 (1964): 25–28. The relevant passage in the 1791 French constitution (vol. 3, 1): “La souveraineté est une, indivisible. Elle appartient à la Nation. Aucune section du peuple ni aucun individu ne peut s’en attribuer l’exercice.” On this subject, see René Johannet, Le principe des nationalités (Paris, 1918), 85ff.; Otto Vossler, Der Nationalgedanke von Rousseau bis Ranke (Berlin, 1937); François-Alphonse Aulard, Le patriotisme français de la renaissance à la révolution (Paris, 1921); Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, 263–328.

Lot, “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” in Recueil des travaux historiques de F. Lot, 433.

This is the contradiction that was exposed already in the very “moment” of birth of the modern nation. The 1791 French constitution itself stipulated a relatively high property qualification as a condition for being able to exercise rights of citizenship: the radicals’ concept of the nation (La nation, c’est la France lettrée ou riche) proved illusory. The birth of the modern nation and citizen coincided only ideologically, in practice the poor—the fourth estate—was left out from the reality of corps politique. Already Marat had put it into words (“the poor don’t have a home”) and a little later, the historian Augustin Thierry was bemoaning the fact that “We think we are one nation, yet we are two nations in one and the same land . . .” See Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics, 324–25.
The only common element is that the model of “national society” is one that is general, though in reality it is articulated, of course, in distinctive outward forms. The historical and conceptual rupture originates in the relationship of the constituent elements of the model, between the modern nation and its historical antecedents (“nationality” and “nation”), even though the original linguistic form refers solely to historical associations and continuity. To summarize briefly, “nationality” is a very old historical formulation, and so is the notion of “society” as a sovereign political community, and the category of “political loyalty.” But these three entities shared no intrinsic features within earlier eras and structures. What is new and has only existed since the end of the eighteenth century, is the historical fusion and functional relationship between these three categories; this is the “nation” as we understand it today.35

The models created have their own widely recognized advantages and disadvantages. The main criterion, however, is one precise feature—leaving all other possible aspects aside: by accentuating certain key features the model should serve its purpose as an abstraction. A model is not well-suited to express causal relations, reflect a diversity of processes, or to provide an explanation for the emergence of a given phenomenon. Nor was this our purpose here, as the objective is not to examine the historical context of national development but to highlight a conceptual distinction. This is not an end in itself, of course, but a methodological starting point for a historical investigation, for separating the historical layers of the subject. As the historiography shows, a major handicap in this process of separation is the fact that unity is lacking in the theoretical underpinnings of conceptual use, and this has repercussions for the end results as well. In the final analysis, the literature on the topic indicates that the “common denominators” will not be discovered by a theoretical approach alone without a historical analysis, nor will they be found using a historical approach alone without a theoretical analysis. Lastly, the goal of unifying historical and theoretical analyses observable over the last two or three decades is also inadequate without shared methodological bases and perspectives. The most important handicap to the present day is found in the latter circumstances, of course. The establishment of the modern nation not only affected the rearrangements and relationships between the categories discussed above, but retrospectively af-

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35 If one should want to further differentiate, the formula would need to be extended to the fusion and mutual relations of “nationality” and categories such as “economy,” “state,” “culture,” etc., which have likewise been in existence since the eighteenth century.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

affected the past, very concept of “history” as well. Yet, the same social and intellectual transformations which, after the eighteenth century, dragged history out of the shadows of God’s Earthly Plan, and discovered the sovereign history of mankind as a replacement of *historiae humanae* moving towards the “goal” of Salvation, at the same time also gave birth to modern nationalism and, thus, with virtually the same motion placed history into a cognitive framework that was new but equally subject to teleological interpretation. Within this framework the latent but immanent principle of history was the national factor and the goal of the historical process now became the emergence of the modern nation. It is impossible to say that this school of thought has been consigned to the past along with romanticism. Astonishingly recently, a surprising number of case studies, manuals, and syntheses have been produced in this spirit. Indeed, this is often the motive which directs source-based investigations of the early antecedents of the nation and national consciousness. Needless to say, the other extreme position, which is prone to treat the phenomenon of nationalism itself as some sort of strange anomaly, does not aid our understanding of historical reality either. Conceptual and terminological aspects are of no special interest for either position; the former school seeks to demonstrate an essential historical and conceptual identity in the category of nation, while the latter conflates primitive xenophobia with a unifying social factor. Naturally, it was not the intention of the outline presented above to chart a course between these two extremes, or even to say anything decisive at all on the historical context itself for the time being. It was merely to point out the intrinsic conceptual features that can be used to distinguish between the two important categories of “nationality” and “nation.” Accordingly, we sought to identify internal conceptual markers for using these categories in a historical context, or at a minimum to reduce the scope of subjective interpretation so that we may carry less ballast when launching a historical investigation into the early antecedents of the nation.

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36 See the comments of Werner Conze, "Nation und Gesellschaft: Zwei Grundbegriffe der revolutionären Epoche," in this connection.

37 On the prolongation of the romantic model, and the proliferation of the artificial, distorting “national aspect” of history which appears even in historiography with Marxist pretensions, see Szűcs, *A nemzet historikuma és a történetiszindélet nemzeti látószöge*.

38 This attitude is present, above all, here and there in the works of modern American research into nationalism.
The Historical Model

Since Aristotle scholarship has been, among other things, the skilled ability to distinguish between things. The common notions of historiography acquire a certain scholarly value when, with their help, a part of a historical reality that belongs together according to certain important features can be separated from parts which are linked by less significant features. A term becomes devalued and loses its scholarly utility if it has been applied rampantly with too many shades of meaning. This is not to assert, of course, that the model proposed in the preceding section is the only option; undoubtedly distinctions may also be imagined using other approaches. What is important is the recognition that, on the basis of significant features, the historical antecedents of national integration (or phenomena that appear at a distance to be analogous) form a different part of historical reality than the phenomenon of the modern nation. And it would be practical to give expression to these circumstances in the terminology. This conceptual and terminological necessity is not at all generally accepted. Nor is it irrelevant which markers are considered to be constitutive of the terminological distinction, because this has theoretical repercussions. Aside from this, the question arises as to whether, even at a terminological level, we solve the problem by making reference to anything before the eighteenth century as a “nationality.” Generally speaking, our method will help to prevent faulty and ahistorical associations, and we shall obtain a term that may be applied safely in numerous contexts, but will we be able to manage in any given context? Can we dispense altogether with the word “nation” and the adjective “national” in reference to earlier centuries?

Here we face an unusual terminological and methodological dilemma for the historian, which is less of a concern to the philosopher or sociologist who deals with the subject. However conscientious the historian may be about the fundamental structural difference that is hidden within phenomena behind the history of the concept of “nation” per se, when naming certain processes or groups of phenomena or attempting to emphasize contrast, even with reference to relatively early centuries he cannot dispense with the adjective “national.” At the same time, he is well aware that in European languages the very formation of these antecedents is not at all generally accepted. Nor is it irrelevant which markers are considered to be constitutive of the terminological distinction, because this has theoretical repercussions. Aside from this, the question arises as to whether, even at a terminological level, we solve the problem by making reference to anything before the eighteenth century as a “nationality.” Generally speaking, our method will help to prevent faulty and ahistorical associations, and we shall obtain a term that may be applied safely in numerous contexts, but will we be able to manage in any given context? Can we dispense altogether with the word “nation” and the adjective “national” in reference to earlier centuries?

