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***Solange noch ein einziger Deutscher lebt*: Migration and Fatherland in the NSDAP’s Imagined Past**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany was permeated by a bitter debate on the role of the Ancient Saxons (*antiqui Saxones*) in German history, a debate which reached its climax in the national socialist thinking of the thirties. For centuries, German intellectuals looked to the ancient *Germani* as counterpart to the glory of Rome, and the vicissitudes of Tacitus’ *Germania* are well known. The Saxons, however, brought a somewhat different symbolic capital with them, which changed the imagined virtues of the Germans into darker, much gloomier tones. The Saxons were pagan rebels checking the expansion of the Christian Empire from primordial woodlands, which, in the discourse of the age, they had inhabited from time immemorial. A little cult formed around Widukind, the reclusive Saxon leader who was seen as a German archetype. It was Widukind who, according to this discourse, saved Germany from Charlemagne, a friend of Rome followed by waves of Semitic races which would have settled in Saxony, polluting the purity of its bloodlines. In the Widukind-Museum built in Enger, the sculptor Paula Münten carved a bust of the war leader topped with the inscription: “Solange noch ein einziger Deutscher lebt, stirbt WIDUKIND nicht!” So bitter and widespread was the dispute that, in 1935, the authorities of the NSDAP were forced to publicly intervene.

In the contemporary debate, the Saxons have been seen as the most pure of the Germanic stock, untainted by southern races and their servile monotheistic religion. Their racial purity was the fruit of the unbroken continuity of their settlement. These misconceptions brought about suggestive efforts in order to reconcile these ideas with the ones of distant and heroic migrations, beloved by the Indo-European research. This paper will focus on the scientific and public debate on the topic.