

VIII. Conferences: past and forthcoming

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Neighbours: Polish-German Relations in Archaeology

Archaeologia Polona, organ of the Institute for Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Science, has established itself in the last few years as an important forum for the Central-European history of (mainly prehistoric) archaeology.¹ Published in English, it has been able to inform also non-Polish speaking scholars about the latest developments in Central-European archaeology. For the forthcoming volume 2004 the editors Zbigniew Kobyliński and Jacek Lech chose one of the most pressing topics in the Central-European history of archaeology: Polish-German relations. In preparation of the volume, part of the contributors met in Warsaw on 24th of March 2004. On invitation of the Commission for the History of Archaeology (subordinate to the Committee for pre- and protohistory of the Polish Academy of Sciences), eight papers on the relations between Polish and German archaeology were given, ranging from the 19th century to 1945 with a clear stress on the 20th century.

Two of the papers were delivered by German archaeologists, the rest of them from a Polish point of view. Polish prehistoric archaeology seems to have been very much defined by German archaeology and politics throughout much of the considered time, at least in today's West Poland, which from 1795 to 1918 was under German occupation. Until 1918 Polish organisations in the then German territories were hindered in their work, for instance by not getting excavation permissions from German administration, whereas for German societies this was usually not a problem. Another problem was the lack of a broader Polish intelligentsia, as Jolanta Małicka-Kukawka and Bogusława Wawrzykowska showed for the case of Toruń and Jarmila E. Kaczmarek for the Poznań region. Generally, before 1918 Polish-German relations in archaeology were far from good because of politics and *Kulturkampf*, although there are examples of cooperation as in the case of Wilhelm Schwartz (1821–1899), a passionate layman-archaeologist in Poznań.

In the inter-war period German methods and interpretations were still strong in the 'reborn' Polish Second Republic. Some of the Polish archaeologists emerged from German schools (e.g. Józef Kostrzewski [1885–1969], educated mainly in Berlin and afterwards professor in Poznań, or Leon Kozłowski [1892–1944], who finished his doctorate in Tübingen before getting the chair of prehistory in Lviv). In both states, some archaeologists were engaged in the legitimization of possession of respectively claim on territories. The author of this review analyzed archaeological literature on Upper Silesia after the partition in 1921 between Germany and Poland as an example for extraordinarily heated polemics and propaganda, exchanged mostly between Bolko von Richthofen (1889–1983) and Józef Kostrzewski. On a wider range, these polemics can be seen before the background of German *Ostforschung* as well as Polish *Westforschung*.² In Hubert Fehr's paper, the German interdisciplinary network

¹ Cf. for example the volume on 'Archaeology in the 20th Century: Ideas – People – Research' (*Archaeologia Polona* 35/36, 1997/1998), or on 'Polish Archaeology in an International Context' (*Archaeologia Polona* 40, 2002).

² German *Ostforschung* and Polish *Westforschung* or *Western thought (myśl zachodni)* were interdisciplinary movements to legitimise possession of resp. claims on territories. This scientific

of the time and the role of archaeology within it became especially clear. On the example of the excavations at Santok/Zantoch he showed distinctly how ideological use of archaeology was made in the 1930s.

Polish-German relations after the German occupation 1939 until the end of the war 1945 were altogether different. No archaeological institutions were left to function under Polish directive, although a few Polish archaeologists were still able to stay in some kind of position. In Danuta Piotrowska's paper the changes in the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw and the German robbery of scientific goods was illustrated by rich photographic material. Maria M. Blombergowa stressed the injustice done by Germans in Łódź during the occupation. In this city, the 'relations' in archaeology were reduced to Polish archaeologists working as handymen in the city museum and administration, where they were at least able to hide and therefore rescue administrative material and paperwork from before 1939 from German destruction.

The last of the papers, by Tomasz Mikocki, although centering on pre-War German collections (mostly private), gave an impression of actual Polish-German relationships. Giving a view of formerly German pieces of antique art which today are in Polish possession, Mikocki initiated a brief but fruitful discussion on the politics of returning and exchanging pieces of art between the two states today.

The meeting helped – hopefully both German and Polish archaeologists – to get an impression of the variety of topics worked on as well as the different points of view. Designed for giving an overview of Polish-German relations through time and being a starting point for further discussion, the congress was certainly successful. As Jacek Lech aptly put it in his conclusion: while German prehistoric archaeology was formed by organisation, Polish prehistoric archaeology consisted of improvisation. Reviewing the Polish contributions from a German perspective, there seems to be a certain preoccupation with the history of German archaeology in the formerly German parts of Poland. This is insofar understandable as German prehistory and politics were, as already pointed out, of great influence on some aspects of Polish prehistoric archaeology. Still, Polish archaeologists and institutions should not be neglected. In general, biographies could fill in gaps; a start has been made with Heinz Grünert's biography of Gustaf Kossinna (1858–1931).³ Next, especially Józef Kostrzewski as the central figure of West Polish archaeology from 1919 onwards, passionately engaged in politics as well as archaeological matters, ought to be the focus of – first of all Polish – attention. As Jacek Lech underlined already in his introductory paper, the closely linked history of both archaeologies holds much in store for future research. National symbols, taken from history and archaeology like Biskupin in Poland, the monument of Arminius in Germany and King Arthur in Great Britain (or rather England) could be a worthwhile topic, as well as comparing archaeological propaganda linked to the changing of national frontiers in Europe through the centuries. The time after the Second World War with the influence of Marxism and Communism in Central-Eastern and Western Europe is also a vast and hardly researched field. Archives in Poland and Germany hold large amounts of personal and official material to be sighted and analysed. The neighbours have a lot of work to do.

approach to politics reached its peak in the first half of the 20th century. For the latest view cf. Markus Krzoska: *Deutsche Ostforschung – polnische Westforschung. Prolegomena zu einem Vergleich. Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 52, 2003, pp. 398–419.

³ Heinz Grünert: *Gustaf Kossinna (1858–1931). Vom Germanisten zum Prähistoriker. Ein Wissenschaftler im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik. Vorgeschichtliche Forschungen* 22. Rahden/Westfalen: Verlag Marie Leidorf 2002.