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„Archaeology and Politics.

Myth, Identity and Constructed History
regarding Archaeological Sites in Europe,
Middle East and Africa“

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Introduction and Scientific Question.....	5
1.2	Europe	10
1.2.1	Europe – past – present- future.....	10
1.2.2	Archeology in Germany and Austria.....	10
1.2.3	The present situation of European Archeology.....	13
1.3	Summary.....	15
2	Israel.....	19
2.1	Preface.....	19
2.2	Masada.....	21
2.2.1	Introduction.....	21
2.2.2	Sources.....	22
2.2.2.a	Historic sources.....	22
2.2.2.b	Archeological sources.....	24
2.2.3	The Myth of Masada.....	27
2.2.4	Battling the Myth.....	31
2.2.5	Synopsis.....	33
2.3	Ein Gedi.....	35
2.3.1	Introduction.....	35
2.3.1.a	Historic and written sources.....	36
2.3.1.b	Archeological sources.....	37
2.3.2	Excavating Ein Gedi.....	41
2.3.3	Summary: Ein Gedi and Masada.....	43
2.3.4	60 Years of Israeli archeology - Summary.....	45
3	Archeology in Africa	49
3.1	Prehistoric Science in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	50
3.2	Goede Verwachting / Simonsberg.....	53
3.2.1	The historic narrative.....	53
3.2.2	Written and oral sources.....	56
3.2.3	Archeological sources.....	57
3.2.4	Excavating the Simonsberg.....	59
3.2.5	Conclusions and summary.....	61

3.3	Migration Archeology in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	63
3.3.1	Introduction.....	63
3.3.2	History of Science.....	64
3.3.3	New sources – new theories.....	67
3.3.4	Case Study – Felix Chami's Resarch on End Neolithic and Early Iron Age alongside the Swahili coast.....	69
3.3.5	History of Science and archeological finds.....	70
3.3.6	Written accounts.....	73
3.3.7	The Politics of Chicken Bones.....	74
3.3.8	Summary.....	75
3.4	Summary – The Dilemma of a New Discipline.....	76
4	Summary.....	81
4.1	The International Stage.....	81
4.1.1	Europe.....	81
4.1.2	Africa	81
4.1.3	Middle East.....	82
4.1.4	Far East.....	83
4.1.5	Australia.....	83
4.1.6	The Americas.....	84
4.2	Conclusions.....	84
4.2.1	Summary of content.....	84
4.2.2	Conclusions.....	87
4.2.3	Further Scientific Questions.....	90
4.2.4	Summary of Conclusions.....	91
4.2.5	Final Summary.....	92
5	Sources.....	95
Appendix:.....		115
I	List of Images.....	115
II	Curriculum Vitae.....	117
III	Abstract	119
IV	Abstract (German).....	121

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Scientific Question

“In the beginning of every scientific discovery there always is a question.”, Hans Jürgen Eggers wrote in the foreword to his “Einführung in die Vorgeschichte” (Introduction to prehistory), that has over half a century grown to be perhaps the most important piece of literature for the aspiring archeologist (Eggers 2004, 10). It is this very question, posed by the researcher, that is caused by intention; the intention of finding a specific answer to a specific question. Archeologists, as do likely any other scientists, start their research with an image of what he¹ is going to find and whilst in the natural sciences Boolean data will finally define a clear answer to most scientific questions, in archeology rarely any questions will ever be answered by the source to an extent that leaves no doubt, but rather will it be the researcher himself, who will use nothing short of the very image that drew him in the beginning to construct an answer from the source material available to him.

Nonetheless this paper, as well, has to start with a question. One of the uncountable number of questions within the topic of “Archeology and Politics”, and one specific enough to be able to deal with within a paper limited to about 100 pages: How does the influence of personal and socio-politics show in archeological work and interpretation?

To explain this, it is best disassembled into single parts:

Archeology used to be a synonym for “prehistory”, thus historic research on the time from man's first cultural and technological leavings until the time about which historic, thus written sources became available to the researcher – the historian. It has, nonetheless evolved further in terms of time frame, now covering research on recent times, as close as the 20th century itself, thus incorporation of a set of “archeological” methods; surveying and excavating, as well as antiquarian methods, that can are now applied in settings that previously belonged exclusively to other disciplines within the historic sciences.

Therefor archeology, besides its quest to accumulate knowledge about times hardly intelligible to other disciplines, has grown to be a discipline challenging historic narratives that have previously seemed to be been untouchable by means of supplying and interpreting new sources.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1981) describes identity as:

¹ For reasons of simplicity the male pronoun will be used addressing both male and female persons throughout this paper.

"[...] b) sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing [...]"

Identity can, however, as well be described as a matrix of affiliations and associations. Affiliation by culture, religion, language etc. and, of course, affiliation by history and a shared past that, in the end, led to the affiliations by culture, religion and others. Thus archeology, as a science dealing with the past, is an important tool to enlighten this shared past, the basis of a group's feeling of affiliation, therefore its identity. It can take part in proving and reconstructing, as well as altering this view on the past, thus identity.

Identity, however, is also linked to politics. In this case, talking less about the prominently featured politics produced by political parties, but rather about the more complex long-termed socio-political streams and views of a given time, social group and region. The way, time and place we were brought up in shape the way we see the world as do our surroundings at the time we are living or, as in the examples below, scientific research is conducted.

The identity and socio-political views of the researcher turn him into a tool for manifesting the theoretical concept of politics and a political set of ideas as a tangible, however possibly constructed, reality within his area of expertise. And especially in those geographic areas where identity is a topic of conflict, possibly even armed one, the tools an archeologist has to offer are not to be under determined as has been very prominently shown on research conducted on the role of archeology during the Nazi and Socialist regimes of Middle Europe.

Myth and even Constructed History can be the result if, for one reason or another, little attention is paid to the matter of both the scientist's and his institution's political and social affiliation – thus the granting of money vital to the historic sciences and scientists, therefore gravely influencing the selection of scientists to work on a given topic or within a given geographic-political surrounding.

The source of political influence and the way a scientist or institute has evolved into a given state can only be touched in this paper, as can the way it comes into existence and is possibly reinforced by institutions and governments. The same is true for the political stage on which each of the following examples takes part. Every single one of the complex situations can, and in some cases have, filled volumes. Only a brief introduction, as far as needed to gain the basic understanding necessary for each example will be given below. This introductions cannot and will not be true or complete in any way. They will lack perspectives, alternative points of views, maybe even facts that are perceived as historical “truth” by either party.

It is not and cannot be the aim of this paper to be politically correct or just for any or the party's standards and the reader needs to be aware that nothing but brief glimpses will be given on each topic and region, intent being to supply the reader with an assortment of examples of the visible outcome of the politics of identity within archeological research and interpretation of sources.

As for the geographical regions chosen for this work, Europe serves as a point of reference, both for the author's personal academic and socio-political background, as well as as a known territory from which to start the subsequent survey of the situation in other regions of the world.

Mostly based on the fabulous work of German archeologist Gabriele Mante, a brief summary on Middle European (i.e. German and Austrian) archeology of the 20th century will be given. The history and state of the discipline in Middle Europe serve as a model of the vast damage that can be done by means of abused archeology in a society not aware of the fact that no version of historic narrative, neither written by historians nor archeologists, can ever be perceived as unquestionable truth. Two absolutist regimes have devastated and made use of the Middle European prehistoric science during the 20th century. As this, again, is a topic to fill whole volumes on the summary will be brief.

Furthermore the state of the discipline and the damage done to it will be discussed. It is Middle Europe once more, that serves as a model of how an idea of non-political archeology can, or can't work and what this extreme interpretation of the archeologists role and boundaries can cause and prevent within the discipline.

Whilst the region of the Middle East (i.e. Israel) has been chosen for the obvious reason of the author being familiar with it, it furthermore supplies what might be one of the most well-known and prominent contemporary examples of myth created by the prehistoric sciences: King Herod's ancient fortress of Masada, situated on a hilltop overlooking the Dead Sea.

Whilst the architectural value of the site is not to be underestimated a different narrative made Masada well-known far beyond Israel: archeologist Yigael Yadin and Shmaria Guttman's understanding of historian Flavius Josephus' account on the last stand of a group of people – Jewish rebels according to Yadin / Guttman – ultimately committing suicide when the Roman army took over the fortress. Within less than a century Masada has made it all the way from a little known Herodian fortress to becoming a national myth, ultimately a symbol of how gravely archeology can rewrite history, when the next generation of Israeli archeologists, thus the product of a changed social-political climate in Israel, has turned on the Masada Myth from a more skeptical point of view. The narrative of bravery was, all of a sudden, rewritten into one of fear and cowardice (also see Pfaffl 2010).

On the example of Masada a process of coming into existence and deconstruction of mythical narratives will be shown, that has not yet ended and it can be presented very clearly how the development of a young nation and its population and society does influence archeology and its interpretation – and the other way round.

The second Israeli archeological site chosen for this paper, the Jewish village of Ein Gedi, just a couple of kilometers away from Masada offers a contrast to the vast attention and the vast political influence at Masada. Ein Gedi, however important from a scientific and historic point of view, excavated over decades on a scale that resembles the one seen at Masada, has had little media attention. With the major part of the excavations taking part during what might have been the most calm and hopeful period in Israeli history, and being conducted by a team of people of different ethnic and social-political background Ein Gedi has produced a remarkably detailed and vivid idea Jewish settlement. And however charged the existence of such a obviously wealthy, well-functioning and very Jewish settlement might have been obviously it never turned into anything feasible as a major myth.

After all Ein Gedi shows what difference a couple of decades and a balanced team, driven by altered expectations can make when excavating a site, and what amazing science is possible under supporting circumstances.

As for the second region chosen, namely sub-Saharan Africa, after evaluation of a couple of candidates, as discussed below, the region offered a ground not yet discussed in the light of politically influenced archeology as much as Israel. However regarding the near history of the place mechanisms similar to those seen in Israel have taken place and are still doing so.

Thus the two geographic regions of this paper, the Middle East and Africa supply an interesting mixture of similarities and differences. Both are post-colonial regions, who's identity is shaped gravely by the experience of oppression and persecution. Also both regions have, ever since the first days of archeology awoken the interest of foreign researchers and adventurers. Therefore the beginning of the discipline in both regions has been shaped by foreigners and only slowly have locals taken over control, which of course made the definition and purpose of existence of the discipline even more urgent.

Furthermore with both regions hosting young, dynamic states, in many respects still in the process of nation building, changes are happening frequently and penetrating deeply into society, the nation's structures and self-understanding and thus, ultimately her and her citizen's politics and political understandings. Today's second and third post-colonial generations of course do have a completely different approach to history compared to their parents and grandparents and thereby provide even more momentum to ongoing discussions. This effect makes comparison possible over

rather short periods of time, about two decades at most, thus minimizing the effects of vast changes in global philosophy and society and the availability of new scientific methods.

The two sites of sub-Saharan African archeology, that will be discussed in this paper are the South African Simonsberg Silver mine and the topic of the Late Stone Age (LSA) to Early Iron Working (EIW) transition and (postulated) Bantu Migration.

First to offer a glimpse on the influence of political opinion and upbringing concerning a very small-scaled one-man survey, so to examine a contrast to the vast operations discussed in the other examples. The Simonsberg Mine was surveyed by a foreigner, Icelander Gavin Lucas, with his idea of a very specific question, namely that of the working circumstances in the colonial working environment of the Simonsberg Mine. The mine as well happens to host a rather curious narrative of a Danish VOC tradesman tricking (?) his fellow tradesmen into investing a large amount of money into a mining site that never produced any ore.

Whilst the Simonsberg offers an idea of political influence on a very small scale the topic of the Late Stone Age / Early Iron Working period transition in sub-Saharan Africa does so in the opposite direction: The quest for identity can be shown as regards whole peoples and the conflict between foreign, white, archeology and local, black, archeology. In short the pending question of the extent to which ancient African societies have been capable of inventions of their own, or whether and to what extent they, as has been postulated during the early days of archeology, have been transferred from the Caucasian or at least Hamite (thus Egyptian) regions farther north has been and still is fought on this academic ground.

Not only does the conflict between Africans and Caucasians voice, but as well the conflict and struggle for domination between different African peoples. Thus the example offers not only a bigger perspective, both in geographic terms and terms of time frame, but also an idea of the vast complexity of political influence and identities involved in archeological surveys.

Those two regions, featuring four examples, as well as the summary of European history of science and a global outlook will be summed up and discussed in a final chapter of the paper where the attempt will be made to approach the question posed in the beginning:

How does the influence of personal and social-politics show in archeological work and interpretation?

1.2 Europe

1.2.1 Europe – past – present-future.

When talking about the way politics and, most of all, a scientist's own socio-political background is influencing the science and the way archeological source material is interpreted, it is crucial to set an example by not muting about one's own scientific and personal upbringing and background.

The author was born in 1985 in Linz / Austria and raised there in a conservative surrounding, however exposed to socialist ideas in her youth. After formal education at different schools in Linz she started her academic education at Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg / Germany in 2005 at that time headed firstly by Carola Metzner-Nebelsiek and subsequently by Frank Falkenstein. Her minor subjects were Arabic and German, later Communication Sciences. Next to her studies she worked at the local Bumiller Collection of Early Islamic Art and during summer holidays with the Austrian Antiques Authority.

After mid-term exams in 2007 she left Germany for a five-month internship at Austrian Embassy Tel Aviv / Israel, where she worked as a program manager in event management and public relations. She afterward resumed her studies at Vienna University, where she was made to focus on medieval and historical archeology under the auspices of Claudia Theune-Vogt who grew to be her M.A. thesis' academic adviser.

It shall, therefor, an abstract about the historic development of the prehistoric sciences in Middle Europe be given to make way for the understanding of the point of view from which the later sites and their researchers were looked upon. The following is mostly based on the work of Gabriele Mante (2007)'s archeological work on the German Prehistoric Archeology.

1.2.2 Archeology in Germany and Austria

Two grave historic abuses have happened to the prehistoric sciences in Germany within the 20th century and have left it marked. Though in Austria the discipline has had to go through only one of these traumas², a tradition of conservative scientific work, as well as a traditional affiliation with its same-language neighbor of Germany, have mostly kept the country and its most important arts and humanities department at Vienna university on-track with German prehistoric science,

² Whether or not the term „trauma“ is appropriate is subject of academic dispute, however the author, referring to Webster's definition of „trauma“ as a „b) psychological or emotional stress or blow that may produce disordered feelings or behavior“ agrees with Gabriele Mante's use of the term in this context.

which is why at least as far as the Nazi-trauma is concerned, Austria and Germany can be regarded as one scientific-cultural entity. Only when local topics are concerned has Austrian prehistoric science found a way to emancipate itself from German influence.

Having spent her academic training at universities in Bamberg / Germany and Vienna / Austria, as well as abroad and, later on, focused on foreign archeological work based upon her own experience the author can only agree with Gabriele Mante as she points out:

„German and foreign archeologists came to the agreement that German prehistoric archeology is quite a strange thing: on the one hand it has been misused by the supporters of various political systems [...] on the other hand it has the reputation of being mostly uneventful science, which dedicates itself to the everlasting refinement of the antiquarian tradition: surveying, excavating, documenting and establishing of catalogues, typologies and chronologies [...].

[...]

When it is compared to the flourishing theoretical involvement of Anglo-American archeologists that has taken place since the 1960s, German archeology appears quite pale and traditional.“ (Mante 2007, 238)

This opinion, naturally, is not beyond criticism in Middle European sciences (see e.g. Steuer 2001, Brather 2009) and applying criticism of sources other aspects have to be taken into account. For instance has the author found Anglo-American archeology, probably corresponding to a different culture and temperament, to be more likely to attract public attention than traditionally more modest Middle European archeology. Though Mante's point of view goes along with the author's general experience it cannot be ruled out that for the casual reader, who is not an expert in the very field, Anglo-American cutting-edge theories just feature more prominently than likewise ideas by their more cautious Middle European Colleagues.

Thus it is probably the word “appears” that emphasis has to be put on with Gabriele Mante's later statement.

However catching up with Mante's work the antiquarian approach on archeology that is supposed to have been brought about by the trauma German prehistoric sciences had to go through after the end of the Nazi reign and the over-interpretative abuse of prehistory that had become all too obvious at this point. German archeologists, some may argue, were too terrified of causing harm by ways of their science and interpretation, to give cultural historically oriented approaches on the subject another try (see e.g. Smolla 1979).

It is still questionable whether (see Mante 2007) or not (see Kossack 1992) German archeology was mostly a unwilling tool or a full-bred supporter of the Nazi paradigm of the German-Aryan „superior race“. As a matter of fact, of course, the racist model of Nazi Germany, beyond other sciences, relied on an understanding of a specifically German prehistory, paired with an early distinction of the German-Aryan „master race“.

„The trouble started,“ states Mante (2007, 242), „with an angry old man: Gustaf Kossina (1859 -1931), who held the first extraordinary professorship for Deutsche Vorgeschichte [German prehistory] at Humboldt-University since 1902.“ Kossina, who shaped important paradigms of the German prehistoric sciences, such as the idea of the existence of sharply definable cultural areas, whether or not he intended to, did make way for the coming into existence of an archeology gravely abused by Nazi rulers and sets of believe. Though the Nazi prehistoric narratives that had been presequently founded on Kossina's work have meanwhile been dismantled and mostly dismissed from the canon of German prehistoric science (see Eggers 2004), Kossina's work still keeps a strong influence on 21st century German prehistoric approaches by means of its negative consequences.

It took German – and Austrian – prehistory more then half a century to break the silence (Mante 2007, 244) that had followed the fall of the Nazi reign. Only in 1998 did Achim Leube (2002) of Humboldt-University Berlin organize the first conference on the subject of the prehistoric sciences role during the Nazi regime.

„It is possible“, Mante (2007, 244) thus suspects, „that the strongest influence of Kossina, Reinert & Co. after 1945 can be found in the questions that scholars refused to investigate, as well as in the activities they failed to initiate.“

As far as eastern Germany, geographic host to socialist German Democratic Republic until 1990, is concerned, withdrawal from political interpretation of archeological finds and material did not take part as much as it did in western Germany, however interpretation was reduced to a „radical Marxist“ (Mante 2007, 245) point of view, officially in order to avoid another drift of archeology towards totalitarian racist ideas as had happened during the Nazi reign over Germany, however certainly also so to befriend the socialist ruler's ideas of prehistory and social mechanisms.

However, as Gabriele Mante in her PhD thesis, composed at the very university that hosted Eastern German Marxist archeology, less then 20 years after the end of the German Democratic Republic points out:

„[...] the whole enterprise became a rather „semantic balloon“ flying high above the heads of the „normal“ excavating archeologist, who mostly did not have the foggiest idea what the big shots were talking about.“ (Mante 2007, 246)

In General prehistoric science within the German Democratic Republic consisted of two groups: Those actively supporting the Marxist paradigm, yet mostly concerned with theoretical questions of the discipline and those, who probably didn't (or just didn't care), but given the omnipresent surveillance, as well as the strict political rule of the Akademie der Wissenschaften (Academy of Sciences) (see Gringmuth-Dallmer 2001, 25), in charge of funding and jobs within Eastern German archeology wouldn't have dared to speak up. Those where the scientists who busied themselves doing the actual excavation work and stuck to it in a manner resembling very much the Western German way of avoiding interpretation of finds.

However after the end of the German Democratic Republic science, as was every aspect of social, political and economic life, was included in western German structures as fast as possible and it seems, at least at the first glimpse that has been taken by the author during field trips and study of eastern German originated scientific papers, like differences between eastern and western German archeological approaches and interpretations cannot easily be found anymore. Whether this is true as well on the second look, though, once more is a question to be left to another paper, as it cannot be sufficiently discussed here.

1.2.3 The present situation of European Archeology

Europe, though motherland to the modern archeological sciences, today faces issues of archeology and politics mostly on a rather local stage. This could be witnessed for instance during a April 2010 international conference on archeology in Conflict in Vienna at which, despite the location, little Middle European archeologists where present and even less presented their scientific work.

Also, as probably in an other place in the world European individual universities and archeology departments tend to have a specific political orientation, thus tend to promote their specific orientation within students and staff alike. Grants, which for many European countries are a rarity depend on personal networking, thus fitting into one's academic surroundings. archeologists performing research on topics too far off their institution's given line will find themselves struggling for grants of any kind.

However as far as Europe is concerned this focus of science varies from institution to institution and little general biases can be found on the first glimpse. It is, thus, perfectly possible for a researcher not fitting in one place to relocate. At least as long as someone is working on an

international stage. Since many Middle European archeologists do, as a matter of fact, rather turn to very local topics – thus meaning topics present within an area of some 100 – 150 km from their base relocation mostly isn't an option. A look at University of Vienna's prehistory department's associates, for instance, shows that an absolute majority of Viennese lecturers has had their academic training at the very same university, though some have spent time abroad, or at least participated in intra-European seminars or conferences. Regarding this it seem to be mostly trans-local topics, for instance as regards issues of mobility, centrality (see Gringmuth-Dallmer 1999) etc., that cause European scientists cross borders to meet with their colleagues from other Universities and states.

As far as conducting research in other areas of the world go, two areas of scientific culture can be distinguished, namely that of Middle Europe (as presented above) and those Eastern and South-Eastern European countries shaped by the Middle European scientific culture and, on the other hand, what has been called the Anglo-American sphere, consisting of mostly the Western and Northern European countries.

Other than the the Middle European approach on prehistoric sciences the Anglo-American sphere does not only act as a global player, conducting a higher number of excavations and surveys outside Europe, but also is closer affiliated with different scientific disciplines, such as anthropology and innovative schools such as neo-Marxist or (post-)Processionalist archeology.

However it cannot be ignored that the „new“ Northern and Western European approach on archeology has a tendency to be highly speculative and interpretative as opposed to the „conservative“ approach that can be seen in Middle and Eastern Europe. It is also questionable whether or not the Anglo-American tendency of conducting science in other regions of the world is, in the end, beneficial for these host countries as much obvious damage has been done by foreign expeditions in the past, as can easily be seen on the example of sub-Saharan Africa's struggle for identity on the ground of historic “truth”.

As well it needs to be pointed out that, though Anglo-American archeology probably conducts more and more prominent international science, European Science is catching up as can be seen at a variety of ÖAI (Austrian Archeological Institute) and DAI (German archeological Institute) expeditions.

In a way it seems both streams of archeology form opposite poles and it would for sure contribute to Europe's diversity would „new“ and „conservative“ archeologists find a way to improve their relationship and work together on a regular basis as opposed to the common practice of keeping out of each others way. Like in so many other parts of intra-European relationship European Union is now conducting projects of intra-European archeology, such as German State Baden-Württemberg's preservation agency-led European Landscapes.

At the same time, nonetheless, the awareness of foreign researcher's special responsibility and

difficulties has grown over recent years. Other than during the early to mid 20th century, when European scientists would rush into „underdeveloped“ countries, digging up and taking with them as they pleased, today's generation of archeologists at least seems to be developing an understanding of the importance of cultural sites for the local population. Large operations are often conducted in cooperation with local institutions and researchers, both parties gaining from the other one's know-how, and it is a given that the unearthed remains of ancient sites are to be made accessible to locals and tourists, instead of taken to a strange country.

1.3 Summary

As the scientific question of this paper, How does the influence of personal and social-politics show in archeological work and interpretation? touches a wide field of topics and possible scientific questions it is important to point out the limits of this paper, posed most of all by the nature of this paper, being a Masters thesis in Pre- and Early History, thereby its size and focus on the topic and on the discipline.

However politically charged or regarded as important some of the topics not discussed in this paper might be, they have to be dismissed for the benefit of using the space and resources available to the author to focus on the actual topic of this paper. It is not the intention of this paper to be politically correct or complete to any extent.

