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## IN MEMORIAM

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haps deliberately provocative. After all, the data as they stand are not clear-cut enough to absolutely support any single position: they remain blurry at the edges. This thoughtful article thus challenges researchers to look at the material afresh, rather than providing the final word. I hope that the challenge will be taken up.

The problem, if we want to call it that, is that Herxheim is so unique. In spite of recognisable elements, no other enclosure is like it, few sites can begin to rival the level of imports, and no depositional event reaches this level of complexity. No other site has therefore caused a similar level of controversy. The number of people interred remains difficult for any interpretation, as does the quantity and quality of material, and the fact that in spite of the incredible amount of work put down by a large team only parts of it could be studied and published. The severe erosion that has impacted this site, like so many others, will also always be a limitation for the understanding of depositional processes.

Chapman / Gaydarska / Jakob have also grappled with this uniqueness and these limitations, and like others before them have picked on different aspects from which to attack the problem, and reached conclusions written from this necessarily partial perspective. As they themselves state, any narrative of Herxheim will be a simplification. Their main success is the gauntlet they throw down for future research. From their model, even the more provocative parts of it, one can generate propositions for further research that can then inform on LBK social dynamics more broadly. For example, previous isotopic and aDNA research has tended to privilege whole interments – but do fragmented remains everywhere have a greater variability of origins? Do they require their own sampling, recording and interpretative strategies? Is there room for more statistical interpretation of recurrent depositional associations, at Herxheim and beyond? Who was in the uplands when? Even more crucially, the authors have provided us with a lively account that sees LBK people as political agents, rather than standard entities pushed around by climatic and demographic events beyond their control.

Mine is therefore a middle of the road position – there is much here that I found inspiring and important for future research, notably concerning various aspects of mobility, and much that I found less convincing, in particular regarding the micro-management of depositional processes. In this case, the middle of the road, half-way between slave-raiding blood-thirsty raiders and homicidal ritual Guardians angry at falling import levels, may be a dangerous place to be. Yet we are some way from a resolution, and will never be able to understand Herxheim completely. Undoubtedly, the excavation and study of this site have lastingly expanded our horizons of what it is possible to think and write about the LBK. Chapman / Gaydarska / Jakob take us one step further along the road, but there is still some way to go.

## After the break? Against parts and wholes

By Stefan Schreiber

John Chapman's, Bisserka Gaydarska's, and Tina Jakob's article makes us pause and reflect on many levels. I agree with the authors on a lot of aspects. However, I am happy to contribute a few more thoughts from a New Materialist point of view. As I am not an expert in the archaeology of *Linearbandkeramik* (LBK) myself, I would like to focus on the theoretical part, even if it takes up a rather small part of the article.

The fragmentation and incompleteness of archaeological finds represent a commonplace. While much of the archaeological debate circles around taphonomic processes of relocation and deposition, it is surprising that past fragmentation practices receive little theoretical attention. Although there are a large number of individual studies on artefact categories or find sites, for example, on the intentional destruction of weapons in burials, there are hardly any coherent theoretical discussions. A welcome exception since the end of the 1990s have been the numerous works by J. Chapman and B. Gaydarska on enchainment and fragmentation (cf. Chapman 1996; 2000; Chapman / Gaydarska 2007; Gaydarska / Chapman 2009). Together with T. Jakob, they now bring these gradually more elaborated approaches into connection with one of the most interesting *Linearbandkeramik* sites – Herxheim in Rhineland-Palatinate.

At the outset, the authors provide an exemplary and reflective account of the genesis of their fragmentation theory. From the observation of re-fitting and enchainment, they arrive at the well-known 'Fragmentation Premise'. This is extended to include the fragmentation of persons and places alongside the fragmentation of objects. Ultimately, they combine these aspects into a so-called identity triangle *(Fig. 1)*. Their extended premise at this stage of the research can be summarised as: "Places, human bodies and objects were regularly deliberately fragmented and the resulting fragments were often re-used in an extended use-life 'after the break'" *(Chapman / Gaydarska / Jakob, p. 1)*.

First of all, I would like to emphasise that the fragmentation theory has one positive feature that can hardly be topped – it has been obtained empirically. Starting with the inductive archaeological observation of the re-fitting of objects, the subsequent study of fragmentation practices, the expansion to include persons and places, and finally the development of an (alternative) historical interpretation of the Herxheim site including a very good (and very German-style?) source criticism, all the registers of scientific work are exercised here in an exemplary manner. In contrast to the majority of other theories, one can justifiably speak here of an *Empiriegeladenheit der Theorie* ("empirical loading of the theory" (Hirschauer 2008). As a ready-to-hand theory, fragmentation theory can be quickly checked for plausibility with and integrated into archaeological-empirical research because it is itself based on archaeological-empirical research. In the best sense, it mediates as a middle-range theory between empirical phenomena and grand theories (Merton 1968), and at the same time, fragmentation theory is highly connectable in a communicative sense. This is well illustrated by the chosen example of Herxheim.

