

**CLAIMING VALHALLA:  
ARCHAEOLOGY, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND THE GERMAN-DANISH  
BORDERLAND, 1830-1950**

by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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Claiming Valhalla: Archaeology, National Identity, and the German-Danish Borderland,  
1830-1950

(Under the direction of Konrad H. Jarausch)

This dissertation traces the emergence of an academic community of archaeologists in the contested German-Danish borderland of Schleswig-Holstein from 1830 to 1950 in order to explore the uses of the distant past for creating modern national identities. The study considers the role of professional scholars in claiming and contesting shared heritages for diverging nationalist ends and explains how scholars handled the paradox of participating in nation-building projects while maintaining their commitments as members of a transnational scholarly community. The study begins in the 1830s with the founding of the Kiel Museum of Antiquities, which was the product of collaboration between German and Danish antiquarians. It then follows the work of antiquarian scholars in the period of the German-Danish Wars from 1848 to 1864, when prehistory became a focal point of claims to territory and led antiquarians to contest the ownership of artifacts such as the Nydam Boat and the Flensburg Collection. In the wake of the wars, the work of scholars such as Johanna Mestorf and Sophus Müller led to a renewal of cross-border collaboration, which resulted in the discovery of the lost Viking trading town of Haithabu and aided the development of a scientific model for the practice of archaeology. The success of research in both countries fostered the production of narratives of prehistory based on scientific methods but tied to national histories. Archaeologists such as Gustaf Kossinna envisioned the borderland as the site of the earliest Germanic peoples and the starting point of Germanic prehistory. The result was a “Nordic paradigm” for prehistoric development with strong racial and imperialist overtones that coexisted with traditional

scientific approaches. The dissertation traces the transformation of such thinking in Schleswig-Holstein during the early twentieth century and considers its political implications in the Nazi Era, when the transnational context played a key role in the engagement of borderland scholars with the Third Reich. The study concludes with an appraisal of the fate of nationalist orientations for German and Danish archaeology and the impact of borderland archaeologists on their discipline and their respective national communities.

To my wife, Christine, whose love and support made the years completing this project  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 COLLABORATIVE SCHOLARSHIP AND CONTESTED PASTS The Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and the Founding of the Kiel Museum, 1830-1845.....	23
CHAPTER 2 “WHEN THE GERMANS RAN WILD IN DENMARK”: The Nationalization of Prehistory and the German- Danish Wars, 1845-1865.....	58
CHAPTER 3 “A REDISCOVERED CITY”: Professionalization and Reconciliation in the Late Nineteenth Century.....	102
CHAPTER 4 FORGING THE NORDIC PARADIGM: Volkish Ideology, Positivist Science, and Prehistoric Origins.....	136
CHAPTER 5 BETWEEN HEROES AND <i>HEIMAT</i> : Borderland Archaeology and the Popular Imagination in the Interwar Period.....	181
CHAPTER 6 FROM COOPERATION TO COMPLICITY: Borderland Archaeologists in the Third Reich and World War II.....	221
CONCLUSION.....	265
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	290

## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Alte Akten
Abt.	Abteilung
Afd.	Afdeling
AFS	Akten zur Flensburger Sammlung
ALM	Schleswig-Holsteinisches Archäologisches Landesmuseum
BA	Bundesarchiv
DAG	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte
DAI	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
HU	Archiv der Humboldt-Universität
KA	Korrepondence Arkiv
KM	Akten zur Kiel Museum Sammlung
MuG	Museumsgeschichte Archiv
NM	Nationalmuseet
Reg-Akt	Registratur-Akten
RGK	Römisch-Germanisch Kommission
SHLA	Schleswig-Holstein Landesarchiv
SHLB	Schleswig-Holstein Landesbibliothek
SHLG	<i>Bericht der Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgischen Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländischer Alterthümer</i>

## INTRODUCTION

A few kilometers west of the German town of Schleswig, not far from the border with Denmark, stand the remains of the Danewall, an ancient defensive barrier and one of the great showpieces of late Northern European antiquity. The site, which has long symbolized centuries of acrimonious border relations between Germans and Danes, now evokes a spirit of cooperation with a bilingual museum adorned with German and Danish flags.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite its fame as the largest set of ancient fortifications in Northern Europe, the site often leaves foreign visitors with a profound sense of anticlimax. The Danewall, they quickly discover, is little more than a line of short, grassy, weathered hills. Once the bane of invading armies, this erstwhile bulwark fails now even to measure up to the earthen mounds supporting the nearby highway overpass. Indeed, only a small patch of bricks slipping from beneath the blanket of earth lends assurance that this is not simply another inconspicuous protuberance in the rural landscape.

Such is the prehistory of northern Europe. There are no circuses or colosseums here, no ancient cities of stone with markets and forums, and no temples with columns and magnificent friezes. Ubiquitous but unassuming, the walls and mounds that mark the remains of antiquity in this region suggest themselves only gingerly. Yet in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these sites and the artifacts buried beneath them acquired new significance. They became objects of scholarship, idealized cornerstones of the eternal nation-state, devices for the rhetoric of cultural distinctiveness, and justifications for territorial conquest. Above all, prehistory in this region became the subject of an intense intellectual project that sought to appropriate the past for “national” histories, which ultimately led modern identities to intersect and come into conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Jørgen Kühl, “Danevirke mellem oldtid og nutid,” *Danevirkegårdens museumspædagogiske tekster* 1 (May 1991), 2.





The Danewall at Waldesmar's Wall. J. Laurence Hare.

This dissertation is a study of this powerful and complex set of relationships between modern identities and northern European antiquity in the borderland of Schleswig-Holstein during the last two centuries. It traces the network of scholars, both antiquarian enthusiasts and professional archaeologists, who played such an important role in shaping and negotiating visions of the distant past and thereby informed constructions of national identity. Specifically, it examines the ways in which these scholars collaborated and competed to discover and interpret regional antiquities, how they made them available for consumption by their respective national publics, and the degree to which they brought their scholarship into the service of nationalist projects. Ultimately, it explores how and why the two bordering nation-states of Germany and Denmark claimed and contested common heritages for diverging nationalist ends.

Although this study treats the development of archaeology in a primarily regional context, its underlying focus lies with the broader concepts of nation, nationalism, and identity. In this case, the exploration of the relationship between the distant past and national identity in Schleswig-Holstein offers a way into larger questions about the ways

in which visions of nation interact across borders. Answering these questions thus warrants a decidedly *transnational* approach that moves beyond a traditional comparative history of two national case studies.<sup>2</sup> In this dissertation, the transnational dimension is reflected both in the selection of geographic space; i.e. the German-Danish borderland, and in the emphasis on a cross-border scholarly network.<sup>3</sup> Together, these two foci illuminate processes of cultural and intellectual transfer operating at once on individual, regional, and national levels.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the dissertation's central theme, the discovery of a part of antiquity variously labeled as "Germanic," "Nordic," "Teutonic," and even "Aryan,"<sup>5</sup> is one whose transnational dimension is often overlooked in modern historiography. Far from being limited to Central Europe as a hallmark of a German cultural and intellectual *Sonderweg*,<sup>6</sup> the idea of "Germanic" prehistory was also deeply embedded in national cultures in other parts of Europe, in particular Britain and Scandinavia.<sup>7</sup> A proper understanding of this phenomenon thus demands a perspective transcending one national case.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Heinz Gerhard-Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, "Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems," in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective*, ed. Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 31.

<sup>3</sup> On academic exchanges as transnational history, see Christophe Charle, Jürgen Schriewer, and Peter Wagner, eds., *Transnational Intellectual Networks: Forms of Academic Knowledge and the Search for Cultural Identities*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> This description follows a model for transfer history presented in Bernd Kortländer, "Begrenzung - Entgrenzung: Kultur- und Wissenschaftstransfer in Europa," in *National Grenzen und internationaler Austausch. Studien zur Kultur- und Wissenschaftstransfer in Europa*, ed. Lothar Jordan and Bernd Kortländer, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), 3-8.

<sup>5</sup> There was a great deal of flexibility in these terms, with "Germanic" and "Teutonic" generally following linguistic criteria and "Nordic" applying both to ancient groups inhabiting the territories of modern Scandinavia and in the twentieth century to a specific racial category (see Chapter 5). Even in the mid-twentieth century, however, they continued to be somewhat interchangeable. See Paul Kluge, "Nationalsozialistische Europaideologie," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (July, 1955), 240-75.

<sup>6</sup> See among others, George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: The Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964); Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); and Klaus von See, *Deutsche Germanen-Ideologie. Von Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Maike Oergel, "The redeeming Teuton: Nineteenth-Century Notions of the 'Germanic' in England and Germany," in *Imagining Nations*, ed. Geoffrey Cubitt, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 75-6.

Across northern and western Europe, the fascination with northern prehistory stemmed in part from a need for self-definition arising at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As Germans and Danes in particular grappled with the consequences of the French Revolution and struggled either for or against the armies of Napoleon, they began to entertain questions about the shape and character of their respective nations. What and where is the nation? When and how did it first come into existence? In search of answers, they emphasized first and foremost criteria highly visible in the present, such as common languages and sets of cultural practice. At the same time, however, they sought guidance from the distant past in the prehistoric remains beneath their feet, finding not a lost civilization, but rather a lost period of their own histories. The ancient sites and artifacts they uncovered not only provided tangible links to this remote past, but also heightened the mysterious quality of the world in which their ancestors had lived. By themselves, the artifacts could not fully illuminate the darkness surrounding ancient times, but they could provide just enough of a glimmer to fire the imagination of nineteenth-century thinkers and philosophers, who saw them at times as the cherished reminders of the legendary figures from the ancient sagas. Such visions helped transform northern antiquity into, among other things, a key theme in the philosophy of Grundtvig, a motif in the operas of Wagner, and the subject of the art of Lundbye and Freund. Lying beyond the eyes of history, it allowed modern nationalist thinkers to blur the lines between myth and reality and to conjure Romantic visions of ancient heroes and brave deeds. Northern antiquity suggested to them a Valhalla lost and calling to be regained through the realization of the modern nation-state.

After the 1830s, cohorts of aristocratic and middle-class dilettante collectors were joined by an emerging discipline of archaeology dedicated to a comprehensive understanding of the past. Archaeology eventually dominated the investigation and interpretation of artifacts and inherited the controversies that eventually surrounded them. It was a discipline practiced by middle-class professionals and experts who spent long days in the heat with spade in hand, carefully wresting the secrets of the past from the

earth. They were discoverers and preservers. They were teachers and storytellers. And, ultimately, they were nation builders and agents in the creation of identities.

Such projections onto prehistory, however, even as they reinforced conceptions of nation, were inevitably fraught with difficulty, since the ancient communities did not conform to modern political geographies. Above all, it was in border regions like Schleswig-Holstein where the national or ethnic categories defining archaeology began to unravel, and where archaeologists were forced to make choices that altered the way the past informed the present. The German-Danish border, in particular, changed frequently in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which challenged overt ascriptions of symbolic value for many ancient remains. The Danewall, for example, changed hands twice in the nineteenth century, finally becoming German territory after 1864. Even so, it remained a powerful symbol for both Germans and Danes, underscoring the larger dilemma facing scholars, which was how to reconcile a cooperative pursuit of knowledge about the past with participation in exclusive nationalist projects.

### **Archaeology and the Nation**

In the early nineteenth century, Jacob Grimm recognized a link between his discipline of philology (*Sprachwissenschaft*) and the emerging national consciousness. “Because I learned,” he wrote, “that its language, its law, and its past had been placed far too low, I wanted to lift up my Fatherland.”<sup>8</sup> His maxim became a rallying cry for succeeding generations of scholars who saw it as their duty to make Germans aware of their heritage and nationhood. Moreover, it highlights what modern historiography has only begun to acknowledge since the 1980’s, that not only is the past a critical component of national identity, but also that intellectuals and academics are instrumental in cultivating such components within the national consciousness. All nations, of course, have a history of some kind, but it is the idea of a distant past that raises some especially interesting questions about national origins. Are nations “organic” entities with discernible ethnic

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte. Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, (Leipzig: C. Kabitzsch, 1911), 237.

origins stretching back hundreds or thousands of years? Or are they mainly "voluntary" communities firmly grounded in the present, with any notion of prehistoric roots merely a fantasy?<sup>9</sup> In other words, does the past represent an earlier form of the national community, or is it a clever disguise designed to dress a modern construct in ancient garb? While scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have argued for the artificial nature of so-called ancient traditions,<sup>10</sup> others, most notably John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith, have emphasized that national identities must necessarily rest on some form of pre-existing ethnic or cultural consciousness with a belief in a shared past as an indispensable dimension.<sup>11</sup> "A sense of common history," Smith explains, "unites successive generations, each with its set of experiences which are added to the common stock, and it also defines a population in terms of experienced temporal sequences, which conveys to later generations the historicity of their own experiences."<sup>12</sup>

Seeking a way beyond these dichotomies, a number of recent studies have begun to argue that debates over the civic or ethnic nature of nation-states and the modernist or pre-modernist origins of nations are less helpful in understanding the nature of a concept that has such a complex set of variables and exceptions. In the German case, for example, Dietmar Schirmer has shown that it is no longer possible to see Germany as a pure example of a nation founded on an ethnic model. Rather, according to Schirmer, ethnic considerations operated alongside ideas of political citizenship to determine in sometimes unexpected ways who belonged to the nation and who was an outsider.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, purely civic understandings of the nation have also come under attack. As Gregory Jusdanis has pointed out:

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<sup>9</sup> See especially Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 6-20.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982),

<sup>12</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Dietmar Schirmer, "Closing the Nation: Nationalism and Statism in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany," in Godfrey and Unger, *The Shifting Foundations of Modern Nation-States*, 35-58.

The debate over civic or ethnic nationalism, political or cultural nations is pointless because *all nationalism takes on a cultural dimension*. This does not mean that nationalism is strictly a xenophobic, inward-looking, racist discourse, preoccupied with ethnic inclusivity. Rather, it suggests that issues of national identity, literature, tradition, language have served as stimulants in the construction of even the most quintessentially political nations.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, the search for a common ancient past as an anchor for the nation suggests a belief in a community based on something more essential than a mere political community rooted solely in the present.

As an alternative to ethnic or civic labels, a number of scholars have instead begun to subscribe to an idea of "cultural nationalism," which emphasizes the ways in which the concept of the nation is experienced in everyday life and in which the people of a nation define themselves in terms of a unique public culture.<sup>15</sup> This theory posits itself against the idea of "political nationalism" in that it comes "from below" rather than from the state or from isolated intellectuals and demands a sense of uniqueness *vis-à-vis* other national groups rather than other nation-states.<sup>16</sup> It is useful because it allows us to redirect our focus from the elite groups normally associated with nationalist movements to other cultural producers. Moreover, a cultural nationalist approach claims that a national history is important because it legitimizes the nation and gives it purpose by adding a temporal dimension. Such histories can suggest both where the nation has been and where it is going. "The nationalist historians . . . " explains John Hutchinson, "are no mere scholars but rather 'myth-making' intellectuals who combine a 'romantic' search for meaning with a scientific zeal to establish this on authoritative foundations."<sup>17</sup> I would argue that the archaeologists in this study fit into this cultural-nationalist model not necessarily as "nationalist intellectuals" dedicated to a conscious project of nation-

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<sup>14</sup> Gregory Jusdanis, *The Necessary Nation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 162. Emphasis in original.

<sup>15</sup> Notable works include John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987); and Jyoti Puri, *Encountering Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Hutchinson, John, "Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration," in *Nationalism*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 122-23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

building, but nevertheless as actors shaping the distinct culture of the nation through their work with the past. Above all, their role was to create a sense of temporal depth and provide a credible and organic foundation on which to base the “eternal” nation.

While the task of creating a national prehistory thus seems to support the the core view of the modernist position, that modern nations represent a new form of community, it also suggests that prospective national identities succeed only insofar as they resonate with their members. As Smith rightly reminds us, there is a deep emotional attachment to nations that is greater than any strictly artificial construction can engender.<sup>18</sup> Only through integration with pre-existing identities can nations become accepted as legitimate communities. Moreover, I would add that histories of nations must be congruent with existing cultural memory structures. In other words, they must appeal to symbols and episodes to which the members of the community can feel some prior connection. Smith, however, tends to see the underlying cultural or ethnic group as a closed, holistic system, whose values and set of meanings operate as what he calls a cohesive “myth-symbol complex.” I find this somewhat overstated, and would argue instead that these groups before the advent of nationalism are beset by internal tensions and ambiguities. Indeed, this is what made defining the German and Danish nations so difficult, because internally they faced confessional, dynastic, regional, and linguistic cleavages, and externally shared borders which obscured a number of cultural, and, as the dissertation will show, historical commonalities. These factors precluded a unified culture for both countries, which is why it is important to study how national identities are shaped by neighboring identities, where mutual affinities may be just as influential as key differences.

In many ways, however, the quest to rediscover and reconstruct the past was an attempt to provide such elusive distinction for Germany and Denmark. The archaeologists at the center of this project were part of an ongoing trend by intellectuals and scholars to divine an authentic and pure German or Danish history as the core of a national identity. They were important both in transmitting historical narratives and in

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<sup>18</sup> On the modernist position, see for example Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). Gellner represents the leading voice for structuralist interpretations of modern national construction. He argues that nations emerge from the needs of industrialization, which fosters an artificial community as a means of providing a stable, differentiated workforce.

affirming specific narrative orientations. Archaeologists and prehistorians were especially privileged in this regard because they investigated a subject whose firm contours had long since eroded into doubt and conjecture. At the same time, their scholarly credibility remained intact by virtue of their scientific approach and systematic methodology. They provided both tangibility and malleability to national identity first because they recovered artifacts and sites with an immediate symbolic power absent in textual history and second because their evidence lent them a great deal of flexibility to create credible national narratives.

Mindful of this condition, archaeologists in the last few decades have begun to question their own scientific objectivity and have produced a growing literature on the connections between their field and the social and cultural contexts in which they operate. Most significant among those first seeking to uncover these patterns of influence was Bruce Trigger, whose work in the early 1980s described the impact of such modern ideological trends as nationalism and imperialism in the interpretation of archaeological material.<sup>19</sup> Later studies have since recognized the existence of distinct archaeological traditions corresponding to group identities, which, according to Philip Kohl, “characteristically coincide with nation-states.”<sup>20</sup> Kohl has also shown that such practices can exist in states, such as the Soviet Union, in which an *ethnos* rather than the nation is the primary guiding principle.<sup>21</sup> In other words, national or ethno-cultural identities have been powerful lenses through which scholars have viewed and understood archaeology. Kohl has suggested that this may in part stem from the strong ties between institutionalized scholarship and the state, which can influence the final interpretations of archaeologists eager to please state patrons and secure continued support for research. German archaeologists such as Ulrich Veit have replied by cautioning against reducing

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<sup>19</sup> Bruce Trigger, “Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist,” *Man* 19/3 (Sept. 1984), 355-70; idem., *A History of Archaeological Thought*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> Philip L. Kohl, “Nationalism and Archaeology: On the Construction of Nations and the Reconstruction of the Remote Past,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998), 226.

<sup>21</sup> Idem., “National and International Influences in Archaeology, 19th Century Beginnings to Post-Processual Ponderings,” Paper presented at the International Colloquium, “National Scholarship and Transnational Experience: Politics, Identity, and Objectivity in the Humanities and Social Sciences,” Chapel Hill, NC, 2006.



the connections between archaeology and nationalism to a one-to-one correlation, but have nevertheless agreed that the potential influence is strong enough to merit further study.<sup>22</sup>

Kohl's revelation has thus fueled the tendency in the last ten years to study these independent traditions in their national contexts.<sup>23</sup> In Scandinavia, for example, Barbara Scott has convincingly shown how the developing field of archaeology played an integral role in the formation of a distinct Norwegian national identity.<sup>24</sup> Jon-Karl Helgasson, meanwhile, has highlighted the role of linguistic artifacts by tracing the use of *Njal's Saga* in Northern Europe to reveal how translation became a medium for claiming ancient myths as national possessions.<sup>25</sup> In Denmark, Stine Wiell has conducted extensive studies of the rise of Danish archaeology, including two monographs treating the controversies surrounding archaeology in the German-Danish borderland. In her first book, she offers a micro-historical account of the Museum for Nordic Antiquities in Flensburg.<sup>26</sup> The second account deals with the so-called "struggle for antiquity" between Germans and Danes during the German-Danish War in 1864.<sup>27</sup>

Wiell's studies show exhaustive research, but are limited on a number of levels. First, Wiell's work treats relatively short periods of time and deals only with specific episodes in what was a much longer period of interaction between Germans and Danes. Secondly, her work is concerned primarily with the impact of these conflicts on the practice of archaeology in the region. While this is certainly an important project, I propose to examine the archaeological community in northern Germany and southern Denmark over

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<sup>22</sup> Ulrich Veit, "Gustaf Kossinna and His Concept of National Archaeology," in *Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience*, ed. Heinrich Härke, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 57.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett, eds., *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>24</sup> Barbara G. Scott, "Archaeology and National Identity: The Norwegian Example." *Scandinavian Studies* 68/3 (1996): 321-42.

<sup>25</sup> Jon Karl Helgason, *The Rewriting of Njals Saga: Translation, Politics, and Icelandic Sagas*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, Ltd., 1999).

<sup>26</sup> Stine Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen 1852-1864 og dens skæbne*, (Flensburg: Studiefdeling ved Dansk Centralbibliothek for Sydslesvig, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Idem., *Kampen om oldtiden: nationale oldsager siden 1864*, (Aabenraa: Jelling Bogtrykkeri, 2000).

a longer time period in order to answer questions not only about the discipline of archaeology, but more importantly about the processes involved in the mobilization of the past for the creation of identity.

In the German case, recent work has located prehistoric archaeology's roots in a deep popular passion for the ancient past. The vast quantities of artifact remains that made broad interpretations possible emerged through the work of dozens of amateur antiquarian societies who displayed finds in makeshift museums. Susan Crane's recent *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany* has traced the early emergence of this fascination, which became widespread in Germany after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. She argues that although dilettante organizations were strictly localized, they often "wanted to claim national significance for the artifacts they found."<sup>28</sup> Crane's interest, however, lies primarily with the "transition from individual perception of the historical to collective representations of history," and her work consequently covers a wide variety of institutions, academic disciplines, and forms of historical expression, thus denying her the ability to deal with any single discipline in significant depth.<sup>29</sup> One very strong comprehensive treatment of professional archaeologists in Germany is Suzanne L. Marchand's *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*. Marchand's ambitious work traces the rise and decline of the so-called "Greek tyranny" over Germany, which began in the eighteenth century with the writings of J.J. Winckelmann and Johann Herder. As Marchand shows, a strong philhellenic trend espoused by a "cultural interest group" of middle-class and elite scholars became the basis for a "historically-oriented pedagogy" at the center of Prussian educational reforms in the early nineteenth century. As a result,

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<sup>28</sup> Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 87. Crane argues that the fascination for the past did not originally grow solely from nationalism, but was instead part of an aesthetic Romanticism stressing a personal connection to ancient ruins. Only later did nationalist tendencies supersede the autonomy of individual historical consciousness.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

Classical archaeology was intimately tied to a dominant educational paradigm stressing universal ideas and “well-rounded” students and citizens.<sup>30</sup>

Marchand briefly discusses German prehistory as a potential rival to the dominance of philhellenic scholarship in the twentieth century. Scholarly interest in prehistory within Germany, however, has a history stretching back to the nineteenth century. Indeed, a few archaeologists have treated the history of theoretical developments in German prehistory, but few have traced development of the discipline in order to answer questions about its historical context.<sup>31</sup> Rather, most of the literature traces the history of archaeology for the purpose of understanding its implications for current theoretical practices, thus overlooking the impact of scholarly prehistory on German culture. One notable exception is the recent dissertation from Brent Maner, “The Search for a Buried Nation: Prehistoric Archaeology in Central Europe, 1745-1945,” which explores the connections between domestic prehistoric archaeology in the German territories and questions over the shape and character of the emerging nation-state. Maner focuses on the “metaphorical” power of artifacts to render more vivid various nationalist visions.<sup>32</sup> He then stresses the importance of professional organizations and institutions in the discipline, which, he argues, “codified and spread narratives about prehistory,” and later lent a sense of validity to national or nationalist interpretations. As a result:

The moment when professionals were most concerned with proving their findings as scientific truth and spreading this knowledge as a standardized, correct narrative was also the moment when interpretations were most loaded with nationalist meta-narratives.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 27-35.

<sup>31</sup> See for example Heinrich Härke, “All Quiet on the Western Front?” in Ian Hodder, ed., *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*. (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>32</sup> Brent Maner, “The Search for a Buried Nation: Prehistoric Archaeology in Central Europe, 1745-1945,” Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2000, 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

Maner's work is admirable in that it provides a solid synthesis of the history of prehistoric archaeology and its relationship to the concept of nation in Germany, which is a necessary first step to answering questions about the connections between prehistory and nationalist ideology. Moreover, like Crane's work, it takes into consideration the critical role of local or regional identities as mediators and precursors to broader national self-conceptions. What Maner's study seems to lack, however, is a sense of the potential tensions that can arise within the constellation of identities that overlap and at times compete for primacy within a given region. It also propagates a pattern found in other histories of the discipline that adhere to national categories without fully considering the ways in which archaeology transcended them in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Indeed, this is what makes a study centered in a borderland so important. Border regions, after all, bring to the fore the real complexity of the various forms of identity at work within a given nation-state and, as Peter Sahlins has demonstrated in his study of the Franco-Spanish border, often become the sites of conflict where locals are forced to negotiate these different levels.<sup>34</sup>

### **Archaeologists and Scholarly Communities**

In 1844, the Danish prehistorian J.J.A. Worsaae, who would soon develop a reputation as one of the foremost archaeologists of his generation, made a plea for the preservation of ancient remains. "I wish to make it absolutely clear," he wrote, "what significance the remains of both the prehistoric and historical periods have as *national memorials*."<sup>35</sup> Local officials, teachers, and university professors had raised similar concerns during the preceding decades, but Worsaae's proclamation carried a special weight. He was, after all, a recognized expert, a professional archaeologist with unique authority to make

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<sup>34</sup> Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). As Sahlins writes, "States did not simply impose their values and boundaries on local society. Rather, local society was a motive force in the formation and consolidation of nationhood and the territorial state," 8.

<sup>35</sup> J.J.A. Worsaae, *Dänemarks Vorzeit durch Alterthümer und Grabhügel beleuchtet*, trans. N. Bertelsen, (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1844), iv. (emphasis added).

judgments about prehistory. He may not have stood alone in appropriating the ancient past on behalf of Denmark, but he and his professional colleagues were nevertheless significant in both systematizing and legitimizing specific nationalist interpretations.

They were no less critical in linking interpretations at home with those of neighboring countries. Indeed, while nationalist thinking dominated emerging narratives of prehistory, transnational interaction was becoming an increasingly important factor in shaping their contours.<sup>36</sup> Through correspondence, professional journals, conferences, and exhibitions, the emerging cohort of specialists in the prehistory of northern Europe maintained close contact with their colleagues both in their home countries and abroad. They traveled to museums, participated in cooperative excavations, granted membership to foreign colleagues in their own national societies, and even shared their precious artifacts. From the earliest days of their work, therefore, they comprised a scholarly community that transcended national borders. Indeed, it was this dialogue both with antiquity and with one another that enabled them to play a central role in linking past to present and thus in shaping their respective national identities.

To explore this set of relationships, this dissertation will draw on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the intellectual field, which addresses the problems of creative autonomy that scholars, writers, and artists face as they navigate the pressures inherent in their work and in their surrounding environment. According to Bourdieu, the concept explains how intellectuals create theories and ideas not in isolation but within a shifting constellation of other intellectuals and ideas, and as such they are limited by their connections with others in their field. Though they may not be aware of them, these intellectual and cultural producers face constraints by virtue of the value judgments that attach to their creations, whether they be artistic, literary, or scholarly works. In other words, such productions either conform to the dominant, or "orthodox," view of the field, or they reject it and move to an outside, or "heterodox," position, ascending into dominance only if others

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<sup>36</sup> On the general emergence of transnational scientific production, see Charle, et al, *Transnational Intellectual Networks*.

subscribe to their message.<sup>37</sup> Such a model has been particularly attractive to intellectual historians seeking to situate individual thinkers and better understand the role of context in their writings and ideas.<sup>38</sup>

This study argues that the community of scholars working on prehistoric archaeology in Northern Germany and Denmark comprised such a field, and it is thus a useful methodology for illuminating the ways in which the work of archaeologists interacted with one another and also how social and political forces shaped emerging orthodoxies of prehistoric scholarship. Since archaeological material was scattered on both sides of the border, archaeologists found it essential to collaborate in order to create more comprehensive interpretations of regional prehistory. This means that neither Germans nor Danes could directly seize elements of the past for their own nationalist ends because doing so would place them outside their field in a “heterodox” position and would thereby deny them the credibility that they enjoyed as professional scholars.

Where Bourdieu envisioned a static sociological model, however, this study will examine the intellectual field of archaeologists as a historical network forming and changing over time.<sup>39</sup> Through an analysis of correspondence, conference reports, museum exhibitions, and published texts, it will reconstruct the dynamics of this group as it evolved over several generations. Specifically, it will emphasize the process of engagement with nationalism on the one hand, and the developing practice of rational

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<sup>37</sup> Pierre Bordieu, “Intellectual Field and Creative Project,” *Social Science Information* 8 (April 1969), 89-119.

<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu's approach was first used by Fritz Ringer, “Intellectual History, the Intellectual Field, and the Sociology of Knowledge,” *Theory and Society* 19/3 (June 1990), 269-94. Ringer, of course, was already interested in such connections in his earlier work, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>39</sup> In a critique of Fritz Ringer's work, Martin Jay first questioned the degree to which current intellectual fields can exist diachronically as well as synchronically. See Jay, “Fieldwork and Theorizing in Intellectual History: A Reply to Fritz Ringer,” *Theory and Society*, 19,3 (June 1990), 311-321. In Ringer's defense, Jay himself acknowledges that Ringer's own title, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, proves his belief that fields can change over time, even if he does not directly address it as such. Moreover, Ringer has engaged in comparative studies that have shown how intellectual fields can be changed by a number of intervening factors. The problem, it seems, is that Ringer has never come to the intellectual field as a distinct historical subject, but rather has used it as a device for reconsidering the traditional “History of Ideas” approach to intellectual history. He is seeking to locate individual thinkers rather than consider the ways in which academics or intellectuals shape their networks. See Ringer, *Fields of Knowledge: French Academic Culture in Comparative Perspective, 1890-1920*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 11-12.

scholarship on the other, which acted as two guiding practices, or *habitués*, within the intellectual field and directed the "spontaneous orchestration" of individual voices to contribute toward common goals.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, these two *habitués* were at times mutually exclusive and thus formed a paradox within the archaeological discipline, as scholars were caught between crafting nationalist histories and acknowledging the positions of their colleagues in neighboring countries. The result was a contradictory set of frameworks that forced archaeologists to make choices between a scholarly discourse stressing cooperation and commonality and a nationalist discourse demanding exclusive ownership.

There are, of course, limits to this approach, not the least of which is the daunting task of defining the parameters of this particular intellectual field. The archaeological community was, after all, not confined merely to Germany and Denmark; Sweden, Norway, and Great Britain were also heavily involved in the task of reconstructing Northern European prehistory. A simple review of the archives of any museum in the region reveals close ties among dozens of institutions in these countries as well as in other parts of Germany, the United States, Russia, Poland, and France. Therefore, while it is exceedingly difficult to recreate completely and accurately the community of archaeologists engaging in cooperative research during this period, it is possible to draw on a useful cross-section limited on a number of levels. With that in mind, this study will stress those archaeologists working in or treating southern Denmark and northern Germany, particularly those working in the two key institutions in the region: the National Museum in Copenhagen and the Museum für vaterländische Alterthümer in Kiel. These museums were important not only for their impressive displays of ancient artifacts, but also for the active engagement of the archaeologists there with field excavation and preservation. Indeed, the museums at Kiel and Copenhagen became centers of prehistoric investigation in the region, and successfully worked to dominate rival institutions after 1864.

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<sup>40</sup> Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 149-51.

## Prehistory and the Modern Schleswig-Holstein Question

In the last fifty years, the border between Germany and Denmark, which now comprises the German *Bundesland* of Schleswig-Holstein and the Danish *Amt* of Sønderjylland,<sup>41</sup> has remained stable, despite being the scene of two wars in the nineteenth century. On both sides, Danish and German minorities have since lived peacefully within their respective countries, and the very success of these relations has become the topic of at least one key study.<sup>42</sup> Yet the absence of continued conflict has resulted in a measure of indifference among English-speaking scholars.<sup>43</sup> In comparison to other border regions such as the Franco-German borderland of Alsace-Lorraine, the body of work on Schleswig-Holstein and Sønderjylland is very limited, in part because of limited competency with the Danish language and Denmark's comparatively minor influence in the trajectory of modern European history. Ultimately, these shortcomings have led English-speaking scholars to overlook the potential of the German-Danish borderland to demonstrate the ways in which the history of transnational intellectual and cultural exchange can unlock key questions about the process of national formation and the concepts of nationalism and national identity.