Whilst the term “archeology”, as far as this paper is concerned, will relate to the definition of “archeology” of a set of methods applied on different questions by people properly educated in using them – thus archeologists, the term “politics” will mostly relate to the personal social-political background of these people. This paper understands the scientist as the person ultimately using and thereby turning from theory into reality the political ideas he was brought up and educated with. It seeks to show how the socialization of a scientist in a specific time, region and social surrounding does influence the way the outcome of his surveys and excavations is interpreted.

In all three geographic examples of this paper, namely Europe, the Middle East and Africa, identity has played and still plays a role in interpretation of archeological finds and data not to be underestimated. Thus, at times, a number of phenomena could be found in all three parts of the world, upon them Myth, which has not (yet) developed into a full-fledged understanding of reality and Constructed History. And as have these been brought into existence in all three areas have they also been dismantled, as was shown on the example of the Nazi and Socialist regimes of Middle Europe above.

Abused by the idea of a clearly definable “Aryan” race and history or by the Marxist paradigm of the German Democratic Republic Middle European archeology has had to go through two major traumas during the 20th century. Traumas that, according to Gabriele Mante (2007), have deeply shaped the discipline and led to an absolute mistrust in any attempt of interpretation, but pushed the prehistoric sciences into a strong focus on antiquarian and, since the 1990ies, natural scientific techniques, at times limiting it to little less than “ surveying, excavating, documenting and establishing of catalogs, typologies and transcribed” (Mante 2007, 238).

At the same time Western and Northern European countries have gone the US American way of “modern”, however sometimes over-interpretative archeology.

This paper will focus on the geographic areas of Israel and South-Eastern Africa, featuring a total of four examples.

Whilst the Israeli Herodian Fortress of Masada and its rebel-narrative has been chosen for the clear example of the coming into existence and dismantling of myth and constructed history, the nearby Jewish village of Ein Gedi, excavated some decades later, during a strongly altered political and social climate that, brought about a different team of scientists and workforce, works as an example for how excavations on a site potentially as politically charged as Masada can work given supportive surroundings.

The South African Simonsberg silver mine surveys serve as an example of political influence on interpretation and the choice of material to be examined on a very small scale, a one-person survey. In contrary the topic of the development of iron melting in South-Eastern Africa points at the topic on a big scale in both geographic and terms of time. Not only have issues of (black) African emancipation against (Caucasian) Europeans found a sphere to vent, but also do issues between different (black) African peoples manifest within the discussion of the Bantu expansion.

A final chapter will strive to distribute to an answer to the question posed above and sum up the correlations between archeology and politics found in this paper.

2 Israel

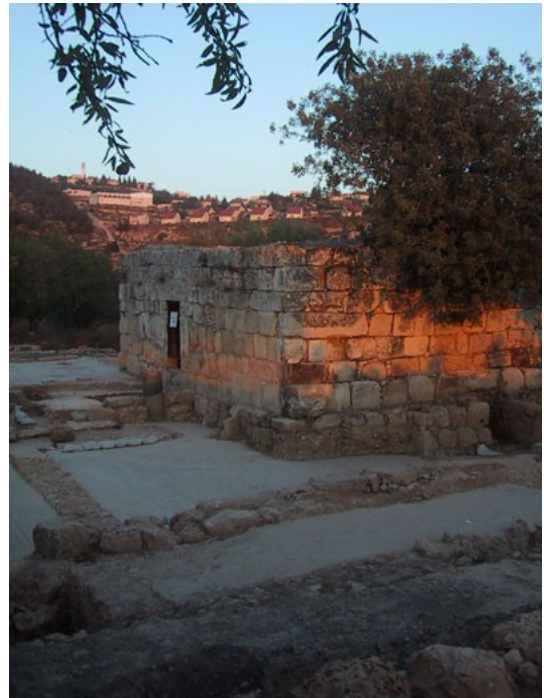
2.1 Preface

When working on a paper on “archeology and Politics.” one hardly comes around the case of Israel and her sister state of Palestine. Not only for archeology in both of the states, as well as the Gaza Strip, remains a constant topic in academic and public discussion as well, but also for the vast influence the outcome of historic, thus also archeological science influences diplomacy and politics.

First can be seen at a range of occasions ranging from WAC's Ramallah Conference in August 2009 (see attachment) and the political discussion whether or not Israeli archeologists were permitted to attend that took place within WAC, via academic (see ...) and non-academic (see Lange 2008) articles, as well as newspaper (see ...) coverage all the way to individual blogging by those interested in the area, its development and change (see BWB 2009).

archeological research in the region is monitored closely by diplomatic, academic and public organizations and individual people. Also is it quickly used as an argument for either side of the parties. Whether it is justifying the existence of Jewish settlements within Palestinian territory, due to ancient Jewish archeological sites nearby, as is the case near the settlement of Shiloh, or the other party is accused of attempted destruction of sites, as was the case during the excavations necessary prior to rebuilding of a collapsed bridge leading to Jerusalem's Temple mount. It is, thus, nearly impossible to conduct research without it being subject to the stigma of intention, no matter to which party one belongs.

Politics and archeology influence each other both directions. The more obvious, of course, is the way archeological research is crucial for the identity of both young nations. This can, as shown below, be most prominently shown featuring the example of the Masada excavations that shaped a myth for a whole nation and constructed a historic narrative of its own.



Ill. 1: Tel Shilo excavations with modern settlement of Shilo in background (M. Pfaffl 2007)

Less apparent is influence going the other direction. However the personal background and – as can be seen at Masada – the charisma of the researcher, that is directly correlated to his stand within the Israeli society, is vastly important for the public influence, and directly connected, the funding that can be had for a certain operation. This is true not exclusively for Israel, but rather on a global scale, of course, but can be shown very clearly at the examples of Ein Gedi, and most prominently, Masada.

As far as archeology in Israel, as opposed to that of the Palestinian Territories goes, there is beyond the vast schism between both cultures and their scientists, as shown above, also a giant gap of research standards between both. Whilst Israel has educated and employed her own scientists from the first days of her existence as a nation, and meanwhile produced a number of scientists of good global reputation the discipline is new to Palestine, where only in recent years the first efforts of establishment of a own track of archeology has started. However those young scientists do not only have to fight for the establishment of their skills and own approach on archeology, as will be shown on the example of Africa below, but also have to face grave difficulties as many of the Palestinian historical and prehistorical sites are in a very bad state. Wars (see Feldinger 2009) as well as looting (see Lange 2008, 60ff) have put many of Palestine's ancient sites, still nearly untouched by historic sciences, near destruction.

Attempts by Israel to aid her neighbor (see Much 2007, 113 – 147) supplying know-how and resources have, themselves, been exploited, or at least transferred into projects of a political scale and have been used to show off Israel's well-meaning.

The situation in the mostly anarchically reigned Gaza strip is even worse. Though in the years between 1994 and the beginning of the Al-Aqusa-Intifada in 2001 seven major archeological sites have been excavated by the Palestinian Authority research halted after the start of the uprising. Tough after the end of the Intifada the Palestinian Authority has found a way back to near-normality the Gaza strip has been taken over by radical Hamas in spring 2007. International isolation, another war in 2009, as well as damage done by Hamas itself has done its share and prevented any further research in the Gaza strip up until today and into the foreseeable future. (see Feldinger 2009).

In the meantime, mostly unseen by global and local media, archeological expeditions, as that of Hirschfeld in Ein Gedi, have, in times of peace, long accomplished this kind of an intercultural working environment (see e.g. Hirschfeld 2007, IX).

Discussing the example of archeology in Israel I would like to show the situation of archeology and politics on a very big scale, featuring a long time span and discussing the meaning of generation and social-political heritage of the researcher. The Myth-building and the coming into existence and fall of constructed history will be a topic as regards Masada, whilst the example of

Ein Gedi will present a long-term research operation less in the focus of attention and, probably, with less intention to begin with. Mechanisms that can be found around the world show astonishingly clear in this big-scale setting.

2.2 Masada

2.2.1 Introduction

The ancient fortress of Masada, Masada', meaning fortress in old Hebrew (see Tsafrir 1993, 3 / Hadas-Lebel 1995, 21), situated in Israel's Judean Desert, overlooking the Dead Sea and its fertile valleys and nakhals, small creeks and fountains leading into the Dead Sea, has, during the last decades, developed into what is perhaps the most important archeological site when it comes to Israel's national identity, "collective memory and myth making"(Ben-Yehuda 1995), however certainly a significant destination of both Israeli and foreign visitors.



Ill. 2: Masada overlooking the Dead Sea as seen from the Judean Desert. (M. Pfaffl)

When Shmaria Guttman first climbed the steep hill leading to the fortress in 1933 (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 63) it was a place hardly known but by locals and the climb, despite today's cable car, difficult. Asking Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, head of the Jewish national committee at that time, all he would say was: "Why are you so excited? Masada? Nine hundred Jewish robbers run from Jerusalem to Masada and committed suicide. So what? What is this excitement all about?" (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 63/ Shashar 1983, 24)

Creating the myth of Masada he and his colleges, Israel's most renown archeologists like Yigael Yadin among them, dramatically changed the perception of the place. Today "Masada shall not fall again" is a proverb used by Israeli politicians on a regular basis, thus pointing out the importance of the place as "last stronghold against the Romans" in Jewish understanding of their own history.

Most fascinating about the Masada narrative is, besides the majestic spur leading to the fortress and serving the roman legions as a ramp, doubtlessly the less easily archeological comprehensible mass suicide of the "rebels" of Masada - choosing death over capture, symbolizing the people of Israel's vast will for freedom. That suicide, even under circumstances as desperate as

those the people of Masada must have faced is, at best controversial among Jewish religious authorities (see Ben-Yehuda 1995, 77), it is however only one of the aspects of the Masada myth, that is tended to be ignored for the sake of the narrative and its further existence.

2.2.2 Sources

2.2.2.a Historic sources

Besides material unearthed during excavations performed at Masada by Yigael Yadin from 1963-1965 (see Yadin 1965) research of Masada has always relied on written sources. Namely Flavius Josephus' notations on *The Wars of the Jews*³, the Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire rule to Judea from 66 CE to the destruction of the Second Temple and vast parts of Jerusalem in 70 CE that have first been translated into Hebrew as soon as 1923 (see Ben-Yehuda 1995, xix).

Josephus Flavius, born into a Jewish priest family as Joseph Ben-Matityahu in 37/38 CE, earned credit and eventually citizenship to Rome and made his life as an historian to the Romans. (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 30f./ Steffelbauer 2007, 43) Some time between 75 CE and 79 CE *The Wars of the Jews*, his first historic account, was written down in Rome (see Simchoni 1923, 11).

The version he adds about Masada and the incidents that took place there can be found in book number seven of *The Jewish Wars*. This narrative is what Yadin would later transfer into the myth of Masada, depicting Masada as a major Jewish stronghold against the Romans held by rebels, sicarii or zealots until finally crushed by mighty Roman legions after building a giant ramp. Apparently the foreseeable end at the rebellion lead to a mass suicide, the "sicarii" hiding in Masada choosing death before enslavement and death penalty through crucification. Highlighting the heroic moment of his story Josephus Flavius even transcribed a version of the rebel's leader Ben-Yair's speeches to the 960 men, women and children in Masada – a number, by the way, that was confirmed by estimates based on the number of sicarii dwelling units found during the excavations of Masada (see Netzer 1991, 45). However only five men and two women would survive the suicide for one reason or another. Most likely one of the women served as an eye witness to the Roman soldiers with her story being relayed to Josephus Flavius who eventually wrote it down.

Josephus Flavius himself, of course, wasn't present at the incident, as he is reported to have already lived in Rome at that time – his sources likely being *comentarii* (reports) and diaries of Roman soldiers (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 31) – yet it is perfectly possible that he knew the place, Masada, from former visits.

³ Also „*The War of the Jews*“ in some translations

As with all sources at the researcher's disposal the works of Josephus Flavius, however informative and important for examination of Masada, must be regarded with great caution and critical assessment of sources must be issued. Josephus Flavius, as any historian up to recent times, has written his account on the history of Masada with a cause and can't at all be considered to be objective.

As Ben-Yehuda put it:

One must remember that Josephus was a problematic figure, and the history he wrote was probably tinted by a complicated set of interests. For many Jews Josephus was a traitor and turncoat, and for this he was hated. As historian to the Romans, he had to write a history that would satisfy his masters. As a Jew, he had to cope with some uneasy issues of identity as well as the obvious necessity of justifying his own actions. (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 31)

In the end what might have happened to Josephus Flavius' works might base on quite the same mechanisms affecting modern archeological interpretations, namely those of direct and indirect political pressure and, of course, the bias of Josephus Flavius' own upbringing in a Jewish priestly family and him living in Rome. His – roman – sources, if any, only added to his likely tendency of writing from the Roman government's point of view.

This, nevertheless, doesn't mean him downplaying the severeness of both the Jewish rebellion and the significance of those hiding in Masada, as domination over a strong enemy meant more glory to Rome and its legions. Thereby Josephus' Roman point of view can also have led to a considerable overstatement of the Masada incident.

As far as reliance in Josephus Flavius' transmission goes, researchers are divided between skepticism and awareness of the bias behind his text and those, as Tsafirir, regarding “Josephus reliability as a historian” as “provided by the general accuracy of his account of Judea's history” (Tsafirir 1993, 4), but for this accuracy is proven by mere comparing to contemporary sources, likely facing the same underlying biases caused by the same overall political situation, it remains questionable whether Josephus' word can really be taken at face value, referring to Josephus Flavius as the person “we know everything about Masada from”. (Hadas-Lebel 1995, 21)

Some researchers, however, like Mireille Hadas-Lebel (1995, 40) question Josephus account to the point of it being merely more than a “weak echo” of the actual historic happenings at Masada:

"It is self-understanding that the speech [of Ben Yair] was never hold. Only a weak and fragmentary echo of what had been said made its way to Josephus. His reconstruction is however a masterpiece of his own rhetoric abilities [...]" (Hadas-Lebel 1995, 40)

Others, like certainly Guttman and Yadin were strongly moved and encouraged by the speech by Eleazar Ben Yair, more likely actually Josephus Flavius, making his followers, the "rebels" of Masada choosing suicide before capture by the Romans.

However even if we leave aside the discussion about Josephus' reliability there still remains the issue of translation and interpretation, not only as far as language goes - The Jewish Wars was written in Greek (see Steffelbauer 2007, 43 a.o.) - but also regarding cultural translation. There needn't necessarily be purpose behind providing today's researchers with false or misunderstood information.

Other written accounts on Masada are brief. Merely a few words dedicated to the place in Strabo's geographical studies and in Pliny's Natural History yet none mentions the critical phase of Masada's role during the Jewish Rebellion (see Tsafirir 1993, 3) – they were written before it took place anyway.

There is, however, another brief note on Euthymius' arrival at the byzantine monastery of Marda, built on the plateau of Masada, by Cyril which tells us at much as that the Roman forts were emptied at that time. (See Hirschfeld 1992, 49 / V. Euth. II, 22. 4-6).

2.2.2.b Archeological sources

Two major seasons of excavations, from October 1963 to April 1964, a total of seven months and with a strength of an average 200 people, mainly volunteers of 28 different countries, organized by the military unearthed the major structures and interesting finds that had preserved well within the dry climate of the Judean Desert.

Masada was built between 40 and 4 BCE by king Herod (73 – 4 BCE) (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 17) in three major phases (see Netzer 1991, 33ff.). The inhabitants of Masada during the Jewish revolt added some more structures, as did the Byzantine monks that occupied Masada during the fifth and sixth century (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 17).

Around 35 BCE, only a short time after the beginning of Herod's rule on Judea (see Netzer 1991, 34ff.) the fortress of Masada was erected to the south of the oasis and provincial town of Ein Gedi as both a representative palace and a part of the chain of fortresses built by the Hasmonean rulers of Judea along the east and west of the Dead Sea in order to assure Jewish control over the

region and protect the capital of Jerusalem that had been inherited by Herod. (see Hirschfeld 2004, 213.)

Firstly A series of buildings, that formed the nucleus of the Western Palace, three further small palaces and some buildings, that have been interpreted as being of administrative use, plus a residential house, three watchtowers and water installations, among them several large cisterns – in this phase rain water was Masada's only source of fresh water - and a swimming pool were constructed. Those buildings were loosely scattered among the mountain and no wall was installed at this point. The architects of this first phase can, through similarities in style, be identified as the same that had served Hasmonean court before (see Netzer 1991, 34ff.).

The construction of Herod's mountain fortress moved further in the “midtwenties of the first century BCE” (Netzer 1991, 37), featuring the main phase of the construction during which most of all the Northern Palace of Masada, serving as king Herod's residency and entertaining area for guests was built. The Northern Palace, that has been referred to as one of the most astonishing of Herod's building projects, featured all comfort of its time decorated by mosaics and frescoes. Eighteen storerooms measuring up to 26 meters in length used for weapons and food served the palace, as well as two extensive service wings added during the second construction phase of Masada. Further cisterns were added too. However the building still remained without a wall, yet matters of defense were clearly included in the planning of Masada. (see Netzer 1991, 37ff.)

During the third phase of the construction of Masada the Western Palace was extended again with new wings added and finally gained its walling.

A fourth phase, apparently still Herodian, could be postulated for the Western Palace. Minor modifications might reflect “rather frequent visits by the king” (Netzer 1991, 44).

After the death of Herod it took only ten years for the Romans to take over Masada from his son Archelaus, along with the rest of Judea. Yet other than coins and inscriptions the Roman inhabitants of Masada didn't leave their mark on the building. Apparently, though, they maintained and watched it until Jewish Rebels took the fortress over in 66 CE. (see Netzer 1991, 45)

Nothing is known about the act of occupation itself, as to how the siacarii “rebels” got themselves into the fortress to begin with. However the fact that there is no information to be had still tells the story of a rather unimportant, perhaps even abandoned old fortress at the outskirts of a part of the Roman Empire that had quite enough battles to be fought from within with the Jews no ceasing to revolt.

When the sicarii “rebels” occupied Masada, however, they made themselves feel at home and it is clear that they came to stay:

[The Sicarii] occupied most of the building on the mountain, particularly the casemate wall, the three small palaces and building no. 9 (the barracks). Within these buildings [they] did as they pleased: large rooms were divided into smaller units, entrances were blocked and others opened in their stead, and temporary constructions were added in those already existing. No doubt even some of the building's roofs served the community (Netzer 1991, 46)

Netzer reports on the considerable modifications made by the Jewish inhabitants of Masada during the years 66 – 73 CE. Those modifications include all kind of household installations and finally an inner wall built against the Romans, all of which Netzer constants “lacked planning and style”.(Netzer 1991, 48) The Western palace, however, remained mostly untouched.

As far as particularly Jewish structures added go, a building that might have served as a stable during Herod's time was turned into a synagogue, identified by typical features of ancient synagogues such as three rows of benches along its walls, seven or eight structures that, according to Netzer (1997, 48f.), might have served as mikvaot, ritual baths, whilst other researchers (for instance Ben-Yehuda 2002, 87ff.) are in doubt.

The surroundings of Masada were turned into a siege network by Silva's Tenth Legion arriving at the site in 72/73 CE. It included eight fortified camps and a siege wall of about four kilometers length.(see Netzer 1991, 48f.) Most impressive and well known among the Roman built structures certainly is the impressive ramp built atop a natural spurn (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 35) that finally brought an end to the occupants of Masada.

An massive earthquake some time in the first century CE later forced the Roman army out of Masada but led to severe destruction. From now on the fortress remained uninhabited (see Netzer 1991, 50) until a small group of Byzantine monks occupied the ruins in the fifth century.

Marda, as the place was called by the Byzantine monks, is today known as the most southern located byzantine monastery in the Judean desert (see Hirschfeld 1992, xix/6.). The byzantine laura of the level type made use of the least destroyed remains of the Herodian fortress in order to build a church – the chapel was the only building actually erected by the monks themselves - and several service buildings. A total of thirteen cells were found at the areal of Marda indicating about 15-20 monks living at the monastery. The cells were an average of 56 m apart from each other and built into remains of Herodian buildings – such as abandoned water cisterns or the entrance gate. (see Hirschfeld 1992, 50ff.)

Artifacts from Masada do not only cover the whole array of everyday goods and astonishingly well preserved organic material, such as human hair (see Tsafirir 1997, 9), sandals (see Tsafirir 1997, 20) or cloth fragments (see Tsafirir 1997, 17), but also an important quantity of written sources, both sixteen fragments of scrolls (see Talmon 1998, 101ff.) and 380 inscriptions, on jars and shreds, said to have been written during the sicarii period of 66 – 73 CE, one of which gained fame as possibly referring to Eleazar Ben-Yair, the Masada “rebels” leader (see Naveh 1997, 85ff.).

As for the scroll fragments, six originate from books of the Hebrew Bible, some from a manuscript of the apocryphal proverbs of Ben Sira, and one piece from the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. Seven more are too short to be identified, but their script suggests they feature non-biblical text. According to the scripture all but one fragment date to some time during or shortly after the Herodian period. Most of the fragments weren't found in situ, but rather where the Byzantine monks apparently disposed of them when they took over the ruins of Masada during the fifth century (see Talmon 1998, 101ff.).

2.2.3 *The Myth of Masada*

When W.F. Albright published his volume on “The archeology of Palestine” in 1949 (Albright 1956) all he would say about the fortress of Masada would be it being:

“the oldest surviving Roman construction in Palestine, after the end of Jewish independence in A.D. 70, are the Roman camp and circumvallation (siege wall) at Masada on the western shore of the Dead Sea, where a group of intransigent Jewish patriots held out until A.D. 73.” (Albright 1965, 165)

which still gave Masada a rather high reputation as compared to other researcher's opinion of the fortress (see e.g. Yadin at Ben-Yehuda 2002, 66), however this would soon change dramatically. Two researchers have contributed more than anybody else to both the research of Masada and the coming into existence of the mythical narrative of Masada: Shmaria Guttman and Yigael Yadin. For better understanding of how the story of Masada, as we know it today, came into existence a small summary of both vitas shall be given here:

Shmaria Guttman was born in Glasgow in 1909 into a Russian Jewish family. He made Aliya, moved to Israel, in 1912 where he lived in Kibbutz Merchiva in northern Israel. Shmaria was socialized into Zionism through his father, who organized Poalei Zion, the “Workers of Zion” during that time. An organization that also hosted personalities as important to Israel's history as Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Tabenkin and Berl Katznelson, who both played vital roles in Zionist politics and, ultimately, the very establishment of the State of Israel.

Aged 17 Guttman joined Noar Oved, the working youth movement and attended the

agricultural school of Mikve Ysrael near Tel Aviv until the age of 19. He returned to Merchiva but subsequently left the kibbutz to focus on his work with Noar Oved. In 1934 he finally settled down at Kibbutz Na'an.

Guttman first visited Masada in 1933 and found himself deeply moved by it. It was then that Guttman developed what would later be known as the Masada myth (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 62ff.).

In March 1955 Guttman, who was an amateur archeologist and some colleagues started first excavations at Masada. Their interest was focused most on the Northern palace and, a year later on some storage areas. Further expeditions followed during the 1960ies, yet Guttman soon had to realize that he needed a prestigious archeologist aboard in order to excavate and properly publicize Masada (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 66 / Ben-Yehuda 1995, 71 /Guttman 1964)

This man was found in person of Yigael Yadin, born in Jerusalem in 1917 as son of the archeologist Eliezer L. Sukenik. In 1933 Yadin joined Israel's underground army HaGanah and quickly was promoted to commanding posts. A task he presumed when the HaGanah was transformed into Israel's regular army, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and thus was appointed chief of staff on 1949. In 1952 he left the IDF in order to devote his life to archeology. He joined the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUU), where he earned his PhD for his work on the Qumran scrolls. He taught at HUU and was appointed professor in 1963 where he earned considerable credits. In his later career Yadin also earned credit in politics. He died aged 67 in 1984. (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 68f.)