39 See Note 14 above. As an extreme case one can mention that even in the most recent debates among Soviet historians a view has emerged, citing some phrases lifted from Marx and Engels, that nation is the appropriate general term to designate the manifestations of the slave-holding or feudal formations, see the comment of S.T. Kaltakhchian, Voprosy istorii, no. 6 (1966): 24.
of the word *national* (*nemzeti* in Hungarian) is an eighteenth-century development. This is a characteristic linguistic shell of the deeper ideological and conceptual transformations for which the category of *nation* has been assigned as an "organizing principle" of the phenomena since the eighteenth century (and only since then). Insofar as the category of "national history," which combines specific aspects of processes that took place in earlier centuries into a conceptual unit, is not meant to authenticate an a priori principle, but to serve as an organizing principle for research methodology, it represents a use of the term and a perspective that is scientifically justified. "National," as a technical term in the narrow sense of the word, i.e., a *terminus technicus* or conceptual aid, is indispensable. Although our conceptual framework may have changed radically since the eighteenth century, the terminological transformation was often neither radical nor consistent enough, so that in relation to our subject it did not evolve a terminologically adequate solution for the curious ambiguity, outlined above, of historical connection and phenomenological antithesis, which characterizes the conceptual relationship between the historical *nation* and the modern "nation."

The "nation-state" as we understand it today, for instance, did not exist before the nineteenth century, but not because nationalities had not yet evolved, or because nationality and the state framework did not generally coincide, but because the inherent logical precondition of the concept is the modern idea of "nation" and the doctrine of national sovereignty that stems from it. That is, the state is the substrate of nation, and *natio* is not a conceptual function of *regnum* or any other political framework. A further precondition is the modern abstraction of the "state," which, in turn, postulates a series of institutions which only developed in the early modern era, along with other modern concepts. Nevertheless, in certain contexts it is hardly possible to avoid the designation "nation-state (monarchy)"—as a technical term—even already in reference to the late Middle Ages if we seek to express the complex reality which existed behind the expanding category of the *regnum*, in contrast to the dualistic universalism of

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41 On the indispensability of the "technische Begriff" in this connection, but also one the ways these contents can be harmonized, see Otto Brunner, *Historische Zeitschrift* 186 (1958): 109–10.
The Historical Model

*Imperium* and *Sacerdotium*, on the one hand, and to the heterogeneous particularism of feudal *provinciae* on the other. The situation is similar with the designations of “national” language, culture, market, and so on, including the term “national consciousness,” to be sure. The employment of such compounds is a constrained but, because of the inadequacy of our classification system, necessary conceptual compromise. Nevertheless, how far should such a compromise go? If one does not take a stance of principled agnosticism, one needs to be able to offer more details. Is anything that can in some way be brought into historical connection with a present-day nation to be regarded as “national”? Historians who possess a modicum of critical acumen have long shuddered at the equally old idea that the “nation-states” of Western Europe resulted from the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century, whereas it is common to name the process which unfolds in the thirteenth century as the birth of “national monarchies,” on the grounds that by this time there is a closer and more direct connection to the modern meaning of the concept.42 But where can a *terminus post quem* be designated reliably? It seems self-evident that one should strive to establish a conceptual foundation on the basis of which the phenomenon in question, in its modern and in its historical meaning, will reveal its identity, or at least indicate a close relationship on the basis of *significant conceptual features*. In other words, a necessary and forced compromise is justified if it is unequivocally deliberate that the technical compromise is for the sake of the “research,” and the smaller the compromise the better it is.

It is not easy to strike the right balance, of course. Remaining with the example offered above, researchers of political history, law and institutions, or political theory will list the same criteria as to why it is that the French kingdom of the first Capetians in the tenth century cannot be considered a “national monarchy,” while the kingdom of Philip “the Fair” (around 1300) can be regarded *in a sense* as such. When we are dealing with “national consciousness” things become even more difficult. What features should be regarded as definitive in measuring “sentiment,” a conscious phenomenon? The ground is shaky everywhere one treads, but in any event it is certain that one will not be able to gain a

42 For an overview, see e.g., Joseph R. Strayer, “The Historical Experience of Nation-Building in Europe,” in *Nation-Building*, ed. W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (New York, 1961), 23 ff. Incidentally, of course, the term “state” is itself the same kind of technical expression under medieval conditions, as the age was unfamiliar with this abstraction, while the Latin *status* and its derivatives (*stato*, *estado*, *estat*, *state*, etc.) designated something quite different before the early modern age; see Arnold Oskar Meyer, “Zur Geschichte des Wortes Staat,” *Die Welt als Geschichte* 10 (1950): 229–39.
reliable hold on the matter if one focuses solely on the history of “nationality.” With this approach one could collect sources which, however colorful, ultimately say little more than that there was a “bit more” of a measure of reality and cognitive content behind a given ethnonym in, say, the fifteenth century than in the eleventh or thirteenth century, and “much more” in the eighteenth century. With this sort of approach one cannot hope for more robust conceptual points of reference, only an enrichment of detail in the narrative at best. The situation is different if the question of nationality and the conscious elements associated with it are viewed in connection with a shift in social and political relationships as subordinate to the whole ideological structure, that is, in a functional relationship with other categories. One wonders whether the model of the distinction outlined above might be of assistance in construing a relative conceptual distinction in the Middle Ages.

As we have seen, the essence of the modern nation subsists in the fact that nationality, kindled by the bourgeois transformation of the modern age and fulfilling its needs, became a fundamental structural element in the sociopolitical sphere. The categories of “society,” “nationality,” and “politics” became fused in a way that earlier epochs had not experienced. In this shape, modern European nations were also completely different from their medieval antecedents. But was the function of nationality in medieval Europe identical in every respect to the one it fulfilled, for instance, in the civilizations of Asia Minor and on the Mediterranean coast in antiquity, or in contemporaneous non-European societies such as the high cultures of Asia—China and India? Isn’t it a specific feature of European history that “nationality” in a certain sense—albeit with a form and content different from that of the modern—enters into a kind of organic fusion par excellence with the spheres of “society” and “politics,” becoming, in a certain sense, an “ideological” factor? Is it not possible that European developments in the Middle Ages do, after all, comprise, in advance, elements of modern nationality? Is there a model, a particular formulation of defined elements that modern evolution transcends so as to realize the model and replenish it with new content? If that were the case, then we could have a handle on the historical and conceptual terminus post quem, which in a terminological sense would also apply to the category of “national” (as a “technical concept”). For this, it would be a methodological requirement that an examination of medieval forms of “nationality” and “national consciousness” would be the subject not of pragmatic data collection or apologetic essays but of the history of political ideas. This history would have to consider also the synchronic context of European develop-
ment. And its purpose would not be to gather arguments to support the idea of the nation’s “antiquity” but to contribute to an understanding of the inherent structures to be found in Europe’s historical development.

Spatial limits will not permit me to raise more than one “representative” example, namely a brief outline of the French development, which, also in medieval history, is rightly regarded as a “classic” case. I wish to point out the scope of possible conceptual “coordinates,” offering signposts rather than a thorough examination of the matter.

