

DOREEN MÖLDERS / SABINE WOLFRAM (eds), *Schlüsselbegriffe der Prähistorischen Archäologie*.

Tübinger Archäologische Taschenbücher, volume 11. Waxmann Verlag, Münster, New York 2014. € 29.00. ISBN 978-3-8309-3176-8. 402 pages.

The reviewed book discusses what its editors consider as the key concepts of prehistoric archaeology. Such concepts clearly relate to theory and methodology of the discipline on fairly general levels, and the contents of the volume demonstrate that the authors understood it in the same way.

Each theory, possibly excluding those built fully deductively, develops in a certain environment. It is quite naturally so in the case of archaeology where the environment is determined by archaeological finds of a region and the social theories currently in use in the region. Sometimes ideology intervenes. The authors of the volume, however, repeatedly define their interest in the 'German speaking countries', which means that they relate their theory to a modern language in a fairly limited region with a limited variability of archaeological finds and a limited selection of customary social theories.

In fact, Germany is a part of Central Europe sharing its territory mainly with Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria (partially with the Netherlands, Switzerland, Slovakia and Hungary). These countries display similar or identical archaeological cultures over many periods of prehistory and their material culture is still largely comparable in modern times. It seems to me that these archaeological facts define prehistoric Central Europe better than a contemporary language area.

The western and southern parts of Central Europe are inhabited by people speaking German, the centre and the east by three nations speaking closely related Slavic languages (Polish, Slovak and Czech); this plays a role in specific aspects of the theory in use. The development of archaeology followed similar lines in all of these regions (and sometimes in the neighbouring ones) including the fact that the culture historical paradigm survived deep into the 20th century. This may have been caused by the fact that these countries isolated themselves in a region which was too small to produce theory and methodology valid worldwide.

The authors do not use the term *paradigm* very often, but they are aware of paradigmatic differences. For me this concept is vital and quite useful for the present review. I do not explain the concept itself, connected with the name of the American historian of science Thomas Kuhn, but I am using examples from Central Europe.

The concept of (particular) archaeological cultures commonly used in Central European Archaeology was developed by the end of the 19th century. Gustaf Kossinna was most influential in the field of theory at that time, but other professional archaeologists in Central Europe shared many of his views, irrespective of their nationality. These "culture historians" assumed that archaeological cultures reflected people (ethnic units such as tribes or nations) changing their areas of settlement from time to time by migration. Thus, specific types of artefacts and their dissemination were interpreted against this background. Migration was assumed to be the main reason why archaeological finds differed over space and time. It seemed obvious that the history (or prehistory) of nations could be determined on this basis. Although ideologically neutral in itself, it still led to racism, nationalistic and Nazi theories in the ideological atmosphere of certain archaeological communities of the first half of the 20th century. The majority of professionals and the general public in many countries believed that the proper objective of archaeology was to trace the history of modern nations.

The extreme consequences drawn from archaeology became untenable after the end of World War II; they disappeared from archaeological publications. However, there was little to replace them. In this situation many archaeologists in Central Europe and elsewhere adopted the second variety of culture history represented by diffusion: archaeological artefacts in a certain area did not

change (only) as a result of migrating people, but (also or mainly) by stimuli from the outside. Archaeological publications became the playground of cultural influences coming from 'more developed cultures' in the south, south-east and / or the east.

The book under review seems to skip over the period of the Kossinna-type culture-history to something its editors consider as processual archaeology. I am not certain if true processualism ever flourished in Germany. The principal concept of processualism is 'adaptation' to the environment, considered to be responsible for most instances of culture change. In contrast to this, the post-processual paradigm concentrated on explaining the archaeological record as 'texts to be read', following an idealist rather than a behaviourist approach. Most academic adherents of this paradigm discuss archaeological finds (their 'texts') in terms of concepts obtained by subjectively taking up and refining theories, e. g. those of postmodern philosophy, which are rather improper for prehistoric archaeology. This kind of work has not received much response in German archaeology as the authors of the reviewed book rightly acknowledge.

Theoretical considerations can in principle be explained by two methods, one of which is historical and the other logical. In the first case, one follows how problems have been solved by other archaeologists, mainly the respectable ones (or better to say by those appreciated in the author's community and writing in a language understandable to him). By comparing their texts (possibly containing new data for similar cases), one comes to a conclusion. Of course, the new data may be provided by the author himself. This is a method typical for historians working on the basis of written records as well as for culture historians in archaeology. In the reviewed book this way of explaining theory prevails.