However when Guttman first approached Yadin he wasn't at all interested in what he thought to be a "Herodian fortress where criminals were sent" (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 66) and only pressure by several people and Guttman's own exciting results finally led to Yadin taking over the research of Masada in the early 1960ies (see Ben-Yehuda 2002,.67f.).

Though the academic jury is still out on the "true" story and history of Masada, what Ben-Yehuda calls "the Mythical Narrative" is very much alive today. That version of history, that could almost be called constructed history is the tale of Masada that has meanwhile become a natural part of Jewish history through pure passing on and, of course, the interest of the media in the excavations and subsequent survey on Masada. It has even made its way into major ceremonies of Israeli youth movements and the Israeli Army as well as very text books. (See Ben-Yehuda 1995)

The "Mythical Narrative" could sound like Dayan's 1983 summary on the history of Masada:

The zealots who survived the siege and destruction of the city [of Jerusalem in 70 CE] escaped to the fortress of Masada, a stronghold difficult to reach atop a mountain near the Dead Sea. From there the Zealots harassed the Romans and created such a threat that the Romans decided to make the tremendous

military effort required to destroy Masada. Consequently the Romans gathered their army and made the long and arduous march through the Judean desert to Masada. They surrounded the fortress and put it under siege. After three years of heroic resistance by the few Zealots against the huge Roman army, the Zealots on Masada realized that their situation was hopeless. They faced two future: either be killed by the Romans or become slaves. Elazar Ben-Yair, the commander addressed his followers and persuaded them all that they had to die as free men. They thus decided to kill themselves, a heroic and liberating death, rather than become wretched slaves. When the Roman soldiers entered Masada, they found only silence and dead bodies. (Dayan 1983, 21)

Came into existence in 1940ies (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 48) but tremendously boosted during the 1960ies and 70ies by Shmaria Guttman and Yigael Yadin's expeditions to Masada, time of ongoing wars - the Six Days War in May 1966 and Yom Kippur war in October 1973 and, though probably less threatening and traumatizing, first Lebanon war in March 1978 - and a constant struggle for survival in Israel, the Myth of Masada served well supplying the people with a heroic story of their ancestors and their all too mighty enemy, the Roman Empire. No wonder the story and symbol of Masada became a crucial part of Jewish culture and historical understanding. The phrase "Masada shall not fall again!" (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 244) and its meaning is perfectly known to everybody in Israel these days.

From the historical point of view the mythical narrative is at best questionable as Ben-Yehuda describes it:

Clearly the popular, widespread Masada mythical narrative has some elements of truth in it [...]. It takes a long, complex, and at some points unclear historical sequence and reduces it to a simple and straightforward heroic narrative characterized by a few clear themes.

[...]

The Masada mythical narrative is thus constructed by transforming a tragic historical event into a heroic fable. The hapless revolt is transformed into a heroic war. The questionable collective suicide on Masada is transformed into a brave last stand of the heroic few against the oppressive many. (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 47)

What ever historical or archeological fact didn't quite fit the myth tends to be left aside (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 47f.) and different groups, such as the Zealots and sicarii are mixed up regardless of the accuracy of such assumptions. (see Steffelbauer 2007 / Ben-Yehuda 2002, 40)

Especially when it comes to the part of the sicarii defenders of Masada coming from Jerusalem, where they are said to have been holding a last stand, or Masada being a base for rebel activities in the area there is no single piece of evidence supporting the theory. As far as we know from the scientific point of view they could as well have been frightened farmers from nearby areas desperately looking for some save haven in the Jewish revolt's chaos.

Ben-Yehuda further shows how the mythical narrative of Masada grew to be an irreplaceable part of Jewish socialization, with it, as symbol and setting, being “a major ingredient in the socialization process of all five major secular Jewish youth movements” (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 49 / Ben-Yehuda 1995, 83ff.), moreover used by all three of the major Jewish underground groups and later on – until recently - the Israel Defense Forces. Of course high school text books had their share as had travel guides and local tour guides. (see Ben-Yehuda 1995 / Ben-Yehuda 2002, 49f.).

When the author visited Masada in the late 1990ies what is called “mythical narrative” by Ben-Yehuda would be the historical correct version of the history of Masada presented to tourists by means of local information of all kind.

A brief insert of “Masada shall not fall again” or “Masada will not fall again” into a web search engine is all that is needed in order to get an overview of the importance and actuality of the proverb today. Take, for instance, a lengthy Jerusalem Post article dated May 15th 2008 stating how former US President George W. Bush during his stay in Israel, where he also visited the site of Masada assured that “Masada will not fall again” and extensively used the myth to emphasize on the spirit of Masada and how the US were to support Israel (see Reuters 2008).

As the importance of the Masada mythical narrative was already mentioned above it might also be of interest to show how at a Zahal [Israel army] web shop T-Shirts can be bought stating in Hebrew and English “Masada shall not fall again” (see <http://www.zahal.org/tshirts/p31.htm>, 20 February 2009). It needs no more then a five minute research to see how the Masada myth is well and alive until today.



Ill. 3: "Masada shall not fall again" T-Shirt as found at [zahal-webshop](http://www.zahal.org/tshirts/p31.htm) (<http://www.zahal.org/tshirts/p31.htm>, 02-2009)

2.2.4 Battling the Myth

Just as the first generation of Masada researchers brought into existence the myth of Masada so did the subsequent generation, researchers like Nachman Ben-Yehuda among them, influenced by post processionalist ideas struggle to battle the myth. Trying to turn what could easily be called Israel's national sanctuary back into an archeological site archeologists like Ben-Yehuda went out questioning every single line of the Masada myth.

Interestingly enough that might bring them back to the very same notion towards Masada that had set young Shmaria Guttman's excitement about Masada aflame in the beginning of the last century: Namely that of Masada being a mere issue of “Nine hundred Jewish robbers run from Jerusalem to Masada and [committing] suicide.” (Ben-Yehuda 2002, 63/ Shashar 1983, 24). It seems as if in the of the day, besides its architectural value as being one of the most sophisticated buildings erected by king Herod, the biggest scientific value of Masada might be research on what happened to the site and its perception in Israel and abroad.

As the discussion and evolution of Israeli society went on new key players in the research of Masada and the mechanisms triggered by it – meanwhile a research topic of its own – entered the stage. Perhaps most involved and engaged within them is Nachman Ben-Yehuda, a professor and former dean at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the very same University his rival Yigael Yadin was working at.

In his own words he describes his focus of work and research on HUU's homepage:

[...]The theoretical focus and backbone of my work is a combination of neo-functionalism, non-Marxist conflict approach and symbolic interaction, grounded in contextual constructionism. I am interested in the nature of social historical research and in the micro-macro link.

[...]

My empirical work focused on the 14th-17th centuries European witch craze; deviant sciences; deviant scientists; drug abuse in historical and comparative perspective; modern occult and science fiction; political deviance; political assassinations; moral panics; modern myth making; treason and betrayals. Hence, it is easy to see that my choice of target topics for research are determined by the theoretical consideration of being able to integrate those target topics into a much broader sociological perspective: dynamic, political and historic. [...] (see HUU Ben-Yehuda)

Whilst according to the abstract above no special interest of Ben-Yehuda seems to be dedicated to Masada, nor archeology, the publication of subsequent books (Ben Yehuda 1995, Ben Yehuda 2002) on the same topic, featuring partially nearly the same information with varying emphasis draws a different picture of a man, that might be as much obsessed with his version of the Masada myth himself, thereby constructing a history as questionable as the version drawn by the foregoing generation of researchers on Masada.

As for the way in which the mythical narrative of Masada has been challenged during the last decade scientists like Ben-Yehuda not only put grave emphasis on the vita and motive of Shmaria Guttman and Yigael Yadin, but go down to the very material unearthed at Masada. A task not made easier by Yadin's long procrastination of publishing the finds of Masada. Until the 1980ies only a small volume of preliminary reports was available to scientists not belonging to Yadin's staff (see Yadin 1965). A method very capable of controlling the construction of contradicting theories and publications.

Once more, though, the text of Josephus Flavius seems to be a main part of the academic discussion as Ben-Yehuda dedicates a whole chapter on what he thinks the Jewish Roman historian wrote about and how it was abused by Guttman and Yadin (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 29ff.). The very same passages of Josephus' text used by Guttman and Yadin to point out the heroic last stand of the Jewish rebels of Masada is now used by Ben-Yehuda to show that they were, indeed, robbers that seized Masada for no other cause then their own good. It seems like the question of translating and interpreting terms such as "sicarii" is a crucial topic for Masada, as is the excavation of the nearby village of Ein Gedi at the Dead Sea shore, which seems to have been in one or another relation with Masada's inhabitants during the Jewish rebellion. That exactly those heroic figures might be the culprits of a massacre committed at Ein Gedi at the questionable time (see Hirschfeld 2006) isn't all too beneficial for the mythical narrative and has not yet been sufficiently commented by any of the archeologists of the Guttman / Yadin school on Masada. The two of them however are long dead and thus regrettably cannot contribute to the discussion anymore.

However it seems as if, whilst Guttman and Yadin forget about every critical assessment of their source, Ben-Yehuda overuses it in order to make Josephus Flavius text intend to be what he expects it to. And whilst his predecessors tended to forget mentioning any evidence that might speak, for instance, against interpreting certain structures as mikvaot (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 87ff.) or interpreting certain human remains as not Jewish (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 125 ff.) it is Ben-Yehuda, who is not all too eager to mention evidence that points that way. In many ways archeologists of Ben-Yehuda's generation have, in their eagerness to make it up to failure done by their predecessors, made the very same ones - merely going the opposite direction. A critical discussion of the matter open to both sides has yet to come up.

2.2.5 Synopsis

Whether the work of Ben-Yehuda and colleagues indeed changed the perception of Masada as far as the broad Israeli public is concerned remains questionable. Perhaps the mere fact that the symbol of Masada is still used in political speeches on a regular basis proves the opposite best. Yet among young Israelis standing up against what they perceive as outdated political approaches and calling for a transformation of the Israeli society Masada again has become a symbol, a symbol of questioning even what seems to be dearest and most important to the very core of Israeli historical perception. From this point of view one could easily assume that in today's Israel the question for one's opinion on Masada might very well mirror the very political opinion of the responder.

As fine an example as Masada is when it comes to the politics of archeology and the way a researcher's personal influences the way he deals with archeological findings the question posed at the beginning of this paper is yet to be answered: How exactly did politics influence archeology when it comes to the example of Masada?

A first look at the support that made the vast excavation of Masada under Yadin possible answers the first part of the question: Government support, vital to a discipline like archeology fully dependent on grants that tend to be given, more easily, to those supporting the government's understanding of history. For sure a Ben-Yehuda couldn't have possibly had the same broad support, both in workforce and funding as Yadin enjoyed and thus would have never had the opportunity to do an excavation as vast as the one conducted by Yadin.

Another hint can be found in Yadin's very publication on the findings of Masada. For instance at his description of the Herodian bath house found at Masada (see Yadin 1965, 34ff.): whilst more than two pages are dedicated to the critical period of Jewish "rebels" holding the fortress – called "Post Herodian Period" by Yadin – only less than one page deals with the archeologically more comprehensible and longer in time periods of the Herodian building and use of Masada. A pattern that can be seen throughout all of his notes.

Subsequent researchers, such as Gila Hurvitz (see Hurvitz 1997) have been equally torn into Yadin's version of the history regarding every find somehow relate-able with the time of the "Sicarii" revolt. Thereby regular glass vessels (see Hurvitz 1997, 23, 24), or oil lamps (see Hurvitz 1997, 29), distinctive in absolutely no way from any other contemporary vessel are attributed to be "Sicarii" without the slightest explanation given in the text. Without any attempt of scientifically questioning Yadin's theories scientists like Gila Hurvitz put their effort on describing the life of the "Sicarii" in what is often called the "last days". That whatever comes out of this efforts is, however, at best questionable, as long as there is no scientifically valid proof for the very identity of the "rebels" remains untouched.

Another topic missing in the mythical narrative's supporters publications and – surprisingly – as well their challenger's work is the issue of Masada's Second Rebellion-population's possible raid at the nearby village of Ein Gedi (see Hirschfeld 2007, 15). There is a single note by Shmaria Guttman to Ben-Yehuda in 1987 asking for his opinion on the Ein Gedi massacre and Masada's “heroes” role in it. (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 148) Ben-Yehuda's answer, however, remains unknown.

The lack of scientific work about the Ein Gedi raid is especially striking as the mention of the raid and its attribution to the Masada “rebels” origins from the very same source as Masada's own Second Rebellion-History: Josephus Flavius' *The Jewish Wars* (see War IV, 403). How could archeologists like Yadin, Guttman or even Hadas-Lebel, Hurvitz et al completely over read a paragraph crucial to Masada's inhabitants identity when it could be found just a couple of pages away in the very same document? Without going as far as indicating reason behind the lack of critical research here, it at least proves how little effort was made to put history's main source on Masada in context.

Other examples are vast in numbers: The postulated identity of the “mikve” (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 87ff. / Yadin 1966, 166), the assumption or at least indication the dead bodies found at Masada might be remains of the “rebels”(see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 130f. / Yadin 1966, 198f.) and, of course, the ostraca or “tags” (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 107ff. / Hurvitz 1997, 106ff. / Yadin 1965, 111) found at different locations that have subsequently been “identified” as the very batches used by the “rebels” to determine who would stay alive to set their supplies aflame (see Ben-Yehuda 2002, 122ff.) – found remains of burnt heaps were of course also brought in context with the heroic “last days” of the “rebels” of Masada.

Fortunately little harm was done to the actual archeological finds, with no all too obvious bias to the excavation itself, thus limiting the damage done. Future generations of archeologists will have the the possibility to apply new scientific techniques and new perceptions on the original finds and might thereby be able to solve many of the questions that remained unsolved by Yadin.

One example of this might be Hirschfeld's work on “The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period” (1992) where he used Yigael Yadin's extensive excavation to work on a topic Yadin himself obviously had little interest in when researching Masada. The large-scale excavations performed by Yadin, whatever their initial intention might have been, remain after all a treasure trove of Israeli archeology merely awaiting further investigation.

2.3 Ein Gedi

2.3.1 Introduction

Whilst Masada is well-known, both as an archeological and historic place and as an enduring example of politics influencing archeology and its interpretation, the excavations and research work performed at the oasis of Ein Gedi, just a couple of kilometers from Masada, are paid less attention, but are nevertheless a milestone in archeology of the Israeli/Palestinian geographic area.



Ill. 4: The area of Ein Gedi as seen from Kibbuz Ein Gedi (Pfaffl 2007)

The settlement of Ein Gedi is, in many ways, including the time that has passed since the large operation at Masada and Israeli society and science's development a good contrast to research conducted on and about Masada. However the geographical, historical and cultural affiliation of the places makes it perfectly possible to see one in the light of the other and draw connections between excavation and interpretation of Ein Gedi and those at Masada as has been previously discussed in this paper when it came to the possible raid of Masada's refugees at Ein Gedi.

Ein Gedi (En Gedi and other transcriptions from Hebrew are in use), 'Ain Jidy in Arabic, is the largest and most important oasis at the Dead Sea's western shore, however only one of a series of important oases along the border of both ancient Judea (see Hirschfeld 2004, 213) and today's State of Israel.

It is situated in Israel's Judean Desert, 40 km southeast of Jerusalem and 16 km north of Masada with which it shares not only a geographical but also historic correlation. Four large springs pose Ein Gedi's source of fresh water and foster a large system of streams ("nakhals") and waterfalls in today's national park. The oasis area hosts a rich fauna and flora and, on terraces and the slope leading to the Dead Sea, agriculture - mostly date palms, citrus and mango trees as cash crops - is conducted today as well as in ancient times. (see Hirschfeld 2007, 1)

Besides rich historic sources by various authors, such as Josephus Flavius, Pliny or in the Bible, as well as in the nearby found Qumran scrolls, confirmed by archeological finds, Ein Gedi and the nearby area also present a range of archeological finds dating from the Chalcolithic period to the time of the Mamluk's reign over the area. However, due to its remote location and the lack of a strong biblical importance of the place, interest in Ein Gedi started rather recently. When W.F.

Albright brought into existence his volume on “The archeology of Palestine” in 1949 not as much as a word was dedicated to the village of Ein Gedi (see Albright 1956, 149) though he had already traveled – and reported on (see Albright 1925) - the area and by that time.

This, of course, protected Ein Gedi from mystification of the Masada-extend and gave contemporary archeology an untouched treasure trove on historic life and settlement archeology in Israel.

Nonetheless, when the major excavations led by Yitzhak Hirschfeld started in 1996 they would reach an extend in man hours spent and international support (see Hirschfeld 2007, IX) that can be compared to the one seen at Masada.

Today, after centuries of desertion the oasis of Ein Gedi is inhabited again, fostering an ambitious Kibbutz making a living mainly of its agricultural products and the income made from tourism at the Dead Sea, a youth hostel and a field school. As a part of Israel's government's efforts to support the desert areas a settlement of young scientists researching desert related topics in the area is on its way these very days and archeological research is far from being finished, given the richness of cultural remains in the area and their stunning potential for research on ancient life in Israel.

2.3.1.a Historic and written sources

Historic sources on ancient Ein Gedi are numerous. Well-known historians, such as Josephus Flavius (Jewish Wars IV, Anth.) or Pliny (Natural History) reported about the village, its area and its business and wealth as well as the Hebrew Bible's authors or scrolls found at nearby Qumran and – later on – Rabbinic sources.(see Hirschfeld 2007, 17) Nonetheless it is this very number of sources that make them play a rather small role when it comes to the influence of politics on Ein Gedi research. Different Historians reported on the village from different backgrounds, points of view and with different areas of interest in the settlement. This led to a rather differentiated image suggested by historic sources, as compared to Masada, where Josephus Flavius is the only source extensively reporting about the site. What further adds to this multi-layered image is the village being of little political importance in ancient times as well as today, therefore little target for propaganda of one kind of another. The importance of the village lay and lays in culture – especially as far as the Essenes are concerned – and its wealth assembled through export of precious goods instead of military or political influence.

In fact the only period – besides the chalcolitic settlement – for which there are no written accounts is the Mamluk period during which only a small, unimportant village was existing in the oasis of Ein Gedi (see Hirschfeld 2007, 17).

As far as contemporary reports on Ein Gedi are concerned history of science starts with the mid 19th century where the place – at that time inhabited merely during some months of the year as a Bedouin camp – appears in traveler's literature. For instance Edward Robinson, who visited the area in 1867 and reported that in spite of historic narratives there would be “not a single palm tree” at the place (Robinson 1867, 505).

2.3.1.b Archeological sources

The beginning of archeological survey in the Ein Gedi area was conducted by a team of British researchers – Charles Conder and Herbert Kitchener - in 1875 (see Conder/Kitchener 1883, 384ff.). However until the foundation of the State of Israel little researchers visited the area. Among them German G.D. Sandel in 1905 (see Sandel 1907), Frenchman F.M. Abel in 1908 (see Abel 1911) and South American-born W.F. Albright in 1925 (see Albright 1925).

Ein Gedi thereby was left alone by the heyday of Biblical archeology for it lacked importance in the Bible thus little was written about the place by foreigners, whilst vast treks of European and US American scientists traveled the huge number of more biblical and historical important places in that time Palestine.

In the very first years after the foundation of the State of Israel Israeli scientists started research in the Ein Gedi area. Benjamin Mazar brought Hebrew University Jerusalem's (HUJ) exploration of the Ein Gedi area into life, conducting his “small exploratory dig” (Hirschfeld 2007, 17) of the Hasmonean fortress at the top of Tel Goren, the Tel (hill) of Ein Gedi in 1949 and published its outcome together with Dothan and Donayevsky in 1966. (see Mazar 1949; Mazar/Dothan/ Dunayevski 1966, 9ff.)

Another comprehensive survey of the area was performed by Aharoni in 1956 (see Aharoni 1958).

Joseph Nave conducted a extensive survey of the water system and historic agriculture in the oasis in the late 1950ies (see Naveh 1978).

The beginning of excavations at the Nakhal David Burial Caves were performed by Nachman Avigad's 1961-62 excavations (see Avigad 1962).

In 1961-64 Benjamin Mazar resumed his research featuring large excavations at Tel Goren during which he above others discovered the Roman Bath House (see Mazar/ Dothan/ Dunayevsky 1966; Mazar/ Dunayevsky 1964, 1967; Mazar 1993).

During the 1970ies Dan Barag, Joseph Porat and Ehud Netzer researched the ancient synagogue of the village starting with an excavation in 1970-72 (see Barag/ Porat 1970; Barag/ Porat /Netzer 1972, 1981) and in 1980 Gideon Hadas excavated some more of the Burial caves at

Nakhal David (see Hirschfeld 2007, 18). Parts of the two fortresses of the area – one of them late Iron Age (7th-6th century BCE), the other Early Roman Period (1st century BCE to 1st century CE) (see Hirschfeld 2007, 2) – were excavated by Avi Ofer and Ze'ev Meshel in 1985 (see Ofer/ Meshel 1986) and in 1986 Israel Antiques Authority's Joseph Porat researched on the irrigation system north of Nakhal David (see Porat 1987). In 1990ies some of the Chalcolithic cave dwellings were excavated by Hadas but have not yet been published (see Hirschfeld 2007, 20).

Yitzhar Hirschfeld's major excavations started in 1996 and were ended in 2002. Those were, once more, conducted mainly by Hebrew University Jerusalem, however with support by Tel Aviv University (TAU) and the Israel Exploration Society (see Hirschfeld 2007, 2; my 2007 talks to TAU students).

Bar Ilan University's (BIU) research started in 2001 featuring Hanan Eshel and Roi Porat's methodical survey of the caves near Ein Gedi, researching Bar-Kokhbar revolt remains as well as Chalcolithic dwellings and a burial cave from the Persian period. Hadas worked on the “Herodian neighborhood” in 2003 (see Hirschfeld 2007, 20). In addition a series of related scientific works, such as a Tel Aviv University Masters Thesis on remote sensing (see Schwartzburd 2007) have been performed accompanying ongoing excavations turning the Ein Gedi archeological operation into a meeting point for Israeli scientists of different subjects.

First settlement traces at Ein Gedi can be dated to the chalcolithic period (c. 4'000 BCE) featuring dwellings in the caves of Nakhal David near the oasis and a prominent temple (see Hirschfeld 2007, 6, 13; Hazar 1993, 404f.).

After the end of the chalcolithic settlement the only archeological find so far is the recent one of a burial cave at Nakhal David by Hanan Eshel and Roi Porat, dating to the Persian period (see Hirschfeld 2007, 2, 20). However no further permanent dwelling at the oasis was founded until the late iron age (7th - 6th century BCE) in which, besides a small village at Tel Goren, the “place where grain was threshed” (Hirschfeld 2007, 13), a fortress was set up by apparently Jewish people. This village steadily grew, was shifted from Tel Goren (elev. -340 m) towards the Dead Sea (towards elev. -380 m) as its level dropped, and ultimately back up the slope to Metzad 'Arugot (elev. -300) as the sea level rose dramatically to almost -380 m in the Byzantine period.