Permit me one remark by way of a preamble: the concept of “nationality” in the way that it is normally used today is itself a retrospective category of sorts. That is to say, in speaking about nationalities within a historic context we will assume that it refers to a configuration from which the modern nation historically emerged. History, however, deals with a very wide range of ethnic groups which one is fully justified in describing as “nationalities,” many of them having vanished over the course of the centuries, in part, as a result of the process that generated other nationalities, being completely assimilated or only surviving as faint traces. “Nationality” is neither an a priori nor an organic configuration, but essentially a highly artificial historical entity which, over the course of its development, enabled political factors to play a decisive role. “Nationality” and “ethnic group” are not synonymous categories. Ethnic characteristics may factor as distinguishing marks of nationality, but nationality does not signify an ethnic group ab ovo.

It would be awkward to speak about a “French ethnic group,” for instance. The French nationality or “historical raw material” was formed by a mesh of Celtic, Roman, and Germanic ethnic elements. Even the Roman society in Gallia (the Romanized descendants of Ligurians, Celts, Iberians, and so on), the groups that, according to early medieval sources, were collectively called Romani, could not be subsumed under an ethnic category, though the early medieval viewpoint regarded them as one and the same nationality (natione Romani). In Gallia, from the fifth to seventh centuries, next to certain groups, which were able to preserve their ethnic unity (for example, the Bretons), the conquering Germanic peoples were sharply demarcated from one another, with societies having ex natione distinct legal customs (lex gentis), divided according to an awareness of origins, social traditions, and customs (origo, mos, consuetudo) and using a different language (lingua). The groups that include the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, Burgundians, Alemanni, and Goths could be perceived as barbarian “nationalities” whose unity was recorded in documents, chronicles, the “common law,” capitialaries, and patristic literature. The inner cohesion of the groups was...
assured by a meaningful and vigorous form of ethnosociological “we” (or in-group) consciousness (gentilism). This was demonstrated in detail in a recent major monograph by Reinhard Wenskus. Over the course of the sixth-eighth centuries, the “Romanized” barbarian kingdoms and early feudal relationships gradually loosened up, eventually upsetting these “gentilist” structures. The assimilation of Roman and barbarian societal elements occurring on various social levels led to the society’s reorganization within new territorial frameworks. The inhabitants of these territorial formations, which proved durable, were perceived before long as belonging to the same “nationality” (note that reference to \textit{natio Aquitana} as early as the seventh century). In parallel, the notion of \textit{Francus} also became “territorialized” in two opposing directions. During the seventh to ninth centuries \textit{Franci} referred at times to the bond between the freemen of the entire \textit{regnum Francorum} within a state framework. During this period the popular etymology of \textit{francus} (that is, \textit{liber} “free”) arose, which has survived in the Romance languages up to the present day with the term \textit{franc.} At other times it referred to the totality of subjects of a realm, the Carolingian \textit{ducatus Franciae}. In the wake of integration efforts by the first Carolingians, there is no doubt that after the middle of the eighth century there emerged a historical possibility of a \textit{nationalité franque} (F. Lot), or Frankish nationality. The literary apotheosis of this (and not of European nationalism) rings out from the so-called long prologue of the \textit{Lex Salica}, around the time of Pepin the Short.43 (763/764)

However, the possibility of a “Frankish nationality” was preempted (among others) by the dissolution of Carolingian unity. Historically, the potential for a \textit{French} nationality emerged. The conditions for this included, for one, the lin-

The Historical Model

The linguistic and cultural assimilation which appeared in some features already in the eighth century; and for another, the recurrent partitioning of the Carolingian Empire (843, 870, 887, etc.). But all of this was still only a remote precondition. In the ninth century the “French,” as such, did not yet exist, and it would be equally inaccurate to associate the birth of the “French state” with the Treaty of Verdun (843). 44 Although the imperial annals—looking back, admittedly, from the perspective of the eleventh century—contain the famous phrase *Hec divisio facta est inter teutones Francos et latinos Francos* (887), and it is possible to trace the separation of a *lingua romana rustica* and a *lingua theotisca* to earlier sources (786, 823, 845, etc.), this only means that, roughly speaking between the Treaty of Verdun and the Treaty of Bonn (921), a political framework evolved under the crowns of the last of the Carolingian and the first Capetian emperors which over the course of centuries forged a populace that spoke a “barbarized” Latin tongue into a unified mass. Likewise, on the other side of the Rhine a political framework (the *regnum Teutonicorum*, first in 919) evolved as well. While this did not develop into a proper state, nevertheless the framework became a loose structure for processes which enabled the interdependence of the dialects of the gentes ultra Rhenum, the theudisc (ultimately from the Old Germanic *theudo*, “people,” which later became the word *deutsch*) unity, to be consciously established. 45 That this was the process of the birth of peoples and nationalities was not evident to the peoples being born for quite some time. First it was outside observers who considered the French or the Germans as one “people.” The first datable authentication of genus Francorum (in the sense of the word “French”) and Teutonicorum is in an Italian document from 909. Two centuries were to elapse by the time French chroniclers used gens, genus, or natio as collective terms in the French context and German chroniclers used them in the German context (around 1100). Otherwise, for the “Germans,” gens, natio, and the concept of nos (lingua nostra, gens nostra, princeps noster) embraced the likes of Saxones, Baioarii, and Thüringi. The “French” were regarded as Franci (the inhabit-

44 Linguistic and ethnic principles played no role in the Treaty of Verdun; the principles of partition were: affinitas, congruential, and aequa portio. See Zöllner, *Die politische Stellung der Völker im Frankenreich* (Veröff. des IÖG 13), 161; Eugen Ewig, “Karl der Große und die Karolingische Teilung,” in *Die Europäer und ihre Geschichte: Epochen und Gestalten im Urteil der Nationen* (Munich, 1961), 6–18.

45 The following items from the extensive literature on the subject are essential: Alfred Dove, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte des deutschen Vornamens* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 1916/78); Leo Weisgerber, *Deutsch als Volksname: Ursprung und Bedeutung* (Stuttgart, 1956); Walter Schlesinger, “Die Grundlegung der deutschen Einheit im frühen Mittelalter,” in *Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1961), 245–85.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

ants of Francia or, roughly speaking, what was later to be known as Île-de-France), Aquitani, Burgundiones, etc. There was an awareness of unity, of course, but mainly at the top, in the dynasties, within the consciousness of those who were cultivating the Carolingian tradition around the Louises, the Ottos living under the influence of the phantasm of translatio Imperii, and in the clergy who ministered to them in the abbeys of Saint-Denis, Fulda, Admont, etc.

It was also present in the consciousness of knights of the First Crusade who—as a result of the “contrast experience” (Kontrasterlebnis)—discovered in the midst of the babble of languages their “otherness” expressing their nationality. Conflicts were routine occurrences; Odo of Deuil wrote of the Second Crusade (1147) “the Germans were unbearable, intolerable (importabilis) to our people.” The French knighthood, as Guibert of Nogent reported, were taken aback to hear the “incomprehensible barbarian language” of German and other knights, and it is around this time that the topoi of the superbia Francorum, furor Teutonicorum, and perfidia Anglorum, which were to become fixed for centuries, first gained currency. Here language did not represent an intrinsic, constitutive “value” but was used for differentiation and mockery. The motifs of “nationality” consisted of simple apparel—anything unfamiliar, outlandish clothing, styled hair and beards, “ungainly” weaponry. These were all crude features which on the primal level are marks of the “ethnocentrism” of savage tribes.

