

MANFRED K. H. EGGERT / ULRICH VEIT (eds), *Theorie in der Archäologie: Zur jüngeren Diskussion in Deutschland*. Tübinger Archäologische Taschenbücher Volume 10. Waxmann Verlag, Münster 2013. ISBN 978-3-8309-2967-3. € 29.90 (printed version). € 26.99 (E-Book). 376 pages.

In a brief editorial introduction, it is stated that the notorious “theoriefeindliche” attitude in Germany has finally dissolved, with increasing teaching and research with a solid theoretical perspective, and hence a textbook on ‘Theorie’ for German archaeology is now absolutely required. The first thematic chapter is by one of the editors, Manfred Eggert, on ‘Kultur’ (pp. 13–61). One controversial point is the statement that archaeological cultures cannot be studied through empirical research but need external knowledge. This is a typical Post-Processual viewpoint wherein all ‘facts’ are considered to be already compromised through our own perceptions, despite the considerable reaction in the wider scientific community this idea has given rise to. An example given is that of the ‘Fürstensitze’ of the Iron Age, although it is surprising to see that non-German contributors to this phenomenon do not get discussed. On the other hand, Eggert is a confirmed believer in Social Evolution, although he allows for diverse pathways to complex societies. Moving on to symbolic culture, once again Eggert states that it cannot be interpreted in its own terms (as Tobias L. KIENLIN argued: *Die Dinge als Zeichen. Zur Einführung in das Thema*. In: T. Kienlin [ed.], *Die Dinge als Zeichen. Kulturelles Wissen und materielle Kultur*. Internationale Fachtagung an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, 3.–5. April 2003. *Univforsch. Prähist. Arch.* 172, 2005, 1–20) but we need other disciplines. He concludes that Germany has a poor record in research into symbolism in archaeology.

Here we already note a weakness of this volume, in its heavy bias to Prehistory and Protohistory. In fact, German-speaking lands have dominated the field of symbolic material culture in Classical Archaeology for several decades, not least through the inspiring publications of Paul Zanker and his students and disciples. This chapter overall is a detailed analysis of culture, useful if heavy-going for the reader, and is not likely to encourage students to read Theory unless they are already enthusiastic about the field.

Next comes Thomas Knopf on ‘Umwelt’ (pp. 63–99). Like Eggert’s, this is a full and useful overview of who has written what on the topic in German. He rightly praises the ‘possibilism’ of G. Kossack and H. Jankuhn, classic works worth studying well also outside of Germany. He criticises the dangers of a utilitarian approach to human-environment relations, and agrees with Alexander GRAMSCH (*Landschaftsarchäologie – ein fachgeschichtlicher Überblick und ein theoretisches Konzept*. In: J. Kunow / J. Müller [eds], *Landschaftsarchäologie und Geographische Informationssysteme. Prognosekarten, Besiedlungsdynamik und prähistorische Raumordnungen*. *Forsch. Arch. Land Brandenburg* 9 = *Archäoprognose Brandenburg I* [Wünsdorf 2003] 35–54), who calls for a Social Landscape, meaning not just the use, for example, of geographical information systems (GIS) to show mobility or visibility, but the task of investigating values in the landscape. Thomas MEIER (e. g. *Umweltarchäologie – Landschaftsarchäologie*. In: S. Brather / D. Geuenich / Chr. Huth [eds], *Historia archaeologica. Festschrift Heiko Steuer zum 70. Geburtstag*. *RGA Ergbd.* 70 [Berlin, New York 2009] 697–734) has tried to illustrate the dialectic between the ecosystem and the social system in Medieval Bavaria, reminiscent to this reviewer of the Ecotype concept developed by the Austrian sociologist and historian Michael Mitterauer. According to Knopf, the recurrent weakness of theory persists, since our data in archaeology privilege exploitation of the environment and offer little to read the thoughts of past societies. As Eggert, Knopf sees outside analogies as essential.

Nils Müller-Scheeßel's chapter covers 'Mensch und Raum' (pp. 101–137). This is a very good and predictably (Germanically-) thorough piece, and is the first chapter to explicitly engage with comparison and contrast between German traditions and those of the Anglo-American theory community. However, he shows that in fact landscape has been long a strongpoint of German archaeology, even if ideas have been less explicitly discussed and stressed. Key works are older geographical and archaeological projects by W. Christaller, J. H. von Thünen, H. Jankuhn and more recently the work of A. Zimmermann, J. Müller, J. Kunow, Th. Meier, A. Gramsch and A. Posluschny. He usefully describes four main approaches for this topic: Culture History; Ecological; Functionalist (settlement systems); Phenomenological. He suggests all can usefully now be deployed together, with GIS as a tool to accomplish this. It is remarkable that a certain degree of German isolation until recently is underlined by the fact that 'Catchment Analysis' was independently developed in Germany in ignorance of its significant invention and use by prehistorians at Cambridge University.