The villagers grew different grains and performed animal husbandry for their own nutrition – a small wine press was found (see Hirschfeld 2007, 13) – however their cash crops, that eventually brought about considerable wealth during the Byzantine period, were dates and the production of balsam as well as the region's natural resources salt and asphalt. Theses precious resources made Ein Gedi one of the richest regions of Byzantine Judea (see Hirschfeld 2007, 17).

Finds within the settlement include residential and commercial areas, remains of agriculture (see Hirschfeld 2007, 9ff.) – upon them a seed of an extinct date species, conserved so well by the dry desert climate it could be brought to germinate (see Sallon et al 2008, 1464) – as well as a synagogue featuring an impressive mosaic floor showing a menorah and for Jewish villages unusual pictorial motives. It is the synagogue where an end 5th century BCE inscription about the “secret of the village” (see Hirschfeld 2007, 11 / Sallon 2008) was found that has since fascinated researchers and interested laymen equally .

Praise of the village is numerous, upon it Pliny's report:

„Under the place of their [the Essene's] dwelling was in the past the city [village] En-Gedi, that which only Jerusalem [Jericho] was greater in its fertility, land and palm gardens.“ (Natural History V, 73)

The Essene's mentioned dwellings are situated in the hills above Ein Gedi, on a natural rock terrace with a splendid view over the Dead Sea, where, according to Pliny, they had “lived for thousands of generations”. As far as Hirschfeld (2007, 14; 567f.) goes the Essenes were a sect consisting exclusively of men who had renounced all worldly joys. The Ein Gedi region is considered their center.

Pliny once more:

„On the western side of the Dead Sea, beyond the boundary of the harmful vapors on the coast, dwells the solitary tribe of the Essenes, the most marvelous of all the sects in the world, for they have no women and have renounced all sexual desire and money, and have only palm-trees for company“ (Natural History V, 73).

The second of Ein Gedi's fortresses was constructed during the Early Roman Period (1st century BCE to 1st century CE).

The darkest hour of Ein Gedi, of which it wouldn't mend all too soon, took place when sicarii (Ben-Yehuda) or “Zealots” (Yadin) “rebels” took over the nearby fortress of Masada at the end of the first Jewish revolt against Roman Rule over Judea, in 75 CE. Judea-born Roman historian Josephus Flavius, who also reported on the fight of the “rebels” of Masada reported on the raid:

„During the Great Revolt, the Sicarii, who dwelt in Masada attacked their countrymen in En-Gedi, routed the men and slaughtered all the weak - women and children - a total of 700 souls (The Jewish War IV, 403)

and Pliny remarked the great village would have been “merely a pile of ash” (Natural History V, 73) afterward.

The Roman bath house found by Benjamin Mazar's 1964 expedition (see Mazar/ Dunayevsky 1966, 193f) and further researched by Hirschfeld's (2007, 653f) team is only one of the signs of the Roman garrison stationed at the periphery of the village between the two Jewish revolts (see Yadin 1963, 49). Apparently the reason of the garrison being to protect the village's precious production of luxury goods after the devastating sicarii raid, rather than controlling possible “rebel” activity (see Cotton 2001; Sar-Avi 2003; Hirschfeld 2007, 2) as Hirschfeld (2006, 11) states:

“It can be assumed that the Roman legion was stationed at Ein Gedi to secure the balsam crop and the date palm groves that had passed into the possession of the emperor.”

Later on Bar Kokhbar (Bar Kokhba in an alternative spelling), after whom the Second Jewish Rebellion (132-135 CE) was named in of his letters “rebukes the leaders of Ein Gedi, Yahunatan and Masbela, for enjoying the 'property of the House of Israel' and not caring for their fighting brothers, whose base was in the hill country”. (Hirschfeld 2006, 11 / Yadin et al. 2002, 165)

During the revolt rebels took over the wealthy oasis, the Roman garrison no longer present (Hirschfeld 2006, 11) to protect them, by force. Numerous of its original residents were slaughtered or enslaved (see Yadin et al. 2002, 282), others took refuge to the caves of Nakhal David hoping for a secure hideout. However their attempt was futile as the Roman army blocked the access to the caves leading to starvation of all villagers hiding there.

Nonetheless after the Roman army took control of the situation the village was restored astonishingly fast and resumed to business – and even more important to production of its goods (see Hirschfeld 2007, 13, 15).

Byzantine times brought about the flourishing of the village of “Hazzazon-Tamar”, so the ancient name of Ein Gedi, “Hassason-Tamar” in Greek (see Audet 1961, 373f), brought about mainly by its balsam production and thereby considerable wealth for its inhabitants. (see Hirschfeld 2007, 10). However when at the end of the sixth century a large fire, potentially induced by a raid of Saracens, Bedouin of the area, broke out the time of the wealthy village was ended (see Hirschfeld 2007, 16).

Next to Ein Gedi another Byzantine site, called “Khirbet Samra”, the black ruin (see Hirschfeld 2007, 619), was excavated by Pesah Bar-Adon in 1968 (see Bar-Adon 1989). Whilst the nature of the site remains unclear due to its remote locations, however great proximity to the village of Ein Gedi, speculations by Hirschfeld hold it the place might have been home to Essenes preserving Second Temple Period traditions (see Hirschfeld 2007, 624f.).

After the end of the Byzantine village the oasis remained uninhabited until in the thirteenth century the Mamluks founded a small and unimportant village of which there is, so far, little scientific material as no written sources exist. However the village could be dated to the period of the 13th to 15th century CE (see Hirschfeld 2007, 17) after which, again, the area became desolate until the mid of the 20th century.

2.3.2 Excavating Ein Gedi

The major excavation of Ein Gedi was conducted under supervision of Hebrew University Jerusalem's (HUJ) Yitzhar Hirschfeld during January and February each year from 1996-2002 and published in a major volume in 2007 (Hirschfeld 2007).

The historic-social background those excavations and research was conducted into was, however, vastly different to Yadin's 1960ies Masada excavations.

Whilst Yadin performed his research during a period gravely marked by war and a very young nation struggling to find even the most basic principles of its identity Hirschfeld conducted his work during what might be the most peaceful and hopeful atmosphere of the modern State of Israel's history.

The 1990ies were shaped by the hope of peace brought about by peace-promoting – however later on not unquestioned - leaders in both conflict parties. Among them characters like “Abu Abbaz”, Yasser 'Arafat, on the Palestinian side and the murdered Yitzhak Rabin on the Israeli side, as well as foreign leaders such as USA's Bill Clinton pushing the region towards the Oslo accord's Road Map for peace.

With the first intifada (uprising of the Palestinian people) ended and the second not yet started (it did in 2001, climaxing in 2002/3) Israelis as well as Palestinians seemed to find back into normality hosting a surprising economic development enforced by the installation of IT business parks and the rise in touristic figures, to some extend, on both sides of the 'Green Line'. More then ever before the two major peoples of Israel/Palestine seemed to approach each other and hope for real, sustainable peace was high.

Hirschfeld took advantage of this historic surroundings and where Yadin had recruited Zionist volunteers he also recruited volunteers from “all parts of the world” (see Hirschfeld 2007, IX) adding to the multi-cultural workforce of his survey consisting of three parts of paid workforce plus the volunteers.

One of those three parts were “Palestinian labor groups from neighboring Jericho” (Hirschfeld 2007, IX), young Bedouin, who lived in the Judean Desert and Negev and Men, he called “Essenes”, that adopted a hermetic lifestyle. (see Hirschfeld 2007, IX).

The excavation's leader, Hirschfeld, himself seemed to be proud in the workforce he had built up and its cooperation as he reported:

the excavation took place during the brief period of optimism and collaboration that followed the Oslo Accords. In those years (up to 2000), cooperation was accompanied by much hope on the part of the Israelis and Palestinians, and we enjoyed a sense of fellowship between the two peoples. We formed deep bonds of friendship with the Palestinians, and, together with the volunteers, held parties at the conclusion of the first season of excavation in the home of Abu Shaqr of Jericho, the foreman. (Hirschfeld 2007, IX.)

No matter of the highly charged socio-political crew working at the excavation, politics weren't much of an issue in their interpretation. Instead emphasis lay on general settlement archeological ideas and scientific questions, right as they could be found in any other country. “The excavations”, Hirschfeld stated in his conclusions, “have provided us with a rich and detailed picture of daily life in a Jewish village in the times of the Mishnah and Talmud.” (Hirschfeld 2007, 659).

At times where Hirschfeld included interpretative lines in his report, he would retreat to rather considerate formulations, such as “in the sources available to us” (Hirschfeld 2007, 14) or “it's reasonable to assume” (Hirschfeld 2007, 15) leaving space for different opinions or own later additions due to new sources.

In a way it seems the research behaved just like the political environment it was conducted in. However it might as well be true that the presence of different stakeholders right at the side prevented one-sided interpretation right away, as matters could be voiced and discussed right at the side, as opposed to discussing it on the academic or even public stage later on.

Nonetheless given the diversity of institutes present at Ein Gedi even the academic stage was there, right at the site. Whilst Ein Gedi's main researching institute, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) has the reputation to being rather conservative in it's research, other institutions also contributed. For instance Tel Aviv University (TAU) reputedly modern and liberal to the point of being part of an ongoing academic dispute with HUJ. Also present, besides the Israel Antique Authority, being a government institution, usually more concerned with heritage preservation than

research, Bar Ilan University (BIU) also conducted research at Ein Gedi. BIU, also based in Tel Aviv, is a religious university featuring a broad selection of Zionist ideas. Other institutions, like Be'er Sheva-based Ben Gurion University (BGU) might join the site too, for both archeological survey and pending issues, such as water management and the preservation of the Dead Sea.

As shown potential for political survey or even éclats of the site isn't to be underestimated. Besides the settlement archeological treasure trove the village poses, due to its well preserved finds and structures other interest groups could have set a different emphasis on the site.

For instance for the religious Jew ancient Ein Gedi, as an unmistakably Jewish village, could pose both a prove of ancient Jewish settlement in the area, as well as information on how Judaism was performed by second temple period Jews. For example as regards the employment of non-Jews for granting irrigation and other vital tasks on Shabbat (see Hirschfeld 2007, 9).

Ein Gedi has indeed verified biblical texts at a number of occasions, thereby further advocating the Bible's historic accuracy.

As far as Kibbutz Ein Gedi is concerned emphasis would lie on matters of antiques preservation as in how to gain the biggest possible benefit for tourism in the area, as it is one of the Kibbutz' most important cash crops. Furthermore, even though Kibbutz Ein Gedi's right of existence hasn't been questioned due to its situation on mostly unquestioned Israeli ground, the existence of an ancient Jewish settlement nearby strengthens the Kibbutz' historic link, an idea crucial to many Kibbutzim. Especially Jewish religious settlements within the West Bank, therefor land claimed by both Israel and Palestine, often chose the ground for their villages by means of nearby ancient Jewish settlements. One of this being the village of Shiloh, situated right on the hill overlooking ancient Shiloh's (see Finkelstein 1993) site, excavated besides an early Danish expedition to "Tall Sailun" (Buhl/Holm-Nielsen 1969) by religious Bar Ilan University's archeologist Israel Finkelstein.

2.3.3 Summary: Ein Gedi and Masada

Not of little interest is the role Ein Gedi plays as looking at the Masada myth. As mentioned above there is considerable evidence – Josephus Flavius' written account as well as archeological finds supporting a raid – ancient Ein Gedi was raided by Masada “rebels”. Given the “Zealot's” (Yadin) image of an anti-Roman resistance army the idea of Jews slaughtering Jews doesn't quite fit the myth. As Yadin apparently blindly relied on Josephus Flavius and attributed great reliability to the source he must have been aware of the text reporting on the Ein Gedi massacre and contributing it to the people of Masada:

During the Great Revolt, the Sicarii, who dwelt in Masada attacked their countrymen in En-Gedi, routed the men and slaughtered all the weak - women and children - a total of 700 souls. (The Jewish War IV, 403)

However not as much as a line on this could be found in Yadin's literature studied by the author. Instead of scientifically questioning his source, which would have been perfectly possible for instance taking into account Flavius, as a Roman historian, would have had sufficiently reason to accuse the Masada "rebels" of a massacre they maybe didn't commit, apparent Yadin has chosen to ignore parts of Josephus Flavius's transmission that didn't support his idea of Masada's inhabitants. A fact that, applying questioning of sources on Yadin's writings as a secondary source, however gravely degrades his reliability. If he dismissed unfitting facts here, where else did he dismiss potentially important information?

Hirschfeld either didn't touch the Masada – Ein Gedi correlation. He mostly just reported on Josephus Flavius transmission of the Ein Gedi raid and moved on with his report, not spending much time with interpretation. In his conclusions (Hirschfeld 2007, 659) he wouldn't as much as mention the massacre.

He might be a child of his time here, as the scientific discipline of archeology, too, moved on during the decades in between Yadin's and Hirschfeld's excavations. Whilst back in the 1960ies even vague ideas were spun to historic stories as a regular part of the archeologist's report since the 1980ies/90ies, when archeology started to re-identify itself as a discipline trying to get away from arts and move on towards natural sciences and natural scientific methods, has made it standard to give little more then the data of artifacts and structures found at a site leaving interpretation open to the reader – if at all. In a way archeology has since built a gap between the scientific and public stage. A gap that is able to prevent mystification but also makes it difficult for non-experts to relate to archeology.

The future might bring about further interesting developments here. Whilst the Masada Myth seems to slowly disassemble – it hasn't been long since Israeli Army Zahal stopped conducting ceremonies at Masada – further major excavations or surveys at Masada or the surroundings haven't yet taken place. Ein Gedi however continues to be researched with ongoing small scale projects, and possible further excavations under the auspices of different Israeli institutions taking place. Whilst Masada seems to have become some kind of national monument not to be touched by the infidel Ein Gedi, among other sites of less historical and biblical prominence has become the true ground of archeological survey conducted in Israel.

2.3.4 60 Years of Israeli archeology - Summary

The modern State of Israel, *medinat ysrael*, was founded in 1948 dividing the former British mandate of Palestine into today's two states of Israel and Jordan. Though acknowledged by United Nations, the right of existence of the world's only Jewish state has been questioned, ever since and led to a series of wars and later terrorist attacks. (see Much 2007, 110) The debate, however interesting and crucial, needs to be left to other authors as it would easily exceed the limits of this paper to even give an overview.

As far as archeology is concerned what should be kept in mind is, that the most common Zionist / Jewish justification for the foundation and existence of *medinat ysrael* is that of it being the (pre-)historic home- and motherland of the Jewish people. Besides Jews referring to Israel as given to them by god in an ancient covenant, modern, mostly secular, Zionists describe the geographic region, that hosts today's State of Israel, as their land of origin, from which they had been displaced by a subsequent series of foreign entities. In order to substantiate their theories they obviously need archeology to prove, in a scientific way, suitable for 20th/21st century patterns of reason, that there does exist such a thing as the people of Israel and that they indeed have a (pre-)historic affiliation with the geographic region of *medinat ysrael*. Therefore as long as the question of Israel's right of existence is pending in one way or another archeology will keep having a hard time being objective and even those that might be will be questioned severely for their background and possible intentions.

However it seems the more time passed after the coming into existence of the state of Israel the less the need for this kind of constructed history was. Over time the Masada myth has lost most of its power and charisma and its truth has been severely questioned. Other kinds of archeological research, like the settlement archeology conducted in Ein Gedi have become more usual in Israel as well. Thus identity still is a crucial point of research but the need for myth constructed history seems to have diminished over time.

History of science traces back to the very roots of the discipline itself. Being the stage of a lot of the bible's records the geographic area of Israel and Palestine was upon the first areas foreign archeologists headed for.

Those were mostly Christians, in search of material traces of biblical history or remains of the crusaders. They, in fact, remain key players of Israeli archeology until today with most western countries fostering archeological surveys on Israeli ground.

The first generation of Israeli, Jewish, archeologists, with some earlier exceptions, rose in the early 1950s. Not only did they tend to be driven by their time's Zionist ideas, but also did most of them lack a proper archeological training. Their struggle with contemporary foreign biblical archeologists didn't make it any better and, if any, only added to their tendency of over-interpreting archeological finds in favor of their Zionist ideas.

It was those men and women, of the first Israeli generation of archeologists that brought into existence the best part of myths, if not even constructed history, often battling against another layer of myth and constructed history already seeded decades earlier by biblical archeologists. Those, however fascinated by biblical history and the land of Israel, belonged to a generation mostly highly skeptical towards Jews, fed by long living ideas of Jews "killing Jesus" or, at least, them being some kind of savage Pagans that had kept themselves from conversion and thereby the "proper way" according to Christian's point of view.

Needless to say that the generation following those first wave of archeologists, mostly already born and raised in Israel, tried the opposite approach to Israeli history. Those people, that attended universities in the 1960ies and 70ies were very aware of the extend to which (pre-)history had been shaped by their preceding scientists and not little of them set out to correct those mistakes. It seems like for some of them the works of great Israeli researchers, such as Shmaria Guttman, Yigael Yadin, or Ysrael Finkelstein, were hardly more then theories to be proven wrong. And so in many respects the archeologists of the second generation set sail with the same amount of compassion as their predecessors and, of course, pretty much the same amount of one-sided thinking. At this time great warriors for the Jewish people were turned into penniless thieves and what used to be their heroic base into a farming village raided by those very thieves, in second wave archeologists' merciless attempt to storm the fortress of myth created by the elder generation.

Only lately and with the emerge of another generation of archeologists there seems to be a wide basis of scientists scattered in ideas and not all too obviously already bound to one ideology or another as they start their careers. Their topics of interest, however, lie elsewhere then classical Israeli issues of biblical Israeli history as Elon points out:

„Native Israelis - they are the large majority now - appear to have less need to search for roots; those who do turn rather to religion, The seczkar nahiruty appears selfassured enough to accept a historical compromise with the Palestinians in a pragmatic mood of post-Zionist open-mindedness“

(Elon 1997, 45)

Following the trend in other western countries they are less interested in historic battles and superlative buildings or artfully made goods, but more in daily life questions of settlement

archeology. The heroic life of the rebels of Masada seems to have lost its enchantment for the new generation, as they strive for new, less politically influenced havens; sites and archeological projects where the desire of gaining knowledge outruns the mere striving to proof a narrative already there.

Yet it is these circumstances and shifted areas of interest, that allow first and second generation Israeli archeologists to further dominate the discussion about those seemingly heroic places of Jewish (pre-)history and thereby prevent a final re-edition of the archeological and historic material.

3 *Archeology in Africa*

As far as Africa is concerned – examples will subsequently be given regarding the geographic areas Sub-Saharan Africa – the history of archeology has it that domestic science was firstly influenced by foreign scientists. Just like Israel, which gained its historic importance through its prominent role in the Bible, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Africa's Rift Valley more specific, has been a geographic hot spot of mankind's history. It was, after all, Sub-Saharan Africa that supplied researchers with some of the best material on man's evolution from ape to human and has, thus been of elevated interest to both archeologists and anthropologists ever since the emerge of Humanism.

Since the end of colonialism during the late 20th century new nations have arisen within Africa and a struggle for African people's self-determination has started, that is far from ended. Whilst the East African nations of Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique, to which the geographic area of the Swahili coast, that will be discussed below belongs, have found into a national policy and definition of identity rather fast and easily – for African standards – Apartheid in South Africa lasted until the 1990ies, thus black self-rule is still new to the region and its inhabitants.

It will be this setting that hosts the first of two examples of archeology in Africa: the Simonsberg mining site. The issue of identity and mystification of history in South Africa poses an interesting supplement to what has been shown on the example of Israel. In many respects the development of identity in South Africa can be compared to the social-political surroundings in which Yigael Yadin and Shmaria Guttman conducted their Masada researches and brought about the Masada myth. However featuring South Africa methods and know-how – both on the technical and philosophical layer – have been augmented and are accessible to research.

The second example of this chapter will be posed by the topic of diffusionism and its overcoming in Eastern Africa, featuring a case study on the work of Felix Chami about late Neolithic / early Iron Age settlements alongside the Swahili coast and its islands. This final example of the paper is aimed to present the archeology-politics correlation on a bigger stage and show how the issues of political influence in archeological research stretch all the way from the individual researcher to research on a (pre-)historical topic as a whole.

3.1 Prehistoric Science in Sub-Saharan Africa

When Grahame Clarke wrote his *World History* in 1961 less than four pages would be dedicated to Africa's post-paleolithic period outside Egypt (see Phillipson 1998, 29). Until today paleolithic archeology still is the most common field of interest in African archeology, especially as far as foreign missions are concerned. State authorities, for instance those of Nigeria, encourage this for paleontological research lacks most of the ethnic conflict potential later sites have and therefore directs attention away from those potentially problematic fields.

The one prehistoric field research is conducted in is the development and migration of Bantu-speaking people in Sub-Saharan Africa, featuring the quest for the development of iron melting as an important example of technology to have or not have been invented by the local, black population. An area of interest that has come up in the 1960ies, as excavations in Africa extended and revealed a genuine African prehistory (Phillipson 1998, 31). From the 1980ies the topic of Bantu-migration hosts the main academic battlefield of traditional versus contemporary interpretation of finds and recent African emancipation in archeology.

The little prehistoric research conducted in Africa is distributed between black and white scientists and encouraged by a hand full of Universities along Africa's southern and eastern coast, most prominently perhaps Tanzania's University of Dar-es-Salaam. However research is in a very early stage, and can not at all to be compared to European standards. Besides a lack of comparable finds and typology a vivid discussion about methodology is still going on questioning whether European or American methodology and standards can be applied to Africa at all.

As far as methodology goes Africa has a tradition of linguistics and oral traditions being used as a historic source. Basically oral traditions are credited a reliability coming close to that of written documents – a concept strange to the European scientist, where oral traditions, even when existent, aren't credited any reliability at all. Linguistics serve as a way of defining cultures and peoples. This is possible because of Africa's vast richness in languages. Main language groups – such as Bantu and Khoi-San – divide into uncountable local languages. By use of methods, as known from European science on the Indo-Germanic languages, the separation of one language from another one can be traced back and thus, as postulated by linguists, a picture of the separation and migration of tribes and peoples can be drawn (see Phillipson 1998, 34; Eggert 2005, 313).

While this is not above critics and likely has exceeded beyond its limits at occasions, for instance when it comes to the postulation of time spans for such separation processes, as will be discussed on the Swahili coast example below, it nonetheless is a specialty to African science, also depicting the importance of language as a feature of identity, and can and should not be dismissed.

As already mentioned above, identity issues, especially as regards South Africa, are grave and widespread. Besides the well-known issues based on Apartheid and post-Apartheid clashes between white and black skinned parts of the population*, issues of cultural heritage of South Africa's different (black) ethnic groups aren't to be dismissed either.

Though black South Africans for the outside spectator might seem like a group mostly unified by their shared cause of overcoming colonialism and Apartheid, thus, white suppression, in fact African black population, consists of a number of different ethnic and cultural groups, indistinguishable for the outsider however highly visible for the African. This can be shown taking into account South Africa's richness in languages and their distribution as a mother tongue among the population. Around 30 different language groups are spoken, upon which, including English and Afrikaans, eleven are official languages.

Numbers of languages for the whole Sub-Saharan African region are hard to estimate. Manfred Eggers (2005, 302) assumes between 200-400, perhaps as much as 680 different languages within the possible Bantu cultural sphere.

Today groups of Zulu language and heritage, for instance, which according to 2001 figures of mother tongue speakers, pose 10,7 Mio. of South Africa's approximately 44 Mio. inhabitants (Suelmann 2007, 14), hold the majority of political power. Discrimination of other ethnic groups is common, however more subliminal than in other African nations.

This does have an impact on archeology for, unlike Europe, where traces of direct lineage vanish in historic times, through linguistics theories about migration the ancient descend of contemporary ethnic groups has been proposed, thus referring archeological finds back to the neolithic age to contemporary ethnic or cultural groups.