Situated at the base of the narrow Jutland Peninsula between the Baltic and North Atlantic, the borderland consists of the old duchies of Holstein, lying between the Elbe and Eider rivers north of Hamburg, and Schleswig, stretching north from the Eider to the Kongeå River and including the modern-day German towns of Schleswig and Flensburg

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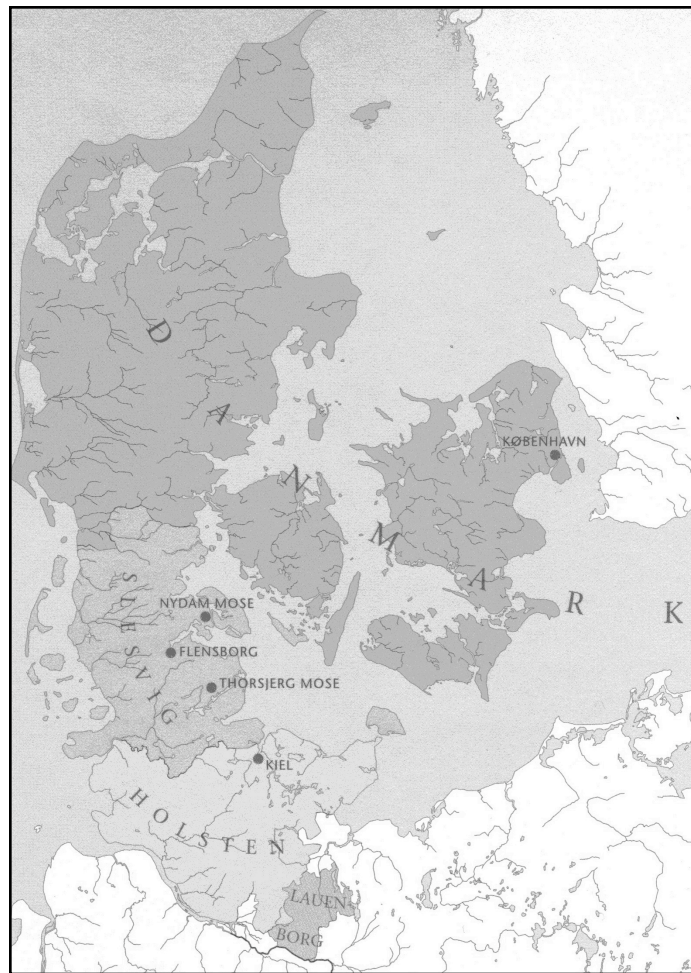
<sup>41</sup> The term "Sønderjylland" was originally a term applied by Danes in the late nineteenth-century to the Schleswig/Slesvig region from the Eider River to the Kongeå River. Sønderjylland, which translates as "Southern Jutland," was a somewhat provocative term at the time, since it evoked the former connections between the region and Denmark.

<sup>42</sup> See especially Norman Berdichevsky, *The Danish-German Border Dispute, 1815-2001: Aspects of Cultural and Demographic Politics*, (Bethesda: Academica, 2002). Berdichevsky also addresses the problem in his most recent work, *Nation, Language, and Citizenship*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> The most notable work on the history of the Schleswig-Holstein Question is William Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein: A Study in National Conflict*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963). Carr's work is a political and diplomatic history of the official wrangling that preceded the German-Danish Wars. Recently, the Institut for grænseregionsforskning in Åbenrå, Denmark, has produced some literature in English. See Jørgen Kühl, *The Schleswig Experience: The National Minorities in the German-Danish Border Area*, (Åbenrå: Institut for grænseregionsforskning, 1998).



and the Danish towns of Sønderborg and Haderslev.<sup>44</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century and until the year 1864, the entire region belonged to the so-called Danish “Composite State” (*Helstat/Gesamtstaat*), which included the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. While the northern half of the borderland was home to a majority Danish-speaking population, the Duchy of Holstein was mostly German-speaking, with large groups of Frisian and Low German speakers inhabiting the western coastal areas.



Schleswig-Holstein/Sønderjylland. From Stine Wiell, *Kampen om Oldtiden*.

<sup>44</sup> Many regions and towns within the borderland share a variety of different names reflecting the changing state affiliations and language groups in the area. The city of Flensburg, for example, is known in Danish as Flensborg, and Haderslev is Hadersleben in German. For the sake of clarity, this dissertation will employ the current spellings related to a given area’s position in present-day Germany and Denmark.

The Schleswig-Holstein region is a land riddled with bogs and marshes containing ancient remains and dotted with grave barrows of earth and rock. It was the scene of frenetic archaeological activity after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. As early as 1834, a number of local amateurs had founded an antiquities society with the blessing of the Danish royal government. From the beginning, this society and its related museum in Kiel were products of cooperation between Germans and Danes. Their success depended on the expertise of scholars working in Copenhagen, who donated artifacts from the Danish National Museum, and the hard work and determination of local Schleswig-Holsteiners, whose weekend jaunts into the countryside provided a wealth of new information beyond the reach of scholars living in the capital.

Antiquarian collection and preservation, however, were ventures that developed alongside a growing sense on both sides of mutual isolation and a desire for a more absolute identity. By the 1830s, both Germans and Danes were growing weary of the “Composite State” solution by which the kings of Denmark had governed Schleswig and Holstein as an addition to their own lands since 1773.<sup>45</sup> While Danish speakers worked to consolidate their cultural domination over the region by demanding more widespread use of Danish in schools and government, German speakers sought both to preserve their traditional language and culture while at the same time agitating for a government more in line with the liberal-nationalist political philosophy popular among the local elite. This longing for change gradually took the form of a German separatist movement that erupted into civil war in 1848 and then war with Prussia in 1864, after which time the border between the new German Empire and Denmark placed all of Schleswig and Holstein beyond the reach of the Danes.

Archaeologists engaging in cooperative research during this period were challenged to maintain contacts within this hostile climate. The German-Danish Wars of 1848-1851 and 1864 split the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and forced the departure of its pro-Danish members, while the controversy over the ownership of the so-called “Flensburg Collection” of bog antiquities brought prehistoric scholarship to the forefront

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<sup>45</sup> Manfred Jessen-Klingenberg, “Schleswig-Holstein im dänischen Gesamtstaat,” in idem., *Standpunkte zur neueren Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, (Malente: Schleswig-Holsteischer Geschichtsverlag, 1998), 24-5,

of the border conflict. After the war, Germans and Danes struggled to resume cooperation in the face of lingering enmities. After the turn of the century, however, they again faced similar difficulties, as increasingly nationalist orientations entered the archaeological discipline from outside the region and as the border question re-emerged after World War I, when Danish speakers living in the northern third of Schleswig voted in a hotly contested postwar plebiscite to return to Denmark. Relations were further strained after the advent of the Third Reich in 1933, and the ties between German archaeologists and the Nazi regime, coupled with the occupation of Denmark during World War II, very nearly destroyed the viability of the archaeological community.

The use of the remains of the past as symbols in these struggles connected archaeology in the region both to the development of national identity and to expressions of local identity. Indeed, as this study will show, it is the complex set of negotiations between two contrasting visions in both the local and national contexts that make this particular history such an interesting case study for understanding the processes of identity formation. This is a history that is not merely comparative in the traditional sense, but also highly interactive in that the comparative variables – the motives and means of using the past – did not merely operate in isolation, but rather exerted active influence on one another. The result is a new way to think not only about the practice of archaeology, but also about the relationships between national groups and their neighbors, and between nation-states and their frontiers.

Such considerations place this case study within the context of recent interest about the role of borders and frontier communities in national development, which grew in concert with the rising interest in studies of nationalism after 1989.<sup>46</sup> As anthropologists Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan have rightly observed, "Borders are always domains of contested power, in which local, national, and international groups negotiate relations of subordination and control."<sup>47</sup> They complain, however, that in seeking an

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<sup>46</sup> Malcolm Anderson, "European Frontiers at the End of the Twentieth Century," in *The Frontiers of Europe*, ed. Malcolm Anderson and Eberhart Bort, (London: Printer, 1998), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, "Nation, State, and Identity at International Borders," in *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, ed. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10.

overarching theory of border regions, scholars in their discipline have neglected to problematize the concepts of state and nation. Historians such as Peter Sahlins, have meanwhile approached this problem from the opposite direction, expressing less interest in general theories and more in understanding the inherent processes within individual states and national communities. As Sahlins has shown, the nation-state is not merely an amorphous term, but also one that evolves over time. "National identity," he explains, "is a socially constructed and continuous process of defining 'friend' and 'enemy,' a logical extension of the process of maintaining boundaries between 'us' and 'them' within more local communities."<sup>48</sup> Presently, however, questions remain about the nature of the relationship between frontier regions and the national states to which they belong. Yet historians, in rephrasing this question, might look to current anthropological research, which discourages any placement of borderlands and their states within the strictly dialectical relationship that Sahlins seems to advocate.<sup>49</sup>

This study, by contrast, will seek to strike a balance between the two perspectives by looking at the state and the nation as two variables, albeit important ones, in a complex matrix that ultimately yielded expressions of identity in the German-Danish borderland. In Schleswig-Holstein, German speakers developed ideas of a national community without the benefit of a central state. Indeed, once the German Empire emerged in 1871, Northern Germans often found themselves in opposition to the Prussian vision of Germany. Thus, while the state certainly exercised an influence, it was not alone in doing so. In any case, this region became an important arena of contestation, where the ideal nations imagined in the capitals of Berlin and Copenhagen confronted the realities of a culture forged between two identities. Such was the environment in which the regional archaeological community lived and worked. These archaeologists thus became actors both in the creation of identities and in the discovery and articulation of the limits of those identities. The German-Danish borderland is uniquely suited as a locale to explore

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<sup>48</sup> Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 270-1.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 8. Sahlins argues here that "both state formation and nation building were two-way processes at work since at least the seventeenth century. States did not simply impose their values and boundaries on local society. Rather, local society was a motive force in the formation and consolidation of nationhood and the territorial state."

this theme not only because of the differences between Germans and Danes, but also because of their commonalities. Above all, while Germans and Danes spoke different languages and had different cultural traits, they shared ties to a common past that challenged any assertions of distinction. It is not surprising, then, that the archaeologists in the region found themselves obliged to moderate the more radical claims of colleagues in Berlin and Copenhagen who were removed from the pressures of finding the nation in a neighbor's backyard.

It is ultimately from this set of problems that key questions emerge about the relationship between the production of knowledge about the past and the creation of modern identities in the borderland. How and why, for example, did Germans and Danes look to the distant past as a criterion of national identity? In what ways did they relate antiquity to the present? And finally, what were the consequences of using the past in this way? By emphasizing the relationships among the scholars working with ancient remains, this study will approach these questions by examining both the process of professionalization in archaeology and the relative power of archaeologists to shape discourses about modern identities. Above all, it will consider the ways in which archaeologists in the borderland reconciled their scholarly commitments with their own nationalist agendas, and how they thus affected the development of national identity in their respective countries. Such questions straddle the fine line between intellectual and cultural history and entreat us to explore the uses of the past to form cultural memory, to find its limits, to gauge its implications, and, finally, to assess its impact on two bordering nation-states, separated only by shifting self-conceptions and one tiny, crumbling, ancient wall in a wind-swept field.

## CHAPTER 1

### COLLABORATIVE SCHOLARSHIP AND CONTESTED PASTS The Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and the Founding of the Kiel Museum, 1830-1845

In 1830, a new passion for the past was awakening in the Kingdom of Denmark. It led to passage graves descending into deep vaults and to solemn barrows ringed with stone. For centuries, such sites had imposed a pensive silence on a rich but forgotten ancient past while steadily surrendering themselves to the surrounding landscape. By the nineteenth century, they had weathered into the earth, and their ancient stone markers had already lost much of their once intricate and meaningful form. Yet these remains managed to draw a new and growing cohort of antiquarian enthusiasts, who were suddenly enchanted with the treasures interred within the crumbling *gravhøje* (in Danish) and *Hünengräber* (in German). Before them was a world of discovery buried beneath more than 20,000 unexplored sites in the Danish *Helstat* - the composite state of the Danish Kingdom, the German-speaking duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, and the mixed German-Danish duchy of Schleswig.<sup>1</sup>

Even as they labored under the spell of the myriad monuments scattered throughout the country, these nineteenth-century antiquarians transformed the previously esoteric study of Northern European antiquity into an accepted form of scholarship in line with the classical archaeology of the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of textual sources, material

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<sup>1</sup> "Ueber die Sammlung nordischer Alterthümer in Kopenhagen," *Neues Staatsbürgerliches Magazin* 2/3 (1834), 855. Lauenburg was a small duchy that Denmark acquired at the end of the Napoleonic Wars as compensation for its loss of Pomerania to Prussia. Although it remained part of the *Helstat* until 1864, contemporaries typically referred to the duchies simply as "Schleswig-Holstein," or in Danish, "Slesvig-Holsten." For the sake of clarity, I am using the current spellings of regions and towns.

<sup>2</sup> On the parallel interest in classical archaeology in Germany, see Marchand, *Down from Olympus*.

remains represented some of the only ties to the discovery of the remote past in the region, and antiquarians began to see them not as oddities or isolated curios, but as pieces of a larger whole with which they could not only reconstruct the past, but also locate their own origins. Consequently, even if they could not fully articulate the connections between ancient and modern Europe, Germans and Scandinavians became increasingly aware of the value that artifacts possessed for understanding the present. Above all, the early nineteenth-century interest in prehistory was unique because it linked ancient cultures to newly forming collective identities in the region and created an awareness of a deeper cultural memory that became a critical component of burgeoning visions of the modern nation-state. It heralded the advent of the discipline of archaeology, which, in contrast to the dilettante nature of antiquarianism, promised a scientific means of rediscovering the lost past and of bringing it into the overarching narrative of the nation's history.

When the the Kiel Museum for National Antiquities (*Museum für vaterländische Alterthümer zu Kiel*) opened its doors to the public in 1835, it became the center of these intersecting trends of identity, modernity, and antiquarianism. Its collections provided a tangible link to a past integral to local and national self-conceptions. The first sight of its coins, urns, rings, and swords effaced the millennial distance between visitors and ancestors and made them part of the same organic community. The museum also brought together the new cohort of antiquarians and became a key institution in the formation of a scholarly community whose collaboration facilitated more comprehensive understandings of prehistory.

The efforts of both German- and Danish-speaking scholars proved indispensable to the success of the museum, as they helped promote new theories of prehistory and encouraged the public to become involved in the preservation of sites and artifacts that otherwise would certainly have been lost. Such cooperation, however, also meant that the Kiel Museum was an institution where emerging identities came into conflict. Its creation coincided with mounting political tensions in the region, as issues of language and lineage raised questions about the relationship between nation and *Helstat* and

between German and Danish speakers in Schleswig-Holstein. The Museum's leaders reflected these growing differences. Its founders were noted scholars whose early ties to the *Helstat* gradually gave way to a partisan involvement in the conflicts between pro-Danish and pro-German forces in the 1830s and 1840s. Indeed, these men eventually became celebrated leaders of their respective nationalist movements, and their political passions inevitably threatened their cooperative commitment to the study of antiquity.



The Kiel Museum in the early twentieth century. Schleswig-Holsteinisches Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

The early years of the Kiel Museum thus secured its place first as an expression of the changing attitude towards antiquity and second as a key point of intersection between the distant past and embattled modern identities in the two emerging nation-states of Germany and Denmark. As such, the history of its beginnings raises critical questions as to how and why the impulses of nationalism and antiquarianism first came into contact in this region. How, first of all, did the collection of artifacts become a national pursuit for both Germans and Danes? How did the antiquarian interests of the museum's founders inform their visions of the borderland and the changing political climate in the 1830s and



1840s? Finally, how did these antiquarians employ their work with the past in the interests of their nationalist causes in the present?

### **C.J. Thomsen, Nicholas Falck, and the New Antiquarianism**

The nineteenth century, of course, was not the first time that the discovery of antiquities had sparked curiosity in this region. During the seventeenth century, for example, the Danish physician Ole Worm (1588-1654) spent decades collecting information on prehistoric remains within Denmark and amassed a significant private collection of artifacts, which after his death formed the core of the royal *Kunstkammer* of King Frederik III.<sup>3</sup> In Schleswig, meanwhile, Duke Christian Albrecht (1641-1694) established his own impressive collection and ordered his administrative officials to send reports of local finds to support the work of German-speaking scholars such as Johann Daniel Major, whose work, *Populated Cimbria* (1692), represented an early attempt to describe the ancient peoples of the area.<sup>4</sup>

With a similarly passionate intellectual curiosity and belief in the power of artifact evidence, the antiquarians active in the nineteenth century were in many ways the heirs to scholars such as Worm and Major. In other ways, however, the scholarly interest developing in the early nineteenth century marked a clear departure from the antiquarianism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For centuries, the ubiquity of ancient sites had rendered them an inseparable part of life in the region, yet before the nineteenth century they were relegated to a dimly understood world of pre-Christian heathendom, which fostered a sense of alienation from the past. These monuments of prehistory stood as foreign objects of fantasy or as sites of pagan worship and sacrifice,

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<sup>3</sup> H.D. Schepelern, "Natural Philosophers and Princely Collectors: Worm, Pauldanus and the Gottorp and Copenhagen Collections," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 168-170; Ole Klindt-Jensen, *A History of Scandinavian Archaeology*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 18-20. The objects in Frederik's collection would later become the foundation of the Danish National Museum in the nineteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> Georg Kossak, "Zur Geschichte der Urgeschichtsforschung in Schleswig-Holstein," *Christiana Albertina* 2 (November, 1966), 53. Cimbria refers to the name of the peninsula that includes, Jutland, Schleswig, and Holstein.

and their artifacts were simply curiosities upon the shelves of the parlor cabinet, drawing little more than dust and idle speculation.

This perception changed in the nineteenth century. While the mentality of the well-to-do individual collector was slow to wane and the idea of antiquity as foreign never fully disappeared, a new relationship with the past developed which stressed a reconnection between the present and the ancient world represented in the artifacts. The new antiquarians wanted to find in their collections some sort of meaning for themselves and a way in which they could render the prehistory of Northern Europe less arcane and more familiar to their communities.



An eighteenth-century view of prehistory. Unknown Artist, "Heathen Altar at Engelmann's Brook in the Duchy of Oldenburg." Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Such an effort in Schleswig-Holstein culminated with a drive to establish a museum in the region to open the knowledge of prehistory to a wider audience. Yet though it would bear a German name and rest in the predominantly German-speaking region of Holstein, its origins were largely Danish, and its principal benefactor hailed from Copenhagen. This was the well-known museum curator Christian Jürgen Thomsen (1788-1865), who

in the summer of 1831 first approached Nikolaus Falck (1784-1850), a law professor at the University of Kiel, about the possibility of establishing a permanent antiquarian institution in the duchies. Thomsen even offered to donate part of his museum's collection to ensure the success of the project.<sup>5</sup>

Thomsen's proposal promised to be a remarkable collaboration not only because of the physical and cultural distance between Kiel and Copenhagen, but also because of a historic rivalry among collectors at the time. Indeed, the last notable "exchange" of artifacts between Denmark and the duchies had taken place in the eighteenth century, when the curiosity cabinet of Duke Christian Albrecht of Schleswig had become part of the Danish Royal *Kunstammer* after Albrecht's defeat in the Great Northern War (1700-1720). Indeed, this event still lingered in regional memory as a humiliating finale to an episode that bound the duchy of Schleswig to the Danish Kingdom and marred German-Danish relations with lasting bitterness.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike this one-sided seizure, however, Thomsen's proposal was much more amenable to both sides. Moreover, its friendly undertones were strengthened by the fact that the two men involved were previous acquaintances. The two most likely met through Falck's work in the Schleswig-Holstein Chancellery in Copenhagen, where he had assisted with the administration of the duchies from 1809 to 1815.<sup>7</sup> Afterwards, Falck continued to have contact with Thomsen through his university colleagues, and the two corresponded occasionally about Thomsen's antiquarian activities in Copenhagen.<sup>8</sup> Falck was an active advocate for antiquarian pursuits in the duchies, having already called for the establishment of an official regional body to oversee the protection of ancient relics in 1828. He also published notices of antiquarian matters in his *Staatsbürgerliches Magazin*

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<sup>5</sup> The details of Thomsen's written suggestion are no longer extant, but Falck mentioned his offer in a letter to Thomsen, 12 July 1831, NM Afd. 2 Kasse IV, 141.

<sup>6</sup> H.D. Schepeleern, "Natural Philosophers and Princely Collectors," 171-2.

<sup>7</sup> Erich Hoffmann, "Nikolaus Falck und die Schleswig-Holsteinische Frage," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* (1986), 145.

<sup>8</sup> Falck to Thomsen, 28 May 1831, 12 July 1831, 15 September 1832, and 10 August 1833, NM Afd. 2 Kasse IV, 141.

and sent Thomsen copies of his publications in exchange for word of significant discoveries both at home and abroad.<sup>9</sup>

While Falck was interested in enlisting Thomsen's assistance in filling the pages of his journal, Thomsen was eager to use news from Schleswig-Holstein to aid him in his daunting task of protecting antiquities in all the Danish territories. Since 1816, he had been the secretary of the Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities, (*Kongelige Commission til Oldsagers Opbevaring*), and from his first day, he had eagerly dedicated himself to organizing the finds entrusted to the Commission's care. At the time, the Commission's collection had become a matter of extreme public concern in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. Not only had a number of pieces been destroyed in two British attacks on Copenhagen in 1801 and 1807, but the ultimate defeat in 1814 had left a deep scar on the Danish psyche. Denmark had lost Norway and Pomerania at the peace table and had surrendered its massive trading fleet to the British, and, as a result, its economy was in shambles.<sup>10</sup>

The Danes, no longer the masters of a sizable empire, responded with a careful reassessment of themselves. Many Danish intellectuals gradually rejected grandiose visions of Denmark as a European power and began a search for a more spiritual power rooted in the uniqueness of the Danish national character. What followed was a period of intense introspection that coincided with and fostered the advent of Romanticism in the region and fueled interest in Nordic mythology and antiquity.<sup>11</sup> Poets and philosophers found themselves inspired to look to the past - and to its tangible remains - for an answer to their calamities and for new hopes for the future. Adam Oehlenschläger (1779-1850),

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<sup>9</sup> Falck to Thomsen, 28 May 1831.

<sup>10</sup> Prussia had actually delivered the duchy of Lauenburg along with two million Thaler to Denmark in compensation for the loss of Pomerania, but the exchange was far from even. See Otto Brandt, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Ein Grundriss*, 8. ed. (Kiel: Mühlaus, 1981), 231.

<sup>11</sup> Vagn Skovgaard-Petersen, *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 5, (Copenhagen: Glydendal, 1985), 159-61; On the nature of early Danish nationalism, see Uffe Østergård, "Statehood, Ethnicity, and Nationalism: The Case of Denmark," in *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, eds. Preben Kaarsholm and Jan Hultin, (Roskilde: International Development Studies, Roskilde University, 1994), 261-303. Østergård characterizes Danish nationalism at the time as "less chauvinistic" than others developing elsewhere after 1815, perhaps because it emerged from the experience of military defeat.

for example, became a celebrated spokesman for the nation after writing “*Guldhornene*,” a poem about the *Kunstkammer*’s most famous artifacts, the Golden Horns of Gallehus. The Horns, which had been discovered in Schleswig by peasants in the seventeenth century, had been stolen from the *Kunstkammer* in 1802 and smelted by an unscrupulous goldsmith. Oehlenschläger’s poem, written a year later, lamented their destruction as a national tragedy and thereby transformed the Golden Horns into a symbolic representation of Denmark’s own lost glory and desires for renewal.<sup>12</sup>

A few years later, the philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig, who would come to exert a powerful influence on Danish thought, published *The Mythology of the North* (1807), in which he argued that the ancient sagas were crucial for Danes reconnecting with the true nature of their nation. He wrote:

The scholars of the North cannot and must never forget that the North also has a heroic age of its own to which they have a double relationship, both a closer one and a deeper one. For Norsemen are the fourth major people in universal history, a fact that needs to be known before one can understand the history of the Middle Ages and modern times.<sup>13</sup>

Grundtvig, who was an ordained minister, sought during his “Romantic Phase” to articulate the special role of Denmark and Scandinavia in Europe by mixing Christian and Nordic themes, and to advocate both the advancement of the nation and the reform of the Danish Church. As Leni Yahil has recently explained, “His striving for religious freedom merged with his patriotism. He stated that, unlike the Latin peoples who had adopted Roman culture along with Christianity, the Norse peoples had become Christian without abandoning their folk characteristics . . .”<sup>14</sup>

The Norse mythology that Grundtvig promoted soon took on a powerful symbolic value, and Danish artists embraced themes drawn from the legends of the Norse gods.

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<sup>12</sup> Adam Oehlenschläger, “*Guldhornene*,” in A. Seidelin, *Digte*, (Copenhagen: 1803), 75-82.

<sup>13</sup> N.F.S. Grundtvig, “Introduction to Norse Mythology,” in *A Grundtvig Anthology*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 1984), 47.

<sup>14</sup> Leni Yahil, “National Pride and Defeat: A Comparison of Danish and German Nationalism,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991), 459-60.

This included H.E. Freund, whose sculpture of a pensive Odin now rests in the Glyptothek in Copenhagen, and Johan Thomas Lundbye, who blended past and present by capturing the power and mystery of ancient sites in his paintings of the contemporary Danish landscape. Lundbye's *Hankehøj* (1847), for example, depicted the famous barrow on Sjælland, with peasant and livestock in the foreground, as an integral part of the bucolic beauty of the Danish countryside. Furthermore, as Hans Kuhn has pointed out, such art mixed Norse and Greek themes, providing at once a claim to the status of high civilization and an "alternative to Classical mythology."<sup>15</sup> Nineteenth-century Romanticism thus helped create a "Nordic Renaissance" in Denmark, in which the world of the ancient Scandinavians, rendered malleable through myth and symbol, took on a utopian quality that assuaged the wounds of the Napoleonic Wars and helped reinvent Danish national identity.



*Hankehøj* by Johan Thomas Lundbye (1847). From a postcard reproduction.  
Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

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<sup>15</sup> Hans Kuhn, "Greek Gods in Northern Costumes: Visual Representations of Norse Mythology in Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia," in *Old Norse Myths, Literature, and Society: Proceedings of the 11th Annual International Saga Conference 2-7 July 2000 University of Sydney*, eds. Geraldine Barnes and Margaret Clunies Ross, (Sydney: Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney, 2000), 210-211.

In this context, Thomsen's collection was a valuable physical expression of this "Nordic Renaissance," and he was keenly aware that it needed special attention. Moreover, the theft of the Golden Horns in 1802 had highlighted the dangers facing an unorganized and unprotected assemblage.<sup>16</sup> In response, Thomsen arranged for a safer facility, moving the collection into Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen. He then sought to create a means of ordering the finds, and in 1818, he began to develop his so-called Three Age Theory, which called for a classification of artifacts according to their material components. Thomsen later maintained that the categories implied a temporal progression, with objects made from stone belonging to the earliest category, followed by bronze and then iron.<sup>17</sup> His determinations followed careful comparative analyses of style, decoration, and associated artifacts. The result was one of the first paradigms for understanding the sequence of prehistoric cultural evolution. It permitted Thomsen to organize his present collection and provided him with a means of incorporating future finds.

This system also afforded Thomsen a chance to pursue one of his other ambitions, which was to bring knowledge of prehistory to a wider lay audience. His classification system infused individual pieces with a larger meaning and granted the uninitiated a chance to see how the collection could tell the story of the Danish past. From the assorted boxes of dusty remains, Thomsen thus managed to create a coherent exhibition, and in 1819, he opened what was to be the Museum for Nordic Antiquities (*Museum for Nordiske Oldsager*) to the public and personally offered weekly tours for well-to-do visitors.<sup>18</sup> In this way, Thomsen's collection became part of the same Danish Golden Age (1800-1850) that oversaw the revival of a vibrant middle-class lifestyle in Copenhagen and that witnessed the flowering of a national artistic and literary tradition.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ole Klindt-Jensen, *A History of Scandinavian Archaeology*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), 46-9.

<sup>17</sup> Jørgen Jensen, *The Prehistory of Denmark*, (London: Methuen, 1982), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Kristian Kristiansen, "A Short History of Danish Archaeology: An Analytical Perspective," in *Archaeological Formation Processes: The Representativity of Archaeological Remains from Danish Prehistory*, ed. Kristian Kristiansen, (Copenhagen, Nationalmuseets Forlag, 1985), 13,

<sup>19</sup> On the Danish Golden Age, see for example Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

Thomsen's vision of his domestic public included those living in Schleswig-Holstein, and, like many of his contemporaries, he remained a committed *Helstat* patriot.<sup>20</sup> He rejected the more nationalistic rhetoric of N.F.S. Grundtvig and was strongly influenced by political liberals such as the historian Rasmus Nyerup (1759-1829), who had founded the Antiquities Commission, and the German numismatist Frederik Münter (1761-1830), who had encouraged Thomsen's early interests in coins.<sup>21</sup> Both the ideas and the direct involvement of these men in Thomsen's work reinforced his belief that the artifacts under his care revealed a prehistory with as much relevance for Schleswig-Holsteiners as for Zealanders and Jutlanders.

In his search for an individual to carry on his work in the duchies, Thomsen seems to have found a kindred spirit in Nikolaus Falck. Although Falck's role in the border agitation of the later 1840s later earned him a reputation as a steadfast German nationalist, his work in the previous decade suggests that he was much more complex and ambivalent. Indeed, his work as an antiquarian seems to affirm recent scholarship de-emphasizing his partisan role and stressing his position as a *Helstat* patriot and a moderate figure in the national conflict.<sup>22</sup> Born in Emmerleff in the northwestern part of Schleswig in 1784, Falck, like Thomsen, was part of a generation that came of age before the experience of the Napoleonic Wars tested the fiber of the *Helstat*. As a native of Schleswig, Falck hailed from a region with a large population of native Danish speakers. The northern section of the region was in fact predominantly Danish, and Falck, whose family was culturally German, nevertheless grew up between the two cultures. Falck was fluent in both languages, and studied law in Kiel and Copenhagen. While many of his close colleagues, most notably the historians A.J. Michelsen and Christian Dahlmann, became ardent German nationalists, Falck viewed himself first as a Schleswig-

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<sup>20</sup> There is some debate among historians about the status of the *Helstat* in the nineteenth century. Several have located its demise at the end of the eighteenth century, but in light of the cooperation between Thomsen and his German colleagues, I tend to agree with Manfred Jessen-Klingenberg that among some intellectuals a viable form of *Helstat* identity survived until the Danish-Prussian War in 1864. See Jessen-Klingenberg, "Schleswig-Holstein im dänischen Gesamtstaat," in Jessen-Klingenberg, *Stanpunkte zur neuen Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, esp. 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> Jørgen Jensen, *Thomsens Museum: historien om Nationalmuseet*, (Copenhagen: Glydendal, 1992), 17-21.

<sup>22</sup> See especially Hoffmann, "Falck und die Schleswig-Holsteinische Frage," 143.



Holsteiner.<sup>23</sup> Like Dahlmann, Falck firmly believed in the unity of the two duchies, but he was as uncertain about their connections to Germany and as he was keenly aware of their alienation from Denmark. He ultimately maintained a sense of ambiguity about Schleswig-Holstein that led him to see the *Helstat* as the most viable political arrangement.<sup>24</sup>

Like Thomsen, Falck was also a political liberal, but while Thomsen's liberalism influenced his desire to share his interests with the Danish public, Falck's manifested itself more broadly as a desire for greater autonomy and political responsibility for Schleswig-Holsteiners. Falck never advocated the complete independence of the duchies, but was a firm believer in their unity, and his research on German law, his work as editor of both *Kieler Blätter* and the *Staatbürgerliches Magazin*, and his interest in local antiquity all reflected a desire to encourage and empower Schleswig-Holsteiners to take an interest in and greater control of their homeland. Although such ideas were certainly revolutionary, they were not far removed from similar thinking among middle class Danes in Copenhagen, who were calling for further political reforms within the Danish absolutist state. This meant that it was more likely for Germans and Danes in the 1820s and 1830s to band together for political ends than to oppose each other on national grounds.

The rise of museums in Copenhagen and Kiel was a product of this kind of thinking, and Thomsen's call for public displays as alternatives to private collections was a tacit recognition that the past and its remains were the property of the citizens of the country. It also showed his desire for scholars to take on the role of awakening the public to the treasures buried in their fields and of teaching them about the legacy beneath their feet. Convincing his compatriots in the duchies, however, proved to be a difficult task, and before finally making arrangements with Falck, Thomsen complained, "All attempts to found a meaningful collection in Kiel have come to an impasse..."<sup>25</sup> Part of the problem

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<sup>23</sup> A.J. Michelsen, "Nikolaus Fack," *Deutsche Allgemeine Biographie*, Bd. 6, (Leipzig: Duncker und Humboldt, 1877), 539-43.

<sup>24</sup> Hoffmann, "Falck und die Schleswig-Holsteinische Frage," 146-9.

<sup>25</sup> Thomsen to Hildebrand, 17.03.1831, quoted in Jensen, *Thomsens Museum*, 119.

stemmed from a misunderstanding of the sentiments of collectors in Schleswig-Holstein. In the previous decade, Thomsen had sought support from the noted antiquities collector Friedrich von Warnstedt (1785-1836). Although Warnstedt was somewhat receptive to the idea of donating his holdings to a broader Schleswig-Holstein collection, he at last rejected the offer because Thomsen's proposal did not include a provision for a local institution, but instead called for a special display of Schleswig-Holstein artifacts in Copenhagen. In fact, Warnstedt had already expressed disappointment over the dominance of Thomsen's museum. "I cannot deny," Warnstedt wrote in 1826, "that from time to time it concerns me when I learn that these antiquities are going to the honorable Copenhagen Museum." He argued that they depreciated "in scientific worth, when they are carried so far from their site of origin."<sup>26</sup>



Niels Nikolaus Falck (1784-1850). Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

The next arrangement, to which Falck acquiesced in 1831, called for support from the Royal Antiquities Commission for an institution in the duchies in return for a promise to send especially rare finds to Copenhagen. This final compromise was a matter of necessity, and, while modern Danish scholars such as Jørgen Jensen are right to stress Thomsen's magnanimity in supporting the work of his colleagues in regional museums, it

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<sup>26</sup> Warnstedt to Thomsen, 14.10.1827, quoted in *ibid.*

seems clear that he actually had little choice otherwise. Thomsen certainly saw private collectors as rivals to his public efforts, and wanted to exercise some element of control over significant pieces, even if doing so meant delegating the responsibility to outside institutions. Moreover, the sheer volume of archaeological material demanded the assistance of local antiquarian scholars who could more easily acquire and preserve local artifacts.

