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Toward a Historical Sociology of German Archaeology

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Introduction

It is not possible to present here a comprehensive historical sociology of German archaeology. For such a task, a substantial empirical research concerning different academic and non-academic environments of German archaeology would be necessary. I will only present an outline of the structure and organization of archaeological research in contemporary Germany with regard to both its history and its wider cultural context (for other brief reflections on the German tradition of archaeological research with special reference to prehistoric archaeology, see Eggert 1994, 2005; Härke 1991, 1994, 1995; Narr 1990; Veit 2001, 2006b).

Two further points are necessary to make in order to fully understand the scope of impact made by German archaeology on the discipline in general. Today archaeology is a worldwide venture, but in its beginnings in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, it had been a distinctly European endeavor (Maier 1994:35). An integral part of the strong European tradition of archaeological research was formed in Central Europe. In this multinational area, the German language, at least up to the mid-twentieth century, was used as *lingua franca* for academic exchange among archaeologists of different nations. During this period, a multi-directional exchange of information and ideas among scholars from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Moravia, Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Poland was common. For that reason it is – at least in a historical perspective – not easy to deal with German archaeology in isolation (see for example Parzinger 2002).

On the other hand, important work by German archaeologists is to be found not only in Germany but also abroad. Nevertheless the following short overview will mainly focus on research conducted in Germany and disregard the work of German

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archaeologists in the Mediterranean (e.g., Olympia, Tiryns, Rome), in Asia Minor (e.g., Pergamon, Troy, Boghazköy), the Near East, and in other parts of the world.

Archaeology and Archaeologies: The Structure of Academic Archaeology in Germany

Archaeology in Germany comprises a wide area of activities which are not structured around a single idea and do not correspond to a master plan. This is especially visible in the academia, where several archaeological subdisciplines with their distinct histories, methodologies, identities, institutional settings and even textbooks co-exist (for an overview see Eggert 2006). For instance, there is only one textbook in German, written by a Near Eastern archaeologist educated in Germany and working today in the United States, which deals with archaeology in general, especially with archaeological theories, irrespective of disciplinary boundaries (Bernbeck 1997). Textbooks dealing with archaeological field techniques are quite often written from the perspective of one archaeological subdiscipline, mainly prehistoric archaeology (e.g., Gersbach 1989; Biel and Klonk 1994).

Educated in prehistoric archaeology, I will be dealing here mainly with this subdiscipline, which is called in German *Ur- und Frühgeschichte* or *Vor- und Frühgeschichte* (pre- and protohistory). It developed during the nineteenth century in countries like Germany, France, and Denmark, i.e., regions lacking the elaborate and well-preserved monuments of antiquity which are found for example in Greece or Italy. Working with sources like settlement remains, burial assemblages, and other kinds of voluntary depositions, a number of specific concepts and methods have been developed to present evidence in a wider historical perspective (see especially Eggert 2008).

The activities in the field of prehistoric archaeology comprise all periods for which written records are missing or rare, ranging from the Paleolithic Period to Early Medieval Ages. Regions and periods with their own literary sources or historiography are usually dealt with by separate subdisciplines, like “classical archaeology” (formerly known simply as “archaeology”), which is mainly concerned with ancient Greece and Rome. This discipline originated in the eighteenth century as a kind of a history of classical antiquity and Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) should be prized as its founder in Germany. Today classical archaeology comprises a wide range of methodologies adopted from the arts as well as from other sciences including those traditionally practiced by prehistoric archaeologists (for details see Borbein et al. 2000).

A special field of research, where prehistoric and classical archaeology come together, is “Aegean Archaeology.” This subdiscipline originated with the excavations by Heinrich Schliemann at Troy and other sites in eastern Mediterranean in the late nineteenth century.

The “Archaeology of the Roman Provinces” has its roots in the so-called *Limesforschung* of the late nineteenth century. *Limes* (Latin for “border”) is the term

for the fortified border of the Roman Empire, which in central Europe separated the Roman provinces from the *Germania libera*. Research in this field deals with a broad spectrum of data, ranging from different type of artifacts and archaeological sites to historical analysis of ancient written sources (Fischer 2001). Traditionally, sites related to the military organization of the Roman Empire, including battle sites, receive special attention. For instance, in recent years, a renewed discussion on the location of the famous battle in the *Teutoburger* forest 9 AD, where Arminius defeated the Roman army under Varus has been carried out by the specialists of the field. These debates were caused by recent archaeological investigations on the site of Kalkriese near Osnabrück (Lower Saxony), which clearly represents a battlefield with traces that can be dated to those years of conflict between the Germans and Romans. But it is not clear at the moment whether the recent finds actually represent the famous battleground (for a summary see Wolters 2003).

Other German archaeological research traditions include Near Eastern archaeology (Nissen 1983), and the "archaeology of the Holy Land" (*Biblische Archäologie*) (Fritz 1985). Both are parts of two larger disciplines dealing mainly with written sources of certain regions (Near Eastern Studies and Theology). The same is true for specialized archaeological research which deals with the Middle and Far East, Egypt, and other parts of Africa and the Americas.