Thus Bilger et al. Claim:

* As far as this paper is concerned the terms „black“ (African) and „white“ (Caucasian) will be used as in use by South African authorities, for the term „African“ can not properly be issued to black Africans exclusively, taking into account South Africa's considerable parts of white and coloured (mixed) population, as well as the Asian-descendant parts of the East African population, most of which are of Africa-born ancestry and can therefore no longer be referred to as „European“ or „Asian“ but rather as „African“.

"Current discourses over autochthony and citizenship in various African contexts are a powerful reminder of how narratives over migration and mobility have recently moved to the center of political discourse and how claims over past or present migrations have turned into a pretext for exclusion" (Bilger / Kraler 2005, 5; Comaroff / Comaroff 2001; Geschriere / Nyamnjoh 2000; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004)

It is self understanding that in a climate like that some peoples have an interest of presenting their cultural lineage as the most recognizable among Africa's ethnic groups, which, also means it is in their best interest to limit survey on other groups' critical sites in order to keep their superiority from being questioned.

As far as the white versus black issue goes black identity has gravely been deconstructed by white historic scientists, who tended to portrait black prehistory as shaped by migration of technology as opposed to technology been invented by black people themselves. The first generation of black African archeologists, that has just made its way up the academic career ladder, educated at African instead of European universities and often faces devastating working conditions (see Champion / Ucko 1998, 23ff.), struggles to prove their people's ability for creative invention already enough, without different ethical groups pressing for their specific ancestors to be the creative ones.

Historic archeology has mostly only come about by the end of Apartheid and both parties – blacks and whites as well as Africans and Europeans – inspired by US American slavery archeology, searched to gain knowledge about actual life under European rule. It remains questionable, however, to what extend that kind of intentional archeology can, or can be expected to, produce any objective results as it actively searches for pro-black results, depicting either the black people's suffering or creativity and strength given the harsh conditions they had to live in.

It is questionable whether a researcher, having that question in mind, can honestly be asked to keep an eye on the other side and conduct serious, objective research as regards the life of the white people, who still seem to be portrayed in a rather romanticized and/or cruel way. Research on goods found in their homes, as will be shown on the example of Goede Verwachting, can tell something about their wealth as opposed to their employees, doing hard work for little money, but can it seriously tell us something about how they lived and how they adapted to place so utterly different to the one they came from?

3.2 *Goede Verwachting / Simonsberg*

On the eastern slopes of the South African Simonsberg lie the rests of the abandoned industrial, housing and mining sites of Goede Verwachting, Afrikaans for „Good Expectations“, a 18th century copper, silver and gold mine. Only 55 km from the area's most important city of Cape Town the site hosted a whole industrial complex, however the mines were „devoid of any silver“ (Lucas 2006, 39) thus likely never credited any money to its owner and eventually mining at the Simonsberg came to an end.

Icelandic archeologist Gavin Lucas started research on the site in 1999, including viewing of various written sources – archival sources as well as an unpublished letter by Vos, a fellow researcher - as well as a small dig, surface pick-ups and a survey on remaining structures from 2001. Other than this, little research has been conducted on the site or likewise sites, that can be found all through South Africa (Lucas 2006, 48), a state rich in resources, to which mining has been and still is economically vital.

Perhaps it is this small dimension and seemingly little importance of the site, as strongly opposed to Israel's epic sites of Masada and Ein Gedi, that have been discussed previously, or Felix Chami's prominent Late Stone Age / Early Iron Work surveys, that will be discussed later on, that have kept it from too much pressure on the political scale. But does the lack of pressure and public attention from the outside necessarily lead to a more objective narrative of the development, daily life and end of the ambitious Simonsberg operations? And to what extent can a small, singular research operation contribute to the development of a differentiated picture of colonial life, especially as soon as the topic of suppression of autochthonal population by the newly arrived European settlers is included the research conducted by a Caucasian scientist.

Lucas, who, as an Icelander perceives himself as “from a colonial background” (see Lucas 2006) shows a heavy interest in the life and hardship of laborers and slaves at the site striving to get the most out of historical and archeological sources as well.

3.2.1 *The historic narrative*

As far as Lucas' (2006, 42) narrative of the operation has it in 1740 Frans Diederik Muller, a soldier of the Dutch East India Company Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) „claimed to have discovered silver in Groot Drakenstein, a claim which prompted the Governor of the Cape, at the time Hendric Swellengrebel, to pay a visit in order to establish the truth of his claim. He was persuaded by Muller that the mountains were rich in ores. But rather than take on direct responsibility for mining operations, the VOC granted a charter to an association of citizens

(burghers) led by a local dignitary, Olof de Weth in 1743.

[...]

The newly formed association, Octroojeerde Society der Mynwerken aan de Simonsberg [...] collected 1800 rixdollars from its 22 shareholders and work began in March 1743 with Muller directing the operation on the ground.“ (Lucas 2006, 42).

In November the same year the society had already spent most of the money on equipment and supplies and had had every member put in another 30 rixdollars. Also they appointed a board of directors to oversee the operations, which included local burghers as well as „the most high ranking members of the VOC government at the Cape“ (Lucas 2006, 42).

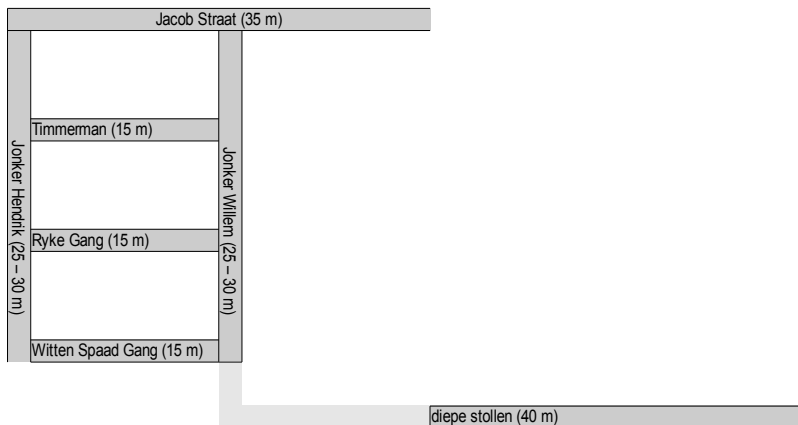
„Between 1743 and 1748“, Lucas (2006, 43) goes on, „the shareholders of the mining society invested thousands of rixdollars in return for nothing but quartz“. The money, however, „went on supplies for the construction of numerous buildings and on wages and rations for the workers“, thus shaping the Simonsberg surroundings and bringing into existence a whole industrial complex. Lucas (2006, 47) hints that, though primary mining operations at the Simonsberg never produced any silver, copper or gold ores, the mere profit made by supplying the operation in the first place might have limited the loss for most of the Society's members.

The Simonsberg workforce consisted, mostly of Company men; soldiers, smiths, sailors, masons, carpenters and – from 1746 – slaves. All in all the mining site employed around 30-40 people of which 16-22 were company men and 12-18 slaves. However fluctuations in personnel were high and only one mine worker, the stijger (overseer) Johan Leendert Voogt could be identified as lasting for the whole course. (see Lucas 2006, 44)

Most of the project's time of existence was spent on the creation of infrastructure, as in fact „only 15 months“ (Lucas 2006, 44) were spent on working the actual mines.

Quarters and a smithy were constructed even before the beginning of actual mining activity and until 1745 a house for Muller, a smithy, two small ovens or furnaces and a processing facility for the ore were built. A smelting house and a water building, as well as a coal store and a smokehouse were completed in early 1747. Another smelting house and a water mill were also constructed at some point. (see Lucas 2006, 44f)

As far as mining activity goes two main phases can be found.



Ill. 5: The Simonsberg upper mine (M. Pfaffl after Lucas 2006, 46)

During the early phase, until 1746, Muller tried to mine the upper level of the mountain, driving a first entrance drift, Jacob Straat, that reached some 35 m into the mountain. From Jacob Straat two blind shafts, Jonker Willem and Jonker Hendrik reached to a depth of 25-30 m. Three additional drifts, which were drifted between 1744 and 1745, Timmerman, Ryke Gang and Witten Spaad Gang, connected the two shafts on a length of approximately 15 m.

At the same time the excavation of an additional access drift, the diepe stollen (deep drift), on a lower level was commenced to simplify ore removal. It was meant to connect with the Jonker Willem shaft at some point but only reached some 40 m into the mountain and was never completed. In fact at the beginning of 1746 work at the upper mine more or less stopped, favoring another site much lower down the mountain side and closer to the living quarters and industrial buildings. (see Lucas 2006, 46)

Regarding these new sites there is much less and less accurate information to be had. Apparently Muller discovered and investigated a total of six sites but worked on only three of them, which lay about 180 m below the upper mines, Isabella, Sancta Helena and Sancta Elisabeth. Isabella, the highest and likely first of the new mining sites had „at least four tunnels“ (Lucas 2006, 46). By 1747 work had reduced to one site, Sancta Helena, which had meanwhile reached a depth of about 24 m. (Lucas 2006, 46)

Though apparently no ore ever came out of either one of the drifts and shafts of the Simonsberg mine Muller “[throughout] maintained that ore he was mining, contained silver, and later copper and finally gold”⁴ (Lucas 2006, 46). Even the two parties of VOC members that visited the mining site in 1745 and 1748 testified to Muller's claims.

⁴ Though the claim of gold, silver and copper to be found within the same deposit might seem too fantastic at first, it is, in fact, a common occurrence for these commodities to be found within the very same seam. A deposit holding significant amounts of uranium, gold and copper, as well as considerable amounts of silver can, for instance, be found in Southern Australia supplying the Olympic Dam mining site.

“Muller was either deluded, incompetent or a liar.”, Lucas (2006, 46) concludes, “Perhaps it matters little which of these he was – perhaps all three. Certainly it is hard to believe this was a complete confidence trick, and my belief is that he did believe in the mines, at least at the start. As the failure of the mines became apparent, he probably became more and more desperate, and probably did lie to the Society to postpone retribution – and in the deluded hope he could redeem himself and strike it lucky.”

In October 1748, however, the operation came to an end, as Muller was brought back to Cape Town and made to stand before a committee of the Society. A goldsmith and two silversmiths, as well as a note by an Amsterdam metallurgist, who had perceived a sample of the ore, put an end to Muller's claims of copper, silver and gold at the Simonsberg. In 1749 Muller was officially charged with fraud and it appears sentenced to banishment. In 1751 he was found to live in Batavia (Java) but eventually by 1753 had found his way back to Europe (Lucas 2006, 47).

3.2.2 Written and oral sources

Early written accounts on the Simonsberg operations, like that of Peter Kolb, a traveler to the Cape, in 1731 and Francois Valentyn, a minister working for the VOC, who visited the area in 1705, reported on the finding of silver and copper and samples of both ores that were sent to VOC's directors in Holland. However the Directors, for lack of labor and fuel (Kolb 1967, 310) didn't „order these mines to be further opened“ (Lucas 39f / Kolb 1968, 51).

The oral story to have been passed down about the mining operations at the Simonsberg, which wasn't as much as touched by Valentyn and Kolb, probably originated in times soon after its failure, as the first known referral to it was that of Lady Anne Barnard, who visited the Cape in the 1790ies (Fairbridge 1924, 39 / Robinson 1994, 255). The story has it that the idea of silver to be found at the Simonsberg was „a confidence trick by a German ex-VOC serviceman, Frans Diederick Muller“ (Lucas 2006, 39 / Burman 1969, 66-73). According to Lady Barnard's narrative the ore to be sent to Holland did not originated from the Simonsberg's natural resources, but rather from „a quantity of Spanish dollars [melted down] into a mass and mixed [...] up with sand and rubbish“ (Robinson 1994, 255).

The very same story would be written to John Barrow in 1797, who would later publish it in his *Travels in the Interior of South Africa* (1801). Both narratives report on the (fake) Simonsberg silver being melted down to produce a chain for the castle gate of Cape Town as a prove of the existence of the Simonsberg silver, but other than that, at least according to Lucas (2006, 41f) „little reason to trust the veracity of her story“ could be found.



Ill. 6: Castle Gate of Cape Town Castle (photo C. Comoli 2008)

Burman (1969, 66-68), however, did trust and pass on the story if only, as Lucas (2006, 42) assumes „because of the integrity of all the others involved“.

It is Burman's (1969) account, as well as numerous historic documents, like that of the Eric Rosenthal Local History Collection (MSB 974 2 (2) / C2774/2-3) etc.), that pose the most important part of the written information still available about the Simonsberg operations.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that though Lucas mentions the “mine works have probably been known in local memory since the events themselves” (Lucas 2006, 47) no account on local oral history, other than its help in finding the mining site (Lucas 2006, 47f), has been added to the article. This might be related to Lucas being an European archeologist as opposed to African archeologists where oral history is a common source whilst it is broadly unknown or untrustworthy in European historic sciences or, simply, to the limited resources of the operation.

3.2.3 Archeological sources

Near the local community of Pniel, an agricultural village founded in 1834 (South Africa Travel – Pniel 2009), thus nearly a century after Muller's failed mining operation in the 1740ies, quite a lot of infrastructure has remained of Muller's Simonsberg operation. The sites, well preserved in local memories include some of the drift entrances, as well as the ruins of houses and industrial sites (see Lucas 2006, 47f).

Lucas (2006, 48) first visited the area in 1999 and once more in 2001. Apart from his research on historic sources he ran a survey on the remaining buildings and the entrances to the mines. However the only building excavated was one house, presumably Muller's own (see Lucas 2006, 55f).

The mine access, of which one can be identified as belonging to Jacob Straat, the upper mine's main entrance (see above), as well as two more remaining entrances, that might correspond with the lower mine's Isabella and Sancta Helena (Lucas 2006, 48) are located roughly 45-60 minutes from the housing quarters and industrial complex (Lucas 2006, 50).

The industrial and residential sites can be divided into two areas, the Lower Ruins (Site 1) and Upper Ruins (Site 2), of which only Site 1, a small group of ore processing buildings lower down the slope of the Simonsberg, has been archeologically investigated prior to Lucas survey (Vos 1992).

Site 1, aka. The Lower Ruins, situated only a couple of meters beyond a small stream features three structures which Lucas (2006, 50; Fig 2.9) identified as a smelt-house, an ore processing facility and, several meters lower down the hill, a small structure that might have served as a store.

The living quarter's ruins can be found several 100 meters up the hill on either side of a track that leads downhill and probably towards the mines. They consist of nine structures. Furthest up the hill are an oven (Structure 2) and a Kraal (Structure 3), next to a prominent three-roomed house that Lucas identified as the bergmeester Hans Diederick Muller's house (Structure 1). Two small stores (Structures 8 and 9), that, as Lucas (2006, 52) assumes might have also served as cells for detention, can be found below Muller's house. The workforce's living quarters (Structures 4 and 5), a tiny one-room building, probably the slave's and/or laborer's quarters and a bigger three-room building, typical for contemporary cottages and probably home to the company men (Lucas 2006, 53) can be found on the other side of the track, next to the smithy (Structure 6). An additional, probably as well residential, building (Structure 7) is situated some 20 meters beyond the cellular storage / detention buildings. (Lucas 2006, 50; Fig. 2.9)

Structure 1 can not only be identified as Muller's house by its location, separated from the other living quarters, which is accounted for in historical sources, but also by the description of the bergmeester's (Mine Master's) house in the transcriptions, which, according to Lucas (2006, 52f) closely match the remains of Structure 1. Further excavations added to the presumed identification of Muller's house unearthing “a rich material culture assemblage” including “fine Chinese porcelain, lead crystal drinking goblets, wine and case bottles” (Lucas 2006, 53) as opposed to the “very different composition consisting mostly of coarse porcelains, stonewares and earthenwares, as well as much higher quantities of clay pipes” that had been found during surface pick-ups performed at assumed slave / laborer / company men housing buildings (Structures 4 and 5).

Muller's house (Lucas 2006, 59; Fig. 2.11) consisted of three main rooms – identified as a kitchen with fireplace and root cellar, a voorhuis (entrance hall) and a bedroom - a stoep (porch-like structure above ground level) and a storage room at a lower level with a separate entrance. Another entrance can possibly be assumed for the north-eastern side of the house, accessible through the voorhuis.

An additional structure at that side of the house could not be unearthed due to the excavation's limited resources.

The house had, at some point, however persisted only of two rooms – turning it into a building similar to the assumed company men dwellings (Structure 5) – but had been expanded to a three room building at some point. It can be argued whether this can be put in any connection to Muller's 1745 marriage to Catharina Geertrug van Staaden (see Lucas 2006, 57).

However, generally spoken, taking into account the little material available about comparative sites in South Africa, no grave dissimilarities, neither as regards Muller's house, nor as regards the workers living quarters, can be found. (see Lucas 2006, 54ff).

Besides Lucas' excavations and surveys some objects made from the “Simonsberg” silver ores persisted. The ores, whatever their origin, had subsequently been used for a baptismal font, drinking cup and two dishes, which were donated to the church at Swellendam by Swellengrebel, of the failed Society's members. (see Lucas 2006, 47)

Furthermore the silver ore that had served as a prove of the Simonsberg's silver resources has been used to produce a chain for the castle gate of Cape Town, as has been reported on by both Lady Anne Barnard and John Barrow.

3.2.4 Excavating the Simonsberg

Unfortunately Icelandic archeologist Gavin Lucas, who published his survey and conclusions on the Simonsberg site as a part of his 2006 account on “The archeology of Dutch Capitalism and the Colonial Trade”, gave little insight into his motives for choosing the Simonsberg for his survey. After all, as he states (2006, 54ff) there is little unusual or special about the Simonsberg operation save, maybe, the narrative of Muller's “trick” played at VOC.

Is it, thus, rather the typical character of the settlement and mining site that made it interesting to Lucas? If so it is questionable how the Simonsberg site can be judged as “typical” beyond considerable doubt, given the lack of corresponding sites in South Africa. Perhaps, in the end it was, like so often in history of science mere coincident that brought Lucas to examining the Simonsberg.

Gavin Lucas, a lector at Reykjavík University since 2006, is a practical, close-to-the findings archeologist with an emphasis on pottery and Icelandic and modern archeology, as well as into the theory behind archeology and the way the science is conducted:

“In theoretical archeology, I have over the past few years spent much time focusing on the nature of archeological practice, especially fieldwork and trying to explore the ways in which archeological knowledge is produced and disseminated.” (Lucas 2009, 1)

He states in his University of Reykjavík profile.

Being an Icelander he, as he described in “The archeology of Dutch Capitalism and the Colonial Trade” (2006), perceives himself as from a colonial background, perceiving Iceland as a nation that had been founded as a colony.

Whilst, without a doubt, he is right taking into account that Iceland in fact was settled by Norse⁵ people originating from another European region, he doesn't go into the vast difference between Iceland's and South Africa's (or Israel's) history, which is brought about by the existence of another people in the area at the time of the colonization. Since this dissimilarity is, beyond the aspect of adaption of the newly settled population to their new surroundings, the crucial point of contemporary archeology of a colonial society, it seems at best bewildering for an Icelander to call upon his own “colonial background” as an inspiration, if not legitimization for his South Africa research.

Perhaps, in a way, he feels that he does need legitimization for his research in the first place. After all, from some point of view, a (white) European conducting research in Africa might be little but yet another looting of indigenous culture and history.

Interestingly enough, other than some archival, thus likely white African-originated sources, Lucas didn't quote a single local source, though he did mention that the mining site is well known to locals and the “perception trick”-narrative still very much alive. It cannot, however, be dismissed that this likely is due to the survey's limited resources and, perhaps, the language barrier.

What Lucas does focus on is the life of Muller's laborers and slaves. He knows how to get, in an obviously methodically accurate way, the most information out of the sources available to him. The ability to bring into existence of a vivid image of daily life from archeological and archival evidence is a skill lacking for many historical scientists.

⁵ In fact examination of the maternal lineage of modern Icelanders by means of mitochondrial DNA suggests Iceland was settled basically by Norse men and (forcefully taken) Celtic wives.

For instance Lucas understands to find circumstantial evidence for poor working conditions through of a number of findings, from a fast change in personnel, via mysterious cases of injury and complaints made to the Society's Cape Town members, all the way to the mentioning of a whip and the existence of structures that might have served as detention cells. Likewise is he able to read the presence of female slaves out of orderings of dresses alongside trousers for the male slaves.

Unfortunately, especially given that the article is the only one published about the Simonsberg so far, archeological field work seems to be neglected at times and only rough sketches and ideas of the structures and finds are given. All in all the reader is left to trust his opinion on the significance of the Simonsberg finds.

Focusing on the sociological component of the Simonsberg mine sites, Lucas in fact showed little interest in the technological site of mining conducted at the site. In fact he hasn't as much as cared to use correct mining terminology as he goes on writing about “tunnels”, which would only apply if the structure featured two openings to the surface, as well as “vertical shafts” for drifts, obviously not being familiar with the correct terminology thus, likely, neither with the basics of mining and mining environments. (see Lucas 2006, 45ff)

It is understandable that Lucas wasn't able to conduct research on the mines themselves as this kind of surveys requires special knowledge and equipment Lucas, obviously inexperienced with mining sites, can't possibly have had, thus he had to rely on written sources as for the nature and size of the drifts and shafts of the mine sites. However little afford has been made to inquire the mining and ore processing activities as far as possible. Beyond a short note on mining being performed – at least in parts – by use of explosives, as well as “digging with picks and spades” (see Lucas 2006, 51) there is, unfortunately, little mention on the techniques used or the nature of the “Ore Processing Facility”, “Smelthouse”, “Smithy” or “Oven”.

As far as preservation and presentation to the public go according to Lucas, induced by his research measures are on the way to clean the site from vegetation and make it accessible to the public. (see Lucas 2006, 48)

3.2.5 Conclusions and summary

Being a mining site the Simonsberg, by nature, is a part of modern South Africa's cultural identity as much as it features a working environment of forced labor, slavery and suppression, as it can be found in innumerable other colonial industrial complexes in different places and has gravely shaped South African history and culture.

Lucas focus on the sociological part of the Simonsberg's history can be seen from either side.

Either as that of a necessary specialization confronted with the multi-layered and technologically difficult history of the Simonsberg – thus crediting Lucas for not pretending to know about the technological aspects and protecting sources for another researcher supplied with the necessary knowledge and tools.

Or, from the other side, his ignorance posing a possible source of material loss, due to unqualified handling of finds. It is well possible that Lucas wouldn't have identified objects as significant, thus dismissed them, due to his lack of knowledge. A danger that has, of course, been minimized by Lucas not excavating any of the industrial sites and modern excavation and documentation techniques strive to minimize altogether, taking into account that sites as multi-layered as the Simonsberg are far from exceptional in archeological work.

As far as his political background is concerned Lucas, without a doubt, has been severely influenced by postmodern “new archeology” ideas of the archeology of labor, if not to say Marxist archeology. This would as well explain his urge to identify with peoples and people suppressed by colonialist Westerners, thus prompting him to identify himself as a perpetrator's successor by declaring his originating from a colonial background.

Lucas' research sure poses an example of how even in the absence of outside political pressure the political pressure laid upon a researcher by himself and his philosophical-methodical set of believes does influence the focus, thus outcome of his research. It seems he had a very clear question, thus a picture in mind when he started research on the Simonsberg and it was this picture he was looking after and ultimately presented. If a picture is as present and vivid as Lucas', would there have been additional space for other pictures and narratives of the same site?