To perceive the beginnings of national consciousness in such expressions, as often happens, is rather like having someone interpreting the emergence of money as a means of payment as the beginning of “capitalism.”

Incipient French nationality, for example, had no role in daily life as yet. The


regnum Francorum itself was no more than a claim of dominion coming from whichever sovereign wore the crown. The reality was terra, patria, pays, in essence the sovereign power of the seigneurs souzerains who numbered over 170 by the middle of the tenth century inside the territory of the French kingdom. The liege lords stood over their subjects not only in everyday matters of life—ranging from providing judicial services to taxation—but were also “ideologically” a focal point within the imagination of “their people.” Little good is said about kings in the Old French epic poetry. As a rule, they were considered weak, capricious, and insignificant figures. The “great names” in the world of chansons de geste are the likes of Godefroy de Bouillon, Raimond de Toulouse, and Robert de Normandie, regarded as the “champions of Christianity,” and entitled to the archaizing honorific of pater patriae. Anyone might have sneered at them, like the monk who summed up his impressions after travelling through the county (comitatus) of Tours as follows: “Right now I have as much power as the king of France, seeing that no one takes his orders any more seriously than they would mine.” In the county of Anjou in the eleventh century the king was ridiculed with the title pseudorex or regulus, whose rule was purely nominal (solo nomine). Francia was the name of a province considered the dynasty’s private dominion (subsequently Île-de-France), and up until the thirteenth century the collective name for the inhabitants of the province was Franci. At that time they still formed only a minute minority among many “nationalities” of the French kingdom. According to the sources, apart from the Franci, a natio or gens consisted of Bretons, Normans, Gascons, Aquitanians, Toulousians, and so on. All these nationes were undeniably “nationalities” because, as a result of centuries of tradition-building, they spoke a language that was by and large the same (and that for the inhabitants of a neighboring pays was considered a “different language”); they were also connected by the same customs (coutumes) and cultural traditions generally, so that in the conceptual language of the times they formed a unit lingua et moribus. In the Gesta Tancredi, Radulf claims that the Provençales differ from the Franci in their “manners, temperament, customs, and lifestyle” (Franci here is to be understood somewhat more broadly as applying to

the inhabitants of any territory north of the Loire). A specific “characterology” emerged, according to which men of the north were belligerent, heroic, and bold, whereas southerners were indolent, vain, and gluttonous, as summed up in a proverb of the time that Radulf cites: *Franci ad bella—Provinciales ad victualia*. In his *Opus maius* Roger Bacon enumerates “startling differences” that are to be found between *Gallici* (inhabitants of the Île-de-France) and, for example, Picardians, Normans, and Burgundians “in their customs and language” (*in moribus et linguis*). Bacon resided in France for a considerable period in the mid-thirteenth century (in Paris, between 1257 and 1267). At that time, the French nationality was still barely perceptible among the multiplicity of *nationalités provinciales*.50

Throughout essentially the whole of the Middle Ages—indeed, as we pointed out earlier, right up to the early modern period—these provincial nationalities came first. In Old French *nacion* (*nascion, nassion*) appears in the broader sense of “people,” but even in the late Middle Ages it was still the designation used first and foremost for the provincial framework. One of the most important French chroniclers, Jean Froissart (died c. 1410) made use of terms such as *nations de Calais/Gascon/France* or, for example, *toutes nations et par es-pécel Angloys, Bretons, Navarroys et Gascons* at every turn; that is to say, he observed matters in the good old way perceiving the English—the foreigners—as a compact entity, while viewing his own “nationality” in a differentiated way. Even when the feudal estates assembled in 1484, the assembly was formed by representatives of the *nations de Languedoc, de Languedoïl, d'Aquitaine, de Paris, de Normandie, and de Picardie*. What about the French language? Even as late as 1323, Pope John XXII, native of Cahors, student in Paris and Orléans, had the French letters translated into Latin that the French king had sent to him; indeed, in 1463 King Louis XI himself only conferred with his own subjects at Brive-la-Gaillarde with the aid of an interpreter. Moreover, even at the time of the French Revolution (1793), one full quarter of *la nation française* did not speak or understand French.51


In a parallel way, the start of something new is palpable in the 1200s. In this process there is a hidden factor, as yet hardly perceptible in the political and ideological sphere: urbanization. Urban development ripped confined regional structures apart and at the same time integrated them. A second factor increasingly became visible within the ideological sphere and as political reality: the monarchy. Consider that Philip Augustus acquired Normandy, Bretagne, and Poitou and conquered every English fief on French territory, thereby doubling the land held by the French crown. Then, with bloody military campaigns in the name of the cross, the conquest of the South was started (to be completed decades later, 1226–1271). This way the king could reach the coastline in both the west and the south. These transformations are only one facet of change, the horizontal one. With respect to the vertical, there was the appearance of royal officers (bailli) in duchies and counties along with the introduction of taxation, customs duties, and financial administration. The rapid “institutionalization” of the regnum suggests the pace of progress. On a conceptual level one component of the process was the extension of the designation of Francia first, in the latter half of the twelfth century, from north of the Loire to Flanders then, chiefly under Louis IX (1226–1270), south as far as Toulouse, while in place of the old rex Francorum the royal title after 1204 was rex Franciae. The concept of tota Francia was thereby given a meaning which was to achieve increasing verisimilitude not only in the next century but in the centuries leading up to the age of absolutism. The process itself was usually aptly referred to as “la francisation de la France.” From the point of view of the monarchy, it naturally meant that the feudal vassals and subjects of a large number of seigneurs were, little by little, shaped into a uniform populus subditus—mes peuples as Louis XIV was to call them. But this resulted in another type of outcome, the nationalité d’État prevailing over the “provincial nationalities.” During the thirteenth century not much of this was visible as yet, but its seeds were noteworthy. The time when the subjects of the French king would understand each other’s language was still a long way off, because the language of “Francia” would be born hard on the heels of the spread of the dialect of Île-de-France. For all that, it is remarkable that a document for the canonization of King Louis IX lists among his miraculous good deeds the alleged account that by the king’s grave a pilgrim from Bur-

“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

gundy suddenly began speaking recte Gallicana instead of his mother tongue (lingua materna)—“as if he had been born in Saint-Denis,” the registrar adds. What is important here is not the likelihood of the “miracle” but the story’s depiction of a state of mind which over centuries was to create a uniform French language. It also suggests that there were “customs” which were shared over the entire territory of Francia. This also marked the beginnings of a metamorphosis of the concept of “nationalism” which is of decisive importance. The earlier point of view, as indicated previously, considered a group of people, a totality of naturales (antonyms: advenae, peregrini, extranei), who lived within a territorial framework de natione sua, de sa naissance, as belonging to one and the same nation. In the feudal era this framework was supplied by the provincia, pays, patria, the county or duchy; naturales, indigenae, and compatriotae were synonyms. Before the thirteenth century it would never have entered a person’s mind that natione or de nation (Old French) one belongs to the kingdom’s territory. A tract which came into being around the turn of the fourteenth century marks the appearance of the idea of gens qui sont nez hors du royaume. At the same time, the designation natione Gallicus (now understood in a broader sense) begins to materialize in sources, and in around 1300 the idea of the nation de France takes shape in written form. Based on the elements of reality in the making, abstraction also produced the category of French “state-nationality.”