In my opinion, however, this is also its greatest disadvantage. Archaeological research – so it would seem – does not need translation into theoretical terms. Most of the concepts used (objects, human bodies, bones, places, identity, fragmentation, operational chains) suggest a common sense that could come from any excavation report or archaeological evaluation (only 'enchainment' and 'itineraries' need more preconditions). In fact, however, they are not concepts, but merely deductive *ad hoc*-theories. Yet it is precisely these concepts that are being operated with which should be questioned as preconditions, because it is here that the origin and benefit of the approach become visible.

First and foremost, this concerns the concept of the object itself. As an *ad hoc*-theory, it marks the anchoring in Cartesian thought; thus, 'after the break' does not include the rupture of the object-subject dichotomy. Instead, it is exclusively the object that is broken, fragmented, and subjugated. In an instrumental relationship, the human determines both when the object breaks and how continued 'use' cements the continuity of the object 'as object'. At the same time, the concept of objects determine what parts and wholes are. The extension to include human bodies – actually, almost exclusively human bones are meant here (in the triangle diagram, significantly, not marked

as bodies, but as persons) – also follows this logic. These can also be fragmented, as they have a 'use-life' after the break. Interestingly, the fragmentation of place follows a different logic. Places are fragmented from territorial units into networks, itineraries, and routes. But here, too, a logic of parts and wholes is applied.

At the same time, objects, human bodies, and places are described as stable, essentialist phenomena. They can be broken and thus fragmented, but at the same time the very concept of the fragment always refers to the whole. The rupture is thus transformed from an anthropocentric practice to the ontological dualism of parts and wholes, which, following Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory (DeLanda 2006; cf. Jervis 2019), is referred to as thinking in totalities. While the focus is on fragmentation, it has the status of a rupture, an intervention in totality (whether it is an object, a body, or a place). Thus, fragmentation remains the *explanans*, while wholeness does not appear to need explanation.

It is surprising that despite the intense debate on the 'flow of material' (cf. Ingold 2011) over the last 15 years, it has not received any attention here. It is precisely the constant transformation and mutability of the material that becomes the agenda in New Materialism (cf. Harris 2014; Witmore 2014; Govier / Steel 2021). Here, ruptures would be a kind of rupture of relations, not of material. In 2010, Marcus Brittain and Oliver J. T. Harris attempted to initiate a debate on how to think about fragmentation and enchainment in a consistently relational and New Materialist way (Brittain / Harris 2010). Unfortunately, this attempt has so far been met with little response, although important points of criticism were made here following Marilyn Strathern (which I do not wish to repeat here in detail; for the details see Brittain / Harris 2010). In my view, it would have been desirable to link fragmentation theory more closely to this debate. It is precisely the mutability, travellings, distributedness, rhizomatic, and relational transformations of the material (cf. Joyce / Gillespie 2015; Steel 2022) that could give fragmentation theory a perspective that goes beyond the narrow anthropocentric focus. Ultimately, I experimented with fragmentation theory myself in my dissertation, but then abandoned it in favour of M. DeLanda's assemblage theory because of its limitations (cf. Schreiber 2018).

What is already true for the object becomes even more obvious with the inclusion of human bodies. The reference in M. Brittain and O. J. T. Harris 2010 to modes of relational personhood (Fowler 2004; 2008) already points to a long debate that cannot be reduced to the distinction between individuals and dividuals in Marilyn Strathern's *Gender of the Gift* (Strathern 1988). Studies on distributed bodies and trans-corporeal entanglements (Alaimo 2010; Fredengren 2021; Schreiber / Rotermund 2023) show how complexly the enacting of human and non-human bodies mesh (not to mention fragmented, distributed practices). Moreover, it is not only human bodies that are fragmented and entangled. Subjects can also be distributed, transindividual, and porous (Smith 2012; Andermann 2021). What Chris Fowler calls personhood is thus itself already an assemblage of different modes of corporeal and subjective enactment and existence. These can only be understood in a very simplified way as 'human bones' and their symbolic meaning. For an interpretation, as the authors suggest for the Herxheim site, the formula as "person = fragmented and reassembled bones + identity" (I am of course exaggerating here) falls considerably short. Ultimately, both the distinctions of body / person and object / body cement a basic anthropocentric attitude without making it explicit.