Lucas' research and focus reflects one of the most modern streams of archeological ideas and interests, featuring an interesting set of state-of-the-art archeological ideas, methods and interpretation techniques. As well Lucas presents himself as a modern researcher well aware of political streams and influences and their influence on his work. However even his awareness and knowledge about the problem haven't been able to prevent it, yet it can be discussed whether Lucas open approach of the issue can supply an aware reader with the tools needed to understand his intentions and their possible influence.

3.3 Migration Archeology in Sub-Saharan Africa

3.3.1 Introduction

As up until now only single archeological sites have been dealt with in this paper the example of Early Iron Age (EIA) and Migration Archeology in Eastern Africa serves as an example examining this paper's topic and scientific question from a broader perspective. However, following the structure of earlier chapters, a case study will be given.

Migration, though a topic of heavy interest for the (pre-) historic sciences within European academia already, is an area of our discipline whose importance for not only Sub-Saharan African archeology, but its society and further emancipation from prejudice rooted in white dominated colonialism, can hardly be overestimated. For decades prehistoric migration of peoples and ideas has been used as a tool “proving” discriminative imagination of the African past, as will be shown in this chapter. Though induced mostly by linguistics the developing discipline of archeology has, as the 20th century progressed, found itself being used as a tool to supply further “prove” for diffusionist models.

However, similar to the findings of earlier chapters, archeology has also proven to be a cradle of new approaches and new generation archeologists have, once more, set out to question what seemed to be unquestionable – in this case not merely a set of theories and misconceptions on (pre-) history, but the sovereign rule of one historic discipline above all others and, on a more subliminal level, even the deep lying idea of Caucasian superiority. Therefore the example of migration archeology in Sub-Saharan Africa poses a topic worth dealing with the utter complexity of its scientific and political aspects.

Furthermore migration, in the setting of African archeology, once more can be found to be hosting important questions of identity and (pre-)historic whereabouts of people as a “part of [the] wider processes of the production of meaning and thus having important imaginary and symbolical dimensions.” (Bilger/Kraler 2005, 5) and is found to be used “to make political claims, claims over property, claims over one's social status, and to express one's own and other's identities.” (Bilger/Kraler 2005, 4)

“Current discourses over autochthony and citizenship in various African contexts” Bilger/Kraler (2005, 1) conclude “are a powerful reminder of how narratives over migration and mobility have recently moved to the center of political discourse.” Ultimately, as Bilger/Kraler point out political contexts can be found in Africa, where archeological interpretations can turn into “a pretext for exclusion”.

As for this chapter's example the outstanding work of Tanzania-based archeologist Felix Chami is only one sample of how single academic persons and their scientific field work on rather narrow topics and aspects of prehistory have supplied the scientific prove that made the astonishing evolution of understanding of the Sub-Saharan prehistory possible. Thus his academic work on the Swahili coast and off-shore islands, concerning both Late Stone Age (LSA) and Early Iron Working (EIW) sites will serve as an example of the very grassroots field work of Sub-Saharan migration archeology.

His finds on various sites, put together with other individual scientist's academic work, have supplied heavy prove of the existence of technology perceived as a part of the “Bantu” iron age-parcel millennia before the postulated spread of the Bantu to the Swahili coast and has thereby severely questioned the effects of the Bantu expansions on populations all over Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3.2 History of Science

When – European – archeologists, upon them researchers as outstanding in the contemporary European historic sciences as Gordon Childe (1951) - first started research beyond palaeolithic archeology in Africa, it soon became a given that every technology that could be found with (earlier) hunter-gatherer tribes had necessarily been imported from up north – Europe or at least Egypt – as part of a culture transfer or diffusional process, if not actual migration of human beings. The mere idea of an independent, African, development of such technologies as iron melting or animal husbandry (Bassey/Shaw a.o. 1993, 9) was, for those pioneers of African archeology, beyond imagination and the theoretic set of “Diffusionism” state-of-the-art.

Contemporary academic texts found strong words arguing the incontrovertible logic of their model of African prehistory and capability of invention:

“Savages are [...] totally without initiative, without the desire or the capacity for inventing a device, a myth or an institution [thus] all major inventions where made but once by some chosen people.” (Childe 1951, 12f / Chami 2007, 2)

“This diffusionist model”, Phillipson (1998, 30) states, “was one that could be applied to Africa in the 1930s because archeological research in this continent had not revealed any contrary.” In other words: Hardly any archeological research had been conducted until that time and thus no source material was available to question the theories that seemed natural to the European first generation of africanist researchers.

Though in general this understanding of African prehistory can be found until today, as the century progressed diffusionist theories were sharpened and adapted to fit new archeological sources and the developing techniques of the science.

For instance, taking into account that the Egyptians' highly creative and inventive nature as one of mankind's most impressive early high cultures, in fact the origin of technologies transferred to Europe, the diffusionist model applied to African prehistory was adapted to allow space for an exceptional people within geographic Africa. Thus the Hamite hypothesis, described by Chami (2007, 2) as the “Hamite myth” came into existence and soon grew to be a popular, seemingly more modern, alternative to the “classic” diffusionist model (see Saunders 1969).

The Hamite hypothesis has it, however, that the Egyptians were paramount among the African peoples, because of reasons that featured strong ties with non-African, Caucasian (see e.g. Chami 2007, 2), civilizations. Scenarios enlightening the origin of Egyptian superiority included trade contact with populations outside Africa, and, most prominently the idea of a less African, thus Caucasian heritage of at least the Egyptian elite.

In fact the effects, the “kind of thinking [that] denied growth within African culture” (Chami 2007, 2) can still easily be found with the popular perception of the Egyptians, or at least their elite, being white in skin color. A picture that, however, has to be newly drawn considering the ongoing heavy academic debate about the skin color and ethnic identity of Egyptians and their rulers.

Whatever the postulated reasons for their superiority, these „Hamite“ or “Nilo-Hamite” people of North Eastern Africa were, in harsh contrast to their (black) colleagues in the southern part of the continent, believed to be capable of inventions and it was thus explained that it were “Hamite” technologies, that were passed on to other African – most of all sub-Saharan - peoples.

A similar model had been come into life for the Swahili-coast, the south-eastern shore of Africa and a region that had had early contact with Islamic tradesman and thus a high affiliation to Islam and the Arabic sphere. After World War II some scientists (e.g. Chittick, Kirkman), that felt close to these Arabic partners, re-adapted the European model of diffusion and applied it on those Arabic traders thus implying an “Afro-Arabic” model of diffusion of technology and culture from the Arab world to Africa, where it was adapted to African needs in the cultural diverse area of the Swahili-Coast. (Phillipson 1998, 191)

However the “Hamite”-hypothesis didn't fit the needs of a post-colonial, nationalistic Africa that was more then aware of the “Hamite's” white heritage and in desperate need for a local hero to do the job. Therefore, as the century progressed to the 1970ies and the first generation of African archeologists, people as prominent as Andah Bassey upon them, as well as a new generation of

European scientists, influenced by a modern, more emancipated understanding of equality and, perhaps, political correctness, sought for a different approach on the topic (Wandibba 1998, 189) reached the academic stage another people was found to be credited the source of African civilization.

„In Africa,” African archeologists Basse/Shaw a.o. (1993, 10) later stated “almost every major conglomeration, be it the stone-walled enclosures of Great Zimbabwe [...], the cities of Ghana [...], or even the kingdom of Congo [...] have been ascribed to the influence of one particular exceptional elite iron age people who were portrayed as having swept across vast areas of land, through innumerable micro and macro environments to impose their authority, usually by replacing (i.e. exterminating) those who stood in their way [...]. In cases where no suitable candidates for such migrations could be found, 'explanation' was abandoned in favor of postulate.“

This exceptional people could soon be found among the ancestry of an African tribe that, beyond an already glorious history, gained political power and popularity with Nelson Mandela's ANC's victory over South Africa's apartheid regime in the 1990ies:

Unlike most parts of the world the Bronze Age is missing in Sub-Saharan Africa but the augmented quantity and quality of African prehistoric data in the late 20th century suggested a rather sudden change from Stone Age to Iron Age, vaguely similar to the European neolithic revolution, featuring a sudden appearance of a whole parcel of technologies: animal husbandry, agricultural technologies as well as iron melting.

Linkage of the postulated times and regions of this change with linguistic data, a field of science well established in Africa, lead to the “identification” of the source of this Iron Age revolution. The Bantu Expansion, thus the spread of Bantu-languages, that could be found to having taken place during the questionable period of time, was set up as a counterpart to European LBC-neolithic spread.

The term Bantu, referring to the Zulu word “aba-ntu” for man or human, that can, in most Bantu languages be found in a similar form (Eggert 2005, 301), is only one example where the strong link of the theory to linguistics can be easily found.

The basic reason for the paramount standing of African linguistic is the huge number of languages that can be found within the continent – Eggert's (2005, 302) numbers claim some 200-400, if not more then 680 different languages – whose development, according to linguists, can be tracked down in form of a tree of languages (Eggert 2005, 313), similar to that in use to describe the evolution if Indo-Germanic languages. However for African linguists this tree of languages, featuring dates of postulated spread of languages can be linked to very historic migration movements.

Thus a vast movement of Bantu-speaking groups through most of southern and eastern Africa was postulated, and found to, at least roughly, correlate to the dates of the appearance of Iron Age technologies in sub-Saharan Africa. It didn't take long for the Bantu migration theory to be linked to the emerging of the Iron Age.

The theory of Bantu expansion was, finally, an African model excluding, safe in a hand full of scientist's (i.e. Gundu 1987) point of view, culture-transfer from up north – neither Europe nor the „Hamite“ peoples of ancient Egypt.

However it should be noted that there still is a tremendous amount of academic dispute on the origin of the Bantu people. Whilst for some, e.g. University of Dar-es-Salaam's Felix Chami (2007, 4; Chami 2006) it has to be sought within “Eastern, Central and Southern Africa” others, like Ehret (1998) “conceive the Bantu speakers receiving this [technology] package from the alleged Sahelinas who had already penetrated the Great Lakes region of the Rift Valley” (Chami 2007, 4).

3.3.3 *New sources – new theories*

It was only during the last years of the 20th century that a new generation of archeologists, people like Tanzanian archeologist Felix Chami, as well as Europeans and Americans, David W. Phillipson, “a foremost authority on Ethiopia’s archeology“ (Yale 2010), upon them started questioning the model of the Bantu expansion that had seemed untouchable, finally offering at least an African model of the beginning iron age. But to question the Bantu expansion theory first the dominion of linguistics over Africa's historical sciences had to be broken, as linguistics delivered a vast majority of scientific prove of the Bantu expansion model. For decades, after all, “archeologists have had to bend their evidence so as to fit the evidence obtained from linguistic.” (Phillipson 1998, 185)

In this new challenge of questioning the Bantu Migration model prove of a lack of correspondence of the emerge of Bantu language with the emerge of the iron age had become crucial. A task difficult to achieve taking into account the difficulty of accurate dating in linguistics (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 78) and even more difficult taking into account the early stage of African archeology and the lack of possibilities in using modern archeological techniques and surveying methods to accurately confirm dating of finds etc brought about by the limited resources of African archeologists.

However encouraging first steps have been set as can, for instance, be seen in Chami/Kweakason's 2003 article, where the possibility of Bantu speaker's existence in the questionable regions of East Africa as early as probably 3000 BCE (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 76), thus possibly millennia before the introduction of iron melting and other technological

innovations credited to Bantu speakers is discussed on example of pottery unearthed at a number of surveys and excavations in different locations on the East African islands, the coastal, as well as the interior regions (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 67ff.). Discussion of cultural affiliation and, thus, possible continuity on basis of pottery is an important and well acknowledged method of archeology that obviously has been used to state of the art standards in this case, thereby providing an excellent example of how the emerge of archeological methods might reshape the understanding of history in the region.

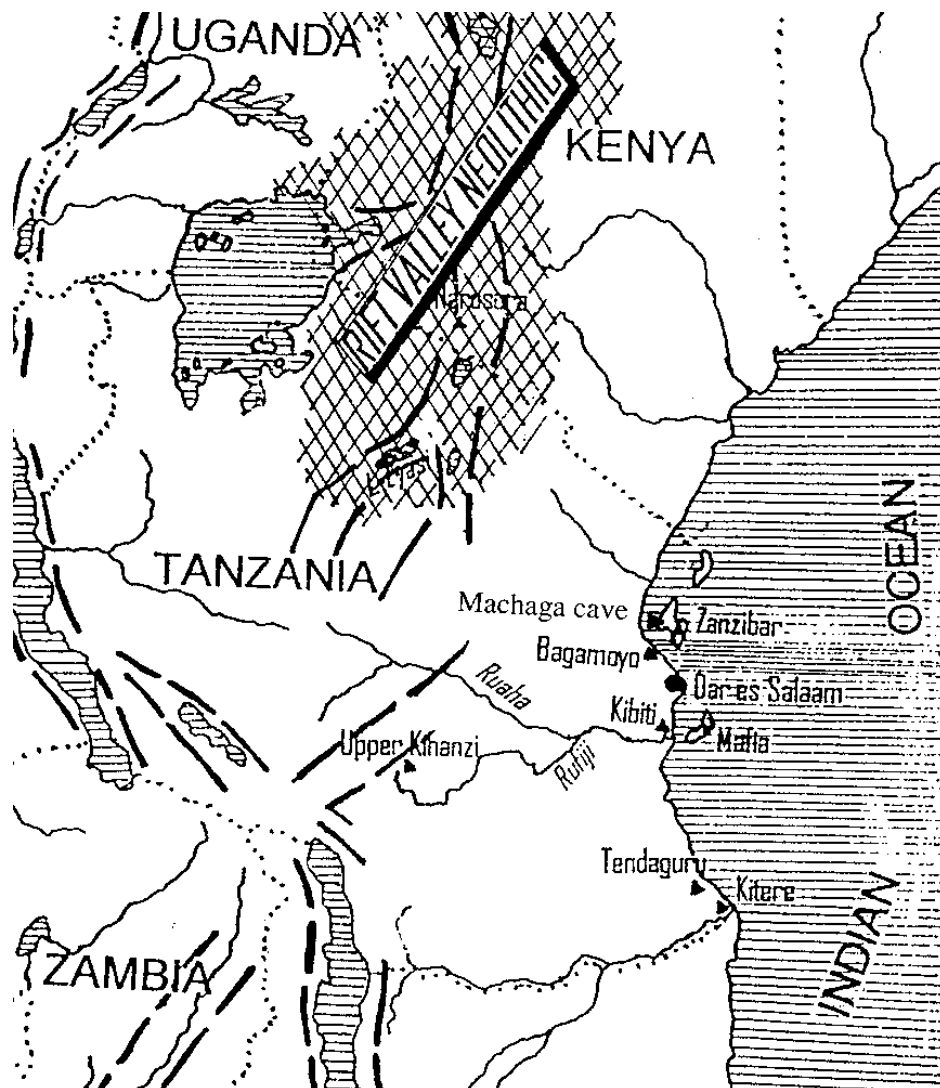
Alternating theories have to be brought into life as well if the Bantu migration model is to be rejected.

For instance Felix Chami (2007, 1-14) favors a model featuring a dense net of trade having existed already in early neolithic times within the coastal and central regions of southern and eastern Africa. Thus, he explains, technologies had likely been invented in one, sometimes even a number of places in the region and subsequently been passed on by traders, refined by another tribe and passed on. Therefore credit for a particular invention couldn't be credited to a specific group of people but rather can be imagined as a slow evolution of technology hosted by whole regions and trade network. This model is actually pretty similar to what historic sciences have found to have happened in Europe on a lot of occasions.

Once more, though, Chami seems to favor his own homeland of Tanzania as being, as a part of the Swahili-coast a hub for this information and trade network. The influence of one's homeland and identity seems not to able to separate from people's academic work in Africa yet.

In the end, after rigorous academic fights over the dating of finds like the chicken bones in Zanzibar's Kuumbi caves (see Chami 2001a), that will be presented as a case study the Jury is still out on the question of the emerging Iron Age in Sub-Saharan Africa. With a limited number of excavations and finds academic proof is hard to obtain for either party.

3.3.4 Case Study – Felix Chami's Research on End Neolithic and Early Iron Age alongside the Swahili coast



Ill. 7: Neolithic sites in the Swahili Coast area (edited by M. Pfaffl; Chami/Kwekason 2003, 67/Fig. 1)

The “Swahili Coast”, called so after its lingua franca, (Ki)Swahili, which came into existence when Arabic-spoken traders made contact with local traders and thus combined local African languages and Arabic, and supplemented with some Portuguese influences when Portuguese explorers and later tradesmen reached the Swahili (Grau 2007).

In geographic terms the Swahili coast refers to the coastal regions southeastern Africa; Tanzania, Mozambique and Kenya, as well as their off-shore islands. It is a geographic region that

is known to feature some remarkable differences in both (material) culture and history from the southeastern African mainland. This was most obviously brought about by the region's ancient strong trade networks, that soon stretched beyond the African continent.

As a matter of fact trade – and transfer of culture and technologies it might have hosted – remains a core issue of Swahili Coast archeology and historical sciences up until today. Actually, it where findings obtained in this region and context that have, for some archeologists, such as Felix A. Chami, an Associate Professor in the Archeology Department of University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania inspired the development of the idea of an ancient world far more tightly connected than anticipated by most researchers. (see e.g. Chami 2007, 3) An idea that, although yet new to the scientific community, appears to be on its way to a full-fledged academic school bound to host surprising new perspectives of the life of prehistoric man during the years to come.

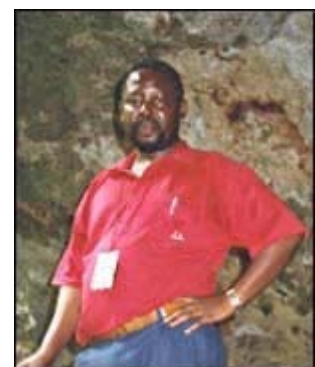
3.3.5 History of Science and archeological finds

Though the eastern African Rift Valley had been subject to research on early human sites from the 1920ies, when the Leakey (see Leakey 2010) family commenced their research, it took until the late 1950ies for archeology to reach the Swahili coast (see Chami 2007, 1). Far into the 20th century foreign missionaries, anthropologists, linguists and historians dominated (pre-)historic research, impressing ideas of diffusionism, thus the (black) local population's lack of the ability to make creative inventions of their own, onto the common image of East African and Swahili Coast prehistoric life.

Only from the 1990ies, with the first generation of native African scientists entering the academic stage, archeological surveys and excavations by local archeologists, have been conducted alongside the East African Swahili Coast, as well as its off-shore islands of Zanzibar, Mafia and Kilwa.

As a matter of fact most of this cutting-edge academic work can be contributed to University of Dar es Salaam-based archeologist Felix Chami.

Early surveys from 1990 to 1994 (see Chami 1994) centered on what is called the “Early Iron Working” (EIW) Period in local terminology, thus the Early Iron Age, a period subject to grave changes in technologies and material culture that has been found to commence on the Swahili coast and islands area from about 0 CE. Chami's early research however focused on the slightly later period of the first



Ill. 8: Felix Chami (Chami 2002)

centuries CE and its pottery and trade networks. (see Chami 2007, 6)

Additional EIW sites were discovered during a later research period focusing on the central coast of both Tanzania and the Island of Mafia, unearthing trade goods from the Roman world (see Chami 1999a; Chami 1999b), thus linking further to Felix Chami's research on the ancient trade city of Rhapta, which he had been able to locate with aid of historic sources (see below).

Chami's major research on the limestone caves of the off-shore islands started in 1999 by means of two seasons of excavations of the Machanga Cave at Pete on Zanzibar. (see Chami 2001b; 2004; Chami/Kwekason 2003, 75ff ; Chami/Wafula 1999). Animal bones, including domestic fowl and cat, stone and bone tools, a pestle and “a few pot sheds” (Chami/Kwekason 2003, 75ff) were found.

Further major excavations on five Neolithic sites at the southern coast of Tanzania and the Rufiji river system were published by Chami and Kwekason in 2003.

Kitere, in southern Tanzania was discovered in 2000. A survey by Kwekason located Late Stone Age (LSA) pottery of a local type, some of which was identified at University of Dar-es-Salaam. (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 69)

Tendaguru (also see Chami/Chami 2001) supplied pottery of the Rift Valley type (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 70f).

The ceramic LSA site at Uhafiwa village at the Upper Kihanzi river was discovered in 1998 by Paul Msemwa (2001). Surface finds of LSA potsherds were found in a disturbed context that could be associated with finds of microliths. Samples transferred to University of Dar-es-Salaam were identified as of different local traditions. (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 71ff).

Mkukutu-Kibiti (also see Chami/Mapunda 1998; Chami 2001a) was explored during two seasons of excavation in 1996 and 1999. Upon others microliths were found at the lower levels, associated with both LSA and EIW periods, as well as fragments of sandstone vessels and “a feature, probably a water channel” (Chami/Kwekason 2003, 74). Two charcoal samples allowed dating of the site to the third century CE (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 74; Chami 1999a), a date that has been confirmed by Roman beads dated to between 100 BCE and 200 CE.

On occasion of their 2003 article Chami and Kwekason also tried an anthropological approach on skeletons to resolve the question of the existence of “Negroes in the Rift Valley” (Chami/Kwekason 2003, 77) but, following the academic work of Gramly/Rightmire (1973, 578), conclude that no final conclusion can be drawn on basis of academic prove for the Rift Valley.

These excavations and surveys on the coastal islands and the Swahili coast itself added scientific prove pointing out that “these were communities that were permanently settled, domesticating animals and probably crops, and trading with other ancient cultures from 3000 BC”

(see Chami 2007, 6; Chami/Kwekason 2003, 76f).

Thus finally sustainable traces had been found confirming theories opposing those suggesting the “diffusion” of permanent settlement, farming technologies and other technologies commonly associated with the EIW technology-parcel to have occurred as late as about 0 CE. Thus the significantly earlier appearance of these technology gravely challenged the established theory of EIW technologies having been derived from Sahel-people who had, earlier, derived them from Egyptians, thus Caucasian peoples (see Ehret 1998) and confirmed the existence of other origins of the technologies for the Swahili islands population.

Furthermore it was on this occasion that the arrival of chicken in Africa, that is supposed to having first been domesticated in Asia, could be dated as early as 3000 BC since at the cave of Machaga besides stone and bone tools – including harpoons – bones of “domesticated chicken and cat, plus African non-domesticates including most of what one finds in Serengeti.” (Chami 2007, 6) were found.

Another layer provided Indian/Roman Red imported ware .

A survey at the Mafia caves found the sites dating to the first millennium BC. The survey further added additional prove for extensive trade networks by means of imported beads and potsherds originating from the Mediterranean and Nile Valley, as well as India, thus “certainly [...] [reflecting] wide trade networks in the mid-late first millennium B.C.” (Chami 2007, 6)

Felix Chami's most recent research on the region features finds from the islands of Kilwa and Zanzibar, targeting Chittick's (1974) theory of a non-African heritage of tenth century CE Swahili towns. Potsherds dated to the pre-Islamic period were unearthed, thus establishing a chronology of local neolithic and EIW traditions (see Chami 2007, 6f) that dated the population period of the island to about 3000 BCE, thus, contrary to Chittick's (1974) assumption pointed towards a five thousand year span of continuing settlement by people of African origin (see Chami 2007, 7) given the identification of these people as of African origin, due to written sources (see below).

Chami's research work has meanwhile been augmented by Emael Sassi's not yet published follow-up excavations.

The excavations at the Kuumbi cave near the Jambiani town of Zanzibar unearthed several layers of archeological material.

