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Martijn Eickhoff

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**Gottessohn und Mutter Erde auf bronzezeitlichen Felsbil-  
dern. Herman Wirth und die völkische Symbolforschung**  
Luitgard S. Löw

**Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie.  
Mäzene – Förderer – Förderstrukturen**  
Susanne Grunwald, Uta Halle, Dirk Mahsarski  
and Karin Reichenbach (eds)

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**SUSANNE GRUNWALD / UTA HALLE / DIRK MAHSARSKI / KARIN REICHENBACH (eds), Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie. Mäzene – Förderer – Förderstrukturen.** Histoire volume 81. Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2016. € 34.99. ISBN 978-3-8376-3113-5 (printed version). € 34.99. ISBN 978-3-8394-3113-9 (E-Book). 318 pages.

In the last three decades, in Germany, the history of archaeology has been a dynamic research field. Important new insights have been developed, particularly with regard to the role that pre- and protohistoric archaeology played and the position it held in the so-called Third Reich. Biographies on leading prehistorians such as Gustaf Kossinna, Herbert Jankuhn, Ernst Petersen, Gero von Merhart, Gustav Schwantes, Walter von Stokar, and Kurt Tackenberg have been crucial for this development. In addition, the history of important excavations, including those at the Santok castle hill, Hedeby, Dolní Věstonice, Solone, and the Glauberg, has been taken up. Moreover, in-depth research has been conducted concerning institutions like the “Kieler Schule” or the national *Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* in Berlin. The interrelation between research into prehistory and protohistory, on the one hand, and National Socialism, on the other hand, has likewise been examined within regional (Rhine Province, Bavaria, Saxony, Bohemia, Silesia) or national (Austria, the Netherlands) frameworks as well as with regard to newly created territories by the National Socialist regime, including the so-called “Reichskommissariat Ostland”. The history of ethnic concepts such as the Goths or the Merovingians has also been analysed critically. While this summary is by no means exhaustive, it demonstrates how the silence surrounding the role and position of pre- and protohistory in the Third Reich, that in Germany was still a reality in the early 1990s, has been permanently broken. As a result, National Socialist archaeology can no longer be reduced to a marginal pseudoscientific activity or to the deeds of a small group of radical archaeologists; the research field as a whole turned out to be connected and interrelated with National Socialism in manifold ways.

The two publications under review here contribute to the development mentioned above and add a new step in coming to terms with the history of archaeology of the National Socialist era. Luitgard Sofie Löw’s study “Gottessohn und Mutter Erde auf bronzezeitlichen Felsbildern. Herman Wirth und die völkische Symbolforschung” (Son of God and Mother Earth in Bronze Age Petroglyphs. Herman Wirth and the ‘völkisch’ Symbolology) should be read as a hybrid biography in which the author links biographic events in the life of Herman Wirth (1885–1981) to the history of ideas (particularly the German interest in petroglyphs), of museology and heritage studies (notably the museological history of plaster casts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries), and of archaeology (especially petroglyphs as an archaeological source). Löw’s goal is to critically understand the work of amateur archaeologists as a cultural-historical phenomenon through H. Wirth, and thereby enter a field of research that is still largely overlooked by historians of the National Socialist era.

Based on the premise that financing research always also serves non-scientific objectives, “Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie. Mäzene – Förderer – Förderstrukturen” (The Trail of Money in Prehistoric Archaeology. Patrons – Sponsors – Funding Structures), edited by Susanne Grunwald, Uta Halle, Dirk Mahsarski, and Karin Reichenbach, aims to develop new perspectives on archaeological research, monument care, and museum practices in Germany. While the subject matter concerns the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a whole, most contributions on the funding history

of archaeology focus on the National Socialist era. As the problem of financing his archaeological projects constitutes an important aspect of the life and works of Herman Wirth, a double-review, as presented here, is justifiable at both a conceptual and a thematic level.

L. S. Löw's hybrid approach makes it abundantly clear how, in the 1930s, Herman Wirth worked within the transnational *völkisch* networks of north-western Europe. On the basis of ethnographic and archaeological research, he believed to have discovered a worldwide primordial monotheistic religion borne by the so-called "Nordic race". He was supported by a diverse and ever-changing group of supporters, patrons, and sponsors, including Heinrich Himmler, and was considered both influential and controversial at this time. L. S. Löw describes how H. Wirth became co-founder of the SS-organisation "Das Ahnenerbe" (The Ancestral Heritage) in 1935, and how he organised expeditions to Scandinavia for this organisation in 1935 and 1936 to produce plaster casts of bronze-age petroglyphs. She also describes conclusively how H. Wirth was contrived to leave the organisation in 1938, when it tried to find a footing in the academic world, while still being supported financially by H. Himmler (p. 78).