Another important development within German archaeology during the last decades has been the emergence of a distinct discipline called Medieval archaeology (Fehring 1987). Practitioners in this field do not hesitate to extend their interests into post-Medieval times. More recently, the term *Historische Archäologie* (historical archaeology) has been introduced in German archaeology as a general term for all archaeology dealing with times from which a substantial number of written records is available (see Frommer 2007). One of the main challenges for scholars is to present a coherent image of the past, which adequately combines the results gained through investigations relying on the use of archaeological and written sources. But the term "historical archaeology" has not yet been generally accepted in Germany. The main objection raised against this term is that all archaeology (at least in the German tradition) is "historical."

Not included in contemporary German archaeology in its narrower sense is the so-called industrial archaeology, which deals primarily with still largely intact industrial buildings, plants, and machines of the last two centuries that should be restored, conserved, and made available for use in a new context (Slotta 1982).

A minor role within the current German academic archaeology is played by ethnoarchaeological studies (Vossen 1992; Göbel 1993). In Germany, ethnoarchaeology primarily means the systematic use of ethnographic data for better understanding of archaeological data (i.e., the use of analogies in reasoning finally leading to some form of model building) and less the systematic application of archaeological methods in ethnographic research (see Struwe and Weniger 1993). This branch of archaeology is not institutionalized as most other archaeological subdisciplines have been practiced by a small group of prehistoric archaeologists.

Similar problems apply to experimental archaeology (Fansa 1990, 1991, 1999; Keefer 2006), which is often practiced in open air museums. The key trouble is in

distinguishing between the scientific rigor of experimentation and marketable value of the experimentation process. Here we have to insist on a strong distinction between scientific experimental research conducted under controlled conditions and demonstrations of ancient techniques to museum visitors on other audiences. The latter is not experimental archaeology in its narrow sense, but a form of reenactment. This will be discussed later, when we look at the wider context of academic archaeology (see below).

All the subdisciplines that could be summarized under the heading "archaeology" in Germany refer to the idea that a special kind of history can and should be written from material relics. Archaeology therefore is seen not as a science on its own, but as a part of the humanities. Nevertheless, since the nineteenth century, scientific methods have been successfully applied by German archaeologists to all kinds of archaeological materials (bones, plants, pollen, mineral resources, metals, ceramics, glass, etc.) (for an overview see Mommsen 1986). These scientific methods played major role especially in interdisciplinary investigations of the prehistoric settlements and cultural landscapes; a number of specialized fields of research emerged from the use of those methods (e.g., archaeozoology, physical anthropology, palaeo[ethno]botany, archaeometry).

"Great Tradition": The Theoretical Orientation of German Archaeology

German archaeology is an integral part of what Colin Renfrew (1980:289) called the "Great Tradition." More than that, "German scholarship" according to Renfrew "has played arguably the greatest part" in it. Renfrew sees the archaeologists of the eighteenth and particularly the nineteenth century as the inheritors of this rich tradition of learning, a tradition that originally focused very much on the writings of classical antiquity, which during the Enlightenment were liberated from their biblical and theological contexts. That meant that scholars working within this tradition were primarily concerned with investigations relating to the early civilizations especially of the classical world.

Later on, the archaeological record (besides the works of art admired by early archaeologists) was also accepted as historical evidence, and people of the early civilizations were included in the investigations of the "Great Tradition." In the beginning of the twentieth century, an influential German archaeologist Carl Schuchhardt (1908:944ff) expressed that in the future "excavated prehistory" could be transformed into "real" history – and in this way prehistoric archaeology will be ultimately integrated into the realm of the "Great Tradition." The works by scholars working within the "Great Tradition" were to a large extent descriptive, "since adequate explanation of events is seen as flowing rather naturally from their full description, to which imperfections in the archaeological record are an inevitable obstacle" (Renfrew 1980:290). Moreover, archaeologists working within the "Great Tradition" saw themselves primarily as culture historians and not as (cultural) anthropologists. The archaeologist in this sense is in the first place a scholar and

not a scientist. His main challenge is to offer (his students and the public) access to cultures that existed long time ago. Therefore, studies of ancient cultures are mainly focused on a demonstration of cultural (inter)connections and cultural diffusions. The results of this kind of research give the audience a sense for the unbroken continuity in which their own culture exists (Gombrich 1991:85ff).

This strong intellectual tradition is contrasted by Renfrew to a kind of archaeological research, which argues on a global scale and seeks to explain cultural changes by reference to law-like regularities. As he (Renfrew 1980:293) points out:

Archaeology thus, in its fundamental nature, has much in common with the sciences, or should I say the other sciences, which proceed by recognizing and then often solving problems, both great and small. It follows that most problems are best tackled in as wide as general an intellectual context as possible, that is, in a global context.

This new strategy also included the idea that new kinds of archaeological data should systematically be used in archaeological research. Especially environmental and subsistence data were thought to be just as much a part of the archaeological record as handsome artifacts. In the United States, the so-called New Archeology of the 1960s pursued such a program and thereby caused what Renfrew has called the "Great Divide" in archaeology. Environmental and subsistence data were made available for archaeological research in Germany before the advent of the New Archaeology, but the epistemological context in which such data were discussed for a long time largely remained in that of the "Great Tradition."