Perhaps the most pressing motivation was the rapid pace of modernization, which jeopardized ancient sites on an unprecedented scale and which had been part of the initial motivation for the formation of the Royal Antiquities Commission.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, this was primarily the upshot of the *landboreform*, the sweeping agricultural reforms of the previous century. A mixture of rising food prices and Enlightenment ideas encouraged many peasants and landholders to advocate a system that could help them increase the efficiency of their farms. They recognized that the feudal *stavnsbånd*, which tied peasants between the ages of 14 and 36 to their homes as a means of supplying recruits to the military, was harmful to the changing labor needs of the country. Influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, they instead called for the introduction of contractual relationships on both practical and humanitarian grounds.<sup>28</sup> After a lengthy struggle with the monarchy's conservative ministers, the noble landholders and royal government reached a compromise solution that released the peasantry from their obligations and led to the creation of a large class of independent farmers. Indeed, by 1820, more than half of Danish farmers owned their own land, and for those who did not, laws granting incentives for land improvements ensured that the nineteenth century would witness dramatically increased crop production and a more secure peasantry.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Kristian Kristiansen, "Dansk arkæologi – fortid og fremtid," *Fortid og Nutid* 26/2 (1975), 279-80.

<sup>28</sup> H. Arnold Barton, *Scandinavia in the Revolutionary Era, 1760-1815*, (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), 20, 184-5.

<sup>29</sup> Stewart Oakley, *The Story of Denmark*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), 157-9; Kristian Kristiansen, "Economic Development in Denmark since Agrarian Reform," in Kristiansen, *Archaeological Formation Processes*, 43-4.

As a result of these reforms, the grave mounds and earthworks resting for hundreds of years undisturbed on empty fields under the gray, saturnine skies of Denmark suddenly found themselves at the mercy of legions of industrious farmers enjoying a growing productivity. The fields soon became marked with fences and stones, and the plows of thousands of newly emancipated farmers churned the earth and cut deeply into buried prehistoric remains. Even monuments with fame outside Denmark were not immune from the inevitable processes of development. By 1840, for example, the much-storied Danewall, the eighth-century series of earthworks representing some of the largest fortifications in Europe, was in danger of disappearing forever. "It is hard to believe," wrote one impassioned observer, "How [the Danewall] has in the last five or six years diminished, as it seems to be a true mania among the farmers to lay a hand everywhere upon all parts of the wall."<sup>30</sup>

The improvements in the rural sector also had the effect of providing the capital necessary for the process of industrialization, which was in its early stages in the 1830s and which only worsened an already desperate situation for antiquarians. This was further fueled by the duchies' proximity to the trading centers of Hamburg and Lübeck, which nurtured the growth of a textile industry in the early nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, between 1820 and 1830, the duchies became the most industrialized sector of the *Helstat* and the scene of a tremendous roadway construction project that linked the principal cities of Altona, Kiel, and Flensburg. These roads served as precursors to a growing rail network that further damaged hundreds of archaeological sites.<sup>32</sup> The pace of urban construction also took its toll, as the stones and earth of archaeological sites were pressed into service as building material. While objects of gold and silver were almost always spared, a surprising array of irreplaceable artifacts found their ways into the corners of

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<sup>30</sup> Von Kindt to the Directors of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, 13 April 1835, ALM AA 1835-039. Reprinted in Dagmar Unverhau, *Das Danewerk 1842. Beschreibung und Aufmass*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1988), 105-6.

<sup>31</sup> Skovgaard, *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 5, 192. Skovgaard argues that the desire for greater economic opportunity encouraged Schleswig-Holsteiners to identify with their neighbors to the south, which thereby fueled the pro-German independence movement.

<sup>32</sup> Jürgen Brockstedt, *Frühindustrialisierung in Schleswig-Holstein, anderen norddeutschen Ländern und Dänemark*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1983), 20-50.

the growing cities. One local teacher in the town of Schleswig, for example, even reported to Falck that he had been astounded to discover a completely intact rune stone covering a gutter in the street.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, however, the dramatic changes to the landscape created a need for archaeology, and encouraged its growth as a discipline. As builders and farmers burrowed into moors, flattened rolling hills, and drained ubiquitous bogs, they inadvertently uncovered a previously unimagined wealth of artifacts. Sites that had spent thousands of years fading from the living world suddenly reemerged to become once again objects of wonder. Modernization thus made rediscovering the past possible even as it promised to erase it forever, and the new generation of antiquarians quickly realized that they had but a short time to save it.

### **The Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society in 1834**

The upshot of the precarious position of regional antiquity was the antiquarian community's growing emphasis on preservation, and both Danes and Schleswig-Holsteiners realized that the situation warranted a commission for the duchies similar to that sitting in Copenhagen. The members of the Royal Commission readily acknowledged the consequences of their own limitations. They knew, for example, about the degradation of the Danewall, but their meager resources and distance from the site left them unable to act to rescue it.<sup>34</sup> "Based on its own experience," they wrote to Falck in 1831, "the Commission believes it is capable of saying that it is by far not simply a matter of money that would resolve the issue, but rather that it is of much greater importance to find men who are willing and able to take on the care and preservation of

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<sup>33</sup> Nikolaus Falck, "Schreiben des Herrn Etatsraths Jochims an den Herausgeber über einen dem ersten gehörigen Runenstein," *Neues Staatsbürgerliches Magazin* 3 (1835), 815.

<sup>34</sup> Von Kindt to the Directors of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, 13 April 1835, in Unverhau, *Danewerk*, 105. Kindt alleged that he had written "for several years," to Thomsen personally, but there is no record of any letters from him among Thomsen's papers in the archives of the National Museum in Copenhagen. Given Kindt's passion for the Danewall, however, it is very likely that he did indeed solicit help from the Royal Antiquities Commission.

antiquities."<sup>35</sup> This letter, coming several months after Thomsen and Falck had informally discussed the possibility of founding an organization, amounted to an official request that placed Falck in a leadership position in forming a committee to oversee the protection of antiquities in the region and to establish a permanent collection in the duchies.

Although Falck's antiquities society would have responsibilities limited to the duchies,<sup>36</sup> its leading members soon included both German- and Danish-speaking Schleswig-Holsteiners as well as Danish immigrants from Copenhagen. The membership of the steering committee thus reflected Falck's *Helstat* outlook. Among Falck's first choices was his close friend Christian Paulsen (1798-1854), who, like Falck, was born into a German-speaking family but grew up in northern Schleswig steeped in Danish culture. In fact, Paulsen felt the Danish influence much more strongly than Falck, and by 1820, while studying in Copenhagen, he suddenly ceased writing German in his diaries and began to use Danish as his principal language. As part of his growing admiration for Danish culture, he also became interested in Nordic antiquity, and he made a point to visit every notable collection in the capital city. Inevitably, he met and befriended Thomsen and was proud to be among the first to visit Thomsen's collection.<sup>37</sup> In the years prior to the establishment of the Kiel Museum, Paulsen was equally active touring Schleswig-Holstein and acquainting himself with the most prominent antiquarian enthusiasts. He had even raised the possibility of making prehistory an area of responsibility for the Schleswig-Holstein Historical Society, which he had co-founded in 1833.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, in many ways it was his interest in prehistory and his related travels that helped Paulsen become a well-known and respected figure in the region.

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<sup>35</sup> Directors of The Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities in Copenhagen to Nikolaus Falck, 20 September 1831, ALM AA 1834-001b

<sup>36</sup> See Thomsen to Falck, 27 March 1832, ALM AA 1834-002.

<sup>37</sup> Christian Paulsen diary entry, 09.09.1820, reprinted in *Flensborgeren, Christian Paulsens Dagbøger*, eds. Knud Fabricius and Johannes Lomholt-Thomsen, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1946), 24-5.

<sup>38</sup> Unverhau, *Danewerk*, 35-6.



Christian Paulsen (1798-1854). Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Paulsen was also a close friend of Falck, whom he had first met while studying at the University of Kiel and again in 1824 after he joined the faculty there as a professor of Danish law and legal history.<sup>39</sup> It was Paulsen who facilitated the continued connection between Falck and Thomsen, and his connections and interest in antiquity made him a logical choice for the new society. Moreover, he was a moderate, but he was already very active in the growing debate over the fate of Schleswig-Holstein. Above all, he became famous for his staunch opposition to the radical Uwe Jens Lornsen, who in 1830 wrote that the current political arrangement between the King and the duchies was illegal, that the duchies were indivisible, and that they should become at least an independent partner with the Danish Kingdom.<sup>40</sup> Paulsen objected to the idea that a dual state should replace the *Helstat*, since it neglected the close ties between Schleswig and Denmark. Falck,

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<sup>39</sup> Stig Juul, "Christian Detlef Paulsen," in *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, ed. Povl Engelstoft, Bd. 27, (Copenhagen: J.H. Schultz, 1940), 51-4.

<sup>40</sup> Manfred Jessen-Klingenberg, "Uwe Jens Lornsen," in *Standpunkte zur neueren Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 48-9. After the Treaty of Vienna, the Danish monarch had allowed Holstein, which it held as a personal possession, to join the German Bund. Lornsen argued that under the laws governing the Bund, the King was obliged to grant Holstein a constitution. Since Lornsen argued that Holstein was legally indivisible from Schleswig, he demanded that the constitution apply to that region as well. Lornsen's argument later became a key means of justifying German-speaking claims for an independent Schleswig-Holstein retaining only a token relationship with the Kingdom of Denmark.

meanwhile, agreed with Lornsen on legal grounds that the duchies were bound together, but he was wary of Lornsen's revolutionary agenda and ultimately sided with Paulsen, which strengthened the bond between the two men.<sup>41</sup>

The experience with Lornsen radicalized Paulsen to some degree, and although he did not immediately embrace Danish nationalism, he did discover much earlier than Falck how difficult it was becoming to avoid taking sides in the debate. Paulsen soon found himself supporting efforts to spread Danish language and culture in Schleswig, and it is very likely that his involvement in the antiquities society, like his later support of the Danish language, reflected his desire to promote the cultural elements that the duchies and Denmark shared in common. Paulsen's work against Lornsen had a tremendous impact on the history of the region, and his most significant political text from 1832, *On Popular Character and State Law in the Duchy of Schleswig* (*Ueber Volksthümlichkeit und Staatsrecht des Herzogthums Schleswig*), was critical in shaping the debate over the duchies in the 1830s and 1840s.

Moreover, Paulsen had an especially strong influence on a recently-arrived scholar from Copenhagen named Christian Flor (1792-1875), who later became the first director of the Kiel Museum. After Flor took up duties teaching Danish language and literature at the University of Kiel in 1826, he and Paulsen immediately became very close friends, with Flor serving as the godfather of Paulsen's daughter Sophie.<sup>42</sup> Flor shared his friend's love for Danish culture and language, but where Paulsen started out as something of a reluctant reformer, Flor was a much more ardent revolutionary. He had been inspired to come to the region after reading the works of Danish nationalists such as N. Outzen and E.C. Wertauff, who argued that the Danish language and way of life were in jeopardy in the duchies, and in Kiel he hoped to use his teaching to nurture an appreciation for

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<sup>41</sup> Johann Runge, *Sønderjyden Christian Paulsen: Et slesvigsk levnedsløb*, (Flensborg: Studieafdeling ved Dansk Centralbibliothek for Sydslesvig, 1981), 19-20, 93-5.

<sup>42</sup> Paulsen, diary entry, 26 December 1834, in *Flensborgeren*, 211.



Danish literature in the region.<sup>43</sup> His was a crusading mission to check the growing German influence that he saw eroding the Danish presence. For his work, he was later hailed as a Danish nationalist hero who "made the push to awaken the Danish people from more than six-hundred years of slumber..."<sup>44</sup>



Christian Flor (1792-1875). From *Illustreret Tidende* 16 (April 1875).

Flor, however, seems to have been somewhat unprepared for what he experienced when he first stepped off the boat in Kiel. Although he traveled widely in Germany and spoke German, he must have found Kiel to be quite foreign in comparison to the Danish-speaking towns and parishes on the north side of the Eider River in Schleswig. Here there were far fewer native Danish speakers, and fewer cultural connections. Flor was painfully aware of the German nationalist sentiment growing at the University, where the historian Christian Dahlmann had become famous across Germany agitating for Schleswig-Holstein's place in a unified German nation-state, and he was repeatedly disappointed by the poor Danish proficiency among his students, which prevented him

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<sup>43</sup> Jens Peter Ædigus, *Christian Flor: pædagogen, politikeren, folkeoplyseren*, (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1994), 69-71. Outzen and Wertauff had co-written *Assessments of the Danish language in the Duchy of Schleswig (Priisskrifter angaaende det danske Sprog i Hertugdømmet Slesvig)* in 1819, which sounded a warning call for the future of Danish in the region.

<sup>44</sup> "Christian Flor," *Illustreret Tidende* 16 (April 1875), in ALM AA 1834-043.

from teaching the literature he loved so dearly. In fact, his entry into the political debate began with his arguments for increased Danish training for school pupils, which angered German speakers in the area and eventually made Flor a controversial figure.<sup>45</sup>

He must have taken some solace in the cooperative endeavor of the developing antiquities society. Although he had expressed little interest in antiquarianism prior to the 1830s, he had undergone a personal transformation following his first encounter with N.F.S. Grundtvig, who visited Kiel in 1829.<sup>46</sup> Thereafter, he became an unwavering Grundtvig disciple and a devotee of the "Nordic Renaissance," and it was this experience that led him to share his friend Paulsen's fascination with Northern European antiquity. A few years later, having largely failed in his efforts to teach Danish literature, he turned with greater success to the ancient sagas and myths of Northern Europe. When he considered the possibility of a museum in Kiel, he saw it as a chance to form a "Nordic" collection that would go beyond the duchies and would reflect a broader depiction of Scandinavian prehistory.

Christian Flor proved a valuable addition, but his membership in the Society added a touch of volatility to the project. There were, after all, a few leading German nationalists as well, especially the young historian Andreas Jacob Michelsen (1801-1881) and the lawyer and later mayor of Kiel Georg Ludwig Balemann (1787-1866). Both men had been students of Dahlmann in Kiel before finishing their studies in Göttingen, and their intellectual development was consequently rich with German nationalist thinking.<sup>47</sup> Each was a proponent of Uwe Jens Lornsen's call for reform and a separate constitution for the duchies, which put them inherently at odds with Paulsen and Flor. Although they had relatively little engagement with the museum in the first few years, they expressed outlooks on the goals of prehistoric research that were significantly different from those of their colleagues. Above all, they sought to tie their participation to their work in the

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<sup>45</sup> Ædigus, *Flor*, 70-1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Werner Buchholz, "Andreas Ludwig Jacob Michelsen," *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 17, (Berlin: Duncker und Humboldt, 1993), 453-4; Friedrich Schmidt-Sibeth, "Georg Ludwig Balemann," *Schleswig-Holstein Biographisches Lexikon*, Bd. 3, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1974), 25-8.

Historical Society, which was engaged in challenging the links between Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark.<sup>48</sup> Michelsen was an especially strong advocate of closer connections to other German historical and antiquities societies, and he was a vocal supporter of an overarching organization to link local associations.<sup>49</sup>

There was consequently a recipe for conflict within the leadership of the emerging antiquities society even before its official chartering, yet nationalism did not cloud the early work of the museum, and the antiquities society functioned quite smoothly for several years, long after the dispute over the region had begun. There were two key reasons for this success. The first was the presence of a cooperative spirit and an arrangement largely pleasing to all participants. Regardless of their pro-German or pro-Danish preferences, each of the leading members shared a similarly liberal orientation and could agree to see the museum and antiquities society in the context of an overall trend of political emancipation. The statutes of their new organization mandated that they as Schleswig-Holsteiners would retain custody of most significant finds, and that it would be their duty to communicate with the regional populace through correspondence and a yearly journal.<sup>50</sup> In short, the Society was taking an active role not only in fostering the study of prehistory, but also in broadening and enriching public life.

The second ingredient was the absence of direct political pressure. Although the parameters of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute were forming in the 1830s, there was as yet no salient issue to test the loyalties of the members. The language question remained hypothetical, since King Frederik VI was loathe to alter the status quo, and he let the most controversial proposals to mandate language usage go unanswered. Even Lornsen's agitation did not produce an irreparable break between the camps.<sup>51</sup> There was consequently disagreement but no conflict, and, in any event, there was no political means by which the participants in the debate could act upon their views. The directors

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<sup>48</sup> Kossak, "Urgeschichtsforschung in Schleswig-Holstein," 56-7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Provisorisch genehmigte Statuten der Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländische Alterthümer, ALM AA 1834-zu 001.

<sup>51</sup> Jessen-Klingenberg, "Uwe Jens Lornsen," 50.

of the antiquities society, in contrast to the more radical history society, which was more dominated by pro-German nationalists, were thus able to put aside their differences of opinion and work together on a genuinely shared passion for local prehistory.<sup>52</sup>

Among the only remaining obstacles to the antiquities society was the concession of King Frederik VI, who withheld his approval pending affirmation of the *Jyske Lov*, a law which mandated that recovered gold and silver objects first go to the royal *Kunstammer*.<sup>53</sup> Falck and Warnstedt, meanwhile, were also eager to secure the 160 objects from Schleswig-Holstein in the Copenhagen museum.<sup>54</sup> After more than two years of negotiations, however, they were forced both to accede to the King's demands and to accept the refusal of the Royal Commission to relinquish the Schleswig-Holstein artifacts.<sup>55</sup> The Commission argued that they could not view the artifacts as the inherent property of a Schleswig-Holstein antiquities society, which was a logical extension of Thomsen's view that all relics belonged to the *Helstat* as a whole and not to individual communities.<sup>56</sup> There were other small delays, such as the death of the Royal Commission's numismatist and his replacement by another less amenable to the idea of loaning coins to a museum in Kiel.<sup>57</sup>

The final breakthrough nevertheless came on May 27th 1834, when the Danish monarch officially chartered the Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburg Society for the Collection and Preservation of National Antiquities (*Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländische Alterthümer*).<sup>58</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup> On the split between the history and antiquities societies, see Kossak, "Urgeschichtsforschung in Schleswig-Holstein," 56.

<sup>53</sup> Thomsen to Flor 17 June 1834, ALM AA 1834-016.

<sup>54</sup> Thomsen to Falck, 27 March 1832, ALM AA 1834-002.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> The Directors of the Royal Commission for Antiquities to Falck, 27 March 1832, ALM AA 1834-002. Although the Royal Commission mentions Falck's request, the referenced letter is apparently no longer extant.

<sup>57</sup> Thomsen to Falck, 01 September 1832, ALM AA 1834-003.

<sup>58</sup> Proclamation from Frederik VI, 27 May 1834, ALM AA 1834-zu 100. The term "National" is used in a more neutral sense in this expression.

directors of the Society met in November and sent out invitations to hundreds of potential members in every significant city and town in the duchies.<sup>59</sup> By the following year, the Society had grown to 366 paying members, over two-thirds of whom were members of the clergy or were lawyers, and almost all of whom were either middle-class professionals (teachers, professors, physicians, etc.) or lower nobles.<sup>60</sup> They were individuals who shared both a passion for the past and the vision of the Society's founders, and they became participants in a newly formed cultural-intellectual community of dilettante amateurs who were laying the groundwork for a new branch of scholarship.

### **From Antiquarian Collection to Archaeological Museum**

With unabashed envy, a visitor to the Copenhagen Museum in 1833 lamented the absence of such a collection in his own homeland of Prussia. "The surprising success of the undertaking [in Denmark] has proved," he wrote, "that it only takes a central institution to awaken the sleeping treasures within."<sup>61</sup> Falck seconded this sentiment in his own journal as he and his colleagues worked feverishly to bring their dream of a museum in the duchies to fruition. "The first steps have been taken," he exclaimed to his readers, "to establish in Kiel a Museum for National Antiquities . . . Upon opening, the museum will be able to begin with not less than 1000 pieces."<sup>62</sup>

The Society, in spite of its members' optimism, still faced a number of new challenges to completing the museum project, the first of which was to fulfill its promise to build a collection with enough size and credibility to encourage future donations and promote

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<sup>59</sup> Vorstand der Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländischer Alterthümer, "Einladungsschreiben," Protokoll des Vorstandes, ALM KM III.

<sup>60</sup> "Verzeichnis sämtlicher Mitglieder der Gesellschaft bis ult. August 1836," *Erster Bericht der Königlichen Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgischen Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländischer Alterthümer* (Kiel: Mohr, 1836), 64-78.

<sup>61</sup> "Ueber die Sammlung nordischer Alterthümer," 858.

<sup>62</sup> N. Falck, "Vermischte Nachrichten und Bemerkungen vaterländische Alterthümer betreffend," *Neues Staatsbürgerliches Magazin* 3/2 (1835), 555.

public interest. Fortunately, the steering committee had guarantees from Copenhagen by 1833 on the delivery of 200 rare coins.<sup>63</sup> The coins were not, however, from Schleswig-Holstein, and the second challenge was therefore to obtain local artifacts for the museum. Falck wrote to Warnstedt to ask for his mediation in acquiring the collection of the Patriotic Society in Altona, which contained several pieces from Holstein. Warnstedt, for whom the museum was the fulfillment of a long-standing dream, went one step further and pledged his entire collection, which immediately made the Kiel Museum the largest assemblage in the region.<sup>64</sup>

Flor, meanwhile, worked to find an appropriate location in which to house the collection. Although Kiel was not the largest city in the duchies, with less than 10,000 residents in the 1830s, it was the home of the Christian-Albrecht University, and the Royal Commission had quickly recognized that "one can always find men in this university town who have historical knowledge and an interest for prehistory, and the university's library would offer the literary references for the interpretation of artifacts."<sup>65</sup> They clearly wanted the museum to be both a repository and scholarly institution, and included provision for a close relationship between the eventual museum and the University Library, to which Falck responded by placing the university's librarian, Henning Ratjen, on the board of directors.<sup>66</sup>

After failing to secure space in the famous Kiel Castle (*Kieler Schloss*) and Holsteiner Hof, Flor eventually managed to establish the museum in a former court building, and, in the summer of 1835, the Museum for National Antiquities (*Museum für vaterländische Alterthümer*) opened its doors to the public, offering public exhibitions every Saturday at noon and special tours for visiting scholars and dignitaries.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly, in the opening days, there was little discussion of the artifacts in the collection. The excitement seems

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<sup>63</sup> Thomsen to Falck, 16 November 1833, ALM AA 1834-005.

<sup>64</sup> Warnstedt to Falck, 24 December 1833, ALM AA 1834-006.

<sup>65</sup> Directors of the Royal Commission to Falck, 27 March 1832, ALM AA 1834-002.

<sup>66</sup> *Zweiter Bericht der Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländische Alterthümer* (1837), 32.

<sup>67</sup> Friedrich von Warnstedt, *Ueber Alterthums-Gegenstände. Eine Ansprache an das Publicum*, (Kiel: C.F. Mohr, 1835), 4.

rather to have rested with the enterprise itself, in which the museum took on a more political meaning as a semi-autonomous institution. The collection nevertheless held some impressive artifacts, including an assortment of flint axe-heads, ceramic urns, bronze rings, a few historical items such as escutcheons and old items found in churches, and, of course, the coins from Copenhagen. The collection was largely unorganized, but what was important was that the relics were safe and that they were together to represent the value of the past. To mark the occasion, Warnstedt delivered a public address in which he declared the museum an invaluable institution for the "research of our history, geography, and statistics," referring specifically to Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>68</sup> He also sought to calm the potential fears of private collectors by assuring them that the museum was not their rival and would not work to undermine their holdings, but sought only images and possible exchanges, and a fruitful intellectual discussion.<sup>69</sup>

The cooperation between the Museum and private collectors made it possible for the Museum to work towards its goal of safeguarding local sites. In response to von Kindt's request for assistance at the Danewall, for example, the directors of the museum pleaded with the provincial administration of Schleswig-Holstein to intercede with farmers in the area. They spent years wrangling over private property rights, and made dozens of impassioned pleas to the Danish government. In 1840, they persuaded King Christian VIII to make a personal visit, where he authorized a massive project to measure and record the remaining fragments of the walls in order "to acquire and preserve if at all possible the especially important and interesting pieces of the earthworks in the possession of private persons."<sup>70</sup> This enormous project ultimately made it possible to save the rest of the site. The directors also worked to prevent the needless destruction of artifacts, working with the builders of the growing railway network to preserve finds as

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Die Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Kanzlei to the Schleswig-Holstein Administration at Gottorf, 15 September 1840, reprinted in Unverhau, *Danewerk*, 156.

they were uncovered.<sup>71</sup> The collectors, in turn, aided these efforts through direct excavation of endangered or especially interesting sites and through regular reporting of results, which the antiquities society published in its annual journal.

The correspondence also helped by reporting on the locations of ancient sites and objects. In 1836, the directors issued a circular asking the Society's members throughout the duchies to report on objects "worthy of antiquarian attention."<sup>72</sup> They also asked collectors to deliver inventories of their private collections, which they promised was the only intrusion the Society sought to make into the realm of privately owned relics. They implored regional antiquarians to keep the Museum updated on new finds, and Falck and Flor corresponded directly with noted collectors.<sup>73</sup> Yet despite the supplications of the Society, there was no denying that the museum was a clear rival to the private collector, and the seemingly innocuous tactic of soliciting information was critical to the slowly-increasing control that the museum's founders were exercising over the study of prehistory. They invited collectors to enter the Society, and published their activities in yearly reports and in Falck's biannual almanac, which rewarded collectors by returning some of the celebrity they were losing due to the declining uniqueness of their holdings. They also worked with the information they received to purchase key pieces using membership dues and to encourage collectors to donate or bequeath their relics to the museum.

The upshot of its rising dominance was a gradual move by the Kiel Museum away from the more amateurish musings of antiquarianism to the more rigorous study and comprehensive interpretation that marked the beginnings of the discipline of archaeology. While not devoting themselves to the full-time scholarly pursuit of prehistory as Thomsen had done, the founders of the museum nevertheless began to ask broader questions and to realize the potential for a systematic analysis of their artifacts and for a more coherent and overarching narrative of prehistory. This was their chance to bring

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<sup>71</sup> Christian Paulsen and Henning Ratjen to The Royal Government in Schleswig-Holstein, 25 November 1844, ALM AA 1844-043.

<sup>72</sup> *Zweiter Bericht der Gesellschaft*, 22-3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



prehistory to bear on the present and to explain its meaning for Schleswig-Holstein. These developments, however, paralleled increasing tensions in the duchies at the end of the 1830s, and as the middle ground disappeared politically, their increasingly irreconcilable views were mirrored by growing disparities in their archaeological interpretations.

The differences actually began to emerge from the first moment of the museum's existence. In his "Address," Warnstedt argued that the museum must have a distinct order to its exhibition, but he claimed that it should follow the system used by the antiquities society in the German region of Oberlausitz, which classified finds as "Heathen," "Christian," or "Indeterminate."<sup>74</sup> It is likely that Flor found this somewhat perturbing, since, as director of the museum, he had from the beginning decided to follow Thomsen's Three-Age model. Indeed, Thomsen discussed with Flor his disappointment over the state of German museology, declaring that it was "in distressful shape" with "a large amount of confusion in interpretations and classifications of objects."<sup>75</sup> Flor agreed, but his German colleagues continued to build contacts to the south, while Flor and Paulsen alone maintained a steady correspondence with Thomsen, writing to him frequently for advice on the care of artifacts and the handling of the rare coins in their custody.<sup>76</sup> In the end, Flor's vision won out, as Warnstedt passed away suddenly in 1836, and, since his was the only personal attachment to the display (most of the artifacts having once belonged to his private collection), for a time there was little further interference with Flor's work.

Looking back on these events, a number of modern archaeologists such as Georg Kossak have hinted that this disagreement between Flor and his German colleagues over the proper arrangement and use of museum artifacts was the reason why the founding

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<sup>74</sup> Warnstedt, *Ansprache*, 6-7.

<sup>75</sup> Thomsen to Flor, 23 January 1836, ALM AA 1836-009.

<sup>76</sup> Thomsen to Flor, 6 May 1834, ALM AA-1834-014; 23 October 1834, ALM AA 1834-021; 21 October 1837, ALM AA 1837-083, 09 March 1838, ALM AA 1838-006, Flor to Thomsen, 19 November 1843 and 17 April 1844, NM Afd. 2 Kasse IV, 141.

cohort dissolved in 1845.<sup>77</sup> They have argued that while Flor focused almost exclusively on the custodianship of the objects, Falck and Michelsen wanted to apply interpretations of the artifacts directly to their historical narratives. Although this was certainly the case, I would argue that this difference of opinion was simply too minor to derail several years of successful cooperation, and, in fact, the museum continued to benefit from at least two more donations from Copenhagen.<sup>78</sup> More significantly, the members' correspondence revealed the degree to which they were choosing to maintain relationships with colleagues on linguistic and cultural grounds, which betrayed their nascent nationalist orientations.

Also connected to these new ties was the second point of divergence: the question of origins, which was by far more divisive and which had the greatest impact over the long term. As their holdings grew, the members of the Antiquities Society became increasingly interested in their potential for uncovering the ethnic or cultural roots of the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein. As Falck explained:

If the former regional divisions [of Schleswig-Holstein] have lost their public meaning in the present, and if at the same time some names for these districts (for example Southern Jutland and the region between the Eider and the Schlei) are long since out of use, these ancient regional divisions nevertheless remain important for the prehistorian, as we emphasized last year in the published address, "On the Objects of Antiquity." [The Warnstedt Address]. According to the foundations laid out in this text, we will direct our efforts with the goal of seeking, through the collection and examination of artifacts, an answer to the question of the degree to which these [regional divisions] coincide with the various tribes of Saxons, Sorbs, Frisians and Danes in our duchies in ancient times.<sup>79</sup>

Such questions were nothing new, and Thomsen had also been interested in tracing the prehistoric roots of the Danes. Nor was there much initial controversy over the argument

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<sup>77</sup> Kossack, "Urgeschichtsforschung in Schleswig-Holstein," 56.

<sup>78</sup> Directors of the Royal Commission to the Directors of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, 24 December 1836, ALM AA 1836-030. The Royal Commission sent a contribution of "two spiral finger rings," and "one finger ring," in response to the Kiel Museum's "good progress." They later sent two golden rings in 1845, which are acknowledged in a society meeting documented in ALM AA 1845-o.N.

<sup>79</sup> "Mittheilungen aus der Correspondenz des Vorstandes," *Erster Bericht*, 7-8.

that the Germans and the Danes had common ancestries in prehistory. "With the highest degree of certainty," wrote the Danish antiquarian D.F. Eschricht in 1837, "it is clear that the Germanic or Gothic tribes, which wandered into Sweden, Norway, and Denmark more than ten centuries ago . . . were the fathers of the present-day Swedes, Normans, and Danes."<sup>80</sup>

For its proponents, this theory had a benign quality and made sense in light of the absence of a unified German state. While Danes could come to terms with their shrinking borders by looking to an unbroken dynastic legacy and centuries of unity, Germans had no such models, and therefore had little upon which to hang their self-conceptions. At the same time, it reinforced the integrity of local identity by stressing the common origins of the region's various cultural groups. Danes and Germans could transcend the linguistic divide and define themselves through a common culture in the past. The search to define an ethnic homeland, however, was inherently problematic, since it brought modern borders into question. It created a geographical dimension to the origins of the nation, which opened the possibility of claims to territory and was consequently one of the strongest manifestations of the relationship between archaeology and nationalism. In the case of Schleswig-Holstein, this was exacerbated by the argument from some in the Antiquities Society that Scandinavia was not merely one of several lands populated by Germanic tribes, but was a point of origin for Germanic tribes, which inherently gave Germans a claim to the cultural legacy – the sagas, myths, and symbols – of Denmark.<sup>81</sup> This was a challenge to Danish nationalist thinking, which was still defined by the promotion of supposedly unique aspects of Danish prehistory.

While Flor did not publish texts on the artifacts in his care, his use of the artifacts in the Schleswig-Holstein dispute suggested that he may have felt somewhat threatened by this overarching thinking about prehistory. In his letters to Thomsen, he consistently referred to the museum as a collection of "Nordic Antiquity," and avoided the adjective "national" (*vaterländisch*), which his German colleagues, and even Paulsen, used not in

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<sup>80</sup> D.F. Eschricht, "Ueber die Schädel und Gerippe in unsern Grabhügeln," in *Neues Staatsbürgerliches Magazin* 6/2 (1837), 691.

<sup>81</sup> Warnstedt, *Ansprache*, 7-8.

the divisive sense of the word, “nation,” but as a generic terms to indicate the museum's significance to their home region. For Flor, the museum had a significance transcending the duchies, and was at least as meaningful for Denmark and Scandinavia. He had, after all, come to the duchies to revitalize Danish culture, and a trend favoring the Germanization of artifacts clearly worked against his purposes.

The late 1830s also saw an increase in political tensions that heightened the danger to Flor's work in the region. In 1836, King Frederik VI relented to pressure from both German- and Danish-speaking liberals and granted a series of Advisory Assemblies (*Stænderforsamlingen*) in Jutland, the Danish Isles, and the duchies that awarded liberals a chance for more involvement in governmental affairs. Unfortunately, the King's plan, which was ostensibly a great victory for liberals, in many ways worsened relations with his German-speaking subjects, since he had decided to grant a separate assembly for each duchy. It was an affront to adherents of Schleswig-Holstein's inherent unity but was an ideal solution for Paulsen and Flor, who were concentrating their efforts on reinforcing the ties between Denmark and Schleswig and supporting the Danish-speaking population there.