Whilst the lowest one was dated to about 20000 BCE, featuring crude stone tools and large animal bones the middle one was dated to 3000-4000 BCE featuring quartz microliths, bone tools, as well as bones of domesticated animals including cattle and chicken. Thereby the results for the chicken bones of Machaga cave, dated to 2800 BCE, could be verified (Chami 2007, 7) and further

prove chicken domestication as early as the third millennium BCE, thus indicating that “the people of the coast of East Africa had domesticated animals as early as that mode of production was realized in the Nile Valley and elsewhere.” (Chami 2007, 7).

The upper layer unearthed further import goods: potsherds, as well as a glass bead from the India and Greek-Phoenician region (Chami 2007, 8).

3.3.6 Written accounts

Historic written accounts on the Swahili cultural region, more specifically on the offshore islands that served as the center of Felix Chami's research have been provided by both Greek and Roman historians' accounts, focusing on the Roman trade network that stretched to the region, and later reports by Arabian and Persian tradesmen and scholars traveling the region.

Thus the town of Rhapta, the “southern most known trading metropolis [of the Antique]” (Chami 2007, 6), that is reported to have become a metropolis in the third century CE (Chami/Kwekason 2003, 77; Huntingford 1980; Ptolmey) was mentioned in Periplus from the third century BCE (see Chami/Kwekason 2003, 77) as well as in Ptolmey's Geographia.

In addition further information on the people of Eastern Africa's off-shore islands was added by Greek authors Pliny, Euhemerus, Iambulus and Eudoxus, and Diodorus Siculus. (see Chami 2007, 6; Diodorus Siculus / Oldfather (trans.) 1961.) Iambulus reported on “several islands on the coast of East Africa where people domesticated chicken and cultivated some plants for food. They also fished and hunted. They were literate and believed in the sun and stars.” (Chami/Kwekason 2003, 77; Cary/Warmington 1963; Oldfather (trans.) 1961). “These” Chami/Kwekason (2003, 77) conclude, “are probably the same people identified by Pliny as cave dwellers who were alleged to have been obtaining cinnamon and cassia from far across the ocean and trading it to the Red Sea population” (Pliny; Rackham 1961 (transl.)).

Islamic-originated sources on the region, come into existence about 1'300 years after the reports of classic authors, include accounts by 13th century's Ibn Battuta on the region's Kilwa-town. (see Chami 2007, 6)

The importance of both groups of accounts can be estimated taking into account their assistance with the identification of both the remains of Rhapta within today's city of Rappij by means of geographic information from antique sources, and its population, being described as of “jet black” black skin color (see Chami 2007, 6), both in antique and Islamic documents.

In addition Pliny's remarks on the “people bringing spices from Asia from time immemorial” being “cave dwellers” (Chami 2007, 6) led Felix Chami directly to the limestone caves on Zanzibar and Mafia that led to his cutting-edge findings.

3.3.7 *The Politics of Chicken Bones*

It can probably never be found out to what extent the lack of archeological source material, due to the simple lack of extensive excavation projects in a region heavily suffering from lack of academic resources, has contributed to the coming into existence and establishment of the European-made diffusionist model and its Africanist successors. Whilst motives of racism and the socialization of the first generations of (white) African Archeologists into a society gravely dominated by the idea of Caucasian superiority can easily be blamed for the existence of scientific theories as discriminating as the diffusionist model it cannot be ignored that, after all, scientific prove, both linguistic data, such as the spread of Bantu languages during the questionable time and archeological facts, such as the sudden transition from Neolithic to Iron Age (see Wandibba 1998, 185), and the absolute lack of any pyrotechnical knowledge prior to the development of iron melting (see Kense/Okoro 1993, 456), have supported the idea of diffusionism triggered by migration. For instance just recent research, such as Chami et al.'s extensive studies (see above) have led to the establishment of a ceramic typology differentiated enough to support more specific distinctions between different groups of people (see Wandibba 1998, 185). Before that Oliver's (1966) uniformation of "dimple-based" ceramic types at the coast (see Wandibba 1998, 185) has supported different academic solutions.

It can, thus, on the example of Sub-Saharan African migration archeology, be shown how the evolution of African archeology and the augmented number of sources examined works in equilibrium with a changed political and social environment to create new theories mirroring both methodical and social/political development. It, thus, needs to be pointed out that, however obvious social and political reasons for interpretation of archeological source material still relies on the finds available. Socio-political changes and the socio-political environment and upbringing of scientists cannot solely be blamed nor credited obvious shifts in scientific models and theories.

Another important aspect of the recent studies of Swahili-Coast and Islands LSA / EIW cultures is, as has been shown earlier in this paper, the vast impact of small excavations or, in some cases, even surface surveys. In the end a very limited amount of archeological sources, examined with very limited resources, have led to a completely altered model of Sub-Saharan prehistory. As Chami is very aware in his 2007 article: "The academic and psychological implications of the above problematic theories are immense. No idea has so far been entertained which would suggest early EIW agricultural domesticating or even pottery making tradition in Sub-Saharan Africa." (Chami 2007, 4)

It probably needs to be added that, of course, Chami's theories are not paramount among the contemporary scientific happening in the region. Not only does it need to be stretched that Chami's approach isn't much of a generalist, but rather heavily focused on his ideas of prehistoric and

historic trade networks (see i.e. Wandibba 1998, 191), but it also does it, at times, look like Chami was more concerned with proving wrong (diffusionist) models than with the creation of new models.

Also it comes with little surprise that theories as cutting-edge as Chamis have triggered considerable academic criticism that has, at times, heavily touched the boundaries of academic well behavior. Remarks such as Sutton's 2002 reaction on Chami's early work are about average of the spectrum that could be found. "Chami's inclination is to challenge received wisdom at every turn." (Sutton 2002, 503) he concludes.

3.3.8 Summary

archeological interest in Sub-Saharan Africa started only very late, featuring prominent European scientists to whom African archeology was just one more stage to play. Thus a easy approach, featuring opinions, scientific models, as well as socio-political theories that had already existed for decades and probably doing little more than fitting them into Sub-Saharan Africa with little actual field work being done.

It was a given under that time socio-political context that Sub-Saharan, black, people, could not be expected to be capable of own intervention and creative thinking, thus what became known as the diffusionist model came into existence.

The diffusionist approach proclaimed transportation (i.e. "diffusion") of new technologies and aspects of civilization from the (Caucasian) north to the (Negroid) south of the continent and was soon accepted in wide parts of the mid-century academic community.

As the century succeeded and post-colonialism changed the face and environment of the continent questioning theories proclaiming European superiority became fashionable and, thus, the diffusionist model changed into Africanist models, such as the Hamite hypothesis, that saw the origin of Sub-Saharan civilization in "Hamite" Egyptian technology and culture.

However when, finally, reasonable amounts of archeological data became available and paired with the coming into existence of historic scientists finally specialized in African archeology, as well as the need for a Africanist approach on Sub-Saharan Africa's prehistory that did not, in any perceivable way, include white people linguistic models of language spread supported the creation of a powerful myth: The Bantu Expansion.

The Bantu Expansion narrative had it that one people upon the Sub-Saharan African people was capable of invention and – ultimately – invented a parcel of technologies, iron melting, pottery and agriculture upon them, that turned the infidel tribes of Southern Africa into Iron Age cultures. It, of course, came in handy that the Bantu could be identified of being upon the ancestry of the ethnic group of the Zulu that, as the end of the 20th century approached, gained considerable

political power in formation of the African National Congress (ANC) and fall of the South African Apartheid regime.

Questioning the model of Bantu Expansion, that had, after all, been supported by scientific proof, became the task of a new generation – African-born and, at least in parts, -educated, black and not of Zulu ethnicity they faced obvious obstacles in a region facing severe shortage of resources and political and social disability, as well as a lack of credibility on the international academic stage.

However with the new millennium came a new theoretical approach on Sub-Saharan prehistory.

Probably upon the most prominent and active of them is Tanzanian archeologist Felix Chami, who started his research on Swahili Coast and Islands prehistoric and historic trade networks during the final years of the 20th century. Within a decade he, and his fellow scientists had, probably for the first time in the region's history, built up a typology of pottery that could meet European standards, and thus found a powerful tool for a more differentiated look at history.

Along the way did they find archeological prove heavily questioning Bantu Expansion bringing with it the whole parcel of Iron Age technology, as much of the technology believed to arrive in the region only with the Bantu Expansion, could be found to have arrived almost 3'000 years earlier. Though many questions remain yet unanswered and Chami's theory under heavy academic pressure the work of him and his colleagues has added an alternative scenario of Sub-Saharan prehistory within little more then a decade.

3.4 Summary – The Dilemma of a New Discipline

Archeology in Africa besides Egypt and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa is a very young discipline. Whilst Paleontology on the “Black Continent” unearthed the very roots of men interest in their further development was limited for European scientists of colonial Africa and, where it finally arose well into the 20th century, the outcome of research was pre-set before surveys started: In accordance to the set picture of colonial black Africans prehistoric Africans were believed to be incapable of creative invention, thus incapable of any kind of development towards civilization. Where more sophisticated technology was found in a prehistoric context there was no doubt it had to origin up north, from cultural centers dominated by or being in heavy contact with Caucasian people.

Diffusionism came and went during the middle of the 20th century, probably as much a child of its time's political view and “knowledge” about black Africans as of the limited severe interest and even less archeological field work being conducted. Whether racist by intention or racist by lack of imagination of a different scenario diffusionism and the concepts of black identity introduced by it

gravely shaped black the self-understanding of black people's origin and history, thus, black identity. The idea of being the offspring of an ancestry that was incapable of invention, incapable of independent development, without a doubt influenced people all over Africa and helped with the deep incorporation of a racist, Caucasian, image of black people, their history and future.

With the end of colonialism or, in the case of South Africa, the apartheid regime came first attempts to question these models impressed by white men. Black Africans stood up against these racist models even though there might, in the end, have been little more than their desire for another history and another cultural identity to prove their ideas.

It wasn't evidence brought about by new surveys and excavations that led to the birth of the Bantu Expansion myth, but the intentional re-arrangement of evidence already there. And this evidence, due to the lack of prehistoric field work, was mostly delivered by linguistic surveys on language development and spread. Africanist Archeology, until the very last decade of the 20th century, was nothing but an auxiliary science to linguistics whose ideas it was to prove right and archeological finds and evidence were bent so to fit the set model that seemed beyond questioning.

Did the fact that the Bantu, that were attributed the one among the Sub-Saharan African peoples that was capable of invention and spread of it, are among the ancestry of one of today's most influential peoples among Sub-Saharan Africa limit science into other possibilities? With the limited resources – in time, topic and sources available – of this paper this question couldn't be answered. Extensive study of the very source material of the Bantu Expansion myth, as well as other contemporary archeological sources need to be done to answer this certainly highly interesting scientific question.

However during research for this paper criticism against tries to overcome the Bantu Expansion myth have been found to be especially emotionally and, as it seems, politically driven, rather than driven by scientific proof and proper scientific argumentation. It needs to be emphasized, though, that this can be due to poor incorporation of scientific working and communication habits due to the youth of our science in Sub-Saharan Africa, just as well as due to obvious social-political influence and peer-pressure.

However pretty much like the Masada myth, that has been discussed in an earlier chapter of this paper, the Bantu Expansion myth wasn't there to last long. A mere generation later, with the first generation of archeologists having spent the majority of their life in an independent, black governed nation, people, most prominently upon them probably Felix Chami, set out to question given models of African prehistory and emancipated the discipline against the paramount nature of linguistics.

It is interesting to note that with Chami's questioning of the Bantu Expansion being the sole

source of prehistoric development in the region, for the first time feasible archeological methodology is used. For instance it takes Chami and his colleagues nearly 20 years to gather enough ceramic material to set up proper, differentiated typology models for some regions. Once this is finally done at least as far as the area of Chami's work – the Swahili coast – is concerned the Bantu Expansion myth is easily dismantled.

The same is true for Gavin Lucas' work on the Simonsberg mines. Though on a smaller scale both the lack of scientific knowledge and comparable sites and the social-political intentionality of his research can be spotted and led to the construction of an obvious picture of the Goede Verwachting history. Although investigating a topic of high potential for conflict of interest and both political and emotional involvement no indication of any form of outside political pressure could be found as regards Lucas' work or the choice of his area of examination. Whilst this cannot mean that no political pressure is there to be had in the region and on this topic, since the lack of pressure can as well origin in the small scale and little attention his research draw upon it, it still shows that the mechanisms influencing interpretation by means of a pre-fabricated idea and image of prehistoric “truth”, that could be found on politically more prominent sites could be found to work for the Simonsberg survey as well.

Furthermore Lucas' own identity as a foreign scientist, as opposed to the native scientists dealt with on other occasions in this paper, could not be identified as having any feasible impact on the mechanisms of political influence on his archeological interpretations. Though patriotism or strive for an altered history of his own people cannot be the reason for Lucas' intentionality he still approached interpretation much the same like those scientists of local origin that were dealing with these issues of identity.

After all the crucial point when researching archeology in Africa and the interpretation of finds in the region can be found within the lack of available primary sources.

Whilst the suggestion of going on to interpretation only when source material is more extensive seems to be natural in this respect it cannot be asked of a young scientific discipline to spend decades on fundamental research, probably stretching through all of some scientists' careers, without trying themselves in interpreting them. Just like any other science archeology has to produce a feasible outcome – theories of prehistoric life in all of its aspects to be presented to the public.

However myth and constructed history can be the result of this accelerated interpretation process pointing towards a heavy moral dilemma of the discipline that links straight to the ongoing controversy between the conservative, antiquarian tradition of the historic sciences in Middle Europe and the (post-)processional approach favored in most parts of the Western World.

4 Summary

4.1 The International Stage

Though for the purpose of limited time and space available this paper had to focus on a limited number of archeological sites in Africa and the Middle East, adding a chapter about Europe for the author's own backyard and -ground, the topic is present throughout the world of archeology. The following paragraphs will give a brief overview on the presence, importance and impact of the archeology – politics correlation on the international stage. Both as regards the highly mobile archeological professional, as well as in respect of the local scale on either continent.

4.1.1 Europe

As Middle Europe's archeological trauma (?) obtained during two subsequent abuses of the discipline has been discussed in the previous chapter today's discipline is probably moving towards rehabilitation with extensive distance in time and the start of coming to terms with both the Nazi and Socialist abuses of the discipline. However rehabilitation has been made more difficult by the fact that many of the new generation, upon them Gabriele Mante by whom the above cited PhD thesis was written, have meanwhile left the scientific stage or at least the geographic area.

Concerning the topic of archeology and politics in Middle Europe historic scientists of the elder generation have made an effort to separate archeology from politics for any price, thus by the time they got aware of the influence of the researcher's upbringing and socialization have mentally banned interpretation at all. Other than this rather indirect influence of Middle Europe's historic past, influence, as can be found in any other geographic regions, is present through the awarding of grants, thus the financial enabling of scientific projects. The movement of the discipline toward project oriented work has done its share as it has put additional pressure especially on young archeologists, since long-term contracts have become unusual. This, however will be discussed further in this paper's final chapter.

4.1.2 Africa

As far as the continent of Africa is concerned, archeologists of different states are struggling to emancipate themselves against the influence of foreign, mostly European and US American, scientists who have held the hegemony over historic sciences in Africa until merely some decades ago. At the same time topics of nation building and national identity are crucial for most states and so are historic sciences, archeology alongside them, who can serve as a tool to confirm national

identity, thus the rightfulness of a state.

Other than in regions like the Middle East, however there is little obvious historic nation building available, since the African concept of identity, reign and social and ethnic affiliation are vastly different to those of many other regions. Thus questions of ethnicity, often investigated and seemingly confirmed through linguistic methods, are crucial for the discipline. A complex setting of interests surprising topics, like the invention of iron melting, that will be discussed above, can become torn into.

Furthermore scientific funding is limited in most African states and archeological research without foreign funding at time outright impossible. It is difficult for the first and second generation of native African historic scientists to conduct serious research in this surrounding.

Nevertheless has the continent of Africa contributed to important discussions and developments within modern archeology featuring upon others its contribution for the formation of the World archeological Congress (WAC), as well as important input on the concept of early interaction between the ancient population of different parts of the world (see Chami 2007, Chami / Kwekason 2003 a.o.).

4.1.3 Middle East

The Middle East, featuring besides Israel / Palestine as well those highly fertile geographic areas that have given rise to mankind's first cities and civilizations has been a hotspot of the historic sciences ever since the beginning of the discipline. Ever until today foreign archeologists in some places play a more important role for archeology than do local scientists.

Whilst for the young nation of Israel archeology as a mean of confirming its right of existence and building up the nation's identity is as crucial as it is for its counterparts to de-legitimize the very same state it seems the new generation of native Israeli archeologists has started to rehabilitate the discipline and move away from its early use for political reasons. The situation, however remains stiff as long as the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict is far from being solved.

This will, however, be discussed beyond.

As far as the Arabic world, some further east is concerned, the political influence at archeology has shown some of its most destructive moments of the early third millennium with the destruction of antique sites, such as Afghanistan's Bamiyan statues (see Gruen / Remondino 2010), that have been destroyed on purpose in 2001 by Afghanistan's Taliban leadership in order to cleanse the state of non-Muslim remains.



Ill. 9: Destruction of the Bamiyan statues (photo: CNN 2001)

The wars of the last decades have done their share in destroying precious among the region's vast number of antique remains. Enough, in fact, to bring the topic to the attention of foreign archeologists, who are struggling to find ways to preserve historic sight in the Arabic world and other regions from further destruction. WAC and UNESCO's Organization of the Blue Shield have, for instance, organized an international conference on the topic „archeology in Conflict“ in April 2010 that will, upon others, host panels on protection of cultural sites during conflicts both from the scientific and the military perspective presented by speakers of scientific and military organizations as well.

4.1.4 Far East

It is the question of identity, thus China's ongoing fear of its peoples separatist groups declaring independence, that influences archeology in the the Far East, however mostly unseen by and, overshadowed by graver problems e.g. with human rights issues. China is a ground nearly untouched by foreign archeology. However other then for research on its great sites, such as the terracotta army of Xian, Chinese archeology, even less its prehistory is hardly present on the world stage safe in ancient arts collections.

4.1.5 Australia

Australia has long not been sufficiently recognized as a continent hosting remains applicable for archeological excavations. Foreign interest in remains of the Australian Aborigines remains on a low scale and the culture itself, as it seems, mostly a topic of the tourism industry. Only lately with the rise of critical archeology of colonial backgrounds, alongside with surprising finds suggesting an Oceania and Australian Aboriginal high culture, who's members might have it made all the way to South America has Australian archeology come closer to the focus of International historic attention.

Within Australia however, besides the need of what seems to be an almighty mining industry destroying whole ancient cultural landscapes and archeology conducted in this context, questions of preserving and exploring as opposed to desecrating Aboriginal sites are crucial.

4.1.6 The Americas

The situation in North America is pretty similar. Besides the flowering discipline of historic archeology increasingly linked to the exploration of slavery, the archeology of North Americas native / first nations heritage, other then the arrival of and colonization by European Settlers, has become a topic of political problems. North American Natives / First Nations, shaped by respect-less and rude behavior in the past, regard most attempts to research their sites as an interference and desecration. The preliminary climax of this development have been the NAGPA acts providing US American Native tribes with a powerful set of laws to protect their cultural heritage, thus research has become difficult. Whether this approach is, in the end, beneficial for a peoples struggling to preserve their heritage and traditions, or other ways of collaborations could be found in the future can, however doubtfully, not be a topic of this paper.

The situation in South America can be compared to that in North America, however do Indio tribes lack the social-political influence of their colleagues in North America, therefor Indiana Jones-like raids on rainforest temples and sites happen until today, not rarely focusing rather on the market value of goods found then on their archeological value. Only slowly and with setbacks is the situation in South America improving towards a better preservation and research of Indio heritage.

4.2 Conclusions

4.2.1 Summary of content

This paper has, so far, dealt with a range of examples of the archeology – politics-correlation.

Firstly the scientific question and its implications and limitations, alongside with methodology and some questions of semantic nature have been discussed. Among them the core expressions of this paper: *myth*, *identity* and *constructed history*, upon which especially the term „identity“ prove to be in need of clarification.

However, independent of this semantic issues the scientific question could be summerized as:

„How does the influence of personal and socio-politics show in archeological work and interpretation?“

Subsequent the history of science of the prehistoric sciences in Middle Europe have been discussed next to the author's own upbringing and academic background. The discussion on Middle European prehistoric sciences has, however, been brief and mostly relied on the work of Gabriele Mante (2007) in order to sufficient space for the core examples of this paper.

In short Mante focused on the two subsequent “traumas” of the Middle European prehistoric sciences, posed by the abuse of the discipline for the implementation and scientific “proof” of Nazi ideas and the Marxist dominated state of discipline during the German Democratic Republic. Some comments have also been made concerning the current state of the discipline and its “pale and traditional” (Mante 2007, 238) appearance from the perspective of the more extroverted Anglo-American scientific discipline.

The two major chapters of this paper dealt with archeology and politics in the Middle East and Africa. Two geographic regions chosen for a range of reasons including a well balanced mix of similarities i.e. the struggle for identity and a record of myths and constructed history in science, and difficulties, i.e. the politic development within the 20th century and the current stability and state of the discipline.

Among these Israel was featured on example of the Herodian fortress of Masada, near the Dead Sea, which shows an amazing track record of the coming into existence and fall of constructed history. Nearly unknown until the 1930ies Masada attracted a single man's – Shmaria Guttman's – attention and, within three decades, developed into a national myth and a symbol of the young State of Israel's struggle for survival, not for its archeological and architectural value but for a curious and heroic story of Jewish “rebels” that hid in the abandoned fortress after the failed Jewish revolt against Roman rule from 66-70 CE.

However Masada not only serves as an example for the birth of a myth, but also for its fall. With a new generation of archeologists and an altered political climate, a mere two decades later came a new way to look at Masada that, ultimately, turned heroes into cowards and rebels into murderers. Today, in 2010 the jury is still out on the “true” narrative of Masada and, after all, the fortress may have a more prominent role in the discipline's self-reflection today than in primary historic sciences.

The chapter's second example is only kilometers away: The wealthy Jewish settlement of Ein Gedi at the Dead Sea's shore. Excavated a generation after Masada, during what might be the calmest and most peaceful period of modern Israeli history, the effects of an altered socio-political environment show most prominently on the example of Ein Gedi.

In Ein Gedi a intercultural team of scientists with gravely different academic and personal

backgrounds created, and is still creating a vivid picture of different aspects of Jewish life.

As a matter of fact scientific evidence even points towards a tragic connection of Ein Gedi to Masada, however little effort has yet been made in researching this connection and taking Ein Gedi's findings and fertile academic environment to Masada.

Where Israel's examples showed the archeology-politics-correlation on a big scale, at major excavations featuring large funding and large numbers of participants during scientific surveys in effect for years, the Africa chapter started off with an example on the small scale of archeological surveys: Gavin Lucas' (2006) survey in the Goede Verwachting mine at the Simonsberg near South Africa's Cape Town.

On example of this very recent and rather small-scaled operation, conducted not by a local, but a foreign archeologist, it could be demonstrated that the same mechanisms of unconscious influence of both the choice of topic and its interpretation works, even if there is no obvious major outside pressure to be found.

Lucas, although having no track record in montane archeology, chose to research the Simonsberg since it fit his interest in colonial working environments and, after all, found exactly what he had set out to look for. As interesting as his survey is regarding the topic of colonial labor it is hard to miss that whatever didn't fit Lucas interest was left out and not to any extend considered in his interpretation and scientific work.

Ultimately Late Stone Age (LSA) / Early Iron Working (EIW) archeology in the coast areas of South-Eastern Africa provided another example on a bigger scale. This time, however, the setting wasn't a single archeological operation, but the history of science of a whole geographic area.