Because the "Great Tradition" is associated so firmly with German archaeology and the New Archaeology with America and Great Britain, the Great Divide did not only mark a temporal but also a regional break within the world of archaeology. This is the main reason why German archaeology (as a whole and not only classical archaeology) for a long time remained surprisingly unaffected by those new ideas that came after the 1960s from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. Substantial changes in this respect became only visible during the last two decades and did not affect all branches of archaeological research in Germany in the same intensity.

The Structure of Prehistoric Archaeology in Germany

What has been discussed thus far generally describes archaeological research in Germany. In order to be more specific I will for the rest of this paper focus on just one branch of archaeological research in Germany, namely prehistoric archaeology.

The name traditionally used by institutions which conduct research on prehistoric times in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland is *Vor- und Frühgeschichte* (or *Ur- und Frühgeschichte* – both having the same meaning). It could adequately be translated as "pre- and protohistory" which refers – as already mentioned – to those periods, from which written sources are unknown or seldom. Only in the last few years it has become customary among prehistorians to use the term *Archäologie* (archaeology) – or more accurate the term *Ur- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie* (pre- and protohistoric archaeology).

Prehistoric archaeology in Germany forms a distinct academic discipline with its own cognitive identity, its own organizational settings, and its own history. To understand the structure and orientation of German prehistoric archaeology we have to ask for its "identity" – to use the term coined within the history of science (see Lepenies 1981; Veit 1995). The "identity" of an academic discipline is seen as being threefold, including a "cognitive identity," a "social identity," and a "historical identity." "Cognitive identity" refers to a (more or less explicit) program that distinguishes a discipline (or a special field of research) from competing disciplines (or fields of research). It defines for example what kind of research has to be done, what kind of evidence is relevant within that research, and what kind of methods are to be used to generate new knowledge. "Social identity" refers to the institutional structure of a discipline, that is, the institutions which enable permanent work on the research program currently pursued. "Historical identity" refers to an acknowledged history of research concerning this research program. Especially it refers to a generation of founders which for the first time formulated problems which are still relevant for present research.

Cognitive Identity

At the heart of the "cognitive identity" of prehistoric archaeology in Germany (as German archaeology in general) lies what can be called a "culture history" paradigm. The hallmarks of the cultural history paradigm can be summarized in the following three points, which correspond with the premises of the "Great Tradition," mentioned above:

1. Prehistoric archaeology is seen as part of a wider tradition of historical research. The aim of such research is to generate firm knowledge about the past – not for practical reasons, but to enrich our contemporary culture and to contribute to a historical orientation of our present culture. Archaeology is explicitly not seen as a (natural or social) science, which produces knowledge capable for application in the present.
2. Archaeological research is characterized by a strong empirical orientation. The focus is on facts and not on theories. And new facts primarily are generated by the collection of new evidence – mainly by the means of excavation.
3. The central aim of prehistoric archaeology is to reconstruct unique historical situations and sequences. Far-reaching concepts concerning the historical process (as to be found within evolutionism and Marxism) and the formulation of law-like regularities to explain early human history are rejected.

This "culture history" orientation (also more recently extended into the fields of environmental and social research) is to a large extent still dominant in German archaeology. Interestingly, historical materialism never played a dominant role in German archaeology. This is even true for the archaeology in the German Democratic Republic (GDR, 1949–1990), where Marxism became a kind of state

religion. Even in those times, a strong culture history orientation prevailed under the surface of the new ideology, which came to an end with German reunification in 1990.

Social Identity

Prehistoric archaeology in Germany is not a uniform organization. One of the reasons for this situation is that all decisions concerning the fields of education and culture in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) are traditionally dealt with not through a centrally organized structure, but separately by the 16 federal states (*Länder*) of which Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) is composed. That is why decisions concerning the representation of archaeology at the universities or state museums (*Landesmuseen*) and the management of the archaeological heritage in the landscape (*Denkmalschutzämter* [state services for heritage management]) are made on the regional scale. Other decisions especially those concerning culture heritage management are made on even more regional or communal levels by archaeologists responsible for the heritage preservation in a specified area (*Stadt- und Kreisarchäologien* [communal and regional archaeological services]) or for communal and regional collections (*Städtische Museen und Heimatmuseen* [communal and country museums]).

Only very recently new structures emerged, which are devoted to promoting discussions on questions related to archaeological methodology and practice on a nationwide level. An association of state archaeologists (*Verband der Landesarchäologen*) and the presidency of the antiquarian societies (*Präsidium der Altertumsverbände*) have to be mentioned here. The foundation of the different antiquarian societies (each responsible for a part of Germany) goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century. More recently, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* has been founded. The main task of these societies is the organization of archaeological congresses on a regional scale and also nationwide to support information exchange among scholars. Since the inception, these congresses also attract participants from other nations, working on related topics (e.g., on wide-ranging prehistoric culture complexes like the famous Late Neolithic "Bell Beaker Culture" or in international fields like Germanic, Celtic, or Slavic archaeology). Discussions of more theoretical issues and epistemological problems (perhaps apart from discussions dealing with the aims and organization of heritage management) are still rare on these occasions.

Apart from the institutions mentioned so far, there are a few nationwide and international research institutions with a long history of existence, namely the *Römisch-Germanische Zentralmuseum* in Mainz and the *Römisch-Germanische Kommission* (RGK) in Frankfurt/M. Both carry out their own research projects in Germany and abroad and also provide forums for information exchange especially in form of published periodicals and monograph series. Other important periodicals and monograph series are edited by the state services for heritage management, the state museums, and about two dozen university departments for prehistoric archaeology that presently exist.