Tim Kerig covers a vast field in the chapter on 'Wirtschaft' (pp. 139–190). A useful historiography brings in key sources such as K. Marx and M. Weber, the New Institutional Economics of D. C. North et al., M. I. Finley and K. Polanyi. Kerig is aware of trends in Classical Archaeology beyond his own field as a prehistorian, such as the rise in quantification affected by Institutional Economics. The main topics are skilfully overviewed: soil, labour, capital, development levels, distribution, consumption, and conjunctures (i. e. economic cycles). In general, he is critical of the lack of quantification in German archaeology, or modelling, with an overemphasis on quality; for example studies of the 'Fürstentum' have focussed on rare prestige items. He emphasises rightly that prestige exchange, and hoards, and grave wealth, are a small percentage of all goods produced and consumed, so that too little attention has been paid to the production and consumption of all goods by the average person. For the future, this barrier must be broken through, and here he cites the centres of research excellence pioneering such work – the Kiel Graduate School and the one he has been associated with himself at Köln-Bonn. The heavy shadow of Idealism in Germany he holds responsible for these broad failures.

Ulrich Veit offers a review of 'Gesellschaft und Herrschaft' and social inequalities (pp. 191–228). This chapter, like almost all other contributions to the volume, is based on Prehistory, but it does constantly cross-reference German scholarship with that of Anglo-American work, usually to the former's disadvantage. Nonetheless, the topic has a research history in Germany from the 1930s onwards, and particularly in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), although the latter contribution is rather dismissed as distorted by the emphasis on Historical Materialism. It is claimed that only from the 1990s with the foundation of the German TAG (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Theorie) could scholars engage directly with the debates going on in New Archaeology and subsequently in Post-Processualism in the UK and the States, and this has meant that Social Archaeology has remained rather divorced from Economic Archaeology. This reviewer has elsewhere seen fit to note that G. Kossack's Sylt Project combined both these fields with some brilliance, although it seems that this example did not give rise to a school of integrated landscape and social archaeology. Veit accepts Ch. Hawkes' model that a pyramid of inference exists in archaeology, where the study of economy and technology is far easier than that of social organisation, from purely archaeological evidence, and like preceding authors in this book calls for ethno-historic parallels and a training in Sociology to assist us in analysing past social organisation. The rise of quantification is praised as a way to resolve data bias, but the danger exists that it can be used merely to reinforce existing assumptions concerning the existence of Princes, elites etc.

Stefan Burmeister introduces the topic 'Migration und Ethnizität' (pp. 229–267). It is odd to the reviewer that a dramatic about-turn has been occurring in Migration theory, yet this is not

featuring in recent German discussions, at least from this book of a few years' vintage. Whereas New Archaeology widely rejected movements of people to explain cultural change, the rise of DNA and isotope analyses has brought the topic unavoidably to the forefront of at least prehistorians' agenda (not least the claimed swamping of East-Central Europe by Yamnaya people from the Black Sea steppes in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC). Kristian Kristiansen has long argued for such a U-turn and a few years ago saw these scientific innovations as likely to be one of the key advances in future archaeological research. Nonetheless, until the limited inroads of New Archaeology dampened migrationism in German research, it was a central element in most prehistoric reconstructions. Particularly interesting is the debate on the relationship between historic migrations in the Early Medieval era and the archaeological evidence, which is well explored here. The trend to move from the search for 'peoples' to a form of self-defined ethnicity is seen as a positive development in this field. It is rare where one can source material culture sufficiently to an exotic area to show a package of alien culture arriving, so that self-defined ethnicity is a stronger approach, although it rather dodges the issue of population movement. Dress is actually a problematic area for such studies. It is suggested that the impact of Late Antique migrations saw civil elites retaining dress elements of *Romanitas*, whilst military elites combined Roman and Barbarian appearance (the latter practice predates actual Barbarian settlement and seems to show Roman emulation, as Kevin Greene showed a long time ago). Frank Siegmund deployed a vast burial database to probe Barbarian ethnicity, using multivariate statistics to isolate clusters that may reflect cultural groups, but admitted that it is social behaviour rather than mere numbers of associated items that we need to comprehend. The lack of engagement with Sociology is seen by Burmeister as a significant problem in these debates.

There follows in depth study of areas such as settlement, burial and dress to see how far models of migration and acculturation might be employed. Burmeister stresses that it is less useful to focus on items of everyday functionality or status, than on personal belongings confined to a social community, such as the way pottery is made, or food is prepared and consumed. At this point the absence of serious attention to new biological science approaches to population movement becomes once again problematic to this reviewer. Finally, the Migration Era is used to make the point that the ethnic groups in our historic sources are usually agglomerations of different societies united temporarily for specific military or colonising purposes (although Peter Heather has already written several ancient history books to demonstrate this point).

