

Heinrich Härke (ed.), *Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience. Gesellschaften und Staaten 7*. Peter Lang GmbH. Frankfurt am Main 2000, 432 p.

Germany held centre stage in the political turmoils of Europe in the 20th century, and it is also one of the major countries in European archaeology. What is the role of archaeology in this historical drama? How has prehistory intertwined with the contemporary history of Germany? Prehistoric archaeology was born and developed in nation-states, where archaeology built a past for the nation, which in its part gave archaeology its economic and intellectual bases. *Archaeology, Ideology and Society* is a collection of 14 articles examining the formation of German archaeology in relation to dominant ideologies and society.

The expression “the use of past” crystallizes the idea that archaeology and archaeologists produce images of the past and construct prehistory as an integrated part of society. How is the past constructed and represented? To what purposes? And for whom? These questions are asked in many recent publications, but the book at hand delves deeper into a single case study. A sharper and more limited focus gives a more nuanced picture than that given by shorter and inevitably more general presentations. The writers’ even somewhat contradictory interpretations also bring out the complexity of the subject. Case studies of this kind on the symbiosis of archaeology and politics are essential, because diversity and differences between national traditions lie at the heart of the history and theories of European archaeology (Hodder 1991: 19–21). One is left wondering how well the purpose of the work is served by a series of articles instead of a single monograph that would permit a more concentrated and sustained analysis.

It is noteworthy that the editor has chosen English as the publication language. German is still one of the major languages of European archaeology, a choice emphasizing the political character of the editor’s decision. The centre of current theoretical and sociological studies of archaeology is in the Anglo-American world (Lang 2000: 105–109 and the discussion in *Fennoscandia Archaeologica XVII*), and it is particularly in English-language publications that the political nature of constructions has been debated. The German

case has also caught the attention of Anglo-American scholars. According to Heinrich Härke, the aim of the book is to explain to a wider, anglophone audience the beginnings and the development of the German school. One also has to remember that the new generation of East European archaeologists has turned to the Anglo-American tradition to find a new theoretical basis after the fall of communism.

Histories of archaeology can concentrate on its inner development or their ties to broader political and social developments. Sometimes these histories are similar and sometimes dissimilar; and by comparing them one can trace an interesting series of continuities and discontinuities. A case in point is the shift from the highly nationalistic Third Reich archaeology to the post-war period. On the one hand, concepts were completely new, on the other, much was preserved from before the war. Ian Hodder (1991: 9–11, 21) emphasizes the ties that bind archaeological theory with historical components. The development of archaeological theories and concepts cannot be separated from the conditions of practical research or from the social functions of archaeology. An awareness of inner changes within archaeology and the wider socio-contextual developments in the history of archaeology brings out epistemological assumptions and makes theoretical debate possible. It leads to a theoretical archaeology instead of an archaeology where “theory” is superficially pasted on practice (Sommer 2000: 162).

The Finnish archaeological tradition lacks an equivalent to *Archaeology, Ideology and Society* but the subject has aroused some interest (Fewster 1990; 2000b; Salminen 2000; see also Muinaistutkija 2/2000; for the effects of discussion on archaeological interpretation see Taavitsainen 1999: 152–157). The German tradition has many analogies with the Finnish one. The internal development of Finnish archaeology has been relatively well mapped and the influence of Fennomania in the archaeological reconstruction of the past in the 19th century has been acknowledged (e.g. Kokkonen 1985: 4–5; 1993: 4). On the other hand, the nationalistic tendencies in Finnish archaeology after 1917, when Finland became independent, and especially after 1945 are still more or less ignored (Fewster 1999: 18). The developments, ideas and the escape to empiricism after the Second World War resemble the German experience.