To sum up, the organization of prehistoric archaeology in Germany rests on three pillars:

1. Large state-sponsored museums hosting archaeological collections, including traditional archaeological museums as well as a large number of open air museums.
2. State, regional, and communal services for cultural heritage management.
3. University departments and central research institutions.

Apart from these a number of societies and voluntary associations exist all with different aims. Some of them see their prime task in promoting exchange of information among archaeologists (*Verbände für Altertumforschung, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte*), while other societies (usually those organized on a regional scale) are devoted to the organization of a dialog between professional archaeologists and the public.

Historical Identity

Historical identity refers to an acknowledged history of research concerning the chosen topic. In German prehistoric archaeology, such history is firmly connected to two institutions, both having roots in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to scholars associated with them. I have mentioned both institutions already. These are the *Römisch-Germanische Zentralmuseum Mainz* (RGZM) and the *Römisch-Germanische Kommission* (RGK). The RGZM was founded in 1852 by Ludwig Lindenschmidt d. Ä. ["the older"] as a museum with the task to collect antiquities from all German regions and make them available for comparative studies (see also below). Lindenschmidt's work was continued in the early twentieth century by other influential scholars like Paul Reinecke and Karl Schumacher (see Böhner 1978). The foundation of the RGK 1902 in Frankfurt/M. as a part of the German Archaeological Institute (Berlin) ultimately goes back to the establishment of the *Reichslimeskommission* by the historian Theodor Mommsen (Berlin) ten years earlier (see Krämer 1979; Becker 2001; on Mommsen: Rebenich 1999, 2002). I will mention only two among the scholars who worked there and whose work concentrated on the prehistoric periods: Carl Schuchhardt and Gerhard Bersu (von Schnurbein 2001; Krämer 2001).

But there clearly are other seminal figures and institutions who defined historical identity of German prehistoric archaeology. The famous pathologist and anthropologist Rudolf Virchow (Andree 1976/1986; Goschler 2002; Veit 2006a) and his "Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory" (*Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*), founded in 1869, should be mentioned as advocating a more scientific approach within prehistoric archaeology. Gustaf Kossinna and his *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Vorgeschichte* (founded in 1909), on the other hand, propagated a more culture historical approach to studying material culture. Kossinna's concept of a "predominantly national" archaeology is criticized today because it was used as the basis for the misuse of archaeology for ideological

reasons during the Third Reich (1933–1945, for more details see below). It is not my intention to carry on a debate concerning the historical identity of German prehistoric archaeology, which started back in the 1930s, when Hans Gummel (1938) published a thick volume on the history of German prehistoric archaeology, covering the time from the seventeenth century on to the 1930s. From the historical context it is clear that Gummel's synthesis has to be seen in relation with contemporary attempts to transform prehistoric archaeology to what was regarded as a mature discipline. In the following pages, I will only provide some basic information on the development of prehistoric archaeology in Germany since its beginnings in the early nineteenth century. In my presentation, I rely on the work of different scholars who dealt with the history of prehistoric archaeology as a whole or discussed its selected periods (Wahle 1950; Kühn 1976; Hachmann 1987; Arnold 1990; Kossack 1992, 1999; Härke 2000; Leube 2002; Callmer et al. 2006; Gramsch 2006).

A Short History of Prehistoric Archaeology in Germany

The history of prehistoric archaeology in Central Europe is deeply linked with the political history of the relevant nations. This is especially true in Germany. The main junctures of German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the foundation of the German Empire 1871, World War I and the end of the monarchy 1914–1918, the seize of power by the national socialists and World War II 1933–1945, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, all represent significant junctures in the development of prehistoric archaeology. With regard to the last 200 years, we may distinguish five major phases in the development of prehistoric archaeology.

The Beginnings

The first phase of development (1800–1871) is characterized by a steady growth of interest in prehistoric remains mainly on a local or regional scale. About 50 new associations, which dealt with antiquities of prehistoric and other ages, were established in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The first more systematic archaeological excavations took place during these decades. This phase, which was forced by a growing romantic nationalism, reached its climax in the years before the German Revolution of 1848. It culminated in the establishment of a number of national institutions which influenced the development prehistoric archaeology during the next phases. Among those institutions were The Germanic National Museum (*Germanisches Nationalmuseum*) in Nuremberg and the Roman-Germanic Central Museum (*Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum*) in Mainz, both founded in 1852. The aim of the latter institution was, according to its founder, Ludwig Lindenschmidt (1809–1893) to gather the most important archaeological objects under one roof. Because it was not possible to acquire enough important original finds, Lindenschmidt, who was an artist, developed the idea to make copies of all

famous antiquities found in Germany and in the neighboring countries and exhibit them in his museum. This allowed the visitors to view them in one place and scholars to conduct comparative studies on a scale not possible in earlier times.