Sooner or later collective emotions became infused with the idea as well. Of course, consciousness of “nationality” permeated society top-down. Walter Ullmann, the distinguished British researcher of the history of political ideas, proposed a model of “ascending” and “descending” conceptions to analyze medieval legal and political questions. If this is applied to the issue of nationality in the Middle Ages, one is generally referring to a “descending” process in societal terms. Despite their universalistic ties rooted in their feudal conditions and their worldview, the clergy and the knights became more quickly aware of their status as a “nationality” than other strata. Degrees of awareness of a socio-psychical “we-group” consciousness were necessarily socially differentiated. The “we,” or secondary in-group, represented the gradually extending nationality—in contrast to


“them,” the foreigners, similar neighboring groups (out-groups). Nonetheless, “group consciousness of nationality,” so to speak, in itself was fairly undifferentiated, not with respect to its intensity but to its intrinsic structure. During the medieval period three of its defining elements need to be mentioned. First, in manifestations of this consciousness demarcation from foreigners occupied the primary role and not internal cohesion. Many a definition of the attributes of a people were found in the Middle Ages, but rarely do they address the issue of what unites a given people. The conceptual approach focuses on what sets apart the diversity of gentes et nationes. Consciousness of nationality itself is normally strong in frontier areas, along linguistic borders; but it is weak in the interior of a country, where routine frictions, strife, and clashes of interest do not directly nourish the psychological experience of contrasts; it is again stronger in the more mobile strata such as clerics visiting foreign universities, knights taking part in military campaigns, or travelling merchants, who experience contrast by virtue of their own movement. Needless to say, political conflicts, conquests, and expansionist aspirations play a major role. The initial stirrings of Franco-German discord, for instance, can be tied to clearly defined circumstances: disputes occurring between the Imperium and the French kingdom at the start of the twelfth century soon led Ekkehard von Aura to speak of a “natural hatred” between the two peoples (invidia quae inter utrosque naturaliter quodammodo versatur). But even in these cases the rationale is frequently not specifically national but one of “true Christianity” opposing “barbarianism” or “heathenry.”

A second characteristic is the nature of the factors with which the age perceived and expressed the experience of relatedness and differentiation. An Italian observer writes at the time of Henry IV that the Germans were extraordinarily proud of

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54 The “definitions” from medieval sources almost always include the diversitas gentium with respect to difference, the factors which divide. A relatively early example is Regino of Prüm’s formula from the early tenth century (Praefatio operis de synodalibus causis compositi), according to which “diversae nationes populorum inter se discrepant genere, moribus, lingua, legibus . . .” Fr. Kurze, ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica (hereafter MGH), Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum (Hanover, 1890), 20. The political themes that appeared at the start of Franco-German antagonisms have been recently explored with clear and compelling information by Karl Ferdinand Werner, “Das hochmittelalterliche Imperium in politischen Bewußtsein Frankreichs (10–12. Jh.),” 34–43 (for earlier literature). There has been much detailed research regarding the early conflicts of the German-Slav linguistic border, such as Erich Maschke’s Das Erwachen des Nationalbewußtseins im deutsch-slawischen Grenzraum (Leipzig, 1933); Clara Redlich, Nationale Frage und Ostkolonisation im Mittelalter (Berlin, 1941), etc. In contrast with the tendentiousness of the above works, Paul Görlich, by analysis of a closed group of sources, has more recently shown that before the fourteenth century, beyond the arguments of a social and religious nature connected with mundane conflicts, “von einer kontinuierlich sich entwickelnden Nationalbewußtseins in den Quellen keine Reden sein kann”: Paul Görlich, Zur Frage des Nationalbewußtseins in Ostdeutschen Quellen des 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts (Marburg and Lahn, 1964), esp. 223.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

their physical size and plentiful hair and ridiculed the small stature of the Normans. On the other hand, as early as 1107 the people of Chalons had a good laugh when the emperor sent handpicked ambassadors who were tall and thin to the pope to convey the dominance of the Imperium. A few decades later Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis described the visit of a Bavarian duke with brutal irony, calling him “a man who was astounding in his entire outward appearance from stem to stern,” as he had made himself the object of public ridicule by bragging and making his servants carry before him a massive sword.

By the thirteenth century common conceptions had already partly distilled into characteristic stereotypes. This can be traced in the curious genre of medieval poetry called *altercatio, conflictus, disputatio* (*Streitgedicht*), entailing popular “ethnic characterologies” called *gentium mores* and the like. It is thanks to Hans Walther that we are now familiar with a whole “catalog” of these tropes.\(^5\) The *Disputatio inter Anglicum et Francum*, for example, registers the insults that were being branded against the English: their language is “so befouled that it dirties the intellect and it flows like poison from mouth to mouth.” The belly was said to be the god of the English: they eat a lot of beef and drink “disgusting beer” (not “noble wine” like the French), and so on. The most common theme was that of language, though it would be a great error to read this as a sign of “linguistic awareness.” It did not indicate a recognition of the value of one’s own language but only a crude condemnation of “foreignness”—the ancient notion of *barbaros* (originally, common with the Sanskrit, meaning “stammerer, stutterer”); or to put it another way, “our lot” speak intelligibly, “their lot,” however, are incapable of intelligible speech. In the opinion of William of Newburg (twelfth century) the language of the Germans was like the “barking of dogs and croaking of frogs,” whereas the French “hiss like snakes.” Dante was quite unique in discovering the value of the mother tongue in his *De Vulgari eloquentia* (1304)—this is something that would only emerge later on with the Renaissance and Humanism. Beyond this the following groups of concepts constituted the system of motifs: “bad manners” (not specified in any detail), clothing,

5 The first case was interpreted as “Stolz auf die eigene völkische Art,” or an “Erkenntnis des eigenen Volkstums,” even a “Zeichen des Nationalbewußtseins,” by Karl Gottfried Hugelmann, “Die deutsche Nation und der deutsche Nationalstaat im Mittelalter,” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 51 (1931), 15. On the event at Chalons, see Kern, “Der mittelalterliche Deutsche,” 247. For the system of stereotypes which were widespread in the Middle Ages, see Hans Walther, *Das Streitgedicht in der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters: Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters*, vol. 5/2 (Munich, 1920); Hans Walther, “Scherz und Ernst in der Völker- und Stämme-Charakteristik mittelalterischer Verse,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 41 (1959): 263–301.
The Historical Model

hairstyle, physical size, food and drink, stereotyped virtues, and “moral” eccentricities such as heroism, honor, or diligence (or conversely cowardice, deviousness, or slothfulness).

Thus, these were nothing but predispositions that are also marks of an “ethnocentric” mentality in primitive structures and can be found just as often in the group consciousness of the barbarians who overthrew Rome as in the tribes of Asia and Africa. It is not a question of “consciousness of nationality” acting as a “psychological infrastructure” of rudimentary group discrimination (W. Mühlmann), which is determined by “a psychological law entailing the numeric overestimation of conspicuous traits.”