The fragmentation and enchainment of places also follow this logic, albeit in a slightly different way. The addition of places or landscapes to the fragmentation theory does not mean that they too are fragmented and enchained. Instead, according to the authors, they are the enchainment itself: "The fragmentation of place is therefore the origin-metaphor for the general process of relating in

the world – viz., enchainment" *(Chapman/Gaydarska/Jakob, p. 2)*. It is true that a relational approach shines through here. But this remains, first and foremost, limited to the relations of people to objects. These can be located and linked as 'metadata', so to speak. However, they are not granted any logic of their own. Thus, the addition of places ultimately remains trapped in a transportation logic, as criticised by Tim Ingold (2011, 149–150).

With these three aspects of the triangle, the authors offer an alternative interpretation following the presentation of previous research results on Herxheim. Despite my criticisms above, this can be considered a very successful interpretation. I found myself smiling again and again while reading it and putting positive exclamation marks on the text. Even if I do not share the preconditions myself, the interpretations are comprehensible and plausible. It shows what clout the fragmentation theory, or perhaps better enchainment theory, has for interpreting archaeological contexts. Only the tendency towards the 'obsession with wholeness', which can often be observed among archaeologists, seems to me to be a little too predominant. Why do places, objects, and people in the past have to be fragmented only to be re-unified? The *synecdoche* as a type of interpretation suggests a *pars pro toto* wholeness, but what if the fragments do not refer to a whole, but rather enact precisely that incompleteness, imperfection, and distributedness that already exists in a non-representational way?

Finally, I would like to put forward a thesis: Fragmentation theory is too connectable. At the outset, I stated that fragmentation theory is a middle-range theory. This is true both because of the theory's design and its scale. It remains easy to understand without getting lost in too abstract explanations and assumptions. Unfortunately, at no point does it become clear between which practices and grand theories it actually wants to mediate. Here, I have tried to read it from the perspective of New Materialism and posthumanism. This was only partially successful, as it is too strongly rooted in Cartesian concepts. At the same time, however, it uses relational practices and can therefore be understood as a further archaeological advancement of practice theories. Moreover it is not based on an explicit theory of practice. It is preceded by 'fragmentation as a practice' of the 'fragmentedness' of the world. Further developments such as the distributed nature of practice and agency are not integrated (cf. Schreiber 2022; Veling 2022). It also operates with a strong premise reminiscent of the hypotheses or so-called Mickey Mouse Laws of Processual Archaeology. This is quite positive, both for the alternative perspectives to Herxheim and for integration into quantitative as well as qualitative research. Ultimately, fragmentation theory is welcome everywhere, but at home nowhere. It is itself fragmentary and enchained. But it does not work as a middle-range theory. Rather, it serves as a bridge between paradigms. In this way, however, it primarily fulfils communicative rather than analytical tasks. However, this cannot be valued highly enough. In the end, it is not only separating theories that are needed, but also connecting ones. Even 'after the break'.

## Fragmenting and moving the parts: a reply

By John Chapman, Bisserka Gaydarska and Tina Jakob

At the outset, we should like to thank the *Germania* editorial team for agreeing to a feature on the Herxheim site and also thank the six colleagues who took the time to read and comment on our article. Since we wrote the article for *Germania*, two of us (B. Gaydarska, J. Chapman) have had the opportunity to visit Herxheim – both site and museum – in the company of Andrea Zeeb-Lanz, who continued to voice the established views of the Herxheim Team. It is these views, together with other external perspectives, that have been summarised here in the form of short critiques of our article.

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References of figures

*Fig. 1:* J. Chapman / B. Gaydarska / T. Jakob. – *Fig. 2:* re-drawn by L. Woodard from authors' multiple sources. – *Fig. 3:* B. Gaydarska. – *Fig. 4:* Zeeb-Lanz / Haack 2016, fig. 2. – *Fig. 5:* Haack 2016a, pl. 66. – *Fig. 6:* Denaire 2019, fig. 10. – *Fig. 7a:* re-drawn by L. Woodard from Zeeb-Lanz 2019b, fig. 6. – *Fig. 7b:* re-drawn by L. Woodard from Turck 2019, fig. 56, modified by L. Hies (RGK). – *Fig. 8:* re-drawn by L. Woodard from original by J. Chapman, B. Gaydarska and T. Jakob. – *Fig. 9:* A. Häußer, GDKE Außenstelle Speyer. – *Fig. 10:* Haack 2016b, pl. 66,1; 67,2. – *Fig. 11:* Haack 2016b, pl. 71,3. – *Fig. 12:* A. Zeeb-Lanz, GDKE Außenstelle Speyer. – *Fig. 13:* Turck 2019, fig. 59. – *Fig. 14:* Turck 2019, fig. 51. – *Tab. 1:* J. Chapman / B. Gaydarska / T. Jakob, layout: L. Hies (RGK).