Falck's election as president of the Schleswig assembly led to an irreparable rift in his relationship with Flor, who did not join the assembly, but worked feverishly behind the scenes to ensure equal rights for Danish speakers. Indeed, the assemblies raised the specter of the language question, as pro-Danish members argued vehemently for the use of Danish as the official language in areas where it was commonly spoken. In 1842, Flor helped force the issue when he convinced assembly member Peter Hiort-Lorenzen to speak Danish in the assembly hall (despite the fact that Lorenzen spoke very little Danish). The moderate Falck, who had failed to mitigate the conflict or limit Flor's influence, was simply not up to the task of controlling the harsh reaction from the pro-German camp.<sup>82</sup>

Danes in Schleswig, according to Flor, were in real danger of cultural extinction, which led him to turn to symbols of prehistory as he argued in their defense. In 1838,

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<sup>82</sup> Hoffmann, "Falck," 150-151.

with help from Paulsen and the printer and fellow Grundtvigian P.C. Koch in the northern Schleswig town of Haderslev, Flor co-founded the journal *Dannevirke*, whose title was drawn from the Danish name of the ancient Danewall. On the cover, the aging, crumbling edifice was reborn as a heroic illustration bedecked with Danish flags, shields, towers, and rune stones. It was once again, if in a figurative sense, a border and bulwark against the encroachment of German influence. Flor used the journal to criticize the Assembly and to make his pleas to the Nordic spirit of his countrymen. Even Paulsen, who remained committed to a bond with both Schleswig and Holstein, used the journal to attack the radical German nationalists.<sup>83</sup>

Shortly after *Dannevirke* appeared and the debates in the assemblies became overtly partisan, the coalition between Danish- and German-speaking liberal groups collapsed. By 1845, the founders of the Kiel Museum began to split along the fault lines of the widening political crisis. The climate in Kiel became too hostile for Flor, and he left to found a Grundtvigian folk high school in Rødding. Paulsen departed soon after at the start of the 1848 Revolution. Falck, having failed to please either side, lost his position in the assembly in 1846 and began to write on the legal justification for Schleswig's entry into the German Confederation, indicating that he, too, had radicalized to some extent. By 1848, the region was engulfed in revolution and then in an unsuccessful war for independence against Denmark. The original leading members of the antiquities society were soon mostly gone, and the museum passed to Karl Müllenhoff (1818-1884), a young philologist at the University of Kiel whose primary interest lay in the myths and legends of Schleswig-Holstein. He thus preserved the local character of the enterprise but his ascendancy marked the end of direct Danish involvement and a temporary halt to direct German-Danish collaboration.

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<sup>83</sup> Unverhau, *Danewerk*, 40-3.

## Conclusion

At the height of the crisis over the fate of his homeland, Nikolaus Falck reflected on the broader value of the museum that he had helped create. "If one were to compare the Germanic and Nordic collection with the museums in which Greek and Roman monuments are preserved," he mused, "then our collection would fall far short."<sup>84</sup> There were, he acknowledged, no breathtaking marble sculptures in Kiel, only a small assortment of notched swords and broken rings, each covered with a patina of rust and earth, and a few broken stone tools and ceramic vessels with faded markings. Yet the artifacts were important. They held answers to the questions of what Schleswig-Holstein had been in the past, and thereby informed the way it should be in the future. Falck and his colleagues could see the common past buried within the landscape, and they knew immediately that theirs was a valuable pursuit both for its own sake and for the purpose of building an independent and unified Schleswig-Holstein.

As an outsider from Copenhagen, Christian Flor had more difficulty grasping the significance of this local identity for his comrades, and his insistence on imparting a broader meaning for Denmark and all of Northern Europe was out of place even if it was a natural reaction to the threats he perceived to his culture. Flor, of course, was not alone to blame for the advent of national strife. In many ways, the example of the Kiel Museum shows that the questions and assumptions of archaeological research were inherently receptive to nationalist ideologies, and that in a context of insecurity, the past could be subject to manipulation. Falck, Warnstedt, and Michelsen all expressed an early interest in comparing their finds with those in other parts of Germany, and seemed to believe that their collection would resonate with Bavarians and Prussians just as it did with Schleswig-Holsteiners.

The founding of the Kiel Museum thus occurred not only at the beginning of a rediscovery of prehistory, but also at the cusp of an intersection between nationalism and archaeology. Its scholars had begun to obtain a privileged position in the interpretation of

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<sup>84</sup> Falck, "Miscellen," *Archiv für Geschichte, Statistik, Kunde der Verwaltung und Landsrechte der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg* 1 (1842), 366-8.

antiquity that would translate into a special role in the articulation of their respective national identities. Their collection would soon allow them to write the prehistory of their nations and lead them to lay the foundation for organic national communities. This, however, was exactly the process that brought differing conceptions of the past to the surface. Even in a time when the museum's scholars were less interested in archaeological analysis and more so in preservation and organization, their differing visions of the meaning of the enterprise of collecting and researching proved to be the primary fault line along which later rifts would develop.

Yet the museum and the antiquities society survived for more than ten years with little controversy, and it was the capacity for all the members, including Paulsen and Flor, to entertain an idea of a unique Schleswig-Holstein identity that made that cooperation possible. The Kiel Museum thus did not begin as a national institution. It suffered instead from the intense social pressures of the debate over Schleswig-Holstein and the subsequent experience of war from 1848 to 1851. Ultimately, the conflict threatened to permanently sunder the connections fostered in the previous decade. In Flensburg, more firmly situated in the Danish part of Schleswig, the Danes erected a new museum in 1852 that would display the collection of Nordic antiquity of which Flor had dreamed.<sup>85</sup> There was thus one German and one Danish institution engaged between the two German-Danish wars in a so-called "struggle for prehistory."<sup>86</sup>

The museum thus became a German national institution as a result of the conflict, but despite the experience of the mid-nineteenth century, it never became fully nationalist, and it never fully abandoned its local and transnational roles. Indeed, the end of the wars soon heralded a return to the old relationship between German and Danish archaeologists. This meant that, in the long term, the museum was a success because it helped forge a transnational community of scholars and became instrumental not only in preserving relics at risk from modernization, but also in shaping a new academic discipline in the region. Through this collaboration, its founders were able to introduce modern methods

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<sup>85</sup> On the Flensburg Museum, see Stine Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*.

<sup>86</sup> Idem., *Kampen om oldtiden*.

of archaeology into Germany, to import Thomsen's chronology, and to make it possible to tell the story of the past. Finally, it was a success because it appealed to a common identity that never extinguished the spirit of cooperation. Because of that sentiment, subsequent generations of archaeologists in Kiel and Copenhagen would find themselves once again at the forefront of their discipline, even as they continued to struggle with the nationalist implications of their collective research.



## CHAPTER 2

### **"WHEN THE GERMANS RAN WILD IN DENMARK": The Nationalization of Prehistory and the German-Danish Wars, 1845-1865**

Every day brought new discoveries. With each turn of the spade, the contours of the ancient past became clearer. In the years between 1845 and 1865, a second generation of scholars came into its own, realizing that the future of archaeology would be found not only in the museum but also in the field. They embraced an approach of toil and challenge with the promise of coaxing true wonders of ancient innovation from beneath water and mud. Their discoveries made famous the lonely bogs of northern Schleswig, beneath which lay beautiful bronze plates inlaid with silver dolphins and birds, impressive hoards of Roman coins, and the swords and shields of vanquished warriors.<sup>1</sup> In 1863, the most dramatic find, an iron-age boat recovered by Conrad Engelhardt from a bog at Nydam, became the great reward of years of painstaking labor. Fully assembled, the Nydam Boat and the treasures from the surrounding marshes made the city of Flensburg a new center of archaeological scholarship. It was there that Engelhardt's once-tiny collection came to surpass the assemblages within the Kiel Museum. Indeed, the 1850s and 1860s were an especially critical period for the emergence of archaeology in Denmark, and the spectacular artifacts in the halls of the Flensburg Collection (*Flensborgsamling*) bore witness to the magnificence of prehistory on Danish soil.

These were, however, also times of war, and the Germans had their own claims to the artifacts and the prehistory they represented. By 1864, with the Prussians marching inexorably on Flensburg, the steady rhythm of the dig suddenly gave way to a desperate race to save precious relics for Denmark. The excavators, whose exhibitions reflected

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<sup>1</sup> Conrad Engelhardt, "Udgravningerne i Sønderbrarup Mose," *Dagbladet* (17 August 1860).

years of delicate care, found themselves hurriedly packing their finds, more than 10,000 in all, into crates and shipping them across the Baltic to safety. It would not be long, however, before these remains would join hundreds of other archaeological finds at the center of a new conflict, as the Germans demanded their return to what was now a united Germany's sovereign soil. The result was a protracted struggle for ownership of the past and a test of national honor on both sides.



A typical excavation scene: excavating a barrow at Schafstedt, ca. 1906. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Beyond northern Europe, the cloak-and-dagger intrigues of the Flensburg Museum are largely forgotten, yet there could be no greater example of the symbolic power of antiquity in the creation of national identity in this border region. The emergence of the Flensburg Collection and the drama of its disappearance and seizure by the Prussians were the highlights of what the Danish archaeologist Stine Wiell has called a great "struggle for prehistory" that stemmed from the two Danish-German wars of 1848-1851 and 1864.<sup>2</sup> During that time, the cooperation that had so successfully institutionalized the study of antiquity in Schleswig and Holstein quickly eroded, and the latent tensions of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Stine Wiell, *Kampen om oldtiden*.

1840s erupted into open divisions, which led to an intense bitterness that colored border relations for over a century.

Germans, for example, remembered the disappearance of the Flensburg Collection as an act of criminal theft on the part of the Danes. In 1929, the Flensburg archivist Fritz Graef wrote the most vociferous account of the conflict, lionizing the efforts of German scholars to recover the collection while condemning the actions of Conrad Engelhardt as the endpoint of a long-running Danish effort to deny the Germans a part of their heritage.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Stine Wiell has sought a more moderate position with books charting the effects of the two conflicts on local archaeology and providing a comprehensive and well-researched history of the Flensburg Collection. Her work recognizes the ambiguous nature of prehistory's relationship to the present, reminding readers, "Prehistoric archaeology apparently knows no boundaries."<sup>4</sup> Yet, even in this statement, there is a sense of hesitancy, and there remains a slightly partisan flavor to her writing. Wiell continues, for example, to refer to the Prussians as "the enemy," and her tone is unmistakable when she laments that now the collection has been "lost to Denmark forever."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, even today many Danes peer wistfully across the border at the Nydam Boat and Thorsberg Collection, which have come to rest, much to Danish chagrin, in the Schleswig-Holstein State Archaeology Museum in Germany (*Schleswig-Holstein Archäologisches Landesmuseum*).

Moreover, despite the complexity and detail of Wiell's writing, two critical dimensions remain unexplored. What, for example, was the role of the national context of revolution and political change gripping both sides of the border? The fate of the region was, after all, inextricably linked to the broader events of 1848, and the so-called "Schleswig Question" was, as Wolfram Siemann has said, "an integral part of the prehistory of the revolution."<sup>6</sup> In the period between 1848 and 1864, the idle dreams of

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<sup>3</sup> Fritz Graef, *Geschichte des Flensburger Museums nordischer Altertümer*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1929).

<sup>4</sup> Stine Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Idem., *Kampen om Oldtiden*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Siemann, Wolfram, *The German Revolution of 1848-49*, trans. Christiane Banerji, (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1998), 46.

the shape of the German and Danish nations that had enchanted the early nineteenth-century Romantics suddenly became key political questions for parliamentarians in Frankfurt and Copenhagen, and among the most salient was the fate of Schleswig and Holstein. Indeed, it was not long before the two duchies became the epicenter of the hopes of an aspiring nation on the one hand and a nation in transformation on the other. In such a passionate and fluid context, it is hardly surprising that two factions looking for symbols to justify their causes would turn to an ancient past that had long inspired their imaginations, nor should it seem out of place that both sides should contest the ownership of those symbols.

Of no less importance, then, is the question of how the symbolic value of antiquity became so readily available and mutable during this transformative period. Lost beneath the marshes, regional antiquity had possessed only an anticipatory power that had generated a more general fascination with the enterprise of collecting and preserving. But with marvelous pieces suddenly on display in museums and with gripping accounts of their discovery in scholarly journals, it became possible for the first time to apply differentiated values to prehistoric remains and to make appropriations. How and why, then, did this transformation in archaeological practice occur, and at what points did it intersect with the passions of revolution and nationalism during this period? Only by interrogating the relationship between these trends of national articulation and archaeological professionalization can we begin to see how antiquity came to the forefront of two inter-ethnic wars that placed local identity at the center of an intense and bloody metamorphosis.

### **Notes from the Field: J.J.A. Worsaae's Independent Archaeology**

On his way to London in the summer of 1846, J.J.A. Worsaae (1821-1885), a young archaeologist and one-time student of C.J. Thomsen, became seasick while traveling the waters of the Baltic. Fearing the resumption of his storm-tossed crossing, he lingered for six days in Kiel, visited friends, and was introduced one evening to Nikolaus Falck. He described the encounter in a letter to his mother, and mentioned Falck not as a fellow antiquarian scholar but as a well-known and respected leader of the Schleswig-Holstein

Party. Such credentials generally entailed an element of enmity from a Danish perspective, but Worsaae nevertheless seemed to appreciate Falck's company, even in the wake of the recent controversies in the Advisory Assembly.<sup>7</sup> "He sought quite earnestly to deflect the accusation that he had dismissed P.H. Lorenzen from the Advisory Assembly because he had spoken Danish;" Worsaae wrote, apparently accepting Falck's explanation that "he had only done it because [Lorenzen] did not wish to obey him as Assembly President."<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Falck confided that he expected future assembly meetings to be "very stormy," and seemed anxious to stress to his Danish colleagues his waning ability to control the momentum of the looming conflict.



J.J.A. Worsaae (1821-1885). Nationalmuseet.

If the assemblies themselves heralded the advent of revolution against the monarchy in Copenhagen, the acrimonious proceedings within them signaled coming divisions within the duchies, and moderate positions such as Falck's were soon to become virtually untenable. In such a context, the meeting with Falck, which Worsaae called an "amusing evening," represented an increasingly rare moment of cordiality between German and Danish antiquarians in the late 1840s. Christian Flor had by this time left Kiel for

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> Worsaae to his mother, reprinted in J.J.A. Worsaae, *En Oldgranskers Erindringer*, ed. Victor Hermansen, (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske, 1934), 282-83.

Rødning, Christian Paulsen would leave two years later, and Worsaae was on the cusp of becoming a leading voice against German claims to local prehistory. Indeed, even on this occasion he did not spare his German colleague from some personal criticism, writing, "I found him to be neither an especially distinguished or dynamic man."<sup>9</sup> He thus made it clear that he was unimpressed by the very qualities that had once made Falck such a successful moderate.

Such criticisms, however, though coming at a moment of political crisis, seemed equally applicable to a broader academic rift growing between young scholars like Worsaae and the more established cohort of Falck and Thomsen. Indeed, such remarks about Falck came during a period when his relationship with his mentor was equally strained, and when Worsaae, born after the Napoleonic Wars with little attachment to the spirit of *Helstat* patriotism, grew generally dissatisfied with the practices of the older generation. Both his political views and professional life intersected at a moment of conflict pitting his own passion, ambition, and vision for change in archaeology against the more compromising but hidebound attitudes of his elders. "As conservative as I was in politics," he wrote, "I was almost radical in my scholarship."<sup>10</sup> Above all, Worsaae felt it was important that archaeology move away from the emphasis on institutions and museums that had lain at the heart of antiquarian work in the previous decades. While he admired Thomsen's museum and valued its world status, he nevertheless wanted to promote the study of antiquities (*Oldkyndighed*) as a more independent discipline. It should, he believed, divest itself of its heavy dependence on textual and historical sources and engage in a comprehensive study of all types of prehistorical remains. In other words, he wanted to practice an archaeology that would consider not only recovered artifacts, but also archaeological sites (*Mindesmærker*) such as barrows and stone circles.

Even if Thomsen had expressed similar interests in studying site contexts, it was nevertheless a fairly radical idea to consider archaeological evidence without the aid of

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Worsaae, *Erindringer*, 93.

textual or linguistic study.<sup>11</sup> This had much to do with the fact that the practice of archaeology was greatly tied to the study of the classical Mediterranean, where textual evidence was abundant. As Suzanne Marchand has shown, European scholars pursuing archaeology in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean strongly emphasized the value of artifacts as aids to textual analysis.<sup>12</sup> Given the dominance of classical scholarship at this time, it is not surprising that such practices extended to prehistoric archaeology in Northern Europe. The problem with this fixation on text, however, was that it severely limited the questions one could ask and hope to answer about a region with few literary resources. Thomsen had never pursued the full potential of studying remains in such isolation, concentrating instead on the order, care, and proper display of artifacts in his museum. This practice had also dominated the arrangement of the collection at the Kiel Museum, where Christian Flor shared a line of thinking affording ancient remains an inherent value to the regional or national community that was not contingent on their place in a historical narrative. At that time, both Thomsen and Flor believed that their collections could reveal a pattern of cultural evolution, but the course of that evolution remained a mystery.

Worsaae, however, had grown up in the shadow of the magnificent barrows at Jelling near his hometown of Vejle in eastern Jutland.<sup>13</sup> He had been a collector of antiquities since childhood, but his enchantment with the past likely grew in part from these enigmatic landmarks on the horizon, and his private passions later informed his approach to archaeology. Moreover, he tackled the problems of his discipline differently because he had been forced to master his craft in the field and had seen the greater potential of archaeological scholarship firsthand. In fact, his initial break with Thomsen stemmed

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<sup>11</sup> Thomsen had been open to the idea of cultural evolution as a guiding principle of archaeological research and this thinking had informed his relative dating techniques. He stopped short, however, of considering the value of evolutionary approaches for the Scandinavian context, thinking that many advanced artifacts had been imported into the region from southern Europe. See Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 75-80.

<sup>12</sup> Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 43.

<sup>13</sup> Worsaae's father had been a chief treasury clerk in the local administration in Vejle, and his family had a great deal of influence in the region. Since prince Frederik (later King Frederik VII) had been studying nearby, the elder Worsaae had been responsible for paying the prince's monthly allowance. Through this connection, the prince, also an eager antiquarian, became interested in Worsaae's private collection and was later a great patron of Worsaae's work. "J.J.A. Worsaae's Erindringer om Frederik VII," in Worsaae, *Af en Oldgranskings Breve*, vol. 2, 1848-1885, ed. Victor Hermansen, (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske, 1938), 14.

from his continuing inability to secure a permanent position in the Copenhagen museum. Worsaae instead worked for a number of years as a volunteer in the museum, and embarked on a series of travels throughout the Danish Islands and Jutland Peninsula. He visited dozens of sites and realized that proper excavations demanded a certain level of expertise and experience. "The conviction," he wrote in 1841, "that one cannot without great difficulty and much uncertainty use reports on barrows which are undertaken by farmers without the supervision of learned men, has time and again led critics [of unsupervised digs] to themselves undertake excavations."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, between 1837 and 1840, Worsaae participated in at least six excavations, including digs at barrows near Vejby and Nyrup on Sjælland, and the now-famous Jelling barrows near his own hometown.<sup>15</sup> The Royal Commission had ordered none of the excavations and had solicited none of the reports that Worsaae published.<sup>16</sup> The impetus stemmed rather from Worsaae's own initiative and boundless energy and enthusiasm, born of a conviction that studying sites directly was the key to unlocking the potential of archaeological evidence.

In 1843, he refined his views and produced his first book, *Danmarks Oldtid oplyst ved Oldsager og Gravhøie*, which was translated a year later into German and in 1849 into English as *The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark*. The book elaborated his thinking on the possibilities of archaeology, especially regarding the contribution that ancient sites were capable of making to the understanding of the past:

But it may be asked, how can we ever hope to arrive, in some degree, at a clear knowledge of the early history of our native land. Such a result, as we have already shewn [sic], can be effected only in part, by means of the existing records. It becomes therefore necessary to look to other sources, from which we may not only derive fresh facts, but also obtain confirmation and illustration of those facts which are preserved in our early records. Recognising this principle, attention has recently been directed to the indisputable memorials of antiquity which we possess in

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<sup>14</sup> Worsaae, "Undersøgelser af Gravhøie i Danmark," *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed* (1840-1841), 137-8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-66.

<sup>16</sup> Worsaae, "Fund i Steendysser i Danmark," *Annaler* (1844-1845), 193.



the Cromlechs, Cairns, Barrows or Grave-hills, Stone-circles, &c., which lie scattered over the country, as well as in the many different objects which have been discovered in them.<sup>17</sup>

He also made a case for applying Thomsen's Three-Age Theory both to artifacts found in the field and to specific archaeological sites:

To obtain correct ideas on the subject of the first peopling and the most ancient relations of our native country, it will not be sufficient to direct attention exclusively to objects exhumed from the earth. It is at the same time indispensably necessary to examine and compare with care the places in which antiquities are usually found; otherwise many most important collateral points can either not be explained at all, or at least in a very unsatisfactory manner.<sup>18</sup>

Such an approach was important first because it provided a new way to test Thomsen's hypothesis about the existence of distinct archaeological periods with specific technologies. He explained: "Thus we should scarcely have been able to refer, as we have done in the previous pages, to three successive periods, if experience had not taught us that objects which belong to different periods are usually found by themselves."<sup>19</sup> At the same time, it suggested that there were features unique to sites stemming from specific periods, and that these could reveal crucial clues as to the settlement and cultural patterns of the ancient peoples of Denmark. This approach permitted Worsaae to delineate a site typology corresponding to artifact types, identifying round stone cromlechs (*Steendysser*) and the longer passage graves (the so-called "giants' chambers" or *Jættestuer*) as indicative of Stone Age construction. It likewise led him to highlight the vast differences between Stone Age structures and the earth-covered, hill-shaped barrows of the Bronze and Iron Ages, which reinforced the idea that the different "ages" indeed represented distinct periods of development.<sup>20</sup> In each case, he was able to verify his hypotheses by comparing the sites with the artifacts found inside, referring to the flint

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<sup>17</sup> Worsaae, *The Primeval Antiquities of Denmark*, trans. William J. Thoms, (London: John Henry Parker, 1844), 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-105.

axes recovered in the cromlechs and bronze rings and swords pulled from the smaller barrows as proof of their exclusive association with a specific age.

The compelling power of his theories succeeded in securing for Worsaae a career in archaeology. In 1847, King Christian VIII (r. 1839-1848) appointed him Inspector for the Preservation of Antiquarian Monuments. Thereafter, he quickly began to earn both a national and international reputation. With support from the royal government, he traveled abroad to make comparisons of archaeological data. His efforts won him a gold medal in Sweden, and drew invitations from the Royal Geographic Society in London.<sup>21</sup> This was a significant step, since Worsaae was not only able to argue for the validity of the Three Age Theory for prehistoric remains outside Denmark, but also to strengthen the overseas ties of the Danish archaeological community.

Worsaae, in effect, succeeded in revolutionizing his discipline even as he struggled to find his place within it. He had entered a field of study in its infancy and had capitalized on the absence of standard practices or methods. Like the farmers and local townsmen who had plunged pick and shovel into barrows in years past, Worsaae faced virtually no restrictions on his ability to undertake excavations. Yet his previous experience and his systematic and carefully reported work across Denmark lent him a certain status as an expert that rendered his assessments more credible. He had taken the first steps towards establishing the dominance of the professional scholar over the practice of fieldwork. Moreover, Worsaae's theories not only reinforced Thomsen's work, but also established a fundamental paradigm for the practice of archaeology. His reinforcement and expansion of the Three Age typology provided excavators with a set of empirical guidelines for future digs. With each discovery, they could test both his hypotheses and the Three Age Theory and could go into the field with a set of expectations about how to interpret finds. This in turn promised to unify the discipline of archaeology, and transformed Thomsen's ideas about the order of artifacts in the museum into a potential point of orthodoxy across an emerging intellectual field.

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<sup>21</sup> David Henry, ed., *Viking Ireland: Jens Worsaae's Accounts of His Visit to Ireland, 1846-47*, (Balgavies, Angus: Pinkfoot Press, 1995), ix. The request for a Danish archaeologist had come from the Duke of Sutherland and the Earl of Ellesmere, who were members of the Royal Geographic Society.

## Germanizing Odin: Mythic Heritages and Volkish Nationalism

The nature of Worsaae's work brought him into frequent contact with German scholars. While working as a volunteer in the museum in Copenhagen, for example, Worsaae maintained a correspondence with Christian Flor regarding archaeological reports, which was one of the few remaining links between Kiel and Copenhagen during Flor's final years and amid rising political tensions.<sup>22</sup> His book was later well received in Germany, and it was Andreas Michelsen who ultimately persuaded him to have it translated and published there.<sup>23</sup> In the summer of 1845, his success afforded him a chance to make a tour through the German states and Austria, with visits to collections in Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Hannover. His assessment was highly critical, and though he admired the German fascination with the past, he was singularly unimpressed by its representation. With the exception of the northern German collections in Schwerin and Kiel (which had been influenced by Danish practice), Worsaae maintained that none of the assemblages had a notable scholarly value. He said, "To a stunning degree, the antiquities from different periods and peoples are blended with one another . . . Chinese, Indian, Persian, and Turkish objects are displayed in the midst of pieces from the fifteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries and from various European countries."<sup>24</sup>

The problem, Worsaae seemed to believe, was not simply limited to the museum, but pervaded German thinking about prehistory. He claimed that a similar type of cultural mixing was plaguing the work of philologists, especially that of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, whose celebrity he encountered throughout Germany. The Grimms, he argued, had borrowed too heavily from Nordic sources, which they then represented as part of the German literary heritage. "In the Grimm's *German Mythology* (*Deutsche Mythologie*), for example, the Scandinavian element is so overwhelming, that when it is taken away, most of the substance disappears and only the names of gods remain behind."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Flor to Worsaae, 19 November 1843 and 15 May 1844, NM Afd. 2 Kasse III, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Worsaae, *Erindringer*, 115.

<sup>24</sup> Idem., "Den nationale Oldkydighed i Tyskland," *Annaler* (1846), 119-20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 118.

The disorganization Worsaae encountered in the German museums was the result of poor connections among collecting associations and an absence of typological theory.<sup>26</sup> In the case of the Grimms, however, the issue of cultural borrowing was a product of uncertainty about the shape and character of the German nation. Worsaae never met the Grimms personally, but his encounter with their work and reputation in Germany introduced him to a long-running debate about the origins of Germanic and Nordic peoples, in which philologists on both sides of the border had been engaged since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Before 1848, the dialogue was a collegial one among German and Scandinavian scholars, and Worsaae later recalled in his memoirs his feeling of surprise at the absence of tensions between Germans and Scandinavians outside the disputed border region.<sup>27</sup> Yet within a few years of his visit, the consequences of this debate would bring his new thinking about archaeology into conflict with various German and Scandinavian ideas about the connections between their past heritages and their present national communities.

On the German side, the Grimms were certainly the leading advocates of linking Nordic and Germanic mythic traditions. Christa Kamenetsky's work on the Grimms has recently emphasized their Romantic view of an ancient mythology in which "nature was humanized," which meant that the myths effaced the boundaries between human beings and nature, and depicted a society in a purer and simpler state.<sup>28</sup> The Grimms shared an attitude at the heart of what Jost Hermand has called a "Teutonic revival," which had appeared in the late eighteenth century. Reacting against a "Frenchified German aristocracy," this movement emerged from the thinking of such eighteenth-century intellectuals as Johann Herder, who saw in the ancient myths a more egalitarian tradition that elided the class cleavages of modern civilization.<sup>29</sup> Herder and his cohort embraced the possibility of reclaiming a more democratic society, and, as Hermand has explained,

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<sup>26</sup> See Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness*.

<sup>27</sup> Worsaae, *Erindringer*, 130.

<sup>28</sup> Christa Kamenetsky, *The Brothers Grimm and Their Critics: Folktales and the Quest for Meaning*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 71-2.

<sup>29</sup> Jost Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich: Volkish Utopias and National Socialism*, trans. Paul Levesque and Stefan Soldovieri, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 5-6.

"Therefore, these more democratically oriented groups stopped placing their hopes in some kind of benevolent despot from the disintegrating 'Holy Roman Empire.' Rather, they began to dream of a state, a nation, a community founded on the idea of simplicity, which *all* citizens could call their own."<sup>30</sup>

Similar attitudes had shaped nationalist thinking in Denmark, where the philosophical world view of N.F.S. Grundtvig stressed the value of cultivating a sense of community. The Grimms were, like Grundtvig, Volkish thinkers, and their engagement with Nordic myth was part of a hunt for the original elements of the German *Volk*. This placed the brothers on common ground with Danish scholars, who joined them in believing that the key to defining the national character was to understand the nature of the *Volk*. While there were notable differences between German and Danish Volkish conceptions, both essentially embraced the concept of a nation composed of an integral community with a collective spirit. It had long captivated the minds of German intellectuals and had led them to place a strong positive value on communal existence at a time when leading liberal thinkers in France and England were placing an emphasis on the individual and were defining the national community by the more open, less exclusive criterion of state citizenship. Germans and Scandinavians, by contrast, described the expression of group consciousness as transcending the concern for the individual. Indeed, the German philosopher G.F.W. Hegel saw individuals as existing in a state of alienation alleviated only by membership in a community expressing a "general will," whose rise was the most rational course of human development. "This essential being," Hegel wrote, "is itself the union of two wills: the subjective will and the rational will. This is an ethical totality: the *state*."<sup>31</sup> For Hegel, the "essential being" was the institutionalization of the community, whose emergence was the capstone to his strongly linear and teleological account of Germany's history and future. The *Volk* had an ancient beginning, and its story was one of its achieving a final political expression.

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<sup>30</sup> Idem, "Back to the Roots: The Teutonic Revival from Klopstock to the Wars of Liberation," in *From the Greeks to the Greens: Images of the Simple Life*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 52.

<sup>31</sup> G.F.W. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 40-1, Emphasis in original.

The search for *Volk* thus implied a search for origins, and for the Grimms, the linguistic artifacts of myths and sagas were the surest means of finding them. As Jacob once said, "the body of the spiritual functions of a people is its language."<sup>32</sup> By noting linguistic similarities in the body of Nordic and Germanic myths, they hypothesized that the myths did not bear the stamp of individual writers, but were products of *collective authorship* shaped through generations and across communities. In order to verify their hypothesis, the Grimms depended on access to a vast array of linguistic artifacts, yet the scarcity and uncertainty of textual resources were as much a problem for their work in Germany as they were for Worsaae's archaeology in Denmark. Moreover, much available material bore the imprint of Christian influences, which attenuated their value as "pure" sources. The Grimms recognized, for example, that much Germanic mythology, such as the *Nibelungenlied*, which had been such a strong cultural component of German nationalist sentiment during the Napoleonic Wars, had in fact been corrupted by Latin and Christian material, and no longer represented an unspoiled or original work.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, they saw the Nordic myths and sagas as relatively untouched by the passage of time, and argued that studying them would best reveal the spirit of the ancient Germans. As Jacob later noted in his celebrated *German Mythology* (*Deutsche Mythologie*), these myths bore clear linguistic affinities, similar nomenclatures, and several shared religious elements.<sup>34</sup> For the Grimms, there was thus virtually no difference between "German mythology" and "Nordic mythology."

It was the possibility of finding unadulterated sources that drew the German gaze to the North, but it was the Danes who made the first contact. In 1809, the historian Rasmus Nyerup (1750-1829) wrote to Wilhelm to commend him on his work on the *Nibelungenlied*. "I am amazed," he later wrote, "by the exact and efficient knowledge of

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Jörg Jochen Müller, *Germanistik und deutsche Nation, 1806-1848*, (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 2000), 143.

<sup>33</sup> George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 84-7.

<sup>34</sup> Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, Bd. 1, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (Göttersloh: Bertelsmann, 1876), 10-12.

our language that you possess . . ."<sup>35</sup> Nyerup expressed enthusiasm about Grimm's work, and warmly greeted his early hypothesis that "the German folk poetry (*Volksdichtung*) stood in close contact with the Danish in earlier times."<sup>36</sup> Wilhelm Grimm and Rasmus Nyerup maintained a steady correspondence through the 1820s, and their relationship even survived the interruption of the Napoleonic Wars, when Nyerup re-established contact through the help of a student, who was none other than a young C.J. Thomsen, then traveling through Heidelberg and Kassel.<sup>37</sup> Nyerup and his colleagues made it possible for both Wilhelm and Jacob to acquire many of the texts and scholarship they needed to carry out their research.<sup>38</sup> In return, they were pleased to see their national heritage promoted abroad by such noted scholars. "You are right when you note the enthusiasm with which the old Norse literature is now pursued [in Germany]," Wilhelm wrote to his friend, "You can rest assured that we take great joy in it here."<sup>39</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, there was nothing inherently threatening about this joint enterprise, and, like the antiquarians in Schleswig-Holstein during the *Vormärz* Era, the philologists studying Nordic and Germanic myths were able to work well together in a common pursuit of the past. If this collegial exchange was the result of mutual nationalist affirmations, it also came partly from the limits of national sentiment in the years preceding the Revolution of 1848. Like many Danish historians and philologists, Nyerup was fascinated by the connections not only between German and Danish traditions, but also by the links among Scandinavian countries, and his intense interest in the work of the Grimms reflected at once a curiosity and an ambivalence about Danish and Scandinavian identity. Although a dedicated Scandinavianist movement did not fully appear until the 1840s, Nyerup, who wrote in the context of a disintegrating *Helstat* and newly-emerging self-conceptions, already presaged sentiments familiar to later Scandinavianists, especially a heightened sense of cultural and ethnic unity. He was

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<sup>35</sup> Nyerup to Wilhelm Grimm, 17 March 1810, reprinted in *Briefwechsel der Gebrüder Grimm mit nordischen Gelehrten*, ed. Ernst Schmidt, (Berlin: Dümmler, 1885), 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Nyerup to Wilhelm Grimm, 24 July 1816, in *ibid.*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Grimm to Nyerup, 26 March 1810, in *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Grimm to Nyerup, 28 August 1818, in *ibid.*, 77.

clearly intrigued by the linkages among Nordic peoples that were implicit in the Grimms' work, and there was still space in his world view for German participation in what was essentially a Scandinavian intellectual project.

During the 1830s and 1840s, the Grimms also maintained both a correspondence and a deep friendship with Nyerup's younger colleague, C.C. Rafn, (1795-1864), a professor at the University of Copenhagen and founder of the Royal Society for Nordic Antiquities (*Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab*).<sup>40</sup> While he would later become one of their most vociferous critics, Rafn at first shared the Grimms' faith in the originality of Nordic sagas, and joined them in studies of the ancient literature of Iceland, which he called "the motherland of Nordic history."<sup>41</sup> Rafn, however, seems to have been much more conscious of his Scandinavianist leanings, and his collaborative work with Jacob Grimm on the Icelandic *Eddas* reflected a growing trend in the Scandinavianist movement to seek cultural anchors in order to cultivate a sense of unity and to downplay previous tensions.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Rafn, who also sat on the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities with Thomsen and Worsaae, wanted the study of archaeology and philology to abandon the limitations of state institutions. He even felt justified welcoming Jacob Grimm into his Royal Society, writing, "Because [antiquities] are a national property of all of northern Europe, so the [Royal Society for Northern Antiquities] is to be seen as a European foundation."<sup>43</sup>

The relationship with the Danes thus succeeded in the spaces between national and pan-national ambitions, and it was only in the revolutionary years, which demanded more concrete fantasies, that the exchanges became fraught with tension. The possibilities of defining new nations led to questions about origins and to conflicting interpretations of linguistic artifacts. Moreover, the tension was not limited to Germany and Denmark; Norwegian scholars, too, brought nationalist agendas into their work. Norway had, after

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<sup>40</sup> The Society was founded in 1825 and its journal, the *Annaler for nordiske Oldkyndighed*, was first published in 1835.