Hermannsdenkmal (Arminius monument) near Detmold, a huge statue commemorating the Germanic victory over the Romans under Varus in 9 AD in the "dark forests of Germania," which is still visible today, symbolizes the times of romantic nationalism. The monument designed by Ernst von Bandel shows the Germanic leader Arminius raising his sword after his victory. Its corner stone was set in 1838 but the monument was not finished before 1875, four years after the foundation of the German Reich (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The Hermannsdenkmal (Arminius monument) near Detmold (Northrhine-Westfalia) has been completed in 1875. It was erected to commemorate the Roman defeat by Germanic tribes in 9 AD in the Teutoburg Forest (Photograph by the author)

Consolidation and New Perspectives

This first phase of the development of prehistoric archaeology was followed by a period of further institutional consolidation and development, which coincided with the so-called *Gründerzeit*, the years after the institution of the German Reich in 1871. From that time on, associations like the *Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, founded in 1869, became the most important organizations spreading knowledge on prehistory in Germany. Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) certainly was the leading figure of this period. Mainly known as a pathologist, physical anthropologist, and politician, he devoted much of his time to the organization and promotion of prehistoric research in Germany. Virchow advocated the integration of archaeology into comprehensively understood anthropology that should include physical anthropology, ethnology, and prehistory. Influenced by the positivistic thinking of his time, he proposed a methodology which combined careful analysis of skeletal remains, artifacts, linguistic evidence, and written sources. Ironically, Virchow is best remembered for his “failure” in the case of the Neanderthal find. He denied the antiquity of these famous skeletal remains found in 1856, claiming that it did not differ significantly from modern humans.

The German Archaeological Institute (*Deutsches Archäologisches Institut*) was founded in 1829 in Rome (under the name *Instituta di corrispondenza archaeologica*), but since 1832 has its headquarters in Berlin. The focus of interest in its early decades was on classical antiquity and Mediterranean archaeology. Only in 1892, a special commission was established with the aim to investigate the Roman limes in central Europe (*Reichslimeskommission*). The research executed by this commission under the direction of the historian Theodor Mommsen also included fieldwork at various sites. These investigations became the basis for the establishment of the “Commission for Roman and Germanic Studies” (RGK) in Frankfurt (Main) in 1902 as a part of the German Archaeological Institute. This event marks the start of coordinated research on the prehistory of Central Europe, and especially on the Bronze and Iron Ages.

A Predominately National Science

The year 1902 was an important one for German prehistoric archaeology also with regard to two other events. Virchow’s death marked the end of his universal and interdisciplinary concept of prehistoric research. What followed was a period in which – under the influence of growing nationalism and also racism – the classic culture-history paradigm was developed and applied to the available archaeological finds on a large scale. Archaeological cultures were equated with ancient people and archaeological remains were used to trace ethnic histories. One of the most significant outcomes of the phase was the incorporation of prehistoric archaeology to university curricula. Gustaf Kossinna (1858–1931), who was appointed professor at the Berlin University in 1902, like no other prehistorian of the time exemplified this process (see Grünert 2002 and for a summary in English Veit 2000).

Kossinna held the view that the Germani and Aryans represented physically by the blond and blue-eyed Nordic type who had their homeland in southern Scandinavia from where they spread over Europe, were the pinnacle of creative humanity (for details see Wiwjorra 1996, 2006). His idea of prehistory as “predominantly national science” (Kossinna 1914) later led the way for the development of the Nazi-controlled prehistory. Nevertheless it is not possible to simply associate Kossinna’s ideas and the Nazi ideology in the use of archaeological evidence in ethnic histories. Although Kossinna’s publications witness his strong nationalist and indeed racist thinking, he nevertheless tried to give prehistory a sound methodological basis. That is why his so-called “settlement-archaeological method” (*Siedlungsarchäologische Methode*) became influential not only in Germany but also abroad. The early V. Gordon Childe’s publications, for example, show a strong influence of Kossinna’s methodology; Childe also highly estimated Kossinna’s work (see Veit 1984).

After the seizure of power by the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) in 1933, prehistory in Germany formally became a part of the culture policy of the Third Reich. This was the end of scientific freedom for archaeologists and others. Among introduced policy changes was an effective ideological control of appointments for all important new posts. Only party members were allowed to occupy high offices. Scholars of Jewish descent were dismissed. Under such constraints, the representatives of the discipline had to choose between collaboration, resistance, or exile. The spectrum of possibilities is illustrated by the biographies of four influential prehistorians of the time: Hans Reinerth, Herbert Jankuhn, Gerhard Bersu, and Gero von Merhart.

In the late 1920s, Hans Reinerth (1900–1990) was a lecturer at Tübingen University. He was well-known for his excavations in the wetlands of the Federsee region in southwestern Germany. At an early date joined the National Socialist movement and became an adherent of the new ideology. This decision opened the way for him to become a professor in Berlin in 1934. At the same time, he also became a leading figure in the “Rosenberg’s Office” (*Amt Rosenberg* – named after Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler’s chief ideologist), where his key task was to prevent deviations from the leading national-socialist ideology (for details see Schöbel 2002).

Herbert Jankuhn (1905–1990), who in 1930 had started his excavations in the Viking-Age settlement of Haithabu, also joined the new ideology and became the head of the prehistory section of the *SS-Ahnenerbe*. This association had been founded in 1935 by members of the Nazi secret police (*Schutzstaffel*, SS) with the aim to study the German past (Steuer 2004; Eickhoff and Halle 2007).

