In what context did the sexual taxonomies emerge, and how were they modified when they were translated across linguistic, disciplinary, and broader cultural boundaries? If we shift our focus from the reception to the transferral of the new ideas, then what can the translations of same-sex sexuality tell us about the sexual and social bodies they aimed to classify? This chapter outlines the theoretical approach of the book by examining the emergence of sexology in Germany and the migration of the sexual taxonomies in Europe, specifically in Britain, from the new discipline’s inception to its first significant disruption by the beginning of World War II. It explores how in the German states the theorisation of the sexual body was linked closely to discourses surrounding an emerging modern national body. As Angela Taeger has argued, ‘neither advocates nor opponents of [homosexuality] could deal with sexuality and morality without simultaneously bringing in one of the most exciting novelties of their times: the development of the nation state’. Here the ‘nation’ was typically conceptualised in terms of its social body, a constantly shifting classification of the population in terms of ideologies of health, strength, and deviancy. Sexologists were part of the project of analyzing society-in-process, embedding into their theories and empirical research assumptions derived from their specific national and cultural backgrounds. To formulate their ideas, they made use of different modes of translation including classical derivations and the use of Latin within the German texts. The sexological writings in turn were transferred from the specialist realm into different political
and cultural spheres, and often but not always translated into other languages.

The chapter traces the evolving discourses of inversion in the works of three key German sexologists: Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–95), same-sex activist and author of the first sexological pamphlet; Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) whose *Psychopathia Sexualis* established some of the best known sexual taxonomies; and Magnus Hirschfeld (1869–1935), founder of the first *Institut für Sexualwissenschaften* [Institute for Sexual Science]. The three men are familiar figures in existing histories of sexuality. However, as I will show, their works have either been interpreted selectively by historians of sexuality or open to some misconstruction because of the early and not always reliable English translations. The chapter argues that their writings are characterised by different forms of translation which indicate how the sexual body was theorised in culturally-specific terms during different stages in the development of German sexology. Ulrichs’ theories were developed in response to the German political situation in the 1860s and derived from the writings of Plato. Their classical genealogy enabled him to sidestep partly the need for the translation of his ideas as their debts to the classical Humanist legacy that binds together different European intellectual traditions made them accessible across national boundaries. This helps to explain why, although his works were not translated, they were nevertheless widely influential across Europe. Translation plays a different role in the works of Krafft-Ebing and Hirschfeld which were subject to issues relating specifically to the translation between languages. Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, especially passages dealing with female inversion and with the gender politics of sexology, was modified when it was translated into English. Hirschfeld deliberately evoked the cultural specificity of certain sexual concepts, and their politics, when at the meeting of the *World League for Sexual Reform* in London in 1929 he discussed a notion of impurity that could not be translated easily into English but played a central role in the increasingly racialised and anti-semitic sexuality debates in Germany. The chapter demonstrates that the translations of sexology in the early writings in German and their transmission into English offers specific insights into the politics of sexual theory formation including an understanding of its gendering and cultural contingency.