Gustaf Kossinna is undoubtedly one of the monumental figures of German archaeology. It is fascinating that his theories are explicitly racist and nationalistic but at the same time cornerstones of archaeological thought. Ulrich Veit's article builds an intellectual context for Kossinna's race theory which equated people (*Volk*) with race. The theory was central in the *siedlungsarchäologische Methode*, which was used to identify the ancient settlement areas of ethnic groups. Kossinna did not form his ideas in isolation. He was influenced by German romanticism and Johann Gottfried Herder, Darwin's theory of evolution, linguistics and the developing study of material culture pioneered by Christian Thomsen and Oscar Montelius. Kossinna's work was a major step from unilinear evolutionist archaeology to a multilinear, nationalistically oriented culture-historical archaeology.

The central question of Finnish archaeology since its inception has been the origin of the Finnish people (Fewster 1999). In the search for these roots, Kossinna's contribution has been significant. This can be seen, for instance, in the way in which language, ethnicity, material culture and biological heritage have been persistently thrown together (Kokkonen 1978: 80–81; Salminen 1993: 26, 40–42). Essential for the lasting importance of Kossinna's work was his conscious and efficiently executed effort to publish his theories for the general public. The tension between the general public and archaeology is one of the main threads running through the series of articles. Martin Schmidt's article considers this tension in contemporary Germany. The general acceptance of archaeology depends on how archaeology is presented to the public. The German public today is as interested in archaeology as it was in the beginning of the 20th century but German archaeologists have been quite reluctant to popularize their work since the war.

When the Nazi party came to power in 1933, German prehistoric archaeology was still a minor field. It was in the Third Reich that prehistoric archaeology experienced a great boom. Henning Haßmann examines the causes and effects of this uplift. Frank Fetten discusses the same phenomenon through the changes in the concepts used in anthropology and archaeology. The Third Reich increased the economic and the institutional support for pre- and protohistory enormously. These

new resources assured the current established position of archaeology in funding and in universities. Archaeology received this attention because it was shaped into an openly political tool. In the Third Reich, history was a weapon. It is disturbing to read about the deliberate falsification of excavation results, pseudo-research and active destruction of unsuitable museum collections, all of which were made in the name of archaeology and the state. Yet what is most interesting are not scrupulous falsifications or the violent distortions that archaeology faced but the willingness of archaeologists to accept or at least submit to the use of the past as a political instrument. It is also amazing how efficient and modern were the ways in which the past was represented in films, popular literature, school teaching and nationalistic symbols. Museum exhibitions in the Third Reich were built following the same principles as today. The past was a mine for pragmatic eclecticism which mixed, selected and interpreted the past as it saw most fit. The only thing that mattered was the effect created.

The fall of the Nazi regime did not break down the new institutional and economic infrastructure of archaeology. It recovered quickly from the destruction of the war and the hardships of reconstruction. Even at a theoretical level one cannot detect an essential break between the pre-1933 period, the Third Reich and the post-war period. The National Socialists assimilated theories and concepts created in archaeology long before the year 1933. The theoretical basis did not change radically, although concepts were perfected and channelled. After the war, the titles and introductions of archaeological publications and the content of popular publications were changed, but the same archaeological approach survived. The concepts of *Volk* and race were replaced by seemingly neutral concepts like group, culture or ethnicity. However, the new concepts were left without thorough examination and definition.

It has often been stated that German post-war archaeology lacks a theoretical basis. Sabine Wolfram takes a deeper look into this theoretical void and into the tension between archaeological theory and its social context in post-war West Germany. Archaeology continued to rely on descriptive chronologies and typologies, i.e. on the quantitative approach, which culminated in the introduction of computers and natural scientific

methods. When Anglo-American and Scandinavian archaeologies were shaken by the impact of New Archaeology in the 1960s, German and Central European archaeology continued on its cultural-historical track.

The publicity slogan of the German car manufacturer Audi, *Vorsprung durch Technik* or Being Ahead through Technology, also reflects the situation of German post-war archaeology. Wolfram interprets the approach imbued with natural scientific methods as an unconscious escape from the political and ideological use of archaeology in the Third Reich. Several theoretical texts were published, but there was a total lack of lively debate. Tom Bloemers calls the phenomenon a lacuna between theory and practice. The challenge of the Nazi past did not receive a response in German archaeology as it did in German historiography. Besides intellectual reluctance to face the past, other factors contributing to the situation include the tradition of German 19th-century historicism, the rigid university system and limited work opportunities, which effectively reduced criticism. Ulrike Sommer takes a critical look at the German university system in her contribution.