At the same time, the situation looked very different for Gerhard Bersu (1899–1964) and Gero von Merhart (1886–1959). Because of his Jewish descent Gerhard Bersu (1899–1964) had been removed from his post as the first director of the RGK in 1935. He left Germany in 1937 and spent the time of war in England, where he directed excavations, which had a decisive influence on the development of the British field archaeology (Krämer 2001). Gero von Merhart on the other hand, who was a professor at Marburg University, was forced to retire from his office after accusations made by the Party members, namely Reinerth, that he did not fulfill the demands of the new regime (Kossack 1977, 1986).

Despite cases of open discrimination, the Nazi rule within prehistoric archaeology was not as effective as it probably could have been. From the beginnings, there

were severe conflicts between leading opponents of the new ideology, especially between the scholars working in the "Rosenberg's Office" and those in the *SS-Ahnenerbe*. Both sections heavily competed for influence not only in Germany but, during WWII, also in the countries occupied by the Germans. They confiscated whole museum collections and transferred them to Germany. The *SS-Ahnenerbe* of Jankuhn turned out to be more "successful" while Reinerth and his adherents came under pressure during the War.

Prehistoric Archaeology After 1945

Looking at these developments it comes as no surprise that after 1945, the reputation of German prehistoric archaeology was reduced to a minimum. As a consequence of the misuse of its knowledge for political reasons, the discipline lost its central paradigm. With regard to what had happened during the War, the possibility of writing a history of European peoples in prehistoric times seemed illusory. Alternatives at that time were not available.

From an organizational point of view, however, despite a certain degree of personal change, the structure of the discipline largely remained untouched. While Bersu came back to office and reorganized the work of the RGK at Frankfurt, Reinerth was banned from holding a publicly funded post in West Germany. He became director of the "Lake Village Museum" (*Pfahlbaumuseum*), a private institution at Unteruhldingen on Lake Constance.

Reinerth was the only known pre-war prehistorian removed from public services. Despite their membership in the SS, many other prehistorians after a certain time reached highest positions in the discipline. For example, Jankuhn ultimately became director of the Institute of Pre- and Protohistory at the Göttingen University, where he continued his research on social and economic problems of pre- and protohistoric communities of northern Germany and directed large archaeological projects in the coastal region of northwest Germany.

With the establishing of the FRG and the GDR in 1949, two opposing political systems were introduced, the "capitalist" and the other "socialist," which also impacted the further development of German archaeology. Parallel to this development during the time of the Cold War, prehistoric archaeology in Germany became paradigmatically divided into two parts. In western Germany, the traditional culture-history approach dominated, while in the eastern part, a small group of archaeologists led by Karl-Heinz Otto (and later Joachim Herrmann) tried to develop a specific Marxist approach to prehistory. Despite a large number of publications, this approach was not successful. In practice, most East German (GDR) archaeologists continued to adhere to the traditionalist, culture-history outlook of prehistoric archaeology.

Apart from these ideological battles, the post-war period, especially the decades between 1960 and 1990 were characterized by a major development of state archaeological services (see Kunow 2002). This is true for both the FRG and the GDR. After German reunification in 1990, we saw further structural reorganization especially in the states that formerly were a part of the GDR. Some attempts at a

scholarship to just these points. Also more abstract ideas played an important role in academic debates. Especially the idea of writing histories through archaeological means – more specifically histories of prehistoric peoples – was influential far beyond Germany (see Veit 1989). And in more recent times, other theoretical orientations have been adopted, partly independently of their developments within Anglo-American archaeology (e.g., environmental studies and social archaeology).

But it is also true that due to strong (cultural) historical tradition, until very recently new theoretical developments propagated elsewhere had little resonance in German prehistoric archaeology. Differently than in Scandinavia or the Netherlands, where a reception of the ideas of the New Archaeology (and the different paradigms that followed) started early, in Germany only very recently these new ideas have been critically discussed (see Wolfram 1986; Bernbeck 1997; Eggert and Veit 1998) and partly adopted. For that reason especially the so-called postprocessual and postmodern approaches in academic archaeology play a minor role in Germany. In consequence, the critical awareness that archaeology is primarily a social practice of the present is hardly discussed in Germany.

Nevertheless especially during the last two decades, German prehistoric archaeology went through a transition toward becoming more self-reflective about new ideas and methods. This comprises a growing interest in methodological problems (attempts to make archaeology more “scientific”) as well as in intensified discussions of problems concerning public role of archaeology (archaeology as part of present-day culture). In the same context, approaches toward a critical history of archaeology developed. The main forum for such a kind of research has been the German “Theorie-AG” (*Theorie-Arbeitsgemeinschaft*), a voluntary association of archaeologists similar to the Theoretical Archaeology Group in Great Britain. It has been founded in the early 1990s by a group of younger German archaeologists, who were especially interested in the lively theoretical discussions in Anglo-American archaeology in those days (see Wolfram and Sommer 1993; Härke 2000).

Complementary to this initiative a new monograph series that mainly deals with theoretical issues was founded at the Tübingen University in the late 1990s (*Tübinger Archäologische Taschenbücher* [Tübingen Archaeological Pocketbooks]). Recent topics have been the status of archaeological knowledge (Heinz et al. 2003), material culture studies (Veit et al. 2003), a critical history of archaeology (Biehl et al. 2002), the reconstruction of social identities in archaeology (Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2006), and the cultural dimensions of burial evidence (Kümmel et al. 2008; Veit 2008). Further topics to be dealt with in this context in near future are for example the relation between history and archaeology and the structure or archaeological narratives (see Veit 2006b). Other recent publications on theoretical topics dealt with sociological approaches within archaeology (Müller and Bernbeck 1996), archaeology as art (Kümmel et al. 1999), analogy in archaeological reasoning (Gramsch 2000), and archaeological approaches to ethnicity (Rieckhoff and Sommer 2007).