Thirdly and lastly, in contrast with more recent centuries, by which time everyone would normally profess to belong to a specific nationality, the concept of natio in the Middle Ages was fluid and ambiguous. People could simultaneously belong to several natios, according to various territorial, broader linguistic, or state and feudal conceptions. It was possible for a person to be natione Normande and (more largely) “French”; and indeed, as we will see further on, at one and the same time a member of the estate nation. The damning stereotypes that the “provincial nationalities” of a prospective nation hurled at each other were not any milder or different in character from those with which foreigners were classified. James of Vitry (d. 1240) drew up a catalog of the insulting adjectives that were fashionably applied at the University of Paris for various “peoples” of the time. These “peoples” were the English, Germans, and Lombards, but also the Normands, Poitevins, Burgundians, Bretons, Flemish, and so on—the constituent elements of the nascent French “nationality.” The only changes in this area up until the early modern era were quantitative, not qualitative. Consciousness of nationality tended to come to the foreground and penetrated deeper into the social hierarchy in contrast to local ties, although even as late as the fifteenth century, for example, there is scarcely any trace of this in literary records which reflect the worldview of the “common people,” the pauvres et laboureurs.

This type of consciousness per se had no influ-


ence on people’s primary loyalties to their social-communal group nor on their political loyalties.

At the same time, though, there was also consciousness which was still distinctly discernible. It was a consciousness that in many respects was of another, ideological sort. Its two poles were quietly taking shape already in the twelfth century. One pole was the increase of the power of the monarchy in the ideological sphere; the other was the formation of a social consciousness supporting this (with chivalric undertones). The symbolic year of birth of the first was 1124, when upon news of a threat of a German attack the knighthood of the French king’s many provinces congregated at the Abbey of Saint-Denis in unusually large numbers for that period, and as a symbol of the venture Louis VI raised on high a war banner (the oriflamme), allegedly originating from Charlemagne, and with this symbol exhorted them pro regni defensione. Until then, the Carolingian heritage had been considered essentially a private affair of the dynasty, and Saint-Denis was one of the many abbeys which happened to be in the French king’s advowson. Chiefly on the initiative of Suger, abbot of Saint-Denis, the twelfth century saw the flourishing of both a dynastic historiography and an increasingly vigorous “dynastic propaganda,” indeed even mythology, a mythe royale as Marc Bloch has referred to it. This traced the dynasty’s calling back to the mythical figure of Charlemagne, as around 1200 they managed to connect the House of Capet with the Carolingians by means of various genealogical maneuvers. This reditus ad stirpem Caroli Magni represented claims vis-à-vis the empire and over the pope and the provincial lords, constituting a “historical right,” so to speak, to the heritage of Charlemagne. The emergence of the designation rex Christianissimus together with the dynasty’s religious propaganda progressed hand in hand with the doctrinal work of the court’s jurists supporting the unity of the kingdom and challenging feudal law. The reasoning of this royal myth, which evolved over the course of the century, is to be found in fully developed form in an address delivered to the pope around 1300. The mission of the French kings was buttressed by the “purity of the royal blood,” the dynasty’s antiquity, the virtues of the rulers, and the condition that they were ready “defenders of Christianity.” Hans Kohn rightly pointed out that at least in its initial phase the “national kingdom” (in the technical sense of the term referred to previously) moved forward with its ideology by splintering and appropriating Christian universalism.58

The social features of the process were displayed in the nascent self-awareness of the king’s loyal knights of northern France, “the king’s Frenchmen” as they were called at the time. The virtus regis extended to his whole people, in line with the ever-expanding notion of Francia. One of the first to express this self-awareness, already striking a tone of deep pathos, was Guibert of Nogent (c. 1053–1124), whose praise of Franciae nomen regiae was at the heart of his writings, and with whom the idea of “election,” Francorum beata gens, first made an appearance: cuius est Dominus Deus, populus quem elegit in hereditatem sibi. Gilles of Corbeil (1140–1224), for his part, asserted that France rose above all countries “by the light of her nature” (lumine morum). Also belonging to this list is the medieval French Chanson de Roland (c. 1100) and the appearance of the notion of a “sweet” native land unknown since antiquity. This land, tere France—still for the time being the narrow Francia, with Paris and Saint-Denis at its heart—was not only “exceedingly sweet” (molt douce pais), not only “lovely” (belle), but also the “land of ancestors” (tere majur), the cradle of the Carolingians who also entered into the chivalric historical consciousness and which had to be defended “from disgrace.” The fact that this douce France is not only an archaizing literary adaptation is well exemplified in the correspondence of a cleric, Pierre of Blois (c. 1135–c. 1203). “I want to live and die in the place where I was born and raised, in dulci Francia,” he wrote; “we have it good here . . .,” before continuing that he was longing for home, “for the pleasant land with the mild climate and fine-tasting wines,” where life was “sweet” (1170). In a different letter he writes to an Anglo-Norman acquaintance who had resettled in Syracuse: “my wish is that you return from that unfriendly, mountainous country to the sweet air of your native land . . . because that is where one is bound by security in life, the native land (natalis patria), the law of nature, the flavor of food and, above all, love for the king of England” (1175). We can see that some of the motifs were the same as those with which the era described differences between “peoples.” The principal difference is that here they make an appearance as a function of integration, augmented with the new element of fealty to the king.59

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Dynastic loyalty in itself is not “national consciousness,” so notions such as “nationalism directed towards the king,” for example, are meaningless. The concentration of political loyalty to a monarchic ideal beyond the concrete person of the king, and political group consciousness founded on a single, immanent historical and social consciousness is already a different kind of construction. Many of the conditions for the emergence of the latter were ripening in the twelfth century. Suffice it to refer to just two of these. One is the consolidation of chivalry itself as a social configuration; the other is the rise of a distinctively new and Christian but still secularized esprit laïque. The essence of the catalog of the nobility’s virtues, virtutes cardinales, consisted of turning wholly secular attributes into “legitimate” virtues through Christian reasoning; thereby the relations of worldly life became favorably sanctioned. From the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, among other things, this perspective facilitated an acceptance of a new system of values, the turn away from universalist structures, and the propagation of the linguae vulgares in chivalric romances. However, in a way it served to liberate the existing approach to history from the neutral collecting of data by monastic annalistic chronicles and the languishing and pessimistic philosophy of history existing in the shadows of the Apocalypse. It is significant that scholasticism voluntarily gave up the study of historia, which disturbed its narrow image of the world, surrendering it to the secular sphere. One very gifted representative of this new spirit (Otto von Freising) wrote: Nos . . . non . . . tragediam, sed iocundam scribere proposuimus hystoriam.

The social, political, and ideological conditions that had only been ripening up until the 1100s bore fruit at both ends of the spectrum (the political and the social). This occurred in the period between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; from an amalgam of the two an ideological form of consciousness would arise—with its distinctive medieval peculiarities, of course—that may rightly be called a “national consciousness.”