At the same time, H. Wirth became an example to academically-oriented archaeologists of how the divide between science and speculation faded unwantedly due to the involvement of amateurs. In their stressing of the importance of the demarcation between professional archaeologists and amateurism, H. Wirth would paradoxically play a vital role in the establishment of prehistory as a scientific subject.

Furthermore, the biographical depiction of H. Wirth's life and workings after World War II is important. He continued to spread his ideas and found new popularity in New Age, ecological, natural-religious, and feminist circles, particularly because of his idea of a "mythical matriarchy". At the same time, L. S. Löw describes the competition for the ownership of the Scandinavian plaster casts, which lasted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As L. S. Löw justly concludes, by this time the casts had gained value for another reason: they had become artefacts of the history of science and examples of research under *völkisch* conditions (pp. 178–179).

The multitude of approaches constitutes both the major strength and the major weakness of this book. While the petroglyph catalogue of over 100 pages (pp. 353–479) based on the first "Ahnenerbe" excursion in 1935 is an important historical source and interesting in its own right, it does not provide further insight into amateurs and their archaeological research as a culture-historical phenomenon. In addition, the book fails to provide a psychological insight into Herman Wirth as a person, which would have been beneficial to better understand his connection to the *völkisch* movement in general and his patrons in particular.

The connections between archaeologists and society are at the heart of the volume edited by Susanne Grunwald, Uta Halle, Dirk Mahsarski, and Karin Reichenbach. All eight contributions have the struggle for finding funding for archaeological research at the core and premise of their analyses. As a whole, the edited volume should be considered an important achievement, as it proves once and for all the importance of analysing the financing structures of archaeology and, consequently, the motivations of both sponsor and recipient. This approach raises a number of important intertwined questions: What kind of financing structures existed? Were they based on regional traditions? How did the structure of financing research develop over time? How did this affect the status of individual sponsorship? What happened after political or constitutional changes? For instance, for a long time, there was no central body to coordinate archaeological research, learning, monument care, and research funding in Germany. This feature of the archaeological system has strongly increased the regional character of research funding. After 1945, only the GDR, where an archaeological institute initiating, coordinating, and funding research was

established as part of the state academy of sciences, saw a change in this situation. In the Federal Republic on the other hand, the already existing system of state-sponsored archaeological heritage agencies and university institutes developed further. The ideal of academic freedom is also analysed in this regard. To what extent has the funding of archaeological projects been based on scientific interests and needs only?

The most important contribution to the edited volume, “Vom Wert der Forschung. Überlegungen zu einer Finanzierungsgeschichte der Prähistorischen Archäologie” (On the value of research. Considerations about the history of financing prehistoric archaeology) by Susanne Grunwald (pp. 17–70), provides an overview of the history of financing archaeology in Germany from 1900 until 1960, using the research of hillforts in Brandenburg and Saxony as examples. The use of the sociological principle of the Matthew effect, which in this case means that current success in mobilising science funding is determined more by previous success than by present accomplishments, leads to relevant new insights. S. Grunwald shows how Carl Schuchhardt, for instance, used the financial recognition of his initial scientific work, as well as his scholarly network built during that time, to initiate additional regional research and to undertake travels in Europe. In comparison to his colleagues, he thus acquired an exclusive position, which enabled him to establish Berlin as the centre of archaeological research from 1918 onwards.

The financing of archaeology as part of the so-called “Notstandsarbeit” established in 1933 is equally important. This made archaeology part of labour market policies developed to counter the contemporary mass-unemployment and less dependent of culture- and science-related funding. S. Grunwald concludes that the *völkisch*-national discourse of the Weimar Republic laid the groundwork for this development. After 1933, this policy was implemented further by the National Socialist state.