Finally, a special group (*Netzwerk archäologisch arbeitender Frauen* [network of women working in archaeology]) has been founded to deal with questions of gender archaeology. Some of the discussions by this group have been published in their own monograph series (*Frauen – Forschung – Archäologie* [Women –

Research – Archaeology]). Besides general questions on engendered archaeology (Fries and Koch 2005), gender roles in archaeological reconstructions has been a topic discussed more recently (Fries et al. 2007).

Similar approaches as within prehistoric archaeology toward a more theoretical archaeology recently emerged in the field of classical archaeology (for a recent overview, see Altekamp et al. 2001). And besides these approaches within the established archaeological disciplines during the last years in Germany, the term “archaeology” has also become an important metaphor in the field of modern culture studies (see Ebeling and Altekamp 2004; These approaches mainly refer to Michel Foucault’s famous distinction between “history” and “archaeology”), and until present these discussions remained largely unnoticed among archaeological practitioners in Germany.

Professional Archaeology, Alternative Archaeologies and the Public

Access to primary archaeological resources (especially to excavation of sites) is in Germany restricted by law to professional archaeologists. Laymen may be integrated in archaeological surveys and excavations only under supervision by trained professional archaeologists. Excavations executed by laymen are illegal and have to be classified as looting. Looting of archaeological sites and trade of illegally obtained finds is an old problem in archaeology, especially since cheap metal detectors were made available on the market. Such cases are investigated by the police and supported by professional archaeologists who provide expert advice.

On the other hand, problems with ethnic minorities claiming rights to certain sites or finds in Germany are virtually unknown. And so far no intense debates concerning grave disturbance and the right of the dead has taken place within German archaeology. Archaeologists and physical anthropologists are free to work with this kind of evidence. They are only obliged to meet some basic ethical standards concerning handling human remains. The same ethical concerns apply to archaeological excavations in general, since each fieldwork is a destruction (in the best case a controlled destruction) of historical sources. Therefore, archaeologists are obliged to obey certain codified rules of good practice (Planck 1999).

Discussions about quality standards in professional archaeology are to be found not only with regard to excavation techniques but also with regard to museums and exhibition practice as well as to the reconstruction of prehistoric buildings in open air museums (Schöbel 2004). A process to implement such standards on a European scale is underway. There are also plans to implement such standards in reference to presentations in the field of “living archaeology” by reenactment groups. Such groups are generally not financed by public authorities but perform at museums and special events on a contract basis. A clear division has been established in most fields of archaeological practice in Germany – or will be established in the near future – between professional archaeologists and laymen engaged in archaeology.

Conflicts that arise in present German archaeology are in most cases caused by economic conditions. Public or private construction projects may be stopped or delayed if they endanger or destroy important archaeological sites. Such conflicts have to be settled by the local heritage management authorities, which have the right to issue injunctions. In those cases, rescue excavations precede the construction. Such excavations in some states are generally executed by public archaeologists, while in other states private firms, which employ trained archaeologists, may be hired for this kind of work. In some parts of Germany, the owner of the land has to pay for rescue excavations.

Such legal regulations are effective because of the existing broad and old consensus in Germany promoting the notion that archaeological sites and finds represent important part of regional, national, and also European history and therefore have to be protected and studied (see Hammer 1995). Due to such policies, a fairly large number of archaeological sites and spectacular finds have become part of our historical memory. Permanent engagement in archaeological research over nearly about 200 years has produced an impressive "archaeological landscape" of archaeological *lieux de mémoire* in all parts of Germany from the *Hermannsdenkmal* (Arminius monument) inaugurated in 1875 to a new visitor center at Nebra (Saxony-Anhalt) where a unique Bronze Age "sky disk" was found on a site excavated some years ago by looters and is presently curated in the Museum in Halle (Saxony-Anhalt), from the Neanderthal Museum near Düsseldorf (Northrhine-Westphalia), erected in the 1980s near the location where in 1856 the famous Neanderthal skull has been found, to the Viking-Age defensive settlement at Haithabu (Schleswig-Holstein), which has been transformed into a museum site.

Besides such prominent locations, a tight network of state and local museums exists along with special open air museums with life-size reconstructions of prehistoric buildings (for details see Schmidt 2000; Schöbel 2008: he quotes a total of 106 museums in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria), archaeological sites with reconstructions, museums, or visitor centers as well as archaeological visitor routes and walks connecting different sites. Many of these institutions, which in most cases are directed or supervised by professional archaeologists (some of them financed by the state, others by communal and regional authorities or by private associations), regularly organize special events, like special exhibitions or museum fairs.