<sup>41</sup> Rafn to Jacob Grimm, 25 June 1828, in *Briefwechsel*, 152.

<sup>42</sup> Åke Holmberg, "On the Practicability of Scandinavianism: Mid-Nineteenth-Century Debate and Aspirations," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 9/3 (1984), 178.

<sup>43</sup> Rafn to Jacob Grimm, 1 June 1833, in *Briefwechsel*, 154.



all, only recently separated from the Danish *Helstat*, and Norwegian scholars were eager not only to establish their own academic credentials, but also to find and affirm their own sense of national identity. Some were thus willing to embrace the Grimms' perspective on the originality of Northern European myths, since Norway's geographic remoteness lent it a privileged status as a potential wellspring of Nordic-Germanic culture. The Norwegian philologist and historian Peter Andreas Munch (1810-1863), for example, argued that Norway was an original homeland for Scandinavian peoples and disputed rival claims for ancient Nordic linguistic remains in Denmark.

Munch was also willing to look beyond sagas and myths and seek evidence from such linguistic artifacts as rune stones and inscriptions on artifacts. For this he drew on the Grimms research to support his position, since the Grimms had also written widely on runes. In 1847, he employed Wilhelm Grimm's 1821 work, "On German Runes," to provide a new translation for inscriptions on the lost Golden Horns of Gallehus.<sup>44</sup> Wilhelm had believed that Nordic peoples were not alone in possessing the capacity for runes, and had argued for the existence of Germanic runes.<sup>45</sup> Munch agreed, and while some Danish scholars had declared the writing on the horns to be Old Norse, Munch used Grimm's alphabet to argue that they were actually of Gothic origin and pre-dated the advent of Nordic peoples, dating possibly to the first century A.D. His revised translation suggested that the piece had originated in Scania in present-day Sweden and had been intended as a gift for guests from Holstein.<sup>46</sup>

Munch's interpretation preserved his views of Scandinavian origins by denying their existence in Denmark before the Migration Period. Perhaps more importantly, it reinforced the Grimms' belief in links between Germanic groups and Denmark. Rafn and his Danish colleagues objected to this position, and an intense debate emerged over the origins of Germanic and Nordic cultures. J.J.A. Worsaae's archaeology matured just at

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<sup>44</sup> Ole Worm had rendered detailed sketches of the horns and their inscriptions, which made analysis possible despite the Horns' untimely destruction.

<sup>45</sup> Gerd Høst Heyerdahl, "Wilhelm Grimm and the Study of Runes," in *The Grimm Brothers and the Germanic Past*, ed. Elmer H. Antonsen, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990), 63-5. Interestingly, Wilhelm Grimm had been influenced by earlier work on runes conducted in Norway at the Royal Norwegian Scholars Society in Trondheim.

<sup>46</sup> P.A. Munch, "Om Indskriften paa det i Sønder-jylland fundne Guldhorn," *Annaler* (1847), 327-52.

the moment when these scholars were grappling with the political consequences of their questions in the tumult of the revolution, and Worsaae soon brought his interpretations to bear not only on questions of prehistory, but also on the shape and character of modern Denmark and Germany. Unlike Munch, however, Worsaae did not need text to make his artifacts speak, and the shifting frame of the debate both politicized the study of antiquity and placed the borderland at the center of international controversy.

### **National Prehistories and the First German-Danish War, 1848-1851**

The 1848 revolutions, which began in Paris and then swept eastward, came to Schleswig-Holstein on the eighteenth of March. That evening, a hastily arranged meeting of assembly members from Schleswig and Itzehoe met in the city of Rendsburg. King Frederik VII, who had ascended the throne in January 1848 after the death of Christian VIII, had proved more willing to accede to the demands of the revolutionary liberals, but now there was a need to discuss how to respond to the new constitution, which supposedly gave the pro-Danish faction an unfair advantage in a prospective parliament. Though once united by a common sense of liberalism, the pro-German faction had become suddenly frightened by the growing power of the so-called "Eiderdane" faction, which had brought an end to the absolutist quality of the monarchy and most of whose members favored the direct annexation of Schleswig into the Danish Kingdom, which would fix the new Danish border at the Eider River.<sup>47</sup> The pro-Germans took heart from the expressed willingness of the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to take a leading role in uniting Germany. Since they felt they could no longer trust the Danish King to look after their interests, the Rendsburg Assembly decided to form a provisional government and separate both Schleswig and Holstein from the Danish *Helstat*.<sup>48</sup>

The paradox of the three-year war that followed was that both sides felt they were fighting against the oppression of the other. While the Schleswig-Holsteiners saw their struggle as an independence movement against the Danish crown, the Danes viewed the

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<sup>47</sup> Gerd Stolz, *Die schleswig-holsteinische Erhebung. Die nationale Auseinandersetzung in und um Schleswig-Holstein von 1848/1851*, (Husum: Idstedt Stiftung, 1996), 44-7.

<sup>48</sup> Otto Brandt, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 252-4.

potential separation of Schleswig as a conquest of Danish-speaking territory. The Danes had long feared the potential threat from the enormous German population on their southern border, and the suppression of P. Lorenzen's efforts to use Danish in the Advisory Assembly only seemed to verify fears that the Germans were seeking to Germanize all of Schleswig.<sup>49</sup> As N.F.S. Grundtvig explained:

My whole quarrel with the Germans is really concerned with the fact that they are determined either to make me a German or to regard me as a fool; and I give as good as I get and do not wish to be either. Instead I assert that Denmark is no more the tail of Germany than the Norse spirit is a sprite serving the imperial German reason.<sup>50</sup>

Such expressions from the beleaguered Danes have engendered sympathetic responses from recent historians like Leni Yahil, who has contrasted the introspective responses to the German threat with the more aggressive and expansionist views of German nationalist thinkers.<sup>51</sup> While this view makes sense in light of the subsequent consequences for the two nationalist visions during the twentieth century, it should not tempt us into overlooking the equally aggressive attitude of Danish nationalism during the first German-Danish War.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, as Inge Adriansen has reminded us, the Eiderdane faction was determined to retain Schleswig at all costs, and the war years witnessed the emergence of a so-called "Spirit of 1848," which, though exaggerated in late nineteenth-century Danish memory, nevertheless evinced a potent militancy comparable to the

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<sup>49</sup> Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein, 1815-1844*, 166-8.

<sup>50</sup> Grundtvig, *A Grundtvig Anthology*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> Leni Yahil, "National Pride and Defeat: A Comparison of Danish and German Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991), 474; On Arndt see also Hedda Gramley, *Propheten des deutschen Nationalismus: Theologen, Historiker und Nationalökonomien, 1848-1880*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2001), 156.

<sup>52</sup> Yahil was intrigued by the singular response of the Danes to the Nazi occupation, which included a concerted effort to spare Danish culture from German influence. "This singular reaction," she wrote, "became the decisive factor in the Danes' self-understanding; and their non-aggressive nationalism stands out in antithesis to the aggressive nationalism which gained pre-eminence in Germany during the second half of the nineteenth century . . ." Yahil, "National Pride," 454.

German view. At the same time, according to Adriansen, "Here was forged an image of German aggression that was confirmed in the next Schleswig war in 1864. . ." <sup>53</sup>

It was this image that leading pro-Danes sought to reinforce by creating linkages between the present battle against German encroachment and superiority (*overmagt*) and similar struggles in the late prehistoric and early medieval periods. As the tensions rose over Schleswig in the 1830s, Grundtvig recalled one medieval struggle in his 1839 poem, *Niels Ebbesen*:

There rose a song out of Denmark's grief  
Right sad and sore  
There was no native king in Denmark's fief,  
But civil war  
The Danes were outlawed in forest and strath,  
Rulers we had from heaven's wrath,  
When the Germans ran wild in Denmark. <sup>54</sup>

Grundtvig's allusions to the barbaric Germans fueled a spirit of militant defensiveness, which Christian Flor later adopted in 1844, when he used the Danewall fortress imagery in his *Dannevirke* journal to call for the preservation of Danish Schleswig. Clearly, by 1848 the elements of the distant past were already a symbolic presence in the conflict for Danes.

At the same time, German antiquarians had become equally aware of the potential value of the past for the present crisis. For the Germans, however, the past was an affirmation of the existence of the German nation, and a guidepost for its modern incarnation. In a letter to the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society in 1848, the Henneberg Antiquities Association announced its sixteenth anniversary celebration, noting:

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<sup>53</sup> Inge Adriansen, "Der Drei-jährige Krieg – ein Bürgerkrieg im dänisch-deutschen Gesamtstaat," in *Die schleswig-holsteinische Erhebung*, 187.

<sup>54</sup> Grundtvig, "Niels Ebbesen," trans. Charles Wharon Stork, in *A Grundtvig Anthology*, 193-95.

The various historical or archaeological associations must all the more wish for the prudent realization of the present state of affairs in and for Germany, not only because it coincides with our practices and conclusions, but also because the future existence [of Germany] itself depends on it.<sup>55</sup>

Their counterparts in Kiel certainly might have agreed, but Schleswig-Holstein was engulfed in the Revolution, and the work of the Antiquities Society declined dramatically during this period. Local scholarship consequently played a small role. Correspondence declined, acquisitions became rarer, and the leading members of the society found themselves preoccupied with their immediate futures and largely withdrew from their scholarly pursuits. An aging Nikolaus Falck retired to Kiel; Von Timm, who proved pro-Danish, retired to Eckernförde; von Kindt joined the revolutionary army; Christian Paulsen departed for Copenhagen; and many of the German-speaking society members took leading roles in the newly formed Provisional Government.

The prominent antiquities society member A.J. Michelsen found himself elected to the new German Parliament in Frankfurt. Michelsen was joined in Frankfurt by the historian Christian Dahlmann, and together the two worked tirelessly to keep the Schleswig-Holstein issue at the forefront of the Parliament's work. The Parliament took up the so-called Schleswig-Holstein Question in June 1848 and debated it over five months. Michelesen and Dahlmann maintained that the two duchies were bound historically and legally, and that if Holstein was a member of the German *Bund*, then Schleswig had an equal claim and merited protection from the Parliament as well. He and Dahlmann opposed compromise measures aimed at solving the issue through a plebiscite, claiming instead that many Schleswigers in fact wanted to be part of a united Germany and those that did not would soon realize the benefits of inclusion. Moreover, they appealed to the middle-class sentiments of the parliamentarians, pointing out that German had long been the language of culture and government. According to Brian Vick's recent work, this would have resonated with the representatives, for whom:

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<sup>55</sup> Henneberg Antiquities Association to the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, undated, ALM AA 1848-042.

a given province need not even have had a German numerical majority to qualify as German, and therefore as a welcome component of the new Germany. The Frankfurt deputies only had to be satisfied that its administrative superstructure, high culture, and general will were sufficiently German-oriented to bestow upon it an overall German national character.<sup>56</sup>

In this case, the deputies seemed willing to defer to the local expertise of Michelsen and Dahlmann.

The course of this debate provided just the occasion to apply recent thinking about antiquity to the present political crisis. Despite his credentials as a member of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, Michelsen did not employ symbols of prehistory, confining his arguments instead to background in law and more recent history. The use of the distant past came rather from Jacob Grimm, who also held a seat in the Parliament. Grimm brought to Frankfurt grand ideas of the shape of the German nation, and his sense of Romanticism and scholarship distinguished him from his more practical-minded fellow deputies. Where they saw Germany forming from the states in the *Bund*, Grimm based his vision on language and ethnic history. Grimm was in general a critic of democratic parliamentarism, seeing a constitution as an artificial means of balance.<sup>57</sup> He seems instead to have preferred a solution in which the state corresponded more directly with what he considered the organic nation – the *Volk*. In 1848, he published *Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache*, which placed Dutch and Danish under the rubric of German and called for the inclusion of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Alsace into a future German *Reich*.

Grimm's writing on language left Danish scholars scrambling to counter his claims.<sup>58</sup> In December 1848, C.C. Rafn appealed to Grimm as fellow scholar, sending him a copy of C.F. Wegener's *On Schleswig's Inseparable Bond with Denmark in Respect to Law*

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<sup>56</sup> Brian Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Parliamentarians and National Identity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 140-6.

<sup>57</sup> See Klaus von See, *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft: Völkisch nationales Denken in Deutschland zwischen Französischer Revolution und Erstem Weltkrieg*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2001), 46-7.

<sup>58</sup> Inge Adriansen, *Nationale symboler i det danske rige*, Bd. 2, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag Københavns Universitet, 2003), 39.

(*Über die unzertrennliche Verbindung Schleswigs mit Dänemark in staatsrechtlicher Beziehung*). "I do not doubt," he wrote, "that you as a truth-loving man will gain enlightenment and instruction with consideration of the circumstances that have previously been unknown to you, and it is therefore a pleasure for me to send you the manuscript."<sup>59</sup> Grimm, however, was unmoved, replying, "I am supposed to be enlightened and converted by Wegener's passionate pamphlet? I have discovered nothing in it that would tip the balance. The fate of the so-called duchies must be decided by completely different means."<sup>60</sup>

Grimm's means, of course, implied war, and, as he wrote, the conflict raged across northern Schleswig. In early April 1848, the Danish army won a series of battles and had successfully seized the town of Schleswig and captured the Danewall.<sup>61</sup> J.J.A. Worsaae marked the occasion with a short book on the prehistory of the area. In it he mixed his scholarship with his political views and entered a debate that projected the shifting modern identities of Germans and Danes onto prehistoric groups. He proclaimed, "At this time, all eyes in Scandinavia are turned to the Danewall, to the Danish nation's southern border. When thinking of the hard fight between Germans and Scandinavians, it is natural to think back to bygone times, back to the many rich memories which bind themselves to the older struggles on Denmark's border."<sup>62</sup> Worsaae established himself in the book as sympathetic to the Eiderdane position, arguing for a conception of Lower Jutland (*Sønderjylland*) extending to the Eider River and forming the final border with Germany. He argued that his archaeological research proved the special connection between Schleswig and the people of the Danish islands. "By contrast," he wrote, "Holstein, with its environment bound more closely to the German mainland, was also settled mostly by Germans from the mainland."<sup>63</sup> He also disagreed with the popular

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<sup>59</sup> Rafn to Grimm, 04 December 1848, in *Briefwechsel*, 157.

<sup>60</sup> Grimm to Rafn, 15 December 1848, in *ibid.*, 158-161.

<sup>61</sup> Otto Vaupell, *Kampen for Sønderjylland: Krigene 1848-1850 og 1864*, (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1888), 16-20.

<sup>62</sup> Worsaae, *Danevirke, Danskhedens gamle Grændsevold mod Syden*, (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1848), 2-3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

conception that both the Angles and Saxons in the region were Germanic, and that the Danes had only come later. Instead, he cited the writings of Saxo Grammaticus, who wrote that "Angles and Danes were brothers."<sup>64</sup>

As this example suggests, Worsaae tried at first to focus attention on the historical proof of the Danewall's value to Denmark as a border marker, and he seems to have been reluctant to use prehistory as a political tool. For him, the Danewall was more significant as a long-standing historical testament to repeated Danish defenses against German invasion throughout the Middle Ages, which provided more irrefutable evidence of Danish claims to Schleswig. As the war turned against Denmark, however, Worsaae found himself increasingly pressured to debate the Germans on their own terms. In late April, 1848, 25,000 Prussian troops and soldiers from the German *Bund* swept into the region and began pushing the Danish army out of Jutland. By the time the Truce of Malmö went into effect in July, the Germans faced the tantalizing possibility of seizing the entire Jutland peninsula.<sup>65</sup>

While many Germans did not seriously consider Jutland a viable part of a potential German nation-state, Jacob Grimm argued that not only was it possible, but that it was natural to include the peninsula and reduce Denmark to its tiny islands. He argued that Jutland's original inhabitants had been Germanic rather than Nordic peoples, and that the area had been occupied by the Danes relatively recently. As he explained to Rafn in December 1848, "Originally the peninsula was totally Germanic or German (whichever expression you like), and the ancestors of the Jutes were of one [German] blood with the Cimbrians and Saxons."<sup>66</sup> Rafn was not in a position to counter Grimm's claims directly, and pointed out instead that Schleswig in 1848 had over 200,000 Danish speakers, and that the origins of prehistoric peoples was of little relevance to the contemporary conflict.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>65</sup> Vaupell, *Kampen for Sønderjylland*, 15-16; 73-81.

<sup>66</sup> Jacob Grimm to Rafn, 15 December 1848, in *Briefwechsel*, 158-61.

<sup>67</sup> Rafn to Grimm, 13 February 1849, in *ibid.*, 161-67.



Worsaae, however, was incensed by Grimm's claims, and, despite his own politicization of the issue complained bitterly against Grimm's use of the past as a "playground for political fantasy."<sup>68</sup> He attacked the Germans for using prehistory as a political tool without taking into consideration the history in between. Yet, on this occasion, Worsaae did not fully refrain from refuting Grimm's claims directly, and claimed that his studies of material remains and site construction did not suggest a Germanic culture living alongside a Nordic one, but rather a single, homogenous culture throughout Denmark extending to the immediate area around the Eider River.<sup>69</sup> As further proof, he pointed to the studies of P.A. Munch, which concluded that the Gothic peoples in Denmark and Sweden had actually been culturally closer to the Scandinavians than the Germans. Moreover, Munch also claimed that Denmark had borne a distinctively Nordic character for over 1000 years.<sup>70</sup>

Although Munch, as a Norwegian, bolstered Worsaae's argument by providing an ostensibly "non-partisan" assessment, he also drew criticism from Worsaae by interjecting his own claims about Danish origins. Munch disagreed with Worsaae that the Goths were directly related to the ancient Danes, who he said did not enter Denmark until A.D. 800. He continued to stress the Nordic character of the region, but maintained that the Scandinavian presence in Denmark, although arriving much earlier than Grimm suggested, nevertheless originated not in Denmark but in Norway.<sup>71</sup> As in his study of the Goths, this claim was based on interpretations of Nordic languages, which Munch thought could be traced back to his home country. Because Norwegian languages carried more primeval elements, Munch reasoned that they must be an original source.

In essence, Munch was employing the same basic approach to prehistory as Jacob Grimm but arguing from the other direction, and Worsaae was not pleased with either interpretation. What was missing from both claims was archaeological proof, which for

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<sup>68</sup> Worsaae, *Om en forhistorisk, saakaldet 'tydsk' Befolkning i Danmark, med Hensyn til Nutidens politiske Bevægelser*, (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1849), 3.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 7, 27.

<sup>70</sup> P.A. Munch, "Undersøgelser angaaende Danmarks ethnografiske Forhold i det ældste Tider, og om Eensartetheden i Danmarks Befolkning," *Annaler* (1848), 216-17.

<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*, 224-27.

Worsaae was essential to settling the issue. He acknowledged that Munch had used isolated artifacts as evidence, but argued that a more comprehensive study of sites and finds clearly disproved Munch's theory. Worsaae's view was that finds across Scandinavia suggested not only strong national-regional differences, but also different periods of development. A broad analysis of artifacts across Scandinavia showed, for example, that both the Stone Age and Bronze Age had appeared earlier in Denmark than in Sweden or Norway. Moreover, the Iron Age, which many antiquarians believed to be quite old in Scandinavia, had, according to Worsaae, not appeared until around the eighth century A.D., and then only in Denmark.<sup>72</sup> This was a direct challenge to Munch because it revealed a pattern of cultural diffusion moving from south (in Denmark) to north (in Norway). Finally, the characteristics of the artifacts did not differ widely enough within Denmark to support either Munch's claim of a local multi-ethnic mix of different Nordic and Germanic groups or Grimm's assertion of "an older Gothic origin with a sharply-stamped German nationality."<sup>73</sup>

This critical debate highlighted the differences between the emerging nationalist visions of Worsaae, Grimm, and Munch. Where the latter two found their visions reinforced by scholarship appealing to broad characterizations of Nordic or Germanic peoples, Worsaae defended the idea of Denmark with evidence stressing the variations among countries. He did possess a trace of the ambiguity between nationalism and Scandinavianism, telling the Scandinavian Society in 1849 that, "as we struggle under the Danish flag (*Dannebrog*) and for the Danewall, we are not fighting a battle for Denmark alone – no! – for the whole North."<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, Worsaae was becoming more keenly interested in finding what defined Denmark. In the same speech, he argued that Denmark was unique in Europe because it had existed independently for over two thousand years. In the face of a powerful German threat, this was a necessary argument for Worsaae, but it also meant that he was no longer willing to refrain from linking his new archaeology to the history and present-day struggles of his nation.

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<sup>72</sup> Worsaae, "Jernalderens Begyndelse i Danmark, oplyst gennem Gravfund," *Annaler* (1848), 277-83.

<sup>73</sup> Idem., "tydsk Befolkning," 12.

<sup>74</sup> Idem., *Om Dannebrog: Et Foredrag i det Skandinavske Selskab, den 17. Marts 1849*, (Copenhagen: Thieles, 1849), 32.

## Expanding Networks, Rival Institutions, and Spectacular Discoveries, 1852-1864

The patriotism that filled the air at the Scandinavian Society's meeting in March of 1849 soon carried to the battlefield, as the Danes ended the Malmö Armistice and resumed offensive operations, remaining obstinate about keeping Schleswig as a part of Denmark. Although the course of the war went badly from the beginning, the waning power of the Revolution in Germany and growing international pressure led first to the Berlin Peace of 1850, which signaled the end of Prussian involvement, and later to the First London Protocol guaranteeing the integrity of the *Helstat*. Collectively, these developments on the European stage effectively dashed the hopes of the Schleswig-Holstein Provisional Government. On the second of July 1850, the Schleswig-Holsteiners, without allies or experienced officers, met a crushing defeat from the Danes at the Battle of Idstedt. While the battle decided the outcome of the war, it by no means settled the underlying dispute. The German Schleswig-Holsteiners only grudgingly admitted defeat in January, 1851, and scores of soldiers and statesmen fled the country. Meanwhile, the London Protocol prevented Denmark from seeking to separate Schleswig from Holstein and incorporate it into the Danish Kingdom.<sup>75</sup> The result was a return during the 1850s to an awkward *status quo*, with old tensions seething beneath new attempts at normalcy,

For the Danes, the victory was a tremendous boost after the defeat in the Napoleonic Wars and a relief after the perceived threat of German domination (*overmagt*). The symbolic value of prehistory during the conflict carried into the 1850s as Danes mythologized their success and extolled their national character. The end of the war therefore launched a period of explosive growth for archaeology in Denmark. During the years between the two German-Danish wars, C.J. Thomsen and the Antiquities Commission in Copenhagen authorized eight new collecting institutions across Denmark, the duchies, and in Iceland. The sites of these new museums included Ribe (1855), Odense (1860), Aarhus (1861), Viborg (1862), Aalborg (1863), and Reykjavik (1863).

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<sup>75</sup> Brandt, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 260-2.

These regional museums were modeled on the example of Kiel, holding a collection of local finds, promoting the patronage of local citizens, and, at Thomsen's insistence, enjoying the support of the Museum for Nordic Antiquity in Copenhagen.<sup>76</sup>

The first of these branches was the collection established in Flensburg in 1852, which later drew the criticism of Fritz Graef. While Graef maintained that the collection was designed to rival Kiel in the wake of the 1848 war, it seems unlikely that this was the intention of either Thomsen or the Commission. There is little doubt, of course, that the ties between Kiel and Copenhagen dramatically soured after 1848. Falck passed away in 1850, and the original museum curators and antiquarians were no longer involved in the project. Nevertheless, the impetus for the Flensburg collection came as much from the weakness of German archaeology during this period as from the strength of Danish institutions. Above all, because German thinking about archaeology remained mired in historical and philological thinking in line with Andreas Michelsen and Jacob Grimm, it proved unable to embrace the changes that were shaping archaeology into a professional discipline in Denmark, and the Kiel Museum found itself in a steady decline in the 1850s.

Following the departure of Christian Flor in 1845, the museum passed to the control of Karl Müllenhoff (1818-1884), who was then a young professor of Germanic languages at the University of Kiel. Müllenhoff had studied regional history with Andreas Michelsen in the 1830s, and spent his subsequent years researching both Nordic and Germanic languages and literature. The trajectory of his career was rather remarkable, as he ascended to the university from a minor position as a volunteer school assistant in the small town of Meldorf on the west coast of Holstein. During this period, he told his friend W.H. Kloster of being inspired by the work of the Grimms, and his experience teaching Danish and German led him, like the Grimms, to an intense interest in the connections between Nordic and Germanic myths and sagas.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, he felt that Schleswig-Holstein, which stood at the crossroads of Germanic and Nordic traditions, deserved a more noteworthy status in literary scholarship. He was eager to educate himself through

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<sup>76</sup> Jensen, *Thomsens Museum*, 148.

<sup>77</sup> Wilhelm Scherer, *Karl Müllenhoff. Ein Lebensbild*, (Heide: Westholsteinische Verlagsanstalt, 1991), 60-1.

study tours of Germany and Scandinavia, even appealing to the Danish king for support. Once, when Christian VIII visited Meldorf in 1842, Müllenhoff appealed to the king's *Helstat* patriotism and wrote:

Parts of both of the main branches of Germanic lineage stand under Your Royal Majesty's benedictory scepter: in respect to the first of these, the antiquities of the fatherland have been cared for with love, and indeed Copenhagen is the seat of Scandinavian philology; in respect to the other, its scholarship, at least as far as language, poetry, and literature are concerned, is almost completely unknown.<sup>78</sup>

Although he was unsuccessful with his royal appeal and was forced to remain home, Müllenhoff earned a reputation as a formidable scholar through his writings on local myths and sagas, which ultimately helped him secure first a position working with Henning Ratjen at the university library and later in 1846 a professorship in German language, literature, and antiquity.<sup>79</sup> The fact that he was appointed to direct the Kiel Museum in the same year suggests that the antiquities society continued to view material relics as an auxiliary responsibility of textual or linguistic scholarship. Though he worked with alacrity, Müllenhof had little time to devote to the Museum as he taught lectures on Danish and German literature and undertook a translation of Tacitus' *Germania*. The Museum grew very little at the beginning of his tenure, and at the outbreak of the Revolution, the work of the antiquities society had virtually come to a standstill.

The outcome of the war was a further devastating blow. Not only did the conflict interrupt the work of the society, but it also forced many society members to emigrate from Schleswig-Holstein at the end of the war. In 1850 alone, four members died, eleven resigned, and only one individual joined the society. By 1858, the society had gone from 366 members to only thirty-one.<sup>80</sup> The loss in revenue meant that the Museum was unable to pay for new acquisitions or improve its display. The University of Kiel offered

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<sup>78</sup> Karl Müllenhoff to King Christian VIII, 01 September 1842, quoted in *ibid*, 59.

<sup>79</sup> Scherer, *Müllenhoff*, 60-1.

<sup>80</sup> SHLG (1850), 68

some assistance, granting, for example, a small sum for the purchase of a new cabinet in March 1851.<sup>81</sup> It was unable, however, to make up for the loss of so many members, and the society was only able to print four volumes of its annual report from 1850 to 1860.<sup>82</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, the revenue shortfall prevented the society from obtaining one of the most notable collections in the region. In 1847, the wealthy businessman and antiquities collector Claus Jaspersen died in the town of Schleswig, and his wife Sophie put the collection up for sale after the war.<sup>83</sup> Claus Jaspersen had started his collection both as an expression of his love of antiquity and as a life insurance investment for his wife, and it was common knowledge that he would one day sell it. Christian Flor had cultivated a relationship with Jaspersen during the early 1840s, but after Flor's departure, Jaspersen seemed disappointed by the waning interest in the museum.<sup>84</sup> After his death, the Kiel Museum requested financial support from the Danish government to purchase the collection. When the request reached the Antiquities Commission, Thomsen endorsed it, but C.C. Rafn wanted to divide the collection between Kiel and Copenhagen. Meanwhile, since most of the pieces came from the Schleswig region, Worsaae, ever the skeptical Eiderdane, made a case for sending them to Rødding, where Christian Flor could tend them at his new Grundtvigian school. The government ultimately sided with Thomsen and planned to meet the Kiel request, but the outbreak of war suspended negotiations with Sophie Jaspersen.<sup>85</sup>

After the war, the Antiquities Commission once again took up the matter and decided to send the artifacts to the city of Flensburg, which had become the new administrative capital of the Duchy of Schleswig. This satisfied Worsaae because it kept the artifacts

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<sup>81</sup> Departement der geistlichen- und Unterrichts-Angelegenheiten der Universität Kiel to Karl Müllenhoff, 13.03.1851, ALM AA 1851-057.

<sup>82</sup> Heinrich Handelsmann, "Die Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Gesellschaft für die Sammlung und Erhaltung vaterländischer Althertümer in Kiel in den Jahren 1850-1860," SHLG (1861), 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> Sophie Jaspersen to Conrad Engelhardt, 16 December 1851, ALM AFS FS 1.

<sup>84</sup> L. Clausen to Conrad Engelhardt, 05 May 1854, ALM AFS FS 11. In the letter, Jaspersen's friend claims that Jaspersen had never had the wish that the collection, "might come into German hands."

<sup>85</sup> Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 32-4. The letters in this exchange are undated, but since Worsaae mentions the death of his mother, which occurred on the eighth of March, Wiell surmises that the exchange occurred around that time.

near Jaspersen's home, and because the construction of the new *Gymnasium* meant that there would be ample space to house the collection. Thomsen was also amenable to the compromise not only because the Royal Ministry for the Duchy would more likely approve, but also because Flensburg had recently become the home of one of his students, Conrad Engelhardt (1825-1881). Despite his limited formal schooling, Engelhardt had been a favorite of Thomsen's and had accompanied his mentor on study tours through southern Europe in the late 1840s. Like, Worsaae, however, Engelhardt had been unable to secure a post with Thomsen's museum, but had found a respectable position in the Flensburg *Gymnasium* made vacant by departing pro-German Schleswig-Holsteiners.<sup>86</sup> His relationship with Thomsen seems to have remained cordial thereafter, and he was a prime candidate to oversee the newly acquired collection.



Conrad Engelhardt. Nationalmuseet.

This new exhibition, with an assortment of artifacts from Copenhagen complementing the sizable Jaspersen collection, opened to the public on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1852 as the Schleswig Collection of Nordic Antiquities (*Slesvigske Samling af nordiske Oldsager*). When it opened, it occupied two rooms: a small foyer and a larger room fitted with nine

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 49.

cabinets. It was modeled very closely on Thomsen's museum, and was designed to exhibit the past in a careful chronological progression. Six cabinets contained local Stone Age artifacts, including some remarkable axe-heads, another two housed relics from the Bronze Age such as pieces of swords and a complete bronze knife, and a final cabinet mixed Iron Age and historical artifacts, with the showpieces being a few Roman and medieval swords.<sup>87</sup>

The first few months were disappointing for Engelhardt, as only a few families and vacationing students patronized his exhibit each week, and he complained to Thomsen that his collection was unable to grow because so many locals had pledged to support the Kiel Museum.<sup>88</sup> His remarks seem to show that the Ministry for the Duchies, though at times supportive of the Flensburg Collection, was not trying to use it to diminish the nearby Kiel Museum. Rather, it was Engelhardt himself who began shaping his collection as a rival to Kiel, though while he was certainly sympathetic to the Danish cause, he was also at least partly interested in promoting his own work. Nevertheless, his method of competition involved appeals to the political sensitivities of the local middle class. He began a writing campaign to those members of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society residing in the Duchy of Schleswig, and he gave private tours to local collectors. His goal, he claimed, was to cultivate an interest in a more localized collection "for the benefit of Schleswig."<sup>89</sup> Such sentiments would have resonated with Danish Schleswigers who had just experienced a three-year war over the status of the duchies. In the course of the dispute, the Danes had emphasized the differences between "Danish" Schleswig and "German" Holstein, and it therefore seemed reasonable that they would support a separate antiquarian institution.

Engelhardt, however, found that his strategy also attracted a number of German-speakers in Schleswig. This came at a time when the Kiel Museum was already in

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 54-5.

<sup>88</sup> Engelhardt to Worsaae, undated, ALM AFS H10-11. In the letter Engelhardt mentions the recent report from the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, which was published in 1852. He also misspells the name of the pharmacist Mechlenburg, who later became an important contributor to Flensburg, but not until 1853. It is thus likely that this letter was written in the late summer or autumn of 1852.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



marked decline, and when its remaining patrons were growing disgruntled by the lack of response to their interest. Even close friends of Müllenhoff were feeling disappointed. In one instance, the antiquarian W.H. Kolster wrote with some sarcasm, "With pleasure I see from your letter that the activities of the Society have not entirely silenced, as I had begun to fear."<sup>90</sup> In this context, Engelhardt gradually managed to draw interest away from Kiel and to acquire several noted collections in Schleswig, including that of the German-speaking Heinrich Piepgras, which included an impressive array of coins and Stone Age relics. He also succeeded in establishing a network with interested antiquarians such as the apothecaries Mechlenburg and Henningsen, whose status in their small towns kept them connected to new discoveries across the region.<sup>91</sup>

What finally established the reputation of the Flensburg Collection, however, was not the scattered private assemblages or occasional donations, but the dramatic discoveries of the late 1850s, when Engelhardt followed the work of J.J.A. Worsaae and began engaging in a series of large-scale excavations in eastern Schleswig. He had already tried his hand at excavating as early as 1853, but his real success came in 1856, when he first learned from M.R. Mechlenburg of a potentially rich prehistoric site discovered during land reclaiming work in the Thorsberg Bog near the parish of Süderbrarup (Sønderbrarup), which lay to the south between the towns of Schleswig and Kappel.<sup>92</sup> Mechlenburg sent one of the pieces he had purchased to Flensburg, but it took Engelhardt two years to pinpoint the best location to dig and to make the necessary arrangements, and he was not able to undertake his first test excavation until the spring of 1858.<sup>93</sup> Although Engelhardt recognized that a bog was an unorthodox site for conducting an archaeological excavation, he quickly realized that the area harbored a major archaeological site, even if it was one not visible to the naked eye. He also understood that in order to recover the

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<sup>90</sup> W.H. Kolster to Ludwig Pelt, 17 July 1851, ALM AA 1851-061.