The tumults of the Third Reich and its faded propaganda pictures – aren't they already in the distant past? Hasn't modern archaeology detached itself from nationalistic projects? Reading John Kinahan's article on the interpretation of Namibian bushmen's rock art, which is still an overtly political tool for the ruling elite of Namibia, reminds one of the continuing bond between past and power. Werner Coblenz's article on archaeology in East Germany and especially Jörn Jacobs's text on archaeology after German reunification present a history of Marxist archaeology in a totalitarian state and finally of the destruction of East German scholarship in the 1990s. After reunification, East German archaeology has been forced to abandon its Marxist background and adopt the rotten West German university system. The situation is regrettable, since Historical Materialism brought historical sense and the need to deal with abstract concepts and theory to archaeology in East Germany as also in Gordon Childe's time (Hodder 1991: 10, 14–15; Ligi 1993: 37). The so-called Engels syndrome is not just an East German phenomenon. It can be observed in the attempt of the entire new generation of East-European archaeologists to bury Marxist archaeol-

ogy and find new ideas from the Anglo-American theories.

Strongly nationalistic archaeology has a conspicuously masculine and militaristic imagination (cf. Engman 2000: 13). Both in the Third Reich and in Finland in the 1920s or 1930s, the past is represented in imagery of men in full armour on their way to battle or already in the heat of it (Fewster 1999: 14–15). These aggravated gender roles would be an interesting subject for a feminist analysis. There are two articles in *Archaeology, Ideology and Society* related to gender studies. Eve-Maria Mertens discusses the situation of female archaeologists both in the German education system and on the job market. An article co-written by Sigrun M. Karlisch, Sibylle Kästner and Helga Brandt is an overview of gender studies or rather the lack of gender studies in German archaeology. Both of these articles highlight important topics and their almost devastating conclusions could also be applied in many other countries.

Something seems to be missing, however: the feminist analysis and critique of the complex relation between archaeology and nationalism. Finding women and gender systems in the prehistoric past is only one dimension of the feminist approach. Feminist critique also has thorough effects on the whole field of archaeology. It should not be just a nice addition to archaeological research. The feminist approach to archaeology could be characterized as a dualistic project of deconstructing and reconstructing the past, archaeology and the history of archaeology from a gender perspective (cf. e.g. Saarinen 1992: 77–115). How would feminist research interpret continuities and discontinuities in the history of archaeology and in the relationship between archaeology and politics?

The last two articles of the collection open up to international perspectives with Tom Bloemers' and Bettina Arnold's critical views of the German archaeological tradition. Both are outsiders comparing their own national traditions with the German school. Their texts show how an exploration of other traditions becomes a double reading of others and oneself. Throughout the book one can read a demand for interpretations, self-reflection and willingness to recognize the use of the past and one's position in the field of power, all of which are thought to protect archaeology against

(self-)deception. To be value-free does not mean being free from power; it is only a way of hiding one's being in the service of power. Allegedly unbiased and apolitical scholarship can all the more readily be manipulated for political ends. But is it possible for archaeology to separate itself from nationalistic connotations?

Chronologically, the book ends at German reunification. Globalization and one aspect of it, namely European integration, are mentioned but not analysed in detail. Shouldn't the time be ripe for it (cf. Kristiansen 1990: 826–828; Ligi 1993: 31–32)? The Celts and the Bronze Age have been used as symbols of common European roots (Fewster 2000a: 108), and at least in Finland, the significant progress of medieval archaeology in the 1980's and 1990's has been thought to have a connection to the search for a Pan-European past (Taavitsainen 1996: 169; Fewster 2000b: 51). What is the impact of the EU on archaeology at the organizational and the ideological level? Or, more generally, what is the place of archaeology in this new world order, which is characterized by international superstructures and regional identity projects?

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