Kerstin Hofmann deals with 'Gräber und Totenrituale' (pp. 269–298). Until recently there was a lack of theory other than that from German scholarship on Burial Archaeology, with the result that the traditional error was perpetuated whereby the grave was seen as an exact mirror of contemporary society. Only Heinrich HÄRKE was for long challenging this approach, but it also has been a weakness in the long debates over the Hallstatt 'Fürstengräber' (e. g. The nature of burial data. In: C. K. Jensen / K. H. Nielsen [eds]. *Burial and Society: The Chronological and Social Analysis of Archaeological Burial Data* [Aarhus 1997] 19–27). Now the author contends, the dam has broken, and there is plentiful evidence for a subtle combination of approaches, with symbolism, gender and age specific analyses and a focus also on the individual, particularly exhibited in the work of A. GRAMSCH (e. g. *Treating Bodies – Transformative and Communicative Practices*. In: S. Tarlow / L. Nilsson Stutz [eds], *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial* [Oxford 2013] 459–474). The author is in favour of seeing the 'Grave as Text', hence employing a semiotic approach. A similar use of French-inspired theory is advocated with a 'Landscapes of Memory' model for studying burial landscapes. The reviewer is astonished at the lack of detailed discussion of Bioarchaeology in this chapter however.

Martin Porr tackles 'Kunst und Kontext' (pp. 299–335). This is consciously focussed on Palaeolithic Art. Oddly GDR contributions are deliberately excluded. The overall tradition in (West) Germany in this field has been ecological and economic and is part of envisaging hunter-gatherers as an early evolutionary phase where mind appears and a view of the cosmos, as opposed to the world of pure animals. K. J. Narr pioneered the use of ethnographic parallels, especially animalism and shamanism. H. Müller-Beck sees rather a continuity of human behaviour between prehistoric and historic societies. H. Müller-Karpe argues the art is all about God and devotes little attention to context or even symbolism. But almost all authors have in common that prehistoric art stems from a 'stage' wherein human sensibility was created and decontextualised. A recent specialist, N. J. Conard also notes that this art represents the appearance of 'Modernity' (which is a puzzling term since Art Historians usually locate this at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD!). In general technology of art often replaces deep analysis of the art itself, the latter being a field dominated by French scholarship. While the role of Palaeolithic art as a symptom of human mental maturity is highlighted, context is usually ignored, so that the absolute rarity of areas of such art has failed to excite appropriate explanation (the reviewer would comment that the work of American scholars such as Wobst and Strauss has very clearly approached this problem as solvable through context). Does this imply that Middle Palaeolithic people are 'pre-Modern'? In fact, this view is increasingly doubted. Porr recommends that scholars make more use of Art Theory in general and of Material Culture Theory.

The final chapter is by Stefanie Samida and deals with 'Archäologie und Öffentlichkeit' (pp. 337–374). This is an area of neglect, it seems, with the appropriate reminder by the author that public interest in archaeology far exceeds archaeologists' interest in the public. This is partly attributed to the public's obsession with spectacular finds. This concern began with the adventurers and treasure-hunters of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries and is perpetuated by the Indiana Jones franchise. Also causing problems is the attitude of C. Holtorf, for whom the Past is actually irrelevant, preferring to see the traces of past peoples as commercial material to satisfy the desires and pleasures of modern society. Samida sees it as a responsibility for archaeologists to move public attitudes towards a more enlightened interest in the past. In fact, the situation remains hard to rectify, where TV programmes continue to go for treasure and sensation when they deal with archaeology. Using wider theory, French and Anglo-American, also History and Archaeology, Samida suggests that Places of Memory can be seen as a good approach, allowing people today to associate finds and sites with past events and lifeways. An additional battle is required to prevent Invented Traditions, such as the much-debated concept of The Celts, and A. GRAMSCH ('Reflexiveness' in archaeology, nationalism and Europeanism. *Arch. Dialogues* 7,1, 2000, 4–19) has been active in criticizing the use of archaeological evidence to support European Origin narratives. Re-enactments are a popular way to involve the public, they are attractive, can include technically-accurate experimental archaeology, and are also good fun. The author oddly has nothing to say about Virtual Reality, a real growth field in public involvement with past worlds. The chapter rather lacks firm suggestions to improve the situation, despite massive steps made by Commercial / Public Archaeology in the UK and the USA with outreach activities, ignored here. This book on the other hand was published before the challenging and interesting volume "Appropriate Narratives. Archaeologists, Publics and Stories" (*Archaeolingua Series Minor* 33 [Budapest 2013]), edited by German theorist Thomas MEIER together with Elisabeth NIKLASSON, was widely available.

In summary, this volume makes a good job of covering all the major aspects of Theory in Archaeology, in German for the use of students and professionals. There are curious omissions, and it is heavy going. Perhaps as a non-German, the tendency to plod through lists of topics is not very stimulating, so I also suspect students may not get very excited about becoming theoretical when they read this. It lacks the immediate glossy and chatty appeal of K. Greene's or C. Renfrew and

P. Bahn's student archaeology textbooks. Theory should be sexy and fun, but still this is a worthy, useful tome and much to be welcomed in German-speaking countries. There is also a lot to be learnt for non-German readers if they can battle their way through its pedagogic intensity.

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