<sup>91</sup> See for example Henningsen to Engelhardt, 06 June 1856, ALM AFS FS 16. Mechlenburg is mentioned in a number of letters as a key intermediary, but his direct correspondence with Engelhardt is apparently no longer extant.

<sup>92</sup> Engelhardt, "Den slesvigske Samling af nordiske Oldsager i Flensborg," *Dagbladet* (24 November, 1856), in ALM AFS F21-22.

<sup>93</sup> Engelhardt, *Thorsbjerg Mosefund*, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1863), 10-11.

artifacts, he would have to become personally involved, first because the excavations lay on land owned by several farmers, which would warrant a comprehensive excavation, and second because it would be an expensive operation to drain and excavate the bogs. Moreover, Engelhardt had become aware through his exchanges with private collectors that archaeological remains demanded a higher level of care (Piepgras, for example, had once sent him a spearhead broken into pieces by his children).<sup>94</sup> Finally, Engelhardt was unwilling to let Worsaae conduct the dig, fearing that he would send the choicest pieces to Copenhagen.<sup>95</sup>

With this in mind, Engelhardt announced in June of 1858 that he was planning to use a recent raise at the school to finance an excavation in bogs on the properties belonging to farmers Gosch Hansen and Peter Callsen.<sup>96</sup> He identified three key depressions in the bog, and, within a few weeks, had already uncovered some promising finds, including a number of Roman coins from the period of the Principate (including 3 Trajans, 1 Hadrian, 1 Antonius Pius, and 1 Marcus Aurelius), which helped date deposition at the site to around the third century A.D.<sup>97</sup> Like Worsaae, Engelhardt took careful notes of his progress, preserving evidence in order to answer questions both about the contents of the site and about the processes of deposition.<sup>98</sup> By September, he and his hired laborers had, by digging in the soft earth with their fingers, recovered more than 1000 pieces, including an assortment of Roman items such as helmets with curving bronze snakes, breastplates, swords, and shields. There were, however, also a number of local artifacts, including a number of necklaces, spiral rings, and gold ring fragments whose equal size and weight suggested the existence of some form of monetary system. Among the other key finds were a number of iron implements and shield buckles inscribed with runes. These were fascinating discoveries, and Engelhardt was delighted to find wood, cloth, and leather

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<sup>94</sup> Piepgras to Engelhardt, 29 November 1855, ALM AFS FS 14.

<sup>95</sup> Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 89.

<sup>96</sup> Engelhardt to Thomsen, 02 June 1858, ALM AFS F5-F7; Hansen to Engelhardt, ALM AFS FS 62.

<sup>97</sup> Engelhardt to Thomsen, 24 July 1858, ALM AFS F8-F10.

<sup>98</sup> Engelhardt, *Thorsbjerg Mosefund*, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1863), 17.

artifacts preserved within the marsh, which promised an unprecedented glimpse into the lives of the area's ancient inhabitants. In analyzing his discoveries, Engelhardt was able to enter into Worsaae's emerging paradigm and make comparisons with other bog finds, and ultimately claimed that his site was significant not because it provided evidence of links with the Roman civilization, but also because it reinforced Worsaae's earlier argument that the Iron Age and the use of runic writing were much older in the region than previously believed.<sup>99</sup>

The discoveries at Süderbrarup soon dramatically increased both the reputation and credibility of the Flensburg Collection, and this early success soon led to future excavations in the years before the Second German-Danish War, including a second bog site at the Thorsberger Bog and a number of grave barrows in southern Schleswig. Yet the greatest of these was by far the discovery of the Nydam Boat near the northern Schleswig city of Sønderborg. In July of 1859, Niels Kuntz, a schoolteacher in the small hamlet of Østersottrup, delivered to Engelhardt a fragment from an iron spear recovered on the edge of school property from the narrow Nydam bog.<sup>100</sup> Engelhardt was immediately interested, since C.J. Thomsen had already relayed local suspicions about the potential for rich prehistoric finds in the area, and he was also eager to begin making comparisons with his recent discoveries at Thorsberg. He therefore began excavations in the summer of 1859 and then again in 1862 and 1863.

From the beginning, the site generated a great deal of interest and speculation, and even warranted two visits from King Frederik VII. While the site yielded some impressive results in the first year, it was not until the seventh of August, 1863 that the most spectacular finds began to emerge, as Engelhardt and his team, with a visiting C.J. Thomsen anxiously observing, uncovered the first recognizable pieces of oak from a large, oar-driven boat buried within the earth.<sup>101</sup> After several more days, the excavators found more pieces, and then uncovered the bulk of the craft on the 18th of August. A

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<sup>99</sup> Engelhardt, "Om Sønder-Brarup Funder," *Slesvigske Provindsialsforetninger*, Bd. 1 (1860), 169-86.

<sup>100</sup> Idem., *Nydam Mosefund*, 1859-1863, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1865), 2-3.

<sup>101</sup> Wiel, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 105, 159.

number of other artifacts lay nearby, including personal jewelry, coins, and over 106 iron swords, which dated the site also to the third century A.D. Engelhardt surmised that the items had been carried in the boat via the nearby Alsund Creek and buried in a manner very similar to that seen at Thorsberg.<sup>102</sup> Eventually, Engelhardt's crew managed to recover and bring the boat back to Flensburg, where they began the process of preserving and reassembling it.

The craft was remarkably complete, measuring almost twenty-three meters in length and slightly more than three meters in width. Constructed with planks of both oak and fir held together by iron rivets, it proved an invaluable resource for understanding the sophistication of Iron Age shipbuilding. Its discovery had come alongside a new wealth of silver, gold, and bronze finds that only added to the excitement surrounding this remarkable artifact. Not only was it one of the largest artifacts ever recovered in the region, it was also a testament to the ingenuity of the Iron Age in northern Europe. This was no Roman import, but rather was a regional innovation from the early fourth century A.D. and a fascinating piece of evidence of the cultural life of prehistoric peoples. Yet its present-day value would soon temporarily eclipse its scholarly worth, as the outbreak of a second war with Germany became inevitable.



The Nydam Boat. From Engelhardt, *Nydam Mosefund*.

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<sup>102</sup> Engelhardt, *Nydam Mosefund*, 5-6.

## **The Second German-Danish War and the Disappearance of the Flensburg Collection**

In 1857, Engelhardt wrote to Thomsen that, while he missed his home in Copenhagen, his collection had become such a passion that he felt it bound him to Flensburg. He was not alone in his admiration. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, attitudes about the Flensburg Collection and about archaeology changed as the old political tensions began to rise once again. Where Engelhardt had struggled for funding in the first few years, he found that his later successes in the field brought him a great deal more support from the Danish state. The Ministry for the Duchies had awarded him an initial 700 Rigstaler to begin his digs at Süderbrarup, and later funded his digs at the Thorsberger Moor and at Nydam. Engelhardt desperately needed such support, since the property owners were demanding payment for artifacts removed from their land,<sup>103</sup> and Engelhardt also needed to finance a rather large operation to drain the bogs in order to carry out a controlled dig.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps more importantly, they began to intervene politically to ensure Engelhardt's success at the expense of the Kiel Museum.

In 1858, the Plattdeutsch poet Klaus Groth (1819-1899) succeeded Karl Müllenhoff as Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society after Müllenhoff received a chair in Germanic Languages at the University of Berlin. Like Müllenhoff, Groth did little to advance the scholarship of the Society, but it seems that he was more eager to challenge the pace of Engelhardt's advances. In 1858, as Engelhardt was recovering hundreds of artifacts with the express permission of the government, Groth demanded from the Danish Ministry a clarification of the Antiquities Society's charter, which stated that the Kiel Museum had the responsibility for overseeing finds in the duchies. Above all, the antiquarians in Kiel expressed anxiety over the possibility that Engelhardt would take his finds to Copenhagen. As he awaited a reply, Groth joined the Rector of the University in

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<sup>103</sup> Hansen to Engelhardt, 04 July 1858, ALM AFS FS-62; Engelhardt to the Royal Ministry for the Duchy of Schleswig, 28.08.1861, ALM AFS FS 108.

<sup>104</sup> On the drainage operation, see A. Regenberg to Engelhardt, 24 March 1859, ALM AFL FS 80.

leading an effort to purchase some of the property on which Engelhardt was excavating. The government responded in December that it was inappropriate for a non-political institution to represent both duchies, a decision that the Society members protested in the Advisory Assembly in Itzehoe.<sup>105</sup> That same year, Engelhardt seems to have known that the government would side with him, as he wrote to Thomsen with some relief that the antiquarians in Kiel would be reorganizing as a "Holstein-Lauenburg Antiquities Society."<sup>106</sup> This move also meant that Engelhardt could legally claim artifacts found in the German-speaking areas of southern Schleswig.

This sudden upswing in state support coincided with a growing desire on the part of the Eiderdane faction in the Danish government to effect the legal separation of the two duchies in spite of the London Protocol. As Engelhardt toiled at the Thorsberger Moor in 1858, a new debate emerged in Copenhagen on a prospective constitution for the Kingdom of Denmark, and the central question became one of whether or to what extent it should apply to both Holstein and Schleswig. Work on the constitution had progressed since 1852, but as liberal Eiderdanes led by future interior minister Orla Lehmann (1810-1870), gradually saw their power increase in the government, they began to demand that any Danish constitution must guarantee the connections with Schleswig.<sup>107</sup> In this context, it seems likely that the government's decisions on cultural matters paralleled its political maneuvers. The prohibition against Kiel's involvement in Schleswig antiquities was effectively a limit on the links the Germans could make between the two duchies, and a *de facto* segregation of regional institutions. Moreover, it limited the degree to which Germans could make claims to Schleswig based on archaeological evidence.

The latent political tensions in the region finally erupted after the sudden death of Frederik VII in November of 1863, which occurred two days before the signing of the new constitution. Because Frederik had no direct heir, a succession dispute arose that

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 79, 85.

<sup>106</sup> Engelhardt to Thomsen, 10 January 1858, ALM AFS F1-F2.

<sup>107</sup> Brandt, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 265-6.

allowed opportunists both in Holstein and in Germany a chance to alter the outcome of the 1848 war. While Frederik's distant male relative Christian von Glücksburg was legally entitled to the throne under Denmark's somewhat modified Salic Law, the succession of the duchies was predicated on a direct male heir, and German Schleswig-Holsteiners rejected Christian's right to rule their territory, and instead looked to local nobleman Friedrich von Augustenburg.<sup>108</sup>

On the international scene, popular opinion in Prussia fumed against Danish obstinance and aggression. Theodor Fontane, writing a contemporary commentary on the war, roundly denounced the Eiderdane faction and depicted the conflict as an inevitable Prussian defense of the London Protocol.<sup>109</sup> Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, however, made no secret of the fact that he saw the crisis was an opportunity to capitalize on the emotional resonance of the Schleswig Question in the interests of Prussian aggrandizement. He made official protests against Denmark's violation of the London Protocols and, after the newly installed Christian IX signed the so-called November Constitution, issued an ultimatum for a return to the previous arrangement. When the Danes refused, the Prussians joined an Austrian force in invading the duchies in February 1864.<sup>110</sup>

The Second German-Danish War was thus in many ways similar to the first, but it was no longer a product of a local uprising; rather it was a matter of international politics. Within time, even the Augustenburg candidacy was forgotten, as the Austrians and Prussians moved quickly to divide the duchies among themselves. In Denmark, the old fear of German *overmagt* returned, and the fear of Germans ravaging the countryside was perhaps more pronounced than before. As a war correspondent for the *London Times* reported:

That a dismemberment and extinction of the Danish monarchy is a scheme that has often busied the brains of German statesmen is a point that admits of no doubt. In Berlin and Vienna, and throughout Germany, Denmark is as plainly doomed as the old sick man upon whose inheritance

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>109</sup> Theodor Fontane, *Der Schleswig-Holsteinische Krieg im Jahre 1864*, (Berlin: Decker, 1866).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 271.

Nicholas of Russia was in too great a hurry to reckon. Give Germany that of Denmark which is German give Sweden and Norway what is Scandinavian." The Germans had proposed this to Sweden. Alive as they are to national feelings for what concerns themselves, the Germans too readily forget that other people also have an individuality which they may be anxious to preserve; that the Danes, however deficient in numbers, boast a long, glorious and powerful existence of their own; that, however closely allied by blood with Sweden, however strongly relying on their support in the present straits, they are no more ready to become Swedes, to merge their own even in to a kindred nationality, than the English would be, for instance, to amalgamate with the Saxon or Norman people from whom they claim common descent.<sup>111</sup>

Just as in 1848, the Prussians and Austrians became interested in using prehistory in their claims to the region, and the armies were accompanied by groups of scholars and military officers with antiquarian interests, who saw the recovery of artifacts in Schleswig-Holstein as legitimate explorations of a collective German past. Stine Wiell has documented a number of incidents during the conflict in which Prussian and Austrian forces orchestrated impromptu digs at barrows along the march and transported dozens of artifacts to museums in Berlin and Vienna. Among the leading scholars involved was Leopold von Ledebur (1799-1870), director of the Royal Kunstkammer in Berlin, who Wiell claims came with the army to obtain finds directly from the Flensburg Collection. In some cases, such as at the Austrian dig at the grave barrow at Hohøj in Mariager, the digs were merely opportunities to go treasure hunting and bring home gold and silver. Some officers made agreements to divide found artifacts among their men as spoils of war.<sup>112</sup> Others, such as Prince Ahrenburg of Belgium, who was serving with the Austrian army, were antiquarians drawn by Engelhardt's celebrity to find new rich sites in the region.<sup>113</sup> In the summer of 1864, Ahrenburg led an excavation at the Nydam site that uncovered a metal anchor associated with the boat.<sup>114</sup>

Within a few days of the outbreak of the war, the Prussian and Austrian forces stood before the Danewall, where the Danish general Christian Julius de Meza had strengthened the old fortifications in an attempt to prevent a German advance into Jutland and the Danish Isles. On the night of February 5th, however, de Meza realized that the

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<sup>111</sup> "Traveling Correspondent on the Eve of War from Kiel to Copenhagen," *London Times*, 2. February 1864.

<sup>112</sup> Wiell, *Kampen om Oldtiden*, 25.

<sup>113</sup> Idem., *Flensborgsamlingen*, 177-80.

<sup>114</sup> Engelhardt, *Nydam Mosefund*, 10.



ancient wall that had once stopped the Franks would be no match for the modern armies of the Germans, and he withdrew. Shortly thereafter, the Prussians were on their way to Flensburg to capture the administrative capital of the duchies.

The possibility of Prussian forces arriving at his doorstep forced Conrad Engelhardt to make a difficult choice about the fate of his collection. On the one hand, he remained committed to the local dimension of his enterprise and felt personally connected to Flensburg, and he recognized the potential harm that could come to the delicate pieces should they be moved without a great deal of care. On the other hand, he was under no illusions about the intentions of the invading forces. He was also strongly encouraged by his colleague and fellow Thomsen student C.F. Herbst (1818-1911) to remove the artifacts from possible Prussian control. Worsaae also recommended that they be moved, and on his advice, Engelhardt decided that it would be far better to see his collection go to Copenhagen than Berlin. According to Graef, he packed up the contents of his collection in thirty-two crates with the help of colleagues from the Flensburg school, loaded them onto the steamship *Jylland* and sent them to the city of Norburg. When Norburg also became threatened in the war, he transferred the collection a second time to Korsør on the island of Sjælland.<sup>115</sup>

The Prussians thus arrived to empty exhibition halls in Flensburg. In Kiel, Klaus Groth was joined by the numismatist Heinrich Handelsmann (1827-1891) and the art historian G.F. Thaulow (1817-1883) in calling for the return of the collection to the duchies. They saw the museum's disappearance as the theft of objects belonging to Schleswig-Holstein and evidence of Danish intentions to use the artifacts to cement the bond between Copenhagen and the northern duchy. In response to their outcries, the Prussians soon launched an investigation into the whereabouts of the collection.<sup>116</sup> Newspapers in Copenhagen reported the mystery of its disappearance, which was all the more intriguing given the numbers of Flensburgers who must have been involved in or at least seen its removal. The stunning silence of dozens or perhaps hundreds of Danish

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<sup>115</sup> Graef, *Flensburger Sammlung*, 7.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

townsmen was indicative of the degree to which Danes saw the artifacts as national possessions. Yet the peace negotiators labeled the collection differently, declaring it the property of the Prussian state in Article XIV of the Treaty of Vienna signed in October 1864. Even afterwards, however, the Danes continued to place the collection as a high priority of negotiations into the summer of 1865.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Engelhardt's artifacts had become so important to the Danes that Worsaae wrote the Danish Foreign Ministry to suggest offering the Germans a respectable collection of nordic relics from the Copenhagen museum in exchange for the right to retain the Flensburg Collection.<sup>118</sup>

Worsaae's efforts, however, proved fruitless, as an informant entered the Prussian embassy in Copenhagen in November 1866 and sold the information about the collection's location. The Danes then officially handed over the collection in January 1868, left only with the consolation that the artifacts would not be plundered by Prussian or Austrian military forces. Moreover, the involvement of the Kiel antiquities scholars Heinrich Handelmann and G.F. Thaulow meant that the artifacts would also remain in Schleswig-Holstein and be spared a trip to Berlin. Indeed, the Prussian deliberations over the fate of the collection would create new opportunities for the long-suffering Kiel Museum.<sup>119</sup>

## **Conclusion: Nationalism and the Intellectual Field**

In 1873, the Flensburg Collection became part of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum of National Antiquities, and the Nydam Boat and the marshland treasures from Thorsberg went on display within the new German Empire. In Kiel, they became monuments of a Germanic past reaching back almost two thousand years, the remnants of a nation in aspiration now united and whole. In Denmark, however, they remained stolen relics of Scandinavian settlement in Sønderjylland and all-too visible reminders of a bitterness that survived the two German-Danish Wars and carried into the next century.

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<sup>117</sup> "Museet i Flensborg," *Dagbladet*, 29 August 1864. In ALM AFS G-14.

<sup>118</sup> Worsaae to Udenrigsministeriet, 18 June 1865, ALM AFS G-6a.

<sup>119</sup> Graef, *Flensburger Sammlung*, 8-9.

The Nydam Boat and the thousands of finds from bogs and barrows were physical manifestations of an open conflict over the past. That they could be discovered and displayed, hidden and traded, showed that the years between 1848 and 1865 had rendered the past into national property. Long resting on the murky edges of cultural memory, they and the borderland in which they were found had become centerpieces not only of an emerging scholarship, but also of two emerging nations. Their fate was the consequence of the collision between new practices in archaeology and lingering questions about the borders of two states.

The war years had witnessed a transformation in the way people saw the past. The pursuit of regional antiquity was no longer merely a question of collecting and preserving, but was now a dedicated branch of scholarship with far-reaching questions and precise methods of doing research. This period marked the emergence of an intellectual field in which speculation about the meanings of ancient artifacts gave way to systematic comparisons and paradigms to guide future discovery. At its heart, a growing network of scholars was forming, anchored by institutions and new practices, and above all by a progressive understanding of the possibilities of reconstructing the passage of time in antiquity. The new practices championed by J.J.A. Worsaae and Conrad Engelhardt held the promise of lifting the shroud and telling the story of the past. It was a discipline based on a narrative flow, a tale of evolution, settlement, and migration.

At the same time, this intellectual field was deeply infused with politics. Nationalist interpretations formed its most extreme edges, but also cut across constellations of orthodoxy. Visions of nation had a hand in building and destroying the institution in Flensburg, and had set the participants upon one another in a cacophony of competing and exclusive claims. Yet when the unspoken goal of archaeology remained the excavation of the nation, then political engagement was to be expected, and objectivity was seldom challenged when the existence of those nations were treated as given facts. Only at the border were the distinctions between scholarship and patriotism thrown into question. Only here did the ambiguities of identity demand a deeper search and a more rigorous scholarship. Worsaae, Engelhardt, and Müllenhoff all seemed to have

recognized to differing degrees the fine line between objective truth and political context. If they at times made choices that seemingly threw them off course, or if they failed to embrace a more rigid objectivity, it was at least partly because they experienced pressure from the broader national context. With loud declamations from Frankfurt and armies from Berlin, it is little wonder that archaeologists working in Schleswig and Holstein found it so challenging to find a moderate position and maintain commitments to the local enterprise.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement during this period was that the bonds of this scholarly community, though ruptured, were never fully sundered. Both Thomsen and Engelhardt remained focused on bringing the prehistory both to Danes and to Germans. Even the most bitter debates never put an end to correspondence, and institutional journals carried on the academic conversation even when nationalist passions rendered other forms of dialogue impossible. Indeed, the waning years in the Kiel Museum and the loss of the Flensburg Collection revealed just how important the transnational community was to the practice of archaeology. Archaeology was not merely a matter of sites and artifacts, but of contacts and personal relationships. These years were thus a warning that the hunger for the past could only be satiated through cooperation, and their consequences would leave the next generations struggling to find a center in a polarized and politicized intellectual field.

## CHAPTER 3

### **“A REDISCOVERED CITY”: Professionalization and Reconciliation in the Late Nineteenth Century**

At its eastern end, the Danewall culminates in a curious semi-circular ring of earth and rock. With fingers reaching to wind-swept inlet waters, the mound shelters a grassy field where deer forage and cows graze in the sun. Quiet and unassuming, this meadow became the center of a renewed search for the ancient past in Schleswig-Holstein during the late nineteenth century, as archaeologists from Kiel and Copenhagen worked together for the first time since the outbreak of the German-Danish Wars to uncover the remains of the famous Viking-age trading center of Haithabu.<sup>1</sup> The dramatic find helped transform modern conceptions of northern European antiquity and fired the popular imagination as a "rediscovered city" once relegated to myth and legend.<sup>2</sup> Yet beyond its immediate scientific worth was its powerful appeal to the nationalist sentiments of both Germans and Danes that brought this monument of antiquity into the ongoing discussion over the shape, character, and historical legacy of the German-Danish borderland.

At the end of the German-Danish Wars, museums remained the centers of the so-called “struggle for prehistory” in the borderland, as the controversy over the Flensburg Collection reached its denouement, and locals struggled to rebuild the flagging collection in Kiel. At the same time, however, the antiquarianism of the prewar era was fast giving way to a professionalized discipline of archaeology that included fieldwork as a critical means of unlocking the secrets of the ancient past. It is therefore not surprising that the

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<sup>1</sup> Known in Danish as "Hedeby."

<sup>2</sup> Christian Jensen, "Eine wiedergefundene Stadt," unidentified newspaper clipping from 28 November 1908, in OA Haithabu 1908-194.

return to cooperation among German and Danish archaeologists in the late nineteenth century should occur in the field, in unassuming meadows and atop silent mounds.



The Haithabu Site. From Hildegard Elsner, *Wikinger Museum Haithabu: Schaufenster einer frühen Stadt*.

The Haithabu site was especially significant, because it marked at once the return of old forms of collaboration and the birth of new cooperative approaches to scholarship. The excavations there were indeed remarkable given the degree of complexity that characterized the postwar academic environment. During the period after 1864, Danish archaeologists confronted the frustrating challenge of expanding their broad comparative approaches in a context of restricted access to sites and artifacts in their former southern territories. Moreover, the Prussian victory seemed to many Germans to validate the perception of - as Jacob Grimm had described it - a “German” antiquity in Schleswig-Holstein that invalidated Danish claims to the region. It was a view that helped justify the seizure of both duchies, warranted the removal of hundreds of artifacts by Prussian and Austrian antiquarians, and confounded the Danes’ own efforts to preserve their

cultural ties to Schleswig. Indeed, the Prussian expropriation of regional antiquity was what troubled J.J.A. Worsaae most of all, as he railed against the depredations of the Berlin Museum curator Leopold von Ledebur and his “spiteful, almost ridiculous claims” about the pieces he had relocated to Berlin.<sup>3</sup>

For the pro-German inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, and especially for the antiquarians at Kiel, the situation after 1864 was ostensibly a windfall, as the Prussian administration quickly reconstituted both the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and the Kiel Museum, and granted its directors the authority to oversee the preservation of antiquarian monuments throughout the province, including in Schleswig, which had previously been the exclusive domain of Conrad Engelhardt’s institution.<sup>4</sup> The new charter thus recast the local antiquities society as an extension of the Prussian-centered nation-state, set the museum’s work within fixed borders for the first time, and created an institutional link to bind regional prehistory to the national community at large. Yet it did not furnish the means for the financially-strapped society to meet its responsibilities, nor did it resolve the inherent tensions between Schleswig-Holsteiners and Danes, or for that matter between Schleswig-Holsteiners and the Prussian “outsiders.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Worsaae, *Om Slesvigs eller Sønderjyllands Oldtidsminder*, (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske, 1865), 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> On the new charter, see Oberpräsidium Schleswig-Holsteins to the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, 10. November 1866, ALM AA 1866-037.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of a German nation-state bound in “perpetual union” by a constitution legitimizing Prussian hegemony was seen by many contemporary German historians as the “appropriate” outcome of the German national question, but was attacked by later historians, in particular from the Bielefeld School, as symptomatic of a flawed internal system. See for example Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1873-1918*, trans. Kim Traynor, (Oxford: Berg, 1985), 53-4. Indeed, the upshot of Prussian dominance has been the near-disappearance of the so-called “Third Germany” from mainstream historiography of the Wilhelminian Era, which was highlighted by Shulamit Volkov, “Historiographische Lücken. Europa und das „Dritte Deutschland,”” trans. David Ajchenrand, *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 29 (2000), 147-62; Recently, these gaps have become the subjects of intense interest among historians, and especially among cultural historians. See for example Geoff Eley and James Rettalack, “Introduction,” in idem., *Wilhelminism and its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meaning of Reform, 1890-1930*, (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 2-3; Nancy R. Reagan, “Recent Work on German National Identity: Regional? Imperial? Gendered? Imaginary?” *Central European History* 37/2 (2004), 273-89. Regarding Schleswig-Holstein’s relationship with Prussia both during the North German Confederation of 1867-1871 and during the imperial era, see Oswald Hauser, *Preußische Staatsräson und nationaler Gedanke*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1960), 26-33. This was largely a political history highlighting the disappointment of the so-called Augustenburger faction with the advent of Prussian hegemony. For a more recent but briefer account, see Jessen-Klingenberg, “Von der Preußischer Provinz zum demokratischen Bundesland,” in *Standpunkte zur neuen Geschichte*, 109-22. As yet, however, little has been done to historicize the cultural relations between Prussians and Schleswig-Holsteiners during this period.

How, then, was this reconciliation ultimately possible? How, and to what end, did Danish and German archaeologists put aside the bitterness of the wars to which they had devoted so much of their scholarly energy and look across the border once again to advance the practice of their discipline? These questions relate not only to the emergence of a professional archaeological discipline, but also to the ways in which these exchanges shaped identities in a radically changed political and cultural climate. There was, after all, a new nation-state in possession of the former Danish duchies, and a new German dominance over the province. The upshot was an ostensibly certain answer to the long-standing debate over the shape of a German nation and the settlement of the border question. Yet this border was one fixed through the machinations of war and great power politics, and with lasting resentment and a sense of incompleteness to the process on both sides, a final disposition remained far from certain.<sup>6</sup>

Also unanswered was the question of how regional self-conceptions would reconcile themselves to these newly-consolidated borders. Consequently, just as the experience of the German-Danish Wars sharply influenced (and was influenced by) the growth of archaeology in Denmark, so, too, was the corresponding process of archaeological professionalization in German Schleswig-Holstein shaped by the founding of the *Kaiserreich* and the rise of a rapidly industrializing German nation-state. Indeed, in this context of dislocation and modernization, the practice of archaeology became part of a broader cultural movement seeking to bridge the divide between region and nation. Above all, it reinforced conceptions of local *Heimat* identity, which, as Alon Confino and Celia Applegate have shown, served as powerful mediators between the former German states and the new German Empire.<sup>7</sup> Confino in particular has highlighted the uses of the past in accommodating this transition, writing:

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<sup>6</sup> Even some of the most prominent German Schleswig-Holsteiners, such as Theodor Olshausen (1802-1869), supported the notion of allowing Schleswigers a measure of self-determination. In fact, Bismarck had briefly considered a limited referendum to finalize the border settlement, but ultimately judged it counterproductive in the complex negotiations that produced the Treaty of Vienna (partly due to his own desire to control its scope). See Alexander Scharf, "Bismarcks Plan einer Volksbefragung im Herzogtum Schleswig 1864," in idem., *Schleswig-Holstein in der deutschen und nordeuropäischen Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1969), 236-50.

<sup>7</sup> Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*; Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*.



What is interesting about the Heimat idea is the way in which the Germans imagined the nation as an elaborate combination of national origins with local and everyday life history. This provincial image of the nation enlarged local history into national history. Heimat thus connected the abstract nation with the personal local existence by making national history as tangible as local history; Heimat nationalized local history by, in fact, localizing national history.<sup>8</sup>

This tangibility brought fresh relevance to local antiquity, and the advent of systematic and comparative approaches made it possible to place archaeological discovery in Schleswig-Holstein in the context of a larger, national prehistory.

At the same time, an emerging cohort of professional archaeologists gradually worked to integrate their young discipline into the mainstream of German academia, which subjected it to a host of new forces and practices. In the 1870s, the museum at Kiel became closely affiliated with the University of Kiel, and archaeologists found themselves collaborating with more established fields such as geology, biology, and ethnology.<sup>9</sup> But there was then no model in Germany for prehistoric archaeology as a professional pursuit, and no experts to whom one could turn for guidance. For this, the only role models were the Scandinavians, the Swedish and Danish archaeologists who had already established themselves as members of a dedicated, independent discipline. The result was a lingering space between archaeology and the national academic sphere that favored individuals less connected to the ranks of the traditional “mandarins” (to use Fritz Ringer’s term), and more closely tied to former cross-border networks.<sup>10</sup> These included researchers from lower-class backgrounds, such as provincial schoolteachers, and, most notably, at least one woman, the eventual director of the Kiel Museum, Johanna Mestorf, (1828-1909).

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<sup>8</sup> Confino, *Local Metaphor*, 149.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> See Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1990).

In the period from 1864 to the outbreak of war in 1914, Schleswig-Holstein archaeology consequently became the center of a nexus of local, national, and transnational forces. Its development heralded a series of ruptures in constellations of nation, gender, and class - the principal categories of difference - that determined access, status, and above all power within the intellectual field governing the production of knowledge about the past. The digs at the Haithabu site, and more importantly, the events and trends that produced this remarkable collaboration, thus tell us far more than a simple history of a single excavation. Underneath is a more complex scenario in which the discovery of Haithabu is but the capstone of a process of reconciliation that reveals much about the practice of “normal” scholarship even as it chronicles an extraordinary metamorphosis and extension of the transnational intellectual field.

### **Reconstituting the Antiquities Society**

With the departure of Conrad Engelhardt and the dissolution of the Flensburg Collection, the directors of the Kiel Museum found themselves once again overseeing the primary collecting institution in Schleswig-Holstein. On the 4th of March, 1864, even as German and Danish forces still jockeyed for positions in Schleswig, the Prussian and Austrian governments lifted the prohibition against the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society’s rights to collect antiquities in the northern duchy.<sup>11</sup> Yet, as the war came to its close, and the antiquarians at Kiel became focused on the drama surrounding the Flensburg Collection, the consequences of the Kiel Museum’s wartime decline quickly became clear. From the beginning, Prussian antiquarians expressed little regard for the authority of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, as they conducted private digs and removed a number of artifacts to Berlin and Vienna, which generated a great deal of resentment among the remaining members of the local society.

Most illustrative of these tense relations between Schleswig-Holsteiners and their Prussian “liberators,” was the scandal that erupted over the visit of the famed novelist

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<sup>11</sup> See *Verordnungsblatt für das Herzogthum Schleswig*, 7. Stück, (Schleswig: 1864).

Gustav Freytag, who toured the province in 1868, one year after the region's incorporation into the North German Confederation. During his visit, Freytag was especially interested in examining historic and prehistoric sites, which he saw as key to recovering the authentic (and coincidentally mostly bourgeois) values of the German people.<sup>12</sup> Among the sites on his itinerary were the well-known stone passage graves buried in the low hillsides of the western island of Sylt. The trouble erupted when Freytag found himself accused of entering one of the graves and pilfering its antiquities. Astonished by the accusation, Freytag did not deny the charges, but justified his actions by pointing to the degree of disdain for the fate of artifacts in the region. In such a climate, he argued, it should scarcely matter whether he picked up a few odd pieces. He complained that if artifacts were truly at risk, then the true fault lay with Schleswig-Holsteiners and above all with the Museum of Antiquities in Kiel, whose pitiful state of disrepair reflected a general indifference about the past. He cited examples of untended artifacts and unopened boxes and noted, "one can often hear patriotic Prussian scholars express the opinion that it would be better for scholarship if the antiquities were to remain useful and well-ordered in *Copenhagen* instead of now being packed in a storeroom left to the humidity and rust."<sup>13</sup>

Freytag clearly intended his comments to provoke Schleswig-Holsteiners recovering from the two bitter German-Danish wars of 1848 and 1864, yet he failed to appreciate not only the value of prehistory in the region, but also the degree to which the museum had itself been a casualty of the wars, as its leaders struggled with scarce resources to rebuild it in 1864. Indeed, there was an especially intense urgency to this project, since accompanying Freytag's criticism was the genuine concern among locals that high-value artifacts in Schleswig-Holstein might be stolen or destroyed. "It would be painful to

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<sup>12</sup> On Freytag's conception of history and German national identity, see Lynne Tatlock, "Realist Historiography and the Historiography of Realism: Gustav Freytag's *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*," *German Quarterly* 63/1 (1990), 59-74. Tatlock writes, "The twentieth-century reader of *Bilder* will quickly perceive Freytag's tendency to see in the German past all those virtues prized by the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. We read of the Germans' loyalty, sense of duty, sentimentality, warmth, enthusiasm, industry, democratic sensibilities, even temper, deliberateness, honesty, domesticity, and sexual moderation," 66.