Now we have reached a point where we will have to make do with labels, as it were. On the ideological plane, with the newly elevated person of the king...
and dynasty consolidation of the monarchy meant that an order of thinking developed which attempted to approach the concept of the “state” in a more abstract manner. It also meant to invest it with legal and moral values which would influence the state of consciousness and loyalty of the subjects more powerfully than had ever been the case previously. This “state propaganda” naturally did not deny itself the use of the religious mythology surrounding the dynasty, and, as it happens, it was around 1300 that the concept of *rex Christianissimus* reached its final apotheosis. The propaganda also made use of the theme of “antiquity” connected with the dynasty’s origins. In the thirteenth century this distinction now extended back far before Charlemagne. By appropriating the legend of Troy, King Priam was now made an ancestor of the French kings. In the aforementioned address, the suitability of the French kings for their calling was said to be borne from the “purity of the royal blood *a Priamo primo rege.*” But apart from this the royalist ideologists and the court’s jurists built the intellectual bedrock for the reality of the monarchy, partly by transforming feudal law by means of the introduction of the notion of *ligesse* to bridge incidental feudal allegiances, and partly by shaping the Christian “organic” doctrine of natural law into a theory of state (through the introduction of the notion of a *corpus politicum regni*), but primarily by using elements of Roman law (*utilitas publica rei publicae*) and the first formulation of the notion of the *raison d’état* (*ratio publicae utilitatis*). An emotionally charged and deliberate offshoot from all this over the course of the century was the burgeoning of “patriotic propaganda.” In parallel with the establishment of the aforementioned *tota Francia* was the gradual extension of the notion of *patria*—theoretically, at least. Reading the texts of Roman law, legists and publicists discovered the ancient ethical value of *patria* and recognized its natural ideological potential. In antiquity, Rome was the *communis patria* of all (*Digesta seu Pandecta* 50, tit. 1, s33); any act in opposition to it was considered treachery, (*Dig.* 11, tit. 7, s35), whereas loyalty to it superseded all else (*Dig.* 11, tit. 7, s35; 49, tit. 15, s19) and was regarded as a virtue far greater than obedience.

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“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

to one’s own parents (magis patriae quam parenti); it was believed that anyone who sacrificed his life while fighting for it would attain eternal glory (Institutes of Justinian Bk. 1, tit. 25, pr.; Dig. 9, tit. 2, 57, 4.).

These notions took deep roots in the writings of the latter half of the thirteenth century. “Since Rome was the collective home, the country’s crown denotes the communis patria . . .,” one can read in a disquisition of Jacques de Révigny (c. 1270). What was one to do if the “common homeland” called? “In that event,” Révigny continues, “you must subordinate your own narrower native place (patriam propriam) to the communis patria.” Around 1300 a contemporary wrote the following about the royal jurists: “They have turned Paris into their Rome.” We are offered a portrait of this incipient ideological framework with the disquisition of Jean de Blanot entitled Tractatus super feudis et homagiis (1255–56). He asked whom a vassal is under more of an obligation to serve: his liege or his native land (domino vel patrie)? The answer is normally his liege, and for two reasons: because he is bound by an oath and because he falls under his jurisdiction (iureiurando et iurisdictione). He is bound to the king through one law alone: on the basis of jurisdictio. But the following question is: what should happen if, on the one hand, a baron gives him an order to join his army against a neighboring province and the king calls on him to fight a war against the king of England “who wishes to subjugate the crown of France”? In that case, since the king called on him for “the good of the fatherland, that is to say, the public good of France” (propter bona totius patrie sive propter bonum publicum regni Gallie), he is obliged on the basis of ius gentium to follow the king’s order pugnando pro patria, specifically, because the liege had summoned him merely for his own personal ends (privata utilitas) whereas the king was calling on his services in the “public interest” (publica utilitas).65 As one can see, “patriotic propaganda” and the ideological framework are not merely poetic phrases but firmly embedded in the “public law” that was taking form on the basis of re-

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The Historical Model

The patriotic propaganda itself, together with the other specified ideological elements, belongs to one of the monarchic poles of the thirteenth-century transformation. The essence of the other, social pole was that the emerging *nation de France* became the object of the theoretical vision of history and society. The ambiguous coupling of Trojan descent with the Franks had already surfaced in the seventh century (in the form of the so-called Fredegar Chronicle). The idea was lurking in monastic consciousness (Fleury Abbey) in the eleventh century without the broader community being aware of it or associating it with the “French.” It was at the Abbey of Saint-Denis that the theory was fully elaborated, in a great chronicle that had been kept over generations (*Les grandes chroniques de France*), in the segment compiled at the beginning of the thirteenth century (*Gesta Philippi Augusti*). According to the chroniclers it was not only the dynasty but the entire French *gens* that descended from the mythical King Priam. In the legendary ancient past under the leadership of Francion and Marcomir those fleeing Troy settled in Gallia. From them descended the Merovingians, Carolingians, and Capetians—and from their people, the French nation.

In this context, in the 1270s in the collection of the *Grandes chroniques* the Old French word *nacion* came to be applied to all the French. This historical combination clarified three issues with one stroke. Not only was the “antiquity” of the French vindicated; they were said to originate from what was considered the most illustrious of all the legendary tribes of antiquity. (This was the objective of historical theorists throughout Europe, who were motivated by similar interests, but not all of them attained access to such an illustrious past.) In addition, the “historical right” to the possession of Gallia was justified. And finally, it imbued with historic content the dominant vision of a community of birth and origin which had existed intrinsically in the concept of *nation*.

Over the course of the thirteenth century the idea took root that not only was the royal dynasty sacred and elect, so too was the entire *natio*. The germ of this idea existed already in the work of Guibert of Nogent, but the notion of a

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"Nationality" and "National Consciousness" in the Middle Ages

nacio Galicana, nacio notorie Christianissima (Guillaume de Plasian, 1303), the idea of the "divine election" of the French became tangible in political writings around 1300. The characteristically European position of having a national vocation came into being in this way, for the idea of election entailed the expectation of a function being fulfilled within a greater universal totality. A natio, after all, would only be elect (a Domino electa) within the entirety of the populus Christianus. In the same way that the dynasty dissolved and appropriated Christianity's universalism to a degree, the nascent "national" consciousness did the same in the interest of its own secularized goals.67

One important element of this budding consciousness was that the French were regarded as a “free” people. Reference was made earlier to the fact that the fransus = “free” etymology had already developed as early as the seventh–eighth centuries. It was inherited by the French language: France qui de franchise est dite, as Rutebeuf put it. This etymology became the starting point for a specific “theory of society.” This was partially reflected in a work (written around 1283) by the famous jurist Philippe de Beaumanoir, and partially in chivalric epics and romances of the era (for instance, Renart le Contrefait). By the thirteenth century the narrative had matured, embedding itself within the framework of an epic which related how Charlemagne had once summoned his freemen for a campaign against the Moors. Many of them, however, were cowards and failed to perform their military duty, and for this reason the ruler subjected them to servitude. Their descendants were the serfs, while those of the “brave” were freemen, francs, franchises, that is to say—with an etymological shiny finish—the "French." This narrative was well known throughout the whole of Paris around 1300 and according to one tale of chivalry one thousand serfs lived in Paris alone, direct descendants of the legendary “cowards of Apremont” (couards d’Apremont). According to a definition dating back to 1307, Franci sequentibus temporibus (that is, after the disintegration of ancient Gaul) nominati propter iugum a se servitutis amotum. This is the source of a narrative which gradually became a historical element in the social consciousness of the French nobility and was sustained right up until the eighteenth century. At the beginning of the century which ended with the Revolution, one of the leaders of the estates oppo-

The Historical Model

sition still maintained that the French *nation* was a descendant of Frankish conquerors whereas the *people* were the progeny of Gallic servants. This “social theory” was an indispensable element of the kind of “national” consciousness that was taking shape.68

This is illustrated in works of self-characterization that crystallized into a canon-form around 1300. In the major work of Pierre Dubois, the treatise *De recuperatione terrae sanctae* (1305–1307), traditional virtues which were the heritage of the twelfth-century chivalric ideal were presented dogmatically as features of the “free” *nation*: audacity, bravery, perseverance, and the “handsomeness” of outward appearance. But two new elements appeared alongside these: the Frenchmen of old, Dubois asserted, never acted *inordinate*; their deeds were guided by *iudicium rationis*, by the *recta ratio*. Logic, expedience, and rational order—*raison* and *ordre*—two constitutive elements of the modern French self-characterology were born here.69