Highlighting the development of prehistoric archeology in the Sub-Saharan region from its beginning as a white-powered discipline to today's struggle of local archeologists to develop a self-determined view on prehistory, the example showed how sometimes the influence of socio-politics and altered socio-political surroundings feature right in front of our eyes, if regarded in retrospect. The idea of black incapability of invention perfectly fits its time's political views, as does the black nationalist idea of one people spreading cultural achievements over Sub-Saharan Africa.

Also the example searched to provide an idea of how the archeology-politics correlation turns just as complicated as socio-politics themselves, where there is no black-and-white and indefinite layers of stakeholders involved.

Finally the work of a small group of archeologists centered around Tanzania's University of Dar-es-Salaam's Felix Chami on LSA/EIW archeology alongside the Swahili coast was put forward as a specific example of the current state of the discipline.

The two main chapters of the paper were completed by a short summary on archeology and its most obvious politic influences on the world stage, where both broad tendencies and devastating worst-case-scenarios of the archeology-politics correlation could be shown.

4.2.2 Conclusions

The initial scientific question is, of course, not to be answered in a single sentence. I fact it can probably not be answered by this paper or any other at all. Politics and archeology are as closely interwoven as politics and society itself. After all Webster's online dictionary defines politics as:

"the process observed in all human (and many non-human) group interactions by which groups make decisions, including activism on behalf of specific issues or causes" (politics, Webster's Online dictionary: <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/>)⁶

It thereby is a fair assumption, and has been backed up by this paper's findings, that archeology and politics can never be separated, even though this might not quite be the most comforting idea for a scientific discipline that often struggles to get away from political influence.

What this paper, however did show very clearly and, in many cases, surprisingly prominently, is that political intention, thus political influence on archeology could easily be found at every single example dealt with, and most likely can be found at every random archeological operation of every scope. In the end even in Ein Gedi the intention of proving how Israel's different ethnic, cultural and religious groups, represented by the survey's staff, could get along with each other and produce excellent scientific results severely influenced the way science was conducted and, ultimately the outcome of the operation.

Given that political influence on archeological surveys are existent the "how" aspect of the initial scientific question can be approached, though, not only due to the limited extent of this paper, not be finally answered.

Discussing the above mentioned examples some repeating critical points of politic influence on prehistoric science could be round up:

a) Choice of topic

⁶ This, however, is a rather abstract definition of the term as the older issue of Webster's Dictionary, as well as the German Brockhaus retreat to definitions more closely relating to the term's etymology from Greek *politikē*: the art of state administration.

At any given moment more possible topics of research than possibilities to research topics will be available to any given researcher. Thus, next to the fact that the range of prime ideas of any given researcher is heavily influenced by his interests and the interests of his scientific community and environment, every scientist has to decide on specific scientific topics to dedicate his time to. This, of course, is a mechanism that can be trusted to be in effect at all of the discussed examples. Some scientists, like Lucas (2006) make an effort to make this decision process, and the reason why a certain scientific question was chosen upon the others more transparent, thus visible.

b) Funding, Resources

It is self-understanding that science is mostly dependent on external funding. Both the coming into existence of a scientific expedition or operation and their extent are determined by the resources available.

For instance as regards Masada the extraordinary range of the operations and ultimately the vast effect it had was only possible because of an enormous funding by different groups outside archeology, ranging from foreign Zionist organizations to the very Israeli Armed Forces, who supplied man power to the operations.

Funding will, however, always depend on a scientific topic and a researcher's reputation fitting into an organization's portfolio since funders, as well, always have more operations in need of funding than funds available and will, thus, take decisions.

c) Field operations

Once research has commenced not only will funding determine its scope, but also focus will be set on certain aspects, that are deemed interesting to the leaders of the operation. The extent to which this decision does influence the outcome of the scientific research can best be shown on example of the Simonsberg surveys, where a nearly exclusive focus was put on the working environment of the Goede Verwachting mine workers as compared to its overseer. Other aspects, that might be of interest for different stakeholders were mostly excluded from both the excavation process and the interpretation. Whilst the non-invasive nature of the Simonsberg surveys limited damage to unwanted sources this focus can, as well, lead to the discarding of these finds and will later on be hard to prove.

However prominently this showed on example of Gavin Lucas' Simonsberg operations it can be assumed that the process influenced all of the examples of this paper.

d) Interpretation

The influence of politics on interpretation is both most subliminal and most important. Whilst by means of transparent good scientific practice at least the effects of the above can be minimized awareness is the main key to minimalizing damage done through intentional interpretation. However it lies in the nature of things that most researchers deem their interpretation correct upon all others and, after all, from their point of view it is.

It probably isn't hard to understand how, given what was "proven knowledge" during that time, archeologists came to interpret their findings so they would "prove" black African inability of invention. From a less historic point of view both generations of Masada-scientists dealt with in the Israel chapter show a very clear tendency of politically influenced interpretation.

e) Presentation, Conservation

Lastly another decision is taken when it comes to dividing archeological finds into those worth preserving and presenting to the broad public and those put away in the broom closet. Ein Gedi, for instance, though a major and ongoing scientific operation has so far attracted little public attention for reasons that the author could only speculate on.

In the end it might be mostly up to individual researcher's opinion and (lack of) engagement whether or not a certain site is or isn't presented to the public and to which extent. Take into account for instance the vast differences in temper between "pale" European and "flashy" Anglo-American prehistoric sciences, where this becomes very obvious. This imbalance becomes problematic when, as happening in the 21st century highly globalized world, such different tempers and cultural triggered approaches overlap and the one is overshadowed by the more flashy other.

What strikes the eye with this fields is that all of them are strongly linked to *decisions*. Going along with Webster's definition (see above) politics, after all, is decision-making and the capability to make decisions is probably, what distinguishes the senior scientist from his unskilled workforce. Decisions, though are made basing on knowledge and experience, thus ultimately by a person's life and social surroundings, which can easily be spotted in every single one of the examples taking a look at the time and social context of each scientific operation and each scientist.

As has been hinted above the correlation between the prehistoric sciences and politics most likely cannot be eliminated. And though it is true that “it would be best if [prehistoric sciences] would focus on archeology and not on politics” (Dahari at Laing 2008) politics and their influence on archeology aren't to be completely dismissed either.

Understanding the critical points of prehistoric scientific work when it comes to politic influence might not pose the ultimate answer to the question and problem of the politic-archeology correlation, but it certainly does point future researchers into a direction and offers specific areas to look at since ultimately the archeology-politics correlation is an area of interest for both scientists interested in the mechanisms for scientific reason and field archeologists as knowledge may prove to be the path to minimizing damage through awareness, probably even understanding and reflection of both the researcher's own decisions and the decisions that were taken by other scientists and, thus, reflect in their academic work during all stages.

4.2.3 Further Scientific Questions

As far as the prospect for further research on the topic go there are plenty of opportunities. This paper's approach was one of rather random, i.e. chosen due to the author's areas of knowledge and interest, archeological sites to serve as examples. Thus, obviously, further more specific surveys, for instance on a number of comparable sites within one cultural region or even within a given time frame in the past could shed further light on the mechanisms of political influence on archeology for specific times and / or regions.

Also every single one of the above listed aspects could easily fill volumes of academic papers and discussion, as would theoretical approaches on reducing damage. These areas of academic research, in the end, probably call for a interdisciplinary approach rather than a merely archeological one.



Ill. 10: Invitation flyer for the 2009 WAC Inter-Congress in Ramallah, that triggered intense discussions on the archeology-politics correlation (WAC)

At least on an experiment-of-thought basis a paper on the meta-level, researching the way different researchers deal with researching political influence on archeology from their different points of views could prove to be interesting as, of course, this paper as well is full of decisions, thus full of politic influence, as will every other approach imaginable be.

A question that might prove to be especially interesting to a discipline like archeology might also be the comparison to other historic or even natural-scientific – disciplines. Unfortunately it could not be researched in this paper whether or not it is the often very subjective nature of the discipline with little concluding, absolute truth that makes it especially vulnerable to politic pressure and interference or whether or not the impression of an above-average vulnerability of the discipline does sustain scientific, probably even statistic revision.

Thus research on archeology and politics might ultimately even benefit other scientific disciplines and help understand the way scientific decisions are taken and are influencing our world that is gravely shaped by science and its way of (seemingly) reasonable thinking.

4.2.4 Summary of Conclusions

Archeology and politics are not to be disjoined since political thinking is undetachably connected to decision making that, in fact, is a crucial part of science, thus affects archeological field work as well as theoretical or interpretation work, as has been shown below.

Political decisions influence every archeological operation, no matter what its size, stakeholders or location, both in time and space and they do so on various occasions during the research process, starting with the choice of topic, place and members of team, via funding, during archeological field work or survey to interpretation of finds and, ultimately, go on to influence the way and extent to which a certain site or topic is preserved and presented to the broad topic.

However little of this happens on intention and probably even less to the scientist's awareness. Whilst the establishment of proper academic codes of conduct has, without a doubt, reduced the impact of politically influenced, thus subjective decisions within the research process, chances are they cannot ultimately be prevented. Awareness, by both scientists and (academic) recipients of academic work might well prove to be the key to minimizing damage as far as possible.

The field, whatsoever, offers broad opportunities for further research, not merely by archeologists, but as well by other disciplines or as interdisciplinary projects since the problematic of the politics-archeology correlation, as well as the correlation between politics and any other science, are of high interest for a society closely affiliated to academic ideas of reasonable thinking.

In the meantime the jury is still out to investigate whether or not a scientific discipline like archeology that has to relay big deal on subjective interpretation and, probably apart from some antiquarian methodology, lacks the ability to come to absolute, unquestionable Boolean answers⁷ is vulnerable to political influence upon average.

4.2.5 Final Summary

Four major examples of political influence on archeological field and interpretation work have been dealt with in this paper in order to answer one initial scientific question: „*How does the influence of personal and socio-politics show in archeological work and interpretation?*”

Within a time frame of nearly a century and on two different continents featuring a post-colonial environment in desperate search for identity, political influence on archeology could easily be found:

Flavius Josephus' rebel' narrative at the Herodian fortress of Masada was turned into a myth of a brave last stand through a single man's quest for his own identity whose enthusiasm influenced a well-reputed senior archeologist into a major excavation operation in order to confirm a myth that seemed immortal. However a mere two decades later the political climate had severely changed and produced a new generation of archeologists who disassembled the myth of bravery to a story of fear and cowardice. Within three decades one site and the material unearthed during one set of excavation seasons had produced two completely different narratives.

Just a stone's throw away another team of archeologists set out to research the Jewish Settlement of Ein Gedi and although their excavations and surveys provided everything the politically sensitive researcher could wish for – and produced an amazingly vivid picture of the village – still their research was influenced by politics, namely the positive politic climate of hope and peace that dominated the epoch.

The second set of examples, one historic and one prehistoric, showed the same mechanisms but also provided an insight into how even one-man-expeditions with minimal need for funding and/or public support were subject to influence of the researcher's political view. Which is especially interesting given that the researcher, Gavin Lucas, identified himself as politically aware and made an effort of informing the recipient of his background, thus possible influence of his work. If awareness is the key to coping with political influence in archeology the example made it clear that awareness needs to come from both sides – the author's and the reader's.

⁷ See Oscar Montelius' (1896, 155ff.) remarks on the establishment of absolute chronology from relative chronology in which he states very clearly the rising probability of archeological theorie, however is very aware of the fact that absolute plausability can never be reached with archeological methods.

This paper's final example put a spotlight on politics on a big temporal and local scale, dealing with a whole region's history of science. Looking at politic influence in the past made it very easy to spot and, at the same time, very simple to put in a context of contemporary political ideas and how this researcher's theories seemed to be logical by that time's standards. Finally a very contemporary approach on regional archeology by a small group of committed scientists was introduced where, apart from the paper's theoretical ideas, the complicated and tedious process of overcoming constructed history was shown.

As for the answer to the initial scientific question a number of critical moments of archeological work could be found and described. These, in turn, could be identified to be strongly affiliated to decision-making, thus highlighting the nondetachable nature of science and politics:

From the initial decision to research a certain topic or region, via further filtering of these topics by means of (lack of) funding, the actual field work process where in a highly specialized academic environment focal points have to be set, to the very obvious process of interpretation of finds all the way to decisions on the extent of preservation and presentation of certain sites and finds to the public personal politic ideas could be found to influence the archeological research process.

Whilst some of this can be, and in the past have already been, controlled to a certain extent by the introduction of proper academic codes of conduct, archeologists have to be aware that most of these subjective, politically influenced decisions happen out of the scientist's consciousness, as the examples of this paper's main chapters have shown. Thus awareness and self-criticism may, upon the further implementation of modern academic methodology, come to be the key to a minimalization of damage done through political influence.

Therefor, whilst politics aren't to excessively interfere with archeology, just like any other science, further investigation of the archeology-politics-correlation are crucial and there certainly are plenty of scientific questions still out to be answered. Studies of regional and temporally closely connected sites might prove to be just as interesting as interdisciplinary studies or papers comparing the role of politics within archeology to that within other historic or non-historic sciences.

In the end understanding how decisions are made and influenced should be of interest for everybody living in a society that is as gravely influenced by the scientific understanding of reason and reasonable thinking as is the one we are living in.

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Appendix:

I. List of Images

III. 1: Tel Shilo excavations with modern settlement of Shilo in background (M. Pfaffl 2007).....	19
III. 2: Masada overlooking the Dead Sea as seen from the Judean Desert. (M. Pfaffl).....	21
III. 3: "Masada shall not fall again" T-Shirt as found at zahal-webshop (http://www.zahal.org/tshirts/p31.htm , 02-2009).....	30
III. 4: The area of Ein Gedi as seen from Kibbuz Ein Gedi (Pfaffl 2007).....	35
III. 5: The Simonsberg upper mine (M. Pfaffl after Lucas 2006, 46).....	55
III. 6: Castle Gate of Cape Town Castle (photo C. Comoli 2008).....	57
III. 7: Neolithic sites in the Swahili Coast area (edited by M. Pfaffl; Chami/Kwekason 2003, 67/Fig. 1).....	69
III. 8: Felix Chami (Chami 2002).....	70
III. 9: Destruction of the Bamiyan statues (photo: CNN 2001).....	83
III. 10: Invitation flyer for the 2009 WAC Inter-Congress in Ramallah, that triggered intense discussions on the archeology-politics correlation (WAC).....	90

II. Curriculum Vitae

|| UNIVERSITY ||

- 10-2007 – 10-2010 Mag. Phil. Prehistory, University of Vienna (Austria)
Thesis: *Archeology and Politics. Myth, Identity and Constructed History concerning archaeological sites in Europe, Middle East and Africa*
- 04-2005 – 03-2007 Pre- and Early Historic Archeology, German, Communication Sciences, Arabic, University of Bamberg (Germany)

|| EXCAVATIONS & CONFERENCES||

- 04-2010 Paper Narratives of Bravery and Fear. The Masada Myth at Conference "Archaeology in Conflict", Vienna (Austria)
- 07-2009 – 08-2009 Linz/Schlossberg (Austria), University of Vienna
- 08-2006 – 10-2006 Linz/Promenade, Linz/Pfarrplatz a.o. (Austria), Federal Historic Preservation Agency
- 07-2005 – 08-2005 Motzenstein (Germany), University of Bamberg

|| SCHOOL ||

- 2002 – 2005 BG/BRG für Berufstätige, High School Linz (Austria)
- 2000 – 2002 BORG, High School (Computer Sciences) Linz (Austria)
- 1992 – 2000 Elementary School / Secondary Modern School Hart (Austria)

|| WORK EXPERIENCE ||

- 08-2009 – 12-2009 Tutor, "alternativ lehren und lernen" Magdeburg (Germany)
- 02 – 06-2009 Internship occupational safety, K+S Kali GmbH.(Germany)
- 04 – 08-2007 Internship as a program manager at Austrian Embassy, Tel Aviv (Israel)
- 01-2004 – 12-2008 Journalist/Editor, "plebs" / "netzmagazin." / „nahaufnahmen.“ (Swiss)
- 08 – 10-2006 Archaeologist, Federal Historic Preservation Agency, Linz (Austria)
- 05-2006 – 03-2007 Trustee's assistant, Bumiller Collection of Early Islamic Art, Bamberg (Germany)
- 2003 – 2005 / 2007 – 2009 Tutor, „Perfect Learning“, Linz (Austria)

|| ADDITIONALS ||

- 08-2009 – 12-2009 family partnership, Stiftung Netzwerk Leben, Magdeburg (Germany)
- 05-2007 – 08-2007 local liaison, Alpine Peace Crossing, Tel Aviv (Israel) / Vienna (Austria)
- 03-2006 – 03-2007 People Development Team, AIESEC, Bamberg (Germany)
- 03-2005 – 09-2005 support of psychologically challenged people, OASE, Bamberg (Germany)

III. Abstract

Archeology and politics nowadays seem to be inseparably interconnected which led to the paper's scientific question of how politics do influence archeological work.

Whilst, because of the European origin of the author, Europe and European history of science had to be used as framework, which mostly was done through reception of a major paper by German archeologist Gabriele Mante, the paper at hand deals with the archeology-politics correlation on example of sites in Middle East and Africa.

The Middle East very prominently features the coming into existence and fall of myths and the extend to which archeology can, in fact, influence whole societies and nations, by example of the Herodian fortress of Masada near the Dead Sea. Two subsequent generations of Israeli archeologist's research is examined to show the connection between both scientist's, very different approaches on Flavius Josephus' „sicarii“-narrative and the researcher's socio-political environment. Ultimately it could be shown that within less then half a century the fortress and its finds featured powerful narratives of both bravery and fear.

A stone's throw away from Masada another site, the ancient Jewish village of Ein Gedi, excavated during what might have been the most calm and hopeful period of modern Israeli history, confirms the tight relationship between archeology and politics. Researched by a multi-cultural and multi-ethical team Ein Gedi in fact produces an amazingly vivid picture of a thriving Jewish village, however even at a site as exemplary as Ein Gedi politics did sure have an influence on archeology and promoted the establishment of an Ein Gedi narrative of repeated wealth and good relations with its neighbors.

The second set of examples is hosted by the geographic area of sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst the sample of Gavin Lucas' survey of the South African Simonsberg mines, deals with the archeology-politics-correlation on a micro scale – a one-man survey conducted within a few days of time as a part of a bigger research project – it still shows very prominently the influence Lucas' political environment had on his research, which is of even more interest, given that how he paid attention on politic influence.

Lastly history of science and contemporary archeological development in sub-Saharan African migration archeology show the macro scale of politics in archeology, highlighting an environment in which the correlation between that time's political and social climate and contemporary archeological theories is easy to spot. It also hints on the levels of complication mirroring the complexity of society itself within which politic happens in archeology and other historic sciences.

Due to the examples dealt with a list of critical points of archeological research can be compiled that tracks political influence in archeology from the very decision on a topic of research, via the process of funding to the very field work, interpretation and, ultimately to the decision on the extent of preservation and presentation of a certain site to the public.

In short: politics could be found to influence archeological research in every instance decisions are been taken and, as decisions are crucial for scientific cognition, it is, thus inextricably interconnected to the archeological research process.

Whilst the proper implementation of academic research methods can limit the impact of political influence, awareness, both on the author's and recipient's side also does play a major role. The topic, after all, is of interest not only for the, maybe especially vulnerable, historic sciences but for the whole of a society gravely shaped by the scientific way of establishment of the truth.

IV. Abstract (German)

Archäologie und Politik scheinen heutzutage untrennbar miteinander verbunden zu sein, wodurch sich die Forschungsfrage nämlich, auf welche Art Politik archäologisches Arbeiten beeinflusst, nahezu aufdrängt.

Während durch die Europäische Herkunft der Autorin Europa und die Europäische Forschungsgeschichte als Rahmen verwendet werden müssen, was vor Allem durch die Betrachtung einer Forschungsarbeit der Deutschen Archäologin Gabriele Mante geschieht, beschäftigt sich die vorliegende Arbeit vor Allem anhand von Beispielen aus dem Nahen Osten und Afrika mit der Korrelation zwischen Archäologie und Politik.

Der Nahe Osten zeigt die Entstehung und Zerstörung von Mythen und das Ausmaß, in dem Archäologie ganze Nationen beeinflussen kann, am Beispiel der Herodianischen Festung Masada nahe dem Toten Meer. Die Forschungstätigkeit zweier aufeinanderfolgender Generationen israelischer Archäologen zeigt den Zusammenhang der sehr verschiedenen Interpretationen mit dem sozio-politischen Umfeld der Forscher. Schlussendlich zeigt sich, dass die Festung und ihre Funde innerhalb weniger als eines halben Jahrhunderts zum Hintergrund bedeutender Mythen über sowohl Mut als auch Angst wurden.

Nur einen Steinwurf entfernt von Masada bestätigt ein weiterer Fundort, das antike Jüdische Dorf Ein Gedi die engen Verbindungen zwischen Archäologie und Politik. Das während der womöglich ruhigsten Periode moderner israelischer Geschichte von einem multikulturellen und ethnisch vielfältigen Team erforschte Dorf brachte tatsächlich ein erstaunlich facettenreiches Bild des täglichen Lebens hervor. Es zeigt sich jedoch, dass selbst hier das politische Klima der Zeit die Forschung beeinflusst und die Vorstellung eines Dorfes mit guten Beziehungen zu seinen Nachbarn begünstigt.

Die zweite Gruppe von Beispielen befasst sich mit der geographischen Gegend Afrikas südlich der Sahara. Während das Beispiel von Gavin Lucas Untersuchungen des Bergwerks am Südafrikanischen Simonsberg Archäologie und Politik im kleinen Maßstab, nämlich dem einer ein-Mann-Untersuchung als Teil, die an nur wenigen Tagen erfolgte, behandelt, zeigt es dennoch den Einfluss von Lucas politischem Umfeld sehr klar. Dies ist besonders interessant, bedenkt man Lucas offen ausgesprochenes Bewusstsein für die Thematik.

Schlussendlich zeigen Forschungsgeschichte und aktuelle Entwicklung der Migrationsarchäologie in Afrika südlich der Sahara Archäologie und Politik im großen Maßstab. Nicht nur ist hier die Verbindung der jeweiligen Zeit und ihrem politischen und sozialen Umfeld mit zeitgleichen archäologischen Theorien sehr einleuchtend, sondern es zeigt sich auch die Vielschichtigkeit der Thematik, die jener ihrer Ursprungsgesellschaft entspricht.

Durch die behandelten Beispiele kann eine Liste kritischer Phasen in der archäologischen Arbeit erstellt werden, die politischen Einfluss von der ersten Entscheidung für ein Forschungsthema, über die Beschaffung von Mitteln, der archäologischen Feldarbeit selbst und der Interpretation, bis hin zur Entscheidung über das Ausmaß von Konservierung und Ausstellung dokumentiert.

Kurz gesagt: Politik beeinflusst Archäologie, wann immer Entscheidungen getroffen werden und, da Entscheidungen bestimmend für die wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisfindung sind, zeigt sich hier die prinzipielle Untrennbarkeit von Politik und Archäologie.

Während die Anwendung moderner wissenschaftlicher Methoden den Schaden politischer Einflussnahme minimieren kann, stellt sich auch Bewusstseinsbildung, sowohl bei Autoren als auch Rezipienten, als entscheidend heraus. Die Thematik politischer Einflussnahme in der Forschung ist, schlussendlich, nicht nur für die historischen Wissenschaften, die möglicherweise besonders anfällig für politischen Einfluss sind interessant, sondern für unsere gesamte stark von wissenschaftlichen Methoden der Wahrheitsfindung geprägte Gesellschaft.