While archaeological museums and exhibitions are frequently visited – apart from school students – by persons with higher standards of education, open air museums organizing "living archaeology" events are generally regarded as places offering a chance to attract attention from a wider public. In an ideal case, they offer what could be called "edutainment." That means an attempt to present knowledge produced by serious archaeological research to visitors in an entertaining way. In the case of re-enactment shows besides the knowledge and the didactic abilities of the actors, their "authentic" equipment is especially important (Bofinger and Hoppe 2006; Willmy 2006/2007).

Clearly, such historical performances, which influence historical imagination among laymen, are important to attract interest in archaeology and the work of professional

archaeologists. But there are also some problematic aspects involved. Performances may directly transport special ideological messages, as was the case in the first half of the twentieth century, when Germanic superiority was proclaimed in such a way (see for example Schöbel 2004). On the other hand, such performances may also be used to create a fictional mysterious past that has little to do with our knowledge of the past that has been produced through systematic research. Reenactment shows may be justified from a broader point of view (especially because of their commercial impact on local economies), but archaeologists have to make unquestionably clear that such performances have nothing to do with what they do as scholars.

Generally, we must be aware that reenactment in any case is as much "construction" as it is "reconstruction" (an insight that is clearly true for all forms of archaeology). And it is in fact a part of growing new market which offers a broad range of products and services related to archaeology. Among people contributing to this market are not only professional archaeologists but also a growing number of layman like publishers, journalists, crafts-men, exhibitors, and others.

With regard to archaeological publications, professional archaeologists, journalists, and layman compete for public attention. Apart from countless monographs and exhibition catalogs written for the wider public (the classical work which initiated the whole genre of popular publications on archaeology is Ceram 1949; for the wider context, see Schörken 1995), special archaeological periodicals exist, specifically designed for amateur archaeologists but written mainly by professional archaeologists (for example the journals *Archäologie in Deutschland* [Archaeology in Germany] and *Antike Welt* [The Antique World], both published monthly).

Other commercial products circulating on this market are replicas of ancient jewelry, tools, weapons, cloth or artwork as well as souvenirs of all kind. Additionally, a large number of services are available: lectures, courses, workshops, special performances by reenactment groups, guided travels to archaeological sites and even expensive TV-program (Hilrichs 2004; Schlenker and Bick 2007; Schöbel 2006/2007).

In this sense, Cornelius Holtorf (2007) is certainly right, when he claims that "archaeology is a brand." Nevertheless most German archaeologists will not agree with the conclusions he draws from this insight. According to Holtorf, professional archaeology is not open to accept what he calls "alternative archaeologies," that is other, non-academic discourses about the past, which operate within different discourses and often address other audiences. Arguing from a worldwide perspective, Holtorf distinguishes fringe, cult, fantastic, pseudo-archaeologies and is very critical about professional archaeologists who classify people engaged in such discourses as "charlatans" and "misdirected hobbyists." He argues instead that non-professionals should not only be welcomed in archaeological projects but also encouraged and supported in their own specific encounters with archaeology, whether they resemble professional attitudes and preferences or not (Holtorf 2005).

Such a position is incompatible with the comprehension of prehistoric archaeology as an intellectual endeavor aiming at an intersubjective reconstruction of the past, a view that is still dominant among German archaeologists. That does not mean that non-professionals are generally not welcomed within archaeological

projects. But when working within archaeology, it is thought that they also have to obey the basic rules of the archaeological profession, especially when dealing with original sites and finds.

The majority of amateur archaeologists in Germany clearly accepts the authority of professional archaeologists and some of them assist the work of the local archaeological authorities for example by inspecting archaeological sites, collecting surface finds, or by passing on their knowledge of and their enthusiasm for archaeology to other people. Only a minority of them who are active in Germany sees themselves in a fundamental opposition to professional archaeology. But systematic investigations on the motivations and aims of such people (who are organized in groups and active in wider exchange networks) are still rare. Here lie opportunities for future research in a social history of archaeological thought in its broadest sense.

Some Proposals for the Future of German Archaeology

It is a difficult task to speculate how German archaeology will develop in future times. Some trends still visible today will probably continue during the upcoming years. So the "digital revolution" clearly will go on, as well as the application of new techniques developed within the natural sciences and applied to archaeological materials (e.g., "isotopic archaeology"). Apart from this, there certainly will be changes in the organizational structure of German archaeology. The integration of the formerly separated archaeological traditions and the organization of large university departments which unite different archaeologies and other disciplines concerned with research on ancient and medieval cultures are under way. The integration of the different traditions of archaeological research in Europe (funded by the European Union in different programs) will continue. And probably, partly as a result of the reduced public financial support for long-established archaeological institutions, we will also see a further expansion of the commercial activities that developed around archaeology during the last years. Popular book and newspapers, posters, replicas of important finds, open-air museums, reenactment, archaeology-orientated tourism are only some of the keywords relevant in this context.

But looking forward, we really do not know whether in a longer distance the enormous public interest that archaeology enjoys today will last or whether other topics will surface. If there is something to be learned from the history of archaeology, it is that change is inevitable and should be expected. And the lively debates on the general role of science in modern society show us that from time to time fundamental changes are likely to happen. Perhaps such a thing as natural curiosity about human origins does not exist. In each period, archaeologists and their audience define what relevance archaeology has for the present and that defines where exactly its relevance lies. This realization is in a certain way disturbing, but on the other hand, it gives us a hint about remaining calm in regard to heated debates in which we are engaged in our daily work.

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