<sup>13</sup> Freytag, Gustav, "Das Museum für vaterländische Alterthümer in Kiel," *Die Grenzboten* 27 (1868), 159. Emphasis added.

complain," wrote one critic, "if these valuable finds should be split up, but hopefully due care will be exercised in Schleswig, to save what can be saved, to reclaim what should be stolen by Danes and Prussians . . ."<sup>14</sup> These were not entirely imagined fears, especially after Jens Worsaae convinced the well-known German antiquarian Georg Lisch (1801-1883) of Schwerin to act as a mediator in a plan to divide important finds between the antiquities museums in Berlin and Copenhagen.<sup>15</sup> Worsaae and Lisch argued that the scholars in Kiel were not trained as archaeologists and therefore lacked the necessary expertise to treat and interpret the objects in their care, a critique that appears to have been largely directed at Klaus Groth.<sup>16</sup> Many Schleswig-Holstein antiquarians echoed this sentiment, as when Johanna Mestorf, the daughter of one of the society's founding members,<sup>17</sup> wrote in 1868, "Mention Kiel and people laugh; the educated speak with contempt for [Klaus Groth], who has laid aside such interesting [antiquarian] information without further inquiry, etc."<sup>18</sup> A year earlier, Mestorf's mentor, the Hamburg city librarian Christian Petersen (d. 1872), had written to report that many locals had lost faith in the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and had begun sending correspondence about antiquarian finds to him rather than to Groth in Kiel.<sup>19</sup>

In response to this pressure, the directors of the antiquities society looked directly to the Prussian state to grant their enterprise new legitimacy. In September, 1866, they wrote to the provincial administration (*Oberpräsidium*) requesting a new state charter, which they received in November of the same year.<sup>20</sup> Under this new charter, the director

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<sup>14</sup> "Der Wirtschaftsfreund. Schleswig-Holsteinische Schiffsalterthümer," *Itzehoeer Nachrichten* (14 July, 1866).

<sup>15</sup> Mentioned in a letter from Johanna Mestorf to Heinrich Handelsmann, 24 November 1868, ALM AA 1868-093.

<sup>16</sup> Johanna Mestorf to Heinrich Handelsmann, 8 February 1867, ALM AA 1867-047.

<sup>17</sup> Mestorf's father was the surgeon Jacob Heinrich Mestorf (d. 1837), whose name appears on the society's first membership list and whose collection was bequeathed to the museum following his death. See Johanna Mestorf's diary, especially 29 December 1873, ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

<sup>18</sup> Mestorf to Handelsmann, 8 February 1867, ALM AA 1867-047. In the letter, Mestorf uses the initials K.G., but there can be no mistaking to whom she is referring.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> ALM AA 1866-037.

of the museum also received the title of “Conservator of National Antiquities.”<sup>21</sup> In 1866, this dual title went to the historian Heinrich Handelsmann (1827-1891), who was then a lecturer at the university and since 1861 a member of the steering committee of the antiquities society.<sup>22</sup> Handelsmann, who had studied in Kiel in the 1850s after serving as a volunteer in the Schleswig-Holstein uprising of 1848,<sup>23</sup> rose to a leadership position in the society in the 1860s as a result of his expertise in numismatics, which enabled him to gain a reputation by reorganizing the museum’s coin collection.<sup>24</sup> In 1864, he began assisting Groth in overseeing the general collection,<sup>25</sup> and, once Groth received a professorship in Germanic languages in 1866, Handelsmann became the obvious choice to replace him.

Upon receiving his new position, Handelsmann quickly took the lead both in resuming the museum’s scholarship and in expanding the existing collection. Not surprisingly, one of his first acts was to carry out excavations on the island of Sylt, where Freytag’s visit had become such a *cause célèbre*. Although his early studies there revealed a great deal of plunder and damage at the hand of Prussian troops, including the use of grave barrows as signal stations, he remained gracious and thanked all those who had conducted earlier digs, and he situated his own work in a long-term process of German investigations of sites on the island. As a result, the Prussian government began funding a series of digs that lasted through much of the 1870s. In the first three seasons, Handelsmann excavated thirty independent grave sites.<sup>26</sup> The excavations lacked the careful and systematic quality of contemporary Scandinavian methods, and Handelsmann usually spent no more than two or three days (or in some cases a morning or afternoon), but they nevertheless

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Johanna Mestorf, “Nachruf: Gottfried Heinrich Handelsmann,” ALM BA 1904-139.

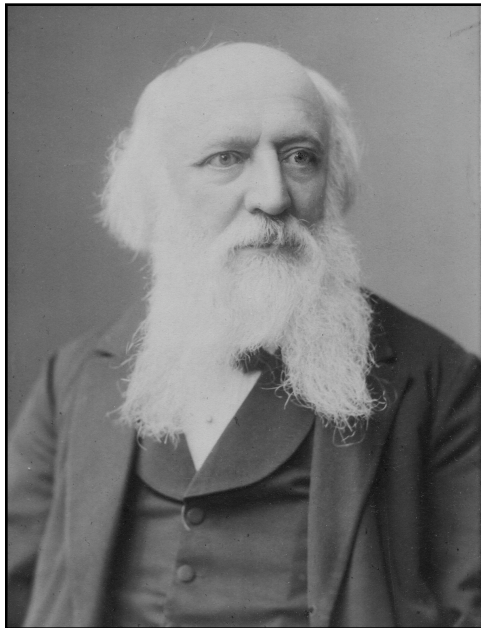
<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Weinhold, “Bericht des Vorstandes,” SHLG (1865), ix.

<sup>25</sup> Idem., “Bericht des Vorstandes,” SHLG (1864), vii.

<sup>26</sup> Heinrich Handelsmann, *Die amtlichen Ausgrabungen auf Sylt: 1870, 1871 und 1873*, (Kiel: C.F. Mohr, 1873). The digs included a number of investigations on the nearby island of Föhr.

gave him a chance to recover several hundred pieces with which to make future comparisons and to rescue dozens of important bronze and iron pieces for the museum.



Heinrich Handelman (1827-1891). Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Handelman was also a leading advocate for bringing the former Flensburg Collection to Kiel, which became a much more heated controversy in the late 1860s. Along with the art historian and curator Gustav Thaulow (1817-1883), Handelman had pushed the Prussians to recover the collection, and, as Conrad Engelhardt continued to make his case for the collection as Danish national property in 1868,<sup>27</sup> Handelman and Thaulow called for the two collections to merge in order to reverse the divides in Schleswig-Holstein created by rival institutions. At the same time, however, supporters in Flensburg advocated returning the finds to their city, and they found sympathy among a majority of the members of the provincial *Landtag* in Rendsburg. Handelman's hopes seemed dashed in late 1868, when the rector of the Flensburg Gymnasium offered to house the artifacts, which once again highlighted the relatively poor conditions in Kiel.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 214-15. See Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> Graef, *Flesburger Sammlung*, 14-15.

Initially, the *Oberpräsidium* sided with Flensburg, but shortly afterwards the news reached Kiel that the Gymnasium's facilities had proved unsuitable and that the Prussian administration would have to reconsider its position. To bolster their case, Handelsmann and his colleagues approached the university about including the museum in their budget, since the society's membership was woefully inadequate to the task of properly displaying such a large addition.<sup>29</sup> Given the fame and impressive size of the Flensburg Collection (over ten thousand artifacts in all), the university quickly accepted, and in July 1869, the Prussian administration awarded the collection to Kiel. By 1873, the two museums had merged to form the Schleswig-Holstein Museum of National Antiquities (*Das Schleswig-Holsteinische Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer*). The Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society, meanwhile, dissolved itself, and the museum became at once an official part of the university and the property of the Prussian state.<sup>30</sup>

The opening of this newly-reconstituted museum in 1873 marked the final step in a process of institutional integration with the German state. While this certainly diminished the original emphasis on the regional dimension of the antiquarian enterprise and weakened local control over projects, it had obvious benefits. Above all, it made it possible to conduct archaeological research in Schleswig-Holstein once again. It also laid the foundation for renewed efforts to strengthen preservation laws by bringing the state into the business of collection and conservation. Indeed, in 1882, as the Kiel representative proposed preservation laws comparable to those in Scandinavia, Wilhelm Seelig, Professor of Economics at Kiel, stressed the connection with the national state, writing, "With the security of our inalienable bond with the collective Fatherland began at the same time once again a renewed enthusiasm for this part of the Fatherland's history."<sup>31</sup> In another sense, however, the episode dimmed hopes for resuming Schleswig-Holstein archaeology as a transnational enterprise, as the institutional split rendered the prospects for a renewal of scholarly collaboration between Germans and

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<sup>29</sup> Handelsmann, "Bericht des Vorstandes," SHLG (1869), 4.

<sup>30</sup> Mestorf, *Führer durch das schleswig-holsteinische Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer*, (Kiel: Schmidt & Klaunig, 1895), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Wilhelm Seelig, "Zum Schutze der vaterländischer Alterthümer," *Kieler Zeitung* (24 April, 1882).

Danes especially bleak. 1865 had witnessed the death of C.J. Thomsen, who had represented one of the last remaining ties to the liberal, regional origins of early antiquarian pursuits in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> With his passing, the directorship of the Copenhagen Museum fell to Jens Worsaae. The dominant figures in the field were thus men who had participated on opposite sides of the two wars, and who had become fully invested in exclusive nationalist projects. But the growth of archaeology in both Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein led Worsaae and Handelsmann to seek assistants, and it would be these who would ultimately form the key agents of change in this polarized environment. For Handelsmann, the search ended with Johanna Mestorf, who worked first as an occasional volunteer and then moved to Kiel from Hamburg in 1873 to take on the role of curator of the collection.

### **Regendering the Field?: Johanna Mestorf and the Rivalry with Heinrich Handelsmann**

Little is now remembered of Mestorf outside northern Germany and Scandinavia, but she was in fact a remarkable woman.<sup>33</sup> During the 1870s and 1880s, she was instrumental in rebuilding the reputation of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, and in the 1890s she became both its director and one of the first women in Germany to earn a professorial title. Without a political agenda, she managed to enjoy a spectacular career as an archaeologist in an era when women were engaged in a long-standing and often

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<sup>32</sup> The only other remaining leading member was Henning Ratjen, the librarian at the University of Kiel, but even his involvement in the Antiquities Society seems to have diminished during the 1850s.

<sup>33</sup> Most writing on Mestorf is done in a strictly local context. The most notable exception is Julia K. Koch and Eva-Maria Martens, eds., *Eine Dame zwischen 500 Herren: Johanna Mestorf – Werk und Wirkung*, (Münster: Waxmann, 2002). A project by Dagmar Unverhau is also currently underway to produce an edited version of Mestorf's diary, which she kept from 1874 to 1891. The diary is seen as a record of her work with materials at the Kiel Museum, but it is a fascinating resource revealing much about Mestorf's personality and passions.



fruitless struggle to gain acceptance in German academia.<sup>34</sup> Her voluminous correspondence and personal diary, which are archived in the Schleswig-Holstein Museum of Archaeology, provide an especially helpful resource for tracing the reconstruction of local archaeology after the German-Danish Wars. Above all, her battles as a woman to succeed in professional archaeology illuminate the forces marking the structure and boundaries of archaeology as an emerging academic discipline in the borderland, in particular the concept of gender. (Here I am using Joan Scott's understanding of gender as "a constitutive element of social relationship based on perceived differences between the sexes and a primary means of signifying relationships of power.")<sup>35</sup> Moreover, her experience reveals the degree to which gender shaped not only the hierarchies of the scholarly communities into which archaeology was entering, but also their questions, interpretations, and audience. Photos from contemporary excavations prove that there was a place for women, but these were secondary, auxiliary roles, and before Mestorf entered the field, the gender dimension, while certainly at work with other so-called "categories of difference" such as class and national and regional identity, was for the most part an unchallenged sphere. We must ask, then, if Mestorf was allowed to practice scholarship in this field, how did she gain access and how did this alter the field in which she worked?

In many ways, Mestorf was ideally suited for life as a female professional. Although she grew up in a traditional middle class family in Bad Bramstedt in Holstein, her father, the physician Jacob Heinrich Mestorf, died in 1837, and Johanna never married or had children. In these circumstances, she lived outside the traditional gender model for middle class women in the nineteenth century and was able to attend school in the 1840s

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<sup>34</sup> See especially Kristine von Soden and Gaby Zipfel, eds., *70 Jahre Frauenstudium*, (Cologne: Paul Rugenstein, 1979); Ulla Bock, Anne Braszeit, and Christiane Schmerl, *Frauen im Wissenschaftsbetrieb: Dokumentation und Untersuchung der Situation von Studentinnen und Dozentinnen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hochschulen von Nordrhein-Westfalen*, (Weinheim: Beltz Verlag, 1983), 4-5; For a very good recent study, see Patricia Mazon, *Gender and the Modern Research University: The Admission of Women to German Higher Education, 1865-1914*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). The best resource for tracing the history of women in archaeology is Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, eds., *Excavating Women: A History of Women in European Archaeology*, (London: Routledge, 1998). Unfortunately, this text does not consider the German context.

<sup>35</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 98 (December, 1998), 1053-75.

and later, when the family's financial situation became more bleak, to seek employment. Her first job brought her to Sweden as a governess for the noble Piper-Engsö family at Lake Mälaren. During her stay, Mestorf mastered the Swedish language and cultivated a deep love for the country and culture. Ultimately, her health forced her to return and take up residence with her mother and brother in Hamburg, but in 1858 her new-found language skills earned her a position as a secretary for the C. Adler publishing house.<sup>36</sup> Among her duties there was the maintenance of correspondence with Scandinavian authors, which soon led to a job translating Swedish novels into German.



A woman at an excavation site. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Even during this early period, Mestorf harbored a deep fascination with prehistory, which may have come from the influence of her father, who was an antiquarian and member of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society. Her pursuits may even have been a means of helping her reconcile his early death (her work diary lingers over each time she came across a find she recognized from her father's collection). Mestorf eagerly read the archaeological texts that came to her publisher from Scandinavia and later asked first the Swedish archaeologist Sven Nilsson and later Jens Worsaae to allow her to translate

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<sup>36</sup> Eva-Maria Mertens, "Johanna Mestorf: Lebensdaten," in *Eine Dame zwischen 500 Herren*, 32.

their work into German.<sup>37</sup> Recognizing that she lacked scholarly credentials, she made her case by emphasizing that her only desire was to promote *their* research in Germany. This argument was significant because, although Sweden and Denmark tended to be somewhat less conservative than Germany when it came to permitting females into professional fields, there remained, particularly during the 1860s, strong limits on women's participation.<sup>38</sup> As Ida Blom has argued, many of the most successful women in Scandinavian countries tended to characterize their advancement within the prevalent patriarchal discourse.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Mestorf seems to have used this very tactic when she justified her role as translator in a letter to Nilsson. "The pursuit of fame and recognition befits the man," she wrote, "while the women should rather strive to make themselves useful in some capacity, and whenever possible should do so in silence, without ostentation."<sup>40</sup>

Ultimately, her arguments convinced her male colleagues, and she succeeded in producing over a dozen translations and short articles on Scandinavian archaeology. Indeed, she was so successful that she was invited to attend a major conference in Copenhagen in 1869 and a second in Bologna in 1871. Although she did not present at the conferences, she played the role of passionate observer, and her correspondence suggests that she made dozens of contacts, familiarized herself with the current interests of antiquarians outside Germany, and published reports of the results.<sup>41</sup> Mestorf thus proved to be an able networker, and circumvented the limitations of her sex by emphasizing the fit between her contributions and her place as a woman.

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<sup>37</sup> Mestorf to Sven Nilsson, 25 November 1861, ALM Nachlass Mestorf; Mestorf to Worsaae, 9 September 1869, NM Afd. 2 Kasse III, 83.

<sup>38</sup> Women were not admitted to university in Denmark until 1875, and in Sweden the first doctoral dissertation appeared only in 1883. See Ann-Sofie Ohlander, "En utmordenlig balansakt: Kvinliga forskarpionjärer i Norden," *Historisk Tidskrift*, 1 (1987), 2-22.

<sup>39</sup> Ida Blom, "Nation-Class-Gender: Scandinavia at the Turn of the Century," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 21/1 (1996), 8

<sup>40</sup> Mestorf to Nilsson, July 1865. ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

<sup>41</sup> Mestorf, *Der archäologische Congreß in Bologna. Aufzeichnungen*, (Hamburg: Otto Meißner, 1871).



Johanna Mestorf (1828-1909). Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

The advances in archaeology that she encountered only underscored the decline of scholarship in Schleswig-Holstein, and in the late 1860s, Mestorf began applying her expertise by writing pieces on local prehistory in the popular newspaper, *Itzehoer Nachrichten*. Her greatest delight, however, came when she learned of the rechartering of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Society and of Handelsmann's promotion in late 1866. The following February she wrote to congratulate him, exclaiming, "I celebrated your promotion to conservator of our fatherland's antiquities as if it were a Christmas party. I greet this act as the first ray of sunshine of a better time, which livens the general interest in archaeology and awakens it to a new life."<sup>42</sup> Through this and other exchanges, Handelsmann became aware of the potential benefits of inviting Mestorf to assist him with the daunting task of reorganizing the museum. Above all, with Worsaae and Lisch joining a chorus of voices calling for the transfer of museum artifacts, Mestorf's expertise and connections served to reassure Scandinavian critics, and she was

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<sup>42</sup> Mestorf to Heinrich Handelsmann, 8 February 1867, ALM AA 1867-047.

able to warn Handelsmann of the machinations against the museum and encourage him to respond through the press<sup>43</sup>

In her struggle to earn a more permanent position, however, Mestorf encountered a great deal of resistance. In 1869, the museum's state of crisis had convinced its new patron, the University of Kiel, to create a paid position for a custodian of the collection, but it was four years before Mestorf was finally offered the post. In a letter to the Swedish archaeologist Emil Hildebrand, she complained that Handelsmann was proving reluctant to speak on her behalf, and that the Minister of Culture was ambivalent about the appointment, "because I am a lady."<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, her reputation proved too great to ignore, as she used her connections to convince not only Hildebrand, but also a number of German archaeologists, including Georg Lisch in Schwerin, to write in support of her application, and her notice of appointment came on October 1st, 1873.<sup>45</sup>

The expanded role at the museum brought Mestorf into a greater decision-making role, and therefore into more direct conflict with her boss, Heinrich Handelsmann. At the root of these disputes was Handelsmann's strong sense of gender division and academic hierarchy. Handelsmann, whose neighbors referred to him as an "unfriendly Father Christmas,"<sup>46</sup> appears to have been an ardent traditionalist who perceived his relationship at the museum with Mestorf as a reproduction of a middle class home. Her role, as he often reminded her, was to serve as a "technical assistant" and tour guide, and especially to maintain and clean the collection, while his was to maintain correspondence and handle all activities related to archaeological scholarship.<sup>47</sup> In other words, he saw himself as the public face of the museum. It was of little concern to him that he was not a specialist in archaeology, rather it mattered only that he was a recognized member of the

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<sup>43</sup> Mestorf to Handelsmann 24 November 1868, ALM AA 1868-093.

<sup>44</sup> Mestorf to Hildebrand, 26 September 1873, ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

<sup>45</sup> Mestorf to Hildebrand, 18 November 1873. ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

<sup>46</sup> Günther Löwe, "Jugendjahre in Kiel, 1886-1902," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Kieler Stadtgeschichte* 1 (1966).

<sup>47</sup> Mestorf Diary, 7 June 1877. She mentions that this description came to her in a letter from Handelsmann. The letter itself is not extant.

academic community, whereas Mestorf was not. For her part, Mestorf was highly conscious of the fact that she had a superior expertise in matters of prehistoric archaeology. She noted that Handelsmann had never trained as an archaeologist, but was a historian with an expertise in numismatics. Thus, while he was an appropriate choice for maintaining the museum's coins, he was, in Mestorf's mind, wholly unsuited to the task of tending and displaying the thousands of other artifacts in the collection.

The two thus repeatedly argued over the arrangements and cataloging. "I understand my boss less and less," she complained, "He is good, he is honest, a *Biedermann* from head to toe, but I cannot understand his work methods, nor tolerate them."<sup>48</sup> In part, the problem was one of aesthetics. With alarm she watched Handelsmann arrange spears in a display of finds from the Nydam Bog, musing, "How grand, how beautiful these cabinets could become."<sup>49</sup> The more important issue, however, was that of scholarly method. The choice of display was not merely a matter of visibility, but could itself present a more complete picture of the past. For that reason, Mestorf was committed to bringing Scandinavian methods of organization to Kiel, and in particular wanted the collection to follow new conceptions of the Danish Three Age Theory. Such an approach, she argued, would create a narrative of cultural evolution in Schleswig-Holstein, complement the history of its people, and better serve to educate the public.<sup>50</sup>

Handelsmann did not completely reject the Three-Age Theory,<sup>51</sup> but he, like many other German antiquarians, remained highly skeptical of the potential to refine the levels of periodization and obtain a more certain chronology from artifact type.<sup>52</sup> These men were especially suspicious of the Bronze Age, and Handelsmann seems to have shared these doubts, as he lumped alleged Bronze Age finds together with stone artifact displays.

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<sup>48</sup> Mestorf Diary 19 December 1873.

<sup>49</sup> Mestorf Diary, 8 December 1874.

<sup>50</sup> Mestorf to Heinrich Handelsmann, 8 February 1867, ALM AA 1867-047.

<sup>51</sup> See Handelsmann, *Schleswig-Holsteinisches Museum Vaterländischer Alterthümer*, (Kiel: Schwerts'sche Buchhandlung, 1879). This guide reflects the exhibit's division: First Division - Stone and Bronze Ages, Second Division - Iron Age, Third Age - Christian Era.

<sup>52</sup> Worsaae had leveled this complaint more generally against the entire German archaeological community. See Worsaae, *Sønderjyllands Oldtidsminder*, 6.

Handelmann's reluctance to embrace Danish methodology was, however, less a reflection of his inexperience and more a product of his aforementioned experiences during the wars. His eschewal of contact with Scandinavian colleagues after the war thus prejudiced his approach to his collection, leading him to go so far as to forbid Mestorf from using Worsaae's notes to organize items from the Flensburg Collection that were incorporated into the Kiel Museum.<sup>53</sup>

What is interesting in these circumstances is that Mestorf, rather than withering in the face of such opposition, was able to take advantage of her nominally subordinate status and her position as an outsider to rebuild ties between German and Danish archaeologists. In 1875, for example, she reached out to Worsaae to seek his help in preventing the sale of the critical Thorsberg Bog site to English antiquarians. This was no easy task, since Worsaae, Engelhardt, and their colleagues proved equally intractable in dealing with Handelmann.<sup>54</sup> Engelhardt, in fact, had even extended his bitterness to Mestorf. Upon hearing of Engelhardt's death in 1881, Mestorf wrote, "I know, that he had no sympathy for me, but then again why should he have? I have never without melancholy been able to think on his prematurely white hair [or] his bitter, caustic character . . ."<sup>55</sup> In transcending this chasm, Mestorf relied on her connections and above all on her friendship with Worsaae. To him she acknowledged that some artifacts recovered from the bog had been part of the contested Flensburg Collection, she warned that it would be preferable to see the artifacts stay in the region in Kiel rather than to have them disappear in London. "I know in the interest of scholarship that *you* will not withhold from me your advice and admonition," she wrote.<sup>56</sup> She stressed that Handelmann had no knowledge of her proposal, and she asked Worsaae to keep it in the strictest confidence, which placed their transaction outside the bounds of normal scholarly networks. In

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<sup>53</sup> Mestorf Diary, 18 February 1876.

<sup>54</sup> In one letter, Engelhardt refused to provide assistance with certain portions of the former Flensburg Collection, arguing that he had been unable to produce the necessary copies to track the origins of certain pieces. Given the meticulousness of his scholarship, however, I question whether this was the case. See Engelhardt to Handelmann, 27 November 1879, ALM AA 1879-130.

<sup>55</sup> Mestorf to Worsaae, 17 November 1881, ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

<sup>56</sup> Mestorf to Worsaae, 28 August 1875, NM Afd. 2 Kasse III, 83. Emphasis in original.

exchange for his help, Mestorf supported Worsaae by translating his responses to attacks against the Three Age Theory in the journal *Archiv für Anthropologie*, where the German scholars Ludwig Lindenschmidt and Christian Hostmann had denied the possibility of a Bronze Age and had called into question the entire chronology.<sup>57</sup> Mestorf threw her weight behind Worsaae, and when his leading German opponents passed away in the 1880s, the consensus backed the Danish position and strengthened Mestorf's academic capital.

Mestorf also worked behind the scenes to promote the work of the Museum to the broader public. Handelsmann, like his predecessors, had emphasized the collection's importance only for the educated members of the antiquities society. By contrast, Mestorf, whose entrance in the society would normally have been impossible, took a much more populist view of the museum's mission in the province. "To the highest degree it is the case in Schleswig-Holstein," she wrote, "that in the last three decades next to nothing has been done to awaken the general understanding and interest for the legacy of [our] forefathers."<sup>58</sup> She argued that the articles that had earlier appeared in *Itzehoeer Nachrichten* "proved that the interest of the people in the prehistory of our country is waiting to germinate, and comes to life with but little encouragement."<sup>59</sup> From the first year of her appointment, Mestorf urged Handelsmann to educate the public as the best means of preserving finds, but his inaction left her frustrated, and, by the late 1870s, she responded by acting independently on her own recommendations. She began to publish a biannual report of the museum's activities not only to the antiquities society, but also in the general press. She also petitioned the Ministry of Education to finance a pamphlet for schoolteachers, arguing, "Through the children the fathers are won to the cause."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Mestorf to Worsaae, 9. February 1876, NM Afd. 2 Kasse III, 83.

<sup>58</sup> Mestorf to Minister Dr. Falk, Ministerium der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medicinalangelegenheiten, 3 August 1877, ALM Mestorf Nachlass. Mestorf was requesting funds from the ministry to support the publication and distribution of a free pamphlet on prehistory to schools in order to streamline education on prehistory.

<sup>59</sup> Mestorf to Handelsmann, 20 September 1867, ALM AA 1867-061.

<sup>60</sup> Johanna Mestorf, *Die vaterländischen Alterthümer Schleswig-Holsteins: Ansprache an unsere Landesleute*. (Hamburg: Otto Meißner, 1877), 5.



Such efforts transformed the relationship between archaeology and identity in Schleswig-Holstein. What had once been a liberal nationalist project to promote the participation of the educated middle class was suddenly cast as a duty for everyone in the province, including women and children. Mestorf held up Danish archaeology as an ideal example, pointing out that it had made breathtaking advances in archaeological scholarship while placing priority on educating the public. She argued that it in comparison to Scandinavia, Schleswig-Holstein, which possessed just as many rich prehistoric sites, was far behind in the advancement of scholarship. Protecting the past and promoting that scholarship was thus the responsibility of every individual, and she begged laborers and farmers to note remains while working outside and asked teachers to fill their students with a passion for the past.<sup>61</sup> In effect, her arguments made all Schleswig-Holsteiners participants in the search for prehistory and rendered the simplest acts of preservation into patriotic deeds. She implicitly encouraged all people at all levels of society to see themselves as members of a community with historical roots stretching back into the mists of time. The emphasis therefore lay on a conception of local identity as a worthy constituent of the national community, and this approach minimized the broad, exclusive claims of ethnic identity that had fueled tensions with Danish-speakers and once again made possible the practice of archaeology as a collaborative enterprise.

Mestorf's enthusiasm for public involvement was paradoxically limited only by her zealous desire to prevent the rise of other collecting institutions in the province. On numerous occasions, Mestorf wrote to the Prussian government to discourage support for the so-called tiny *Kreismuseen* of local communities, and she made appeals to collectors to continue supporting the regional museum in Kiel.<sup>62</sup> In 1882, for example, she was heavily criticized after voicing opposition to the creation of an antiquities association in the region of Dithmarschen in western Holstein. "What would they say in Kiel," asked

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 3-5.

<sup>62</sup> See among others C.H. Fuhlendorf to Mestorf, 20 January 1891, ALM OA Hamburg-Sülldorf 1891-003. Mestorf sometimes discouraged private digs, and even journeyed to Hamburg to trace artifacts sold from Bendorf. See Handelsmann to Königliche Regierung Abteilung für Kirchen- und Schulwesen, 7 January 1882, ALM AA 1882-o.N.

an article in the *Kieler Zeitung*, "if the great state museum in Berlin wanted to claim everything for itself?"<sup>63</sup> Upon learning of the public attacks, Mestorf quickly replied:

The prehistorian does not use a small number of urns with their contents to understand an entire cemetery, nor the uncovering of *one* graveyard to determine the cultural relations of *the region* in the period which it reveals. For this purpose it requires all the materials one can get, and this is the reason why we are opposed to the splitting up of the artifacts in small community and private collections.<sup>64</sup>

There was also a concern about the competence of new collectors. In 1889, Mestorf argued against the creation of an antiquities club in the town of Eutin, fearing that the directors did not seem prepared for such an undertaking.<sup>65</sup> In effect, it was her goal to ensure that the interpretation of ancient remains would fall solely to specialists, who would base their assessments on large bodies of artifact evidence. This was indeed a revolutionary change in the relationship between past and present, and placed Mestorf at the heart of discourse about prehistory that was becoming more consolidated and restricted to the jurisdiction of the professional, even as it appealed to a broader audience.

The quality of this controlled discourse remained strongly nationalist in its orientation. In a speech to the local anthropological society, for example, Mestorf took on Scandinavian theories of prehistory still naturalizing the divide between Holstein and Schleswig north of the Eider River. She attacked Ingvald Undset's thesis that the absence of passage graves indicated a cultural break, maintaining that negative evidence based on the absence of such finds in Holstein could not support such conclusions.<sup>66</sup> In response, she advocated a research agenda seeking just such links between ancient peoples in

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<sup>63</sup> "Das Dithmarscher Alterthumsmuseum," *Kieler Zeitung* 11 December 1882.

<sup>64</sup> Mestorf, Public Address to the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Anthropologischer Verein, 20 December 1882, ALM AA 1882-o.N. Emphasis in original text read on behalf of Mestorf by Adolph Pansch.

<sup>65</sup> Mestorf Diary, 16 November 1889.

<sup>66</sup> Mestorf was criticizing Ingvar Undset, *Jernalderens Begyndelse i Nord-Europa: En Studie in sammenlignede arkæologi*, (Kristiania: Cammermeyer, 1881).

Schleswig and Holstein as a means of reinforcing the inherent unity of the province, which had been a key German aim during the wars.<sup>67</sup>

Such public activities gradually heightened Mestorf's celebrity across the region, but the upshot was increasing strife with Heinrich Handelsmann. Publicly, Mestorf refrained from criticizing her boss, but in her diary she wrote:

I have worked quietly, I have used the local press, striven with tongue and pen to waken interest, to promote; the professor, quieter temperament, has disdained this. I have corresponded with colleagues, visited congresses at length, am more well known. Is it then a wonder, when I am named, when I am written about, when letters are directed to me?<sup>68</sup>

Handelsmann was clearly perturbed by Mestorf's independent activities, particularly in 1877, when she began making public appearances at excavation sites on behalf of the museum, which he deemed a direct attack on his authority.<sup>69</sup> That summer, the tension between the two erupted during the museum's planned transfer to a larger facility, which had been donated by the university in response to pleas for suitable display space.<sup>70</sup> Handelsmann saw the move as a chance to reassert his authority, and he made an effort to cut her off from involvement in the transfer. Mestorf was forced to learn through the newspaper that artifacts had already been packed and moved. Distraught that she had not been told, she resumed her work, but in her state of anger became careless and was nearly injured when a display cabinet came crashing down on top of her. She reflected, "Perhaps it would be best for me, if I were to die today,"<sup>71</sup> Within a few weeks, she recovered her nerve and took her case to the University Rector, demanding a clarification of her position and declaring that she could not take responsibility for the transfer of so

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<sup>67</sup> Mestorf, Public Address to the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Anthropologischer Verein, 20 December 1882. ALM AA 1882-o.N.

<sup>68</sup> Mestorf Diary, 26 May 1877.

<sup>69</sup> Mestorf Diary, 3 July and 6 July, 1877.

<sup>70</sup> Handelsmann to Oberpräsident und Universitäts-Kurator, 9 June 1875, ALM AA 1876-203a.

<sup>71</sup> Mestorf Diary, 17 June 1877.

many delicate artifacts without being notified. Handelsmann later explained to the Rector that he wanted to relegate her to a lower position, but suddenly Mestorf threatened to tender her resignation, and he was forced to retreat.<sup>72</sup>

Such an act was a risky gamble for a woman in her position, but she judged correctly that she had developed real power in her field. In the subsequent years, she continued to draw hostility from Handelsmann: "When he speaks to me, his eyes are horrible, glowering with brutish hatred."<sup>73</sup> But the crisis marked Mestorf's advent as the dominant figure in the museum and in regional archaeology. Her diary indicates that Handelsmann came less frequently to the museum during the 1880s, while the lion's share of business correspondence was addressed to her. In the later 1880s, Handelsmann grew increasingly ill, and for stretches of time signed over control of the museum to Mestorf.<sup>74</sup> Upon Handelsmann's death in April, 1891, Mestorf was officially named his successor.<sup>75</sup>



Schleswig-Holstein prehistory on display in the Kiel Museum. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

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<sup>72</sup> Mestorf Diary, 16 August 1877.

<sup>73</sup> Mestorf Diary, 1 May 1878.

<sup>74</sup> See for example Handelsmann to Mestorf, 4 July 1881, ALM AA 1881-274.

<sup>75</sup> Mestorf Diary, 3 June 1891.