But who and which circles constituted the people around whom these ideological elements were being assembled? Who made up this *nation* in the final analysis? Was it the entire French “nationality”? Hardly, since the very narrative responsible for engendering “national” consciousness excluded from its ranks the *serfs* who made up the overwhelming majority of the population. In this historical area as in others, the evolution of concepts is comparable to a seismograph in recording and indicating the course of events. In one of his poems (c. 1261) the renowned poet Rutebeuf used the term *sa nacion* (i.e., *la nation du roi*) with reference to the “French knighthood.” His main consideration was that the king had not been listening to his “nation,” the militant knights, who were also the guardians of the law, honor, moderation, and justice (*droit, loiauté, mesure, justice*)! The *nacion de France* makes another appearance not long afterwards (sometime before 1277) in a passage from the *Grandes Chroniques* of Saint-Denis and, in this context, it is plainly being used as a synonym for the *clergie et chevalerie*. The first time it figures in a source, this *nation* steps forward, almost symbolically, as a “society” positioning itself in opposition to the king and displays its own specific innate homogeneity as the possessor of a shared historical origin and social *origo*, defined virtues, carrying a certain “mission,” also acting as the guardians of law,


“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

honor, and justice. On the other hand, its consciousness is sustained through its role as protector of the whole kingdom, the defensor patriae in the event of neces-sitas. In a historicized form this consciousness is reflected already around 1250 in the chronicle of Matthew of Paris. According to the text the French nobility con-sidered themselves the limbs (membra) of the kingdom because the acquisition of the regnum was not the result of written laws, nor the haughtiness of the clergy, but the delight (dulcedo) of the battle.70

The historical dénouement of what we outlined above in statu nascendi, limit-ing it to its main features, occurred between the fourteenth and sixteenth cen-turies. There were many factors which gave it its ultimate form, but above all, two: the maturation of the feudal mentality and humanism. Of course, this was far from our modern conception of nation. The nascent patriotic ethos was not “national” patriotism but a distinctive medieval manifestation of “patriotism towards the state” that had also been historically discernible in earlier centuries; the nascent “national” ideology was social consciousness of an “estate nation-state” which expropriated the concept of nation as a pars pro toto, so to speak. This was a mentality which differed from consciousness of “nationality,” albeit associated with it. Yet, it is precisely this loose connection which is a character-istic product of European history: conscious factors associated with nationality become fused with a vision of “social” cohesion par excellence, which accords with the Ciceronian model—the notion of a societas civilis (“the association . . . bound together by the compact of justice and the communication of utility”)—applied to the Middle Ages, gaining a definite political function within the “pol-itical” sphere.

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The aim of this study was first and foremost to outline points of view that might be useful for “orchestrating” different analytical concepts. A skeleton of French historical development was introduced merely to serve as an illustration, with an undisguised intent to keep the matter within a general European framework and somewhat divorced from our specific Eastern European concerns. It would only be possible to go on to examine Eastern European features subsequent to this analysis. My own research has focused primarily, of course, on Hungarian

70 These important connections were pointed out by Müller, “Zur Geschichte des Wortes und Begriffes nation im französischen Schrifttum des Mittelalters bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts,” 162–70.
history between the tenth and fifteenth centuries, but I soon observed that there were many more synchronous correlations in this respect than one would normally expect. There Magyar, Bohemian, and Polish (and indeed, to carry on: the Danish, Swedish, Norwegian . . . ) gentes, the “new barbarians” of European history following the fall of Rome, who in the ninth and tenth centuries started to play a European role, from an asynchronous framework that was still conspicuous at the turn of the first millennium, fairly quickly accommodated to the economic, social, and ideological framework that had been developed by the “old barbarians” over the previous five hundred years. This was possible exactly because a uniform European history already existed by then. Even if the progression of these peoples displayed many singularities, these were all variants of the same common historical evolution. This too has a bearing on our topic. The barbarian Magyars possessed their own ethnic consciousness (“gentilism”) which can be reconstructed on the basis of linguistics, archaeology, ethnology, and contemporary sources in the period around 900. This is equally possible for Europe’s “old barbarians” around 500.71 Nonetheless, it was not this mental pattern which formed the basis for future types of consciousness because it largely decayed and died out, so that by around 1200 it survived only in “silly peasant tales” (according to Anonymus in his Gesta Hungarorum). The new formation, the gens Hungarorum, was not “Magyar” in the ethnic sense but for a long time, up until approximately the middle of the thirteenth century, it was a bond of allegiance, the populus regi subditus, which incorporated many peoples and “nationalities.” Within this, of course, already around 1100 it is also possible to identify from sources the existence of a configuration known as the gens Hungarorum, as defined by lingua and natio (primarily understood in the sense of birth and descent). As can be attested already in the first half of the thirteenth century, this was a perspective which took into account numerous other genera (that is, “peoples,” “nationalities”). Between around 1200 and 1300 in parallel with, but also genetically linked to, Western European development, there flourished an “estate nation-state” and “state patriotism,” linked first to the knighthood and later to the nobility. Detailed research into the arc of Hungary’s development from Anonymus to Simon of Kéza and the “premature” estate form of the 1290s has uncovered not only surprising analogies in the history of ideas but also connections that can be philologically documented. These threads point straight to Paris or Orléans on the one hand, and to Bologna on the other.

71 For details, see “Gentilism: The question of barbarian ethnic consciousness,” chapter 3 in this volume.
“Nationality” and “National Consciousness” in the Middle Ages

Anonymus would have been unable to write his “chivalric romance,” highly theoretical in nature, without knowledge of the political writings of his day, nor without being influenced by the twelfth-century chivalric esprit laïque referred to above. Simon of Kéza would have been unable to craft a social theory out of his story of the Huns without familiarity with Roman law and, for example, the French societal theory referred to above, as well as other ideological constituent elements of the natio Hungarorum which were arising around 1280. Until now, this has effectively been uncharted territory in the historical literature as far as the details are concerned. Nor is it widely known that throughout the thirteenth–sixteenth century period three interrelated and yet highly distinct conceptions of the natio functioned and developed alongside one other. One of these was the “state nationality,” based on, for instance, the bonds and institutions of vassalage; the second was the (partially “territorialized”) “nationality of language,” which was based on ethnic bonds, traditions, and linguistic unity; and thirdly, there was the notion of an estate natio. Their relationships and their development during the late Middle Ages is a complex issue which is particularly intriguing because in many respects it projects a shadow reaching up to the nineteenth century. This model is not, however, specifically Eastern European because there are common denominators mutatis mutandis with, for example, conditions in France, England, and Spain. What is specifically Eastern European is the character of the interrelationships that exists between the three conceptions or vectors listed above, their development in the early modern period, and the resolution brought about in the modern era by means of the forging of this “historical raw material” into the modern nation.

Translated by Tim Wilkinson

72 I presented these connections in detail at the November 4–5, 1971 session of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Middle Ages Research Group. The study is published in an expanded format in the journal Századok as “Társadalomelmélet, politikai teória és történetszemlélet Kézái Simon Gesta Hungarorumában” [Social theory, political theory and the historical approach of Simon of Kéza’s Gesta Hungarorum]. [See chapter 3 in this volume.]