Other contributions by Sabrina Schütze on Ludwig Roselius (pp. 71–86), by Dana Schlegelmilch on Wilhelm Jordan (pp. 121–172), and by Marko Jelusić about Peter Paulsen (pp. 173–208) show how important it is to include financial matters in the biographical approach. D. Schlegelmilch convincingly paints a picture of the life of an archaeologist in the Third Reich in which a personal connection to H. Himmler as an important patron of prehistoric research can be linked to the use of forced labour provided by a concentration camp, excavations in concentration camps, and the looting of museum collections. The author shows how during the National Socialist era these links between archaeology and what we now consider to be war crimes seemed almost self-evident. Against this backdrop, the contributions of Dirk Mahsarski on the sponsoring of pre-historical archaeology by the SS (pp. 87–120) and by Judith Schachtmann and Thomas Widera on the use of forced labour in prehistoric archaeology (pp. 281–312) provide many relevant and valuable new insights.

In her contribution on wartime archaeology by the SS-“Ahnenerbe” and the “Amt Rosenberg” (Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce) in Brittany (pp. 209–258), Reena Perschke shows how complicated archaeological relations in occupied Europe would become. R. Perschke examines the activities of these two institutions concerning the megalithic monuments in Brittany. Interestingly, the decisive element for the “success” of the Rosenberg taskforce in Brittany was not financial but the successful designation of archaeological research as a war necessity, which led to army support.

The contribution by Karin Reichenbach on the funding of archaeological research in Poland from 1949 to 1953 (pp. 259–280) provides a clarifying analysis of how large-scale governmental support converted Polish post-war archaeology into a Marxist science, which at the same time contributed to creating a Polish identity for Poland’s newly acquired western parts. Reichenbach uncovers how archaeology thus became a state funded research programme, which was

controlled by the highest level of government, and as a result had a strong centralist and hierarchic structure.

The edited volume of S. Grunwald, U. Halle, D. Mahsarski, and K. Reichenbach, as fascinating as it already is, also shows how research concerning the funding of archaeology is still in its beginnings. The value of this new approach has, however, been conclusively proven, especially when comparisons are being made. With her contribution on Polish post-war archaeology, K. Reichenbach also demonstrates, for instance, how much room for own initiative still existed during the Third Reich, for archaeologists, or patron-dependent researchers like Herman Wirth.

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In his 1784 “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”, Immanuel Kant called the belief that man and history have a telos (and presumably a progressive one) a ‘regulative idea’, one that we cannot prove with empirical evidence, but in which we must have faith if we are to wrest human history from chaos, and perhaps despair. According to Jan Assmann, for Karl JASPERS (1883–1969), the identification of an ‘axial age’ (the period between roughly 800 and 200 BCE, when many of the great world religions got their start) in his “Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte” (Zurich 1949), was similarly a regulative idea, one that in the dark years after WWII gave him hope for cross-cultural understanding and world peace (p. 187). In a desperate attempt to push beyond a past of genocidal emphases on difference, Jaspers dove back into this ‘axial age’ to discover a period of cosmopolitan connection in which many world cultures had simultaneously, and apparently independently, experienced a ‘break through’ to modernity. In the passage from Mythos to Logos, many peoples had, for the first time, achieved full and reflexive self-consciousness, experienced individual longings for liberation and salvation, and articulated consciousness of their own historicity. For Jaspers, this was the moment in which philosophy was born, a philosophy that was not divorced from religious thought, and so could be found in the sayings of the Buddha as in the Pre-Socratics, in the biblical prophets, and in Confucius. It was not Jaspers’ mission to describe how this synchronicity came about – whether by communication between cultures or by means of the independent evolution of similar ideas. Rather, his aim was to understand how and why ‘axiality’ had occurred in this era, and how it might, in some way, be replicated by postwar peoples facing the urgent task of articulating a cosmopolitan ‘origin and aim of history’.

In his fascinating historiographical review, Jan Assmann tries to trace the sources of the idea of an ‘axial age’ and its emergence around 500 BCE, in the Iron Age. In twelve chapters spanning the period from the Enlightenment to the present, he shows clearly that Jaspers’ ideas were anticipated in various ways by predecessors such as the French traveller and translator of the Zend Avesta, Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), the now-forgotten nineteenth-century cultural historians Ernst von Lasaulx (1805–1861) and John Stuart Stuart-Glennie (1841–1910), and the sociologist Alfred Weber (1868–1958). One very long chapter is devoted to Jaspers himself, and to explaining how he reconfigured the work of these predecessors during the dark times in which he found himself in the 1930s and 1940s. Jaspers’ ‘axial age’ theory, Assmann argues, was