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A historical overview of the different meanings of the terms that, in German, have been used to refer to Prehistoric archaeology is undoubtedly useful. It is clear that this reflects the scientific methodology as it was, and is, in use in German speaking countries. As I am not a specialist in the German approach to prehistory, I will not comment on the text presented by Jürgen HOIKA. He is certainly able to understand the history of German prehistory. The reflections I make are based on my practical understanding of what was going on in prehistoric research within the Low Countries and is clearly not based on a through study of the literature, nor on an extensive research into the history of our prehistoric research.

The history of prehistoric research in Belgium, and partly in the Netherlands as well, has been influenced by several scientific approaches to prehistory. In the past, we predominantly used to refer to prehistory as 'voorgeschiedenis' or 'prehistorie'. I do not believe the terms had different meanings or that they were the result of particular political points of view. Very often both terms have been used by the same authors to refer to the same situation.

In Belgium, the concept of prehistory was initiated by the "naturalists" in the first part of the nineteenth century. Their main purpose was to understand the origin of humans, with special interests in chronology relating to palaeontology and Quaternary studies. The study of prehistory was not part of archaeology but was partially incorporated into geology instead. In this respect Belgian prehistoric studies were strongly influenced by the French approach to prehistory. This was, of course, the consequence of the French oriented policies upon Belgian intellectuals and universities. Even now the results of this policy can be seen. At the Catholic University Leuven, for example, prehistoric research is still integrated within the Department of Geography and Geology in the Faculty of Sciences. At Liège University the earliest prehistoric researchers were clearly attached to what we now should call the Faculty of Sciences, but early this century, prehistoric research moved to the Faculty of Arts. The connection of prehistory to the natural sciences at Liège is understandable also because of the presence of numerous caves, with their sedimentological and palaeontological data. At the University of Ghent prehistoric research was absorbed into the historical studies and thus belongs to the Faculty of Arts. There, prehistory is considered as part of the study of ancient history.

At Groningen, Amsterdam and Leiden, in the Netherlands, prehistoric research was connected with geography and Quaternary studies, implying a particular interest in the natural environment. Moreover, they considered prehistory and geography as spatial sciences. At Groningen, the Biologisch-Archeologisch Instituut clearly proclaimed its connections with the natural sciences, especially palynology. With such a perspective it was not astonishing to see that research into scientific dating techniques, such as  $^{14}\text{C}$ , became an important research item there.

In Belgium and the Netherlands connections between prehistory, cultural anthropology and ethnography were always very loose.

Connections between prehistory and archaeology occurred much later. In Belgium, scientific archaeology originated in the fields of classical, biblical and Near Eastern studies. Archaeology then was a scientific approach you applied in foreign countries, whereas archaeology was mainly the work of local teachers, often in the field of folklore. Scientific archaeology of the Low Countries, as practised at our universities, was mainly considered as a secondary science of some importance, to gain a better understanding of the Gallo-roman and historical periods.

It is only rather recently that prehistoric research has been incorporated into archaeological research. This process came about because of the fundamental changes in archaeological practice, where the approaches of the natural sciences were becoming increasingly integrated. The present classical archaeological approach is no longer so different from that of prehistory. Education in archaeology, in earlier times restricted to the rare student, now includes prehistory, protohistory, the Greek and Roman periods and at some universities, the Middle-Eastern regions as well. More and more, archaeology is becoming a specific approach of the past, of which prehistory is only a part. This is exemplified by the situation at Leiden, where prehistory is merged together with other aspects of archaeology into a single research unit. Moreover, it appears that at the other universities of the Netherlands, geography and other spatial sciences are splitting away from prehistory.

There is no doubt that in the Low Countries, research and education in prehistory will be incorporated into the larger domain of archaeology, and archaeology will lose its special connections with classical and biblical studies. The real question for the future of

prehistoric and archaeological research in its totality is how it will be able to integrate not only the natural sciences but also the spatial and social sciences as well.

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