In the second case, one proceeds by starting from a few general concepts, developing them deductively by logical means and comparing them with observations (finds). Some archaeologists believe that it does not matter where they take the starting concepts from when forming a 'hypothesis', while others build a well-considered model. This method has been used mainly by processualists.

Archaeologists from the core of Central Europe frequently expressed their theoretical and methodological views on the occasion of publishing general articles. However, as far as I know, there are three modern texts in the form of books. The first I want to mention is 'Archaeological Method', which I published in English in 1993, and which is complemented earlier and later texts (E. NEUSTUPNÝ, *Archaeological Method* [Cambridge 1993], cf. M. KUNA, *Intransigent archaeology. An interview with Evžen Neustupný on his life in archaeology.* *Arch. Dialogues* 19, 2012, 3–28). This book tries to be processual, but my book of 2010 (*Teorie archeologie* [Plzeň 2010]) and later articles, published mainly in English, are looking for a new paradigm: artefact archaeology. Here, the exposition of theory is logical rather than subjective.

The second book on theory, *Przeszość społeczna. Próba konceptualizacji* (Poznań 2012), written in Polish, has been written by a large team of Polish archaeologists and was edited by Stanisław TABACZYŃSKI, Arkadiusz MARCINIAK, Dorota CYNGOT and Anna ZALEWSKA. The monumental volume apparently tries to be exhaustive (1330 pages densely covered by text); the basic method of explanation is historical. The exposition is divided into chapters that testify to a systematic planning of the project.

The book discussed in this review is the third one. It is arranged into 57 short chapters, all of the same length, ordered alphabetically in accordance to their headings. Thus, the volume is in fact a dictionary composed of short articles, which makes it difficult to review as an integrated text. In some cases, it is problematic to decide which paradigm stands behind the authors' thoughts.

There is no sense in looking for agreement or disagreement with the authors of individual chapters as doing so would make it necessary to write another book of the same length. Instead, I shall try to pick up some ideas common to several contributions and often reflected in their titles.

One of the terms most frequently used in the volume is 'culture'. U. Veit in his contribution "Archäologie/n" assumes that "excavation is always only a means for a purpose. And this purpose is the 'research on the history of past cultures'". These words demonstrate how much importance is given to culture and to history. Veit goes on by saying that the "recent research is focused on the origin of social inequality, the formation of states" etc., while emphasising that attention should be paid to settlement processes.

Following this and other contributions, culture-history is the study of past culture or the study of the past by means of culture. This goal, apparently bringing the authors of the volume together, is not identical with that of the classical culture-historical paradigm. It seems to be 'fair' trying to include all aspects of life and even some 'engaged' problems.

The effort to pay as much interest to as many aspects of the past culture as possible on the basis of the preserved archaeological record is considered worthwhile. Yet, this effort never leads to anything like completeness as it only considers the archaeological record, not the dynamic culture, and it changes with every new paradigm. One group of problems discussed by the authors of the reviewed volume relates to traditional methodology. This includes typology, stratigraphy, the record, relative and absolute chronology, classification, the analysis of graves and central places. A number of theoretical concepts are discussed in separate articles (e. g. "Historismus", "Materialismus", "New Archaeology – Prozessuale Archäologie", "Strukturalismus", "Wissenschaftstheorie [science theory]).

'Culture' is a topic of a number of articles such as "Kulturbegriff" (concept of culture), "Kulturelle Evolution" (cultural evolution) or "Kulturwandel" (culture change). The relationship of archaeology to other disciplines is the topic of other chapters, but much of this has already been discussed in specialised articles. Certain technical problems of archaeology are not neglected (excavation, absolute and relative dating) and information on post-excavation treatment of archaeological data is included (museums, conservation, experiment in archaeology).

The reviewed book is not much concerned with artefacts. What I mainly miss are considerations on stone artefacts, pottery and architecture which form the majority of prehistoric remains worldwide; they all bear implications for the theoretically based approaches to prehistoric times. Also missing are some theoretical deliberations on agriculture as well as many technical disciplines. And no consequences for prehistoric societies are drawn from both major and smaller technological changes of artefacts. There is no information on formal decomposition (analysis) of the record into relational databases and on the quest for regularities (structures) in them, possibly by mathematical means. This is the future of archaeology and its absence can hardly be pardoned. In contrast to this, explanation is covered by an article on analogy.

On the whole, there are a number of articles in the reviewed volume that are splendid examples of the 'historical' method of building theories, especially if considered within the 'German speaking' archaeology. Some colleagues may deem my criticism unnecessarily austere. But nothing else can be expected if I am another paradigm.

CZ-17000 Praha 7
Nad Kazankou 40
E-Mail: neustup@iol.cz

Evžen Neustupný