In 1895, four years into her tenure, Mestorf published a new guide to the collection that reflected many of the changes in German archaeological thought.<sup>76</sup> The artifacts, for example, were neatly arranged according to the Three Age Model, with lengthy interpretations that explained the significance of each piece for understanding the lives of ancient peoples. The publication highlighted the metamorphosis both for Mestorf's career and for the discipline she was helping to create. Clearly, she was working in an academic field shaped not only by national cleavages, but also by gender, a category that joined a constellation of other forces determining access and relevance. Yet her experience in the first years at Kiel revealed that these were not immutable determinants, and within these structures, Mestorf's success depended in large measure on her willingness to engage patriarchal hierarchies and to circumvent rather than resist gender barriers. Her subsequent ascent to a respected position was in part due to the youth of the discipline of archaeology and to her place as an outsider, which allowed her to gain an expertise unattainable to men locked in a specific national and academic hierarchies. In this way, she found herself in a position to transform a number of the categories - nation, class, and gender, to refashion archaeology as a professional enterprise, and to fundamentally alter the way that contemporaries saw the past, and, by extension, themselves.

### **Cross-Border Reconciliation and the Search for Haithabu, 1891-1903**

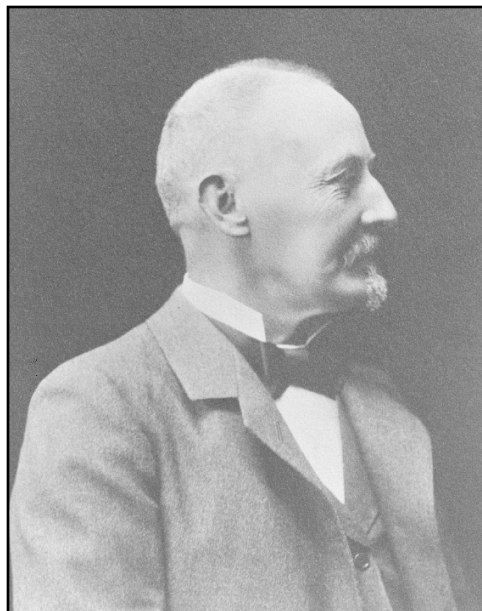
Mestorf's promotion to Director also placed her in a position to foster more direct collaboration with Scandinavian scholars. As early as the 1870s, she worked to strengthen the standing of the museum internationally by inviting colleagues from abroad to examine the growing collection. Given her avowed goal of "making it possible to introduce Scandinavian methods of research,"<sup>77</sup> it was critical that her organizational scheme met with the approval of her Nordic colleagues. The visits, however, also created

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<sup>76</sup> Mestorf, *Führer durch das schleswig-holsteinische Museum*.

<sup>77</sup> Mestorf to Worsaae, 17 November 1881, ALM Nachlass Mestorf.

opportunities for Danes to regain access to materials from the border region. Among the visitors during this period was the young Danish archaeologist Sophus Müller (1846-1932), a student and assistant of Jens Worsaae who first visited Kiel in 1875 to conduct research on bronze artifact finds.<sup>78</sup> In the following years, Müller and Mestorf developed a close professional relationship that ultimately became a focal point of reconciliation efforts after Mestorf became the director at Kiel in 1891 and Müller a director of the National Museum in Copenhagen a year later.<sup>79</sup> Müller, who like his mentor Worsaae harbored strong anti-German feelings, later recalled Mestorf as the only German on whose support he could rely as he sought to refine and expand Worsaae's work on Bronze Age chronology.<sup>80</sup>



Sophus Müller (1846-1932). Nationalmuseet.

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<sup>78</sup> Johanna Mestorf Diary, 27 April – 1 May, 1875.

<sup>79</sup> Klindt-Jensen, *Scandinavian Archaeology*. 86. Müller became head of the museum's First Department (1. *Afdeling*), which oversaw the collections related to Danish prehistory.

<sup>80</sup> Stine Wiell, "Johanna Mestorf und einige dänische Archäologen ihres Zeitalters," in *Eine Dame zwischen 500 Herren*, 152.

The scholarship that emerged from Müller's visit, in particular his 1878 work, *The Northern Bronze Age and its Periodical Division* (which Mestorf translated into German as *Die nordische Bronzezeit und deren Periodentheilung*), marked the beginning of changes in Danish archaeological thought. Müller remained at first fairly close to Worsaae's understanding of the Bronze Age, arguing only that the period exhibited a much more complex pattern of cultural evolution than previously believed. Above all, he treated the problem of explaining the wide stylistic differentiation in alleged Bronze-Age finds, which had raised doubts among many scholars about the period. In his comparisons, he observed at least two forms of bronze artifact manufacture that had earlier been viewed as chronologically distinct. He did not, however, locate a corresponding transitional style, and thus concluded that they represented not subsequent but parallel and independent cultural incursions into Denmark. By comparing a variety of artifact types, including lance heads, swords, and ceramics, with finds from across continental Europe, Müller determined two major currents of migration and artifact introduction from the southwest and southeast.<sup>81</sup> As a result, he felt confident in overturning previous models of unitary evolution, which in turn explained a number of discrepancies with Bronze Age chronology and thus placed the period on firmer scientific ground. This work was instrumental in bringing the last debates over the Three Age Theory to a close in Central Europe and underscored the possibilities of resuming cooperation with Germans in Schleswig-Holstein.

Like Worsaae, however, Müller also held to the underlying premise that peoples in Denmark had created distinct Bronze Age styles that highlighted their cultural sophistication and uniqueness.<sup>82</sup> He implicitly linked this to the modern Danish nation, though from the beginning Müller's work lacked the political subtext that had characterized Worsaae's writing. Moreover, his later work in the 1890s departed from his mentor's view even further by de-emphasizing exclusive linkages and by extending the relevance of Danish prehistory to neighboring regions – including German

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<sup>81</sup> Sophus Müller, *Die nordische Bronzezeit und deren Periodentheilung*, trans. Johanna Mestorf, (Jena: Hermann Costenoble, 1878).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*; On Worsaae's view, see *Sønderjyllands Oldtidsminder*, 25-8.

Schleswig-Holstein. "And this history [of Denmark]" he wrote, "is in the larger sense the same as the history of Europe north of the Alps and especially northern Germany."<sup>83</sup>

Such a cooperative gesture, of course, reflected Müller's broad comparative approach and suggested a higher commitment to scientific objectivity, but it did not signal a full departure from the nationalism embedded in Danish scholarship. In fact, Müller at times worked against German interests in Schleswig, as when he secretly conspired in 1894 to outbid Kiel in the purchase of the rights to the rich Nydam II site near Flensburg.<sup>84</sup> Müller nevertheless seems to have walked a fine line between nationalism and transnational scholarship, since gaining access to sites and artifacts in Germany usually required a more open and collaborative approach. Indeed, this was a quandary for many contemporary Danish intellectuals seeking to preserve cultural ties with Schleswig. The solution for most of these – and here I would include Sophus Müller – was to soften their militant stance over the loss of the southern duchies and adopt what Povl Bagge has called an "anti-nationalist" attitude, which led them to tacitly accept the status of the border.<sup>85</sup> While this term elides the nationalism at the root of Danish overtures, it nevertheless helps explain how Müller and his colleagues managed to balance their national concerns with their academic pursuits.

Such an approach was especially helpful for rekindling interest in sites with a strong symbolic resonance, and, during this period, Müller became intensely interested in new German efforts to preserve the remains of the famous Danewall, which had been the focus of early German-Danish cooperation in the 1840s. After 1864, the Danewall had seen a steady stream of Danish visitors making what amounted to a national pilgrimage to this tangible reminder of Denmark's historical presence in Schleswig. The Schleswig-

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<sup>83</sup> Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde*, Bd. 1 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1897), vi-vii.

<sup>84</sup> See Stine Wiell, "The Story of the Nydam II Find," in *The Kaleidoscopic Past: Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> Nordic TAG Conference Göteborg, 2-5 April 1997*, eds. Anna-Carin Andersson, et. al., (Göteborg: Göteborg University Dept. of Archaeology, 1998), 333-46.

<sup>85</sup> Povl Bagge, "Nationalismus und Antinationalismus in Dänemark um 1900," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 15/5 (1964), 291-303.



Holstein Museum had undertaken a survey in 1877,<sup>86</sup> but beginning in the late 1880s, Mestorf learned that farmers and brick-makers were uncovering a number of artifacts from the eastern end of the Danewall at a horseshoe-shaped embankment known as the Oldenburg, long considered to be a fortified beachhead.<sup>87</sup> Mestorf had already charged her assistant, the former schoolteacher Wilhelm Splieth (1862-1901), with the task of surveying the Danewall's condition,<sup>88</sup> and in 1897 he reported that the Oldenburg site was in danger of disappearing because much of it rested on private property beyond the museum's reach.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, he expressed concern over the military's interest in building a cavalry training site nearby.<sup>90</sup> In response, Mestorf wrote to the German government asking officials to bring the site under government protection. In her letter, she stressed the national significance of the site for both sides:

After it came to our attention that the Danewall is visited throughout the year by numerous Danes . . . and that on the German side the complaint is raised that the old border wall is surrendered under our control to thoughtless destruction, the management of the [Kiel] Museum for the National Antiquities felt itself obliged to take a closer look. The welcome fact that the German Empire has placed the Roman Limes under its protection and lent it its financial support has led us to hope that it might turn the same interest to the younger but no less historically significant Northern Limes.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Handelmann, 38. *Bericht zur Alterthumskunde Schleswig-Holsteins. Zum 50 jährigen Gedächtniss der Eröffnung des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Museums vaterländischer Alterthümer zu Kiel*, (Kiel: Mohr, 1882).

<sup>87</sup> L. Pedersen to Wilhelm Splieth, 8 February 1891, ALM Ortsakten Haithabu/Danewerk 1891-009a. Pedersen also sent the Museum a section of the wall with intact artifacts. See Mestorf Diary, 7 March 1891.

<sup>88</sup> Mestorf Diary 9 April 1888.

<sup>89</sup> Wilhelm Splieth, Report on the Danewall delivered to the General Meeting of the German Anthropological Society in Lübeck, April 1897, SHLA Abt. 309, Nr. 21070, reprinted in Dagmar Unverhau, "Möchte nun unser Hedeby vor unsern Blicken erstehen," in *Haithabu und die frühe Stadtentwicklung im nördlichen Europa*, ed. Klaus Brandt and Michael Müller-Wille, (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2002), 37-8.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., See also Regierungspräsident to Schleswig-Holstein Museum, 24 February 1899, ALM OA Haithabu 1898-033a.

<sup>91</sup> Mestorf to the Oberpräsident in Schleswig, Staatsminister von Köller, 25 February 1898, ALM OA Haithabu 1898-033a.

For Müller, the renewed activities at the Danewall and Oldenburg offered a rare opportunity to revisit a site that had captivated Danish archaeologists since the 1840s, and from the beginning he closely followed Splieth's survey work.<sup>92</sup> By the mid-1890s, he began to argue that the Oldenburg's poor tactical position and shallow inlet made it an unlikely military installation. Rather, he found the site more comparable to other late prehistoric residence centers such as the Birka site in Sweden, which was also surrounded by a semi-circular earthwork. In 1897, he surmised that the site at the Oldenburg might be another such fortified trading town<sup>93</sup>

Müller's interpretation was a dramatic breakthrough, because it suggested that the site might be none other than the mysterious city of Haithabu. Haithabu had been mentioned in early medieval and Arab chronicles,<sup>94</sup> but the previous scholarly consensus held that Haithabu had been an earlier name for an existing site. Indeed, as late as 1889, Splieth and Handelsmann investigated a rune stone associated with a burial at Busdorf very close to the Oldenburg that contained the inscription, "KING SUIN ERECTED THIS STONE FOR SKARTHI HIS FOLLOWER WHO HAD JOURNEYED WESTWARD BUT NOW FELL AT HAITHABU," but, on the basis of other historical evidence,<sup>95</sup> they interpreted "Haithabu" as the Old Danish name for the town of Schleswig a short distance to the north.<sup>96</sup> Müller's analysis, however, transformed the work at the Danewall from a preservation project to one of active discovery, and it encouraged Splieth to conduct limited digs at the Oldenburg in 1900 that yielded ceramics from Swedish tribes historically associated with the city.<sup>97</sup> The tantalizing finds helped Mestorf raise over

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<sup>92</sup> See for example Müller to Splieth, 5 November 1900, ALM OA Haithabu, 1900-136.

<sup>93</sup> Müller, *Nordische Altertumskunde*, Bd. 2, 234-38.

<sup>94</sup> The Arab trader At-Tatûshi reportedly visited the town in A.D. 965. Reported in Hildegard Elsner, *Haithabu: Schaufenster einer frühen Stadt*, (Schleswig: Archäologisches Landesmuseum, 1989).

<sup>95</sup> See among others *Annales regni Francorum, inde ab a. 741. usque ad. a 829*, (Hannover: impensis bibliopoli Hahniani, 1895).

<sup>96</sup> Heinrich Handelsmann and Wilhelm Splieth, *Neue Mittheilungen von den Runesteinen bei Schleswig*, (Kiel: Paul Toeche, 1889), 10.

<sup>97</sup> See Friedrich Knorr, "Schleswig und Haithabu," *Schleswig-Holsteinisches Heimatbuch* (1924), 24-31.

1000 Mark for a more extensive round of excavations.<sup>98</sup> In recognition of Müller's contributions, she made plans to invite him to observe the 1901 digging season.<sup>99</sup>

Before the excavation could begin, however, Splieth, who had long suffered from an unspecified lung disease, suddenly took a turn for the worse and died in February 1901 while recovering in Italy.<sup>100</sup> His death left Mestorf without an experienced field assistant, and she turned to her Danish colleagues to help train her new custodian, Friedrich Knorr (1872-1936) in Scandinavian excavation techniques.<sup>101</sup> The result was a digging season in 1902 that produced hundreds of finds, including the skeletal remains of women and children, and made clear that the site was indeed a long-term residential center. In early 1903, Mestorf felt confident reporting, "Through the excavations of the last years is hypothesis now considered fully certain, that the area of the present-day Oldenburg is identical with the famous residential trading city of Haithabu."<sup>102</sup> The announcement secured more permanent funding and launched decades of work at the site, which even today represents the largest ongoing archaeological project in the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

In September 1903, the local press announced the visit of sixteen leading Danish archaeologists at the Danewall and Oldenburg sites.<sup>104</sup> For the first time, Sophus Müller set foot on the walls that had inspired his scholarship for over a decade. It is interesting to note the degree to which the site that stretched before him symbolized the ambiguous

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<sup>98</sup> "Zur Sicherung der Oldenburg," *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (18 February, 1901).

<sup>99</sup> Mestorf to Müller, 1 January 1901, NM Afd. 2 KA, unnumbered.

<sup>100</sup> Mestorf to Müller, 27 June 1900 and 1 June 1901, NM Afd. 2, KA, 319/00 and 285/01.

<sup>101</sup> Mestorf to Müller, 6 June and 18 June 1901, NM Afd. 2, KA, 323/01.

<sup>102</sup> Mestorf to the Oberpräsidium in Schleswig, 16 February 1903, ALM Nachlass Mestorf, o.N.

<sup>103</sup> Volker Hilberg, personal communication, 4 February 2004. Hilberg is one of the current directors of the Haithabu project at the Schleswig-Holstein archäologisches Landesmuseum in Schleswig, Germany.

<sup>104</sup> "Nachrichten," *Kieler Zeitung* (18 September, 1903).

relations between Germans and Danes. On the one hand, the Danewall recalled centuries of animosity and armed conflict over the border, but on the other hand, Haithabu, the "rediscovered city," was in many ways emblematic of cross-border exchange and cooperation. Indeed, its discovery was the product of a scholarly community that had itself been "rediscovered" in the years following the German-Danish Wars.

The experience of the years after the German-Danish Wars highlighted the need for such a return to cooperation, but its accomplishment was made possible only through dramatic ruptures in the traditional underpinnings of the intellectual field, which is suggestive of the level of agency possible within such structures.<sup>105</sup> Clearly, the prevailing arrangements of gender, nation, and class were altered during these years, as archaeology became open to figures outside the university such as Mestorf, Splieth, and Knorr. Such a degree of change, of course, raises questions of their long-term power to influence the field. With respect to gender, however, it is telling that Mestorf never worked to reproduce her own success and bring more women into the discipline when she clearly had the power to do so. Moreover, the very fact that she is mostly forgotten in archaeological memory and in German historiography is a testimony to the short-term impact of the gender transformation. Nevertheless, her influence on the national quality of German archaeology was much more profound and permanent, and her career was without question, instrumental in recreating a transnational dialogue. Indeed, her crowning moments, the preservation of the Danewall and the discovery of Haithabu, were tributes to the success of archaeology's re-internationalization following the crises of the 1860s.

But what kind of success did it prove to be? After all, this embrace of renewed cross-border collaboration did not lead archaeologists to abandon their nationalist orientations.

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<sup>105</sup> For this period of European history, Fritz Ringer has made the most conspicuous use of Bourdieu's conceptions of intellectual field and habitus, but Sven-Eric Liedman has raised similar questions in his critique of Ringer's understanding of the intellectual field. Above all, Liedman has questioned the consequences of using of a such a strictly functional approach, which cannot account for the level of diversity that characterize the reactions of members of a given field, such as Ringer's "mandarins." "Were the German mandarins unique?" he asks. See Liedman, "Institutions and Ideas: Mandarins and Non-Mandarins in the German Academic Intelligentsia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28,1 (January 1986), 119-144, especially 125-129. His critique is important here because it connects to the kinds of changes we have observed in the field over time, as well as the different types of agents who have gained access and been able to operate within and shape it.

In fact, the example of Haithabu suggests that in many ways transnational experiences made it possible for archaeologists to resume nationalist agendas. In this period of relative political calm, it is at times difficult to see manifestations of nationalism in scholarship as clearly as during periods of upheaval. Furthermore, there is no question that objectivity and pure scholarship were becoming increasingly important in the late nineteenth century, but the priority placed upon many projects, including those at the Danewall, stemmed from the potential of these digs to reconnect scholars to national symbols and to uncover deeper narratives of the history of two national communities, and there remained deeply embedded in the practices of these new professional archaeologists an orientation towards affirming underlying conceptions of identity. This explains how and why Mestorf and her colleagues shaped archaeology in the borderland towards a long-standing notion of Schleswig-Holstein as a fixed corporate entity while seeking to obstruct equally valid visions of local identity from either the individual duchies or from the various *Kreise* of the province. Indeed, these developments are particularly interesting in the German context, since they move us beyond an understanding of a simple dialectic between old German territories and the new German nation and force us to examine these relations as a complex series of permutations of local and national competing for space in the changing political climate.

Such preconceptions of identity also help us understand how the young discipline of archaeology was able to pursue new avenues of research while contributing to the larger nationalist project of reconciling old ideas of the nation as a cultural entity with new incarnations of two territorially-delimited nation-states. Yet it is vital to note from the evidence here that this nationalism was a product of compromises that transformed the relationship between antiquity and modern identity. Above all, the archaeologists working in the borderland recognized that it was no longer possible to pursue research positing immutable differences between their national community and the "other." Thus Johanna Mestorf mediated the German nation through provincial appeals, while Sophus Müller reconnected Danes to Schleswig by casting a broader relevance for regional prehistory and by opening possibilities for overlapping layers of meaning. The results

were, if not attenuated, at least moderated visions of the nation and a renewed scholarly community whose commitments to the transnational dimension of the discipline created limits on the uses of the past that would make Schleswig-Holstein such an important fault line in the tremendous and violent national struggles of the early twentieth century.

## CHAPTER 4

### FORGING THE NORDIC PARADIGM Volkish Ideology, Positivist Science, and Prehistoric Origins

In August, 1878, the German Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*)<sup>1</sup> opened its Ninth General Convention in Kiel. The meeting drew an audience of over 140 doctors, scientists, and antiquarian enthusiasts, including Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), president of the society, and the famed Scandinavian archaeologists Oscar Montelius (1843-1921) of Sweden and Ingvald Undset (1853-1893) of Norway.<sup>2</sup> Much was at stake in this gathering. The advent of the fledgling anthropological society in 1870 marked a new phase in the discovery of prehistory by bringing traditional antiquarianism into contact with the young discipline of anthropology and uniting the two with a number of natural science disciplines in a broader and much more ambitious study of humankind. Such a vision, its founders discovered, faced both an outpouring of enthusiasm and an expression of pervasive skepticism from provincial scholars. In Schleswig-Holstein, Johanna Mestorf reported, “There has already been an expression of doubt as to whether this recently-founded organization will ever blossom.”<sup>3</sup> The decision to meet in Kiel rather than Berlin thus represented a chance for the society’s leaders to draw more support from

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as the DAG.

<sup>2</sup> ALM AA 1877-oN Mitglieder-Verzeichniss der deutschen anthropologischen Gesellschaft zu Kiel 14 August 1878.

<sup>3</sup> Johanna Mestorf, “Der anthropologische Verein in Schleswig-Holstein,” *Itzehoer Nachrichten* 20 December 1877, in ALM AA 1878-022; Adolf Pansch, “Der anthropologische Verein in Schleswig-Holstein,” *Flensburger Norddeutsche Zeitung* 28 February 1878, in ALM AA 1878-020.

the provinces and move closer to their goal of centralizing the various strands of human science research in Germany.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the convention was also the brainchild of Heinrich Handelsmann, who saw the DAG meeting as a tremendous opportunity for the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Museum, which had only recently relocated to a larger facility and begun to regain some of its earlier scholarly momentum.<sup>5</sup> He had, after all, already been working with natural scientists in Kiel for several years,<sup>6</sup> and on this occasion he wished to solidify the relationship by creating in Schleswig-Holstein a permanent branch society (*Zweigverein*), which would be affiliated with the DAG but would also carry out research of local interest. His ultimate goal was to promote his institution while bringing local archaeology into the scientific pursuits on the national level. “We may expect,” he wrote, “a large number of visitors from Schleswig-Holstein for this event and hope that the convention will be received in the farthest reaches of our home region as inspiring and successful for anthropological and archaeological research.”<sup>7</sup>

The DAG’s arrival in Kiel thus heralded a second dimension in the professionalization of archaeology in Schleswig-Holstein. Even as Johanna Mestorf took the lead in renewing cooperation with colleagues in Copenhagen and learning from the experience of Danish prehistorians in the late nineteenth century, there was also a strong impulse to build bridges with scholars in Berlin and join them in fashioning an archaeological tradition for the new Germany. In large measure, this meant creating networks throughout the former German states and importing new theories, methods, and

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<sup>4</sup> On the important place of scholarly organizations in the popularization and professionalization of the disciplines during the nineteenth century, see for example Andreas Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit, 1848-1914*, (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 85-8; More generally, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900-1950*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7. Jarausch lists associational life as one of a number of factors influencing the emergence of professions.

<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Handelsmann, Printed Announcement of the Ninth General Convention of the German Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory in Kiel, November 1877, ALM AA 1877-o.N.; Mestorf Diary 17 June 1877.

<sup>6</sup> Mestorf diary 3 May 1875.

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Handelsmann, Printed Announcement of the Ninth General Convention.



organizational strategies from across Europe. Three key trends emerged as a result. The first was a growing perception of archaeological scholarship as an objective science. Archaeology during this period became imbued with a sense of optimism about the power of empirical study and comparison to reveal systematically the development of ancient societies. Second, the emergence of a provincial branch society launched a process that brought local prehistory onto the national stage, linking archaeologists in Kiel with colleagues across the country and affording regional sites and artifacts a clear national significance to the articulation of a more far-reaching "national" prehistory.

The final trend, and the one that has proved most vexing for recent historical scholarship, was the effort to reconcile the findings of "scientific" archaeology with previous Romantic notions of the German nation, which stemmed from a resurgence of Volkish nationalism in the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> In the eyes of a new generation inspired by the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and the music of Richard Wagner, the Germanic past became once again a plane for nationalist projections, and archaeology a means of reconnecting the modern nation with the values and the spirit of Germanic ancestors. It preserved the links between professional archaeology and its popular roots in antiquarian study, and for better or worse shaped public interest in archaeological research. Volkish ideology also renewed the fascination, begun with the mid-nineteenth-century philologists,<sup>9</sup> with finding the origins of the ancient Germans, and, just as in the days of the Grimms, the tendency was to look towards northern Germany and Scandinavia for the original German homeland (*Urheimat*). The result was the appearance of what we might call a "Nordic Paradigm," a model of cultural and ethnic origins in northern Europe that looked to prehistory to explain the birth of the German *Volk* and extended the history of the nation into the distant past. By the twentieth century, these ideas became inextricably bound with notions of ethnicity and race, and was perhaps best captured in the work of Gustaf Kossinna (1858-1931), who more than any

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<sup>8</sup> Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 47ff.; Klaus von See, *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft*, 142-8; For an extended discussion of volkish thought, see Chapter 2.

<sup>9</sup> Especially important in this regard were figures such as August Schleich and Johannes Schmidt, the forerunners of the so-called "*Junggrammatiker*" of the 1870s. See Klaus von See, *Barbar, Germane, Arier: Die Suche nach der Identität der Deutschen*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994), 143-4.

other contemporary united the scientific and ideological threads of the discipline and whose work on Germanic origins earned him the first chair in German prehistory at the University of Berlin in 1902.

Such a transformation in the discipline was, of course, beset with internal contradictions that now raise an interesting and paradoxical intellectual problem: why did the German academic establishment, and the humanities and social science disciplines in particular, embrace Volkish ideology and incorporate it into their research agendas? At first glance, this must be seen as a surprising turn of events, since Volkish ideology was in many ways at odds with the development of the universalist scientific approach to the past that characterized the years before 1900. Indeed, while George Mosse has shown the incongruence between science and the "mystical" qualities of Volkish thought,<sup>10</sup> others have more recently highlighted the surprisingly liberal, anti-nationalist, and anti-racist bent of German anthropology in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Brent Maner, for example, has pointed out that Rudolf Virchow, the founder of the DAG, very plainly rejected the idea that anthropology and prehistory might lend themselves to the search for nations,<sup>12</sup> and even if Virchow exhibited some anti-Semitic bias in his research,<sup>13</sup> he and his followers nevertheless publicly opposed such thinking and managed to press racial and Volkish influences to the academic fringe until the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

German science and German Volkish ideology were thus in some ways polar opposites, each providing a contrasting response to the processes of modernization and political centralization. Yet the German scientific and academic community

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<sup>10</sup> Mosse, *German Ideology*, 90-2.

<sup>11</sup> For a general analysis, see Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany, 1840-1920*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), esp. 14-34; On anthropology, see especially Benoit Massin, "From Virchow to Fischer: Physical Anthropology and 'Modern Race Theories' in Wilhelmine Germany," in *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: Wisconsin University Press 1996), 79-154.

<sup>12</sup> Maner, "Buried Nation," 155-6.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Zimmermann, "Anti-Semitism as Skill: Rudolf Virchow's *Schulstatistik* and the Racial Composition of Germany," *Central European History* 32 (1999): 409-29.

<sup>14</sup> Massin, "Virchow to Fischer," 92.

nevertheless proved instrumental in allowing Volkish thought to flourish on an unprecedented level at the turn of the century. After Virchow's death in 1902, the human sciences took a decidedly national-conservative turn, and racial ideology became much more common in respected scholarly writing, which in turn lent Volkish ideology a certain credibility. This trend, of course, was reflected in the increasingly illiberal institutional landscape of the later Wilhelmine Era, which was first explored by Fritz Ringer, whose study of the ephemeral flowering of the "German mandarin" scholars emphasized their stubborn resistance to the modernizing forces that threatened their elite status<sup>15</sup> Konrad Jarausch has subsequently examined the institutional aspects of the academic crisis, stressing the structural changes in the university brought about by rising enrollments and state intervention and exploring the role of students, who both shaped and were shaped by the transformation process.<sup>16</sup> From this body of research, we can appreciate the importance of pressures on the disciplines stemming from institutional transformations and the process of modernization. At the same time, it is also important to note that neither anthropology nor archaeology had a clearly defined place in the university, and operated mostly in the museum or under the auspices of the DAG.<sup>17</sup> As a result, recent emphasis has drifted to a host of other factors, including considerations of

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<sup>15</sup> Ringer, *Mandarins*, 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 49-74; For a broader historiographical survey of the expansion of the university during the Wilhelmine Era, see also John E. Craig, "Higher Education and Social Mobility in Germany," in *The Transformation of Higher Learning, 1860-1930*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), esp. 239-44. Craig cites social explanations such as the demands of industrialization and a rising growth of per-capita income, and provides a cultural explanation in the rising perception of prestige associated with a university education. To these factors Jarausch adds that the German population rose dramatically at the end of the century, that growth corresponded to the German nation-state's need to develop a robust bureaucracy, and that the universities actually faced a periodic enrollment crisis in part because of the expansion of secondary education. As he explains, "Because of the two waves of overcrowding in the Second Empire, the educated gradually abandoned liberal and moved towards statist solutions of such academic problems as the 'impairment of teaching by a lowering of academic standards,'" 67.

<sup>17</sup> Maner, "Buried Nation," 164-5.

the experience, both real and imagined, of European colonialism,<sup>18</sup> and the advent of Social Darwinism in Germany.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, while these studies make tremendous progress towards answering key questions about anthropology, few deal directly with comparable trends in archaeology.

Given the complexity of the questions surrounding the pendulum shift from a liberal view of prehistoric origins to the national-conservative, Volkish, and racialized narratives of the early twentieth century, a study such as this one with a limited geographic focus cannot hope to provide a comprehensive set of answers. There are, nevertheless, a number of important insights to be gained from placing developments in the borderland in the broader national context. First of all, what did the dual processes of anthropologization and racialization look like in the case of provincial archaeology? To what degree did the borderland contribute to developments on the national level and how did they shape theories of Germanic origins? And finally, how did established archaeologists in Schleswig-Holstein, including Handelsmann, Mestorf, and the subsequent generation led by Gustav Schwantes (1881-1960) respond to the transformation of these broader national discursive trends at the turn of the century?

In approaching these questions, we must see the German-Danish borderland as more than a locale reflecting larger trends. The Schleswig-Holstein region was, after all, indispensable to the new “Nordic Paradigm” about the Germanic *Urheimat*, since this concept placed a strong value on territory in northern Germany and southern Scandinavia. In so doing, however, it also implicated the complex identity constructions of Germans and Danes in a tense borderland, and thus placed regional archaeology in a new paradox that would shape relations in the twentieth century.

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<sup>18</sup> H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, eds., *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2003). See also Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), and Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds. *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998). On the topic of archaeology and colonialism, see Ian J. McNiven and Lynette Russell, eds., *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology*, (Lanham: Altamira, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1981); Richard Weikart, "The Origins of Social Darwinism in Germany, 1859-1895," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54/3 (July, 1993), 469-88.

## The Science of the Past in Germany and Denmark, 1871-1895

The DAG's decision to come to Kiel at the end of the 1870s was inspired in part by the fascinating anthropological finds emerging from Schleswig-Holstein at the beginning of the decade, especially the discovery of the so-called "Rendswühren Man" in 1871. In June of that year, a peat farmer inadvertently unearthed the remains of an adult male buried nearly three feet beneath the Rendswühren Marsh in southeastern Holstein. Lying face down, the corpse's skin had blackened in the peat, and it was found only with a few articles of clothing, including a cloak, woolen coat, and a single leather foot binding. On the left side of its head was a gaping, apparently violent wound. The body was so well-preserved that local authorities initially believed they had uncovered a recent murder and debated whether to launch an investigation.<sup>20</sup> Yet the mummified state of the remains led a local physician to recognize its antiquity and to write to Heinrich Handelsmann, "Your presence is urgently desired before the state prosecutor appears."<sup>21</sup> Handelsmann rushed to the scene, accompanied by a young physician from Kiel, Adolf Pansch (1841-1887), but by then the body had already become something of a sideshow, lying on display on a farmer's cart, with local curiosity seekers plucking pieces of the body and clothing as macabre souvenirs.<sup>22</sup>

There were, of course, a number of reasons for Germans to be excited about Rendswühren Man. First of all, his age and state of preservation were fascinating to antiquarian enthusiasts whose only contact with their distant ancestors had come through broken pots and decaying pieces of metal. Rendswühren Man, though decayed, nevertheless retained traces of his humanity: his skin, his nose, some of his clothing. The opportunity to come face to face must have been quite thrilling. Moreover, as Mestorf

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<sup>20</sup> Dr. Freese to Handelsmann, 4 June 1871, ALM OA Rendswühren 1871-181A, reprinted in Michael Gebühr, *Moorleichen in Schleswig-Holstein*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2002), 22.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Handelsmann, Forensic Certificate, 6 June 1871, ALM OA Rendswühren 1871-181L; Reprinted in Gebühr, *Moorleichen*, 23. This incident was also carefully described in Handelsmann, SHLG (1872), 8-9.

later pointed out, there was a historical connection between the fate of the deceased and the practices of the ancient Germanic tribes mentioned by Tacitus in *Germania*.<sup>23</sup> His manner of death offered some corroboration for Tacitus' report that the ancient Germans had placed individuals in bogs as punishment for their crimes:

Penalties are classed according to offense: traitors and deserters they hang from trees, but the cowardly and unwarlike and those who disgrace their bodies they submerge in the mud of a marsh, with a wicker frame thrown over. The difference in punishment reflects the thinking that villains should be punished in the open as examples while shameful deeds should be hidden away.<sup>24</sup>

The Rendswühren Man thus became a celebrated discovery, but it is somewhat surprising that he was the first to receive such attention from professional scholars. Bog bodies, after all, were nothing new. Growing populations and the expansion of agriculture had produced a number of remains from bogs in northwestern Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but these finds had rarely attracted the interest of antiquarian experts.<sup>25</sup> Before the 1870s, inspections of remains was cursory at best and produced only brief descriptions of conditions and surroundings, usually written by pastors or local officials. The bodies were then almost always buried in the closest parish cemetery.<sup>26</sup> Yet the Rendswühren Man was different because his appearance coincided with a new series of collaborations between antiquarian scholarship and natural science (*Naturwissenschaft*), and, indeed, the moment of his discovery was emblematic of the new approaches to prehistory that appeared in the 1870s and helped transform dilettante antiquarianism into the professionalized discipline of archaeology. His remains offered new possibilities for solving the mysteries surrounding the interment of the bog

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<sup>23</sup> Mestorf, "Moorleichen," *Die Heimat* (August, 1900), 166-68.

<sup>24</sup> Cornelius Tacitus, *The Origin and Geographical Situation of the Germani*, trans. J.B. Rives, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 82.

<sup>25</sup> Handelman, "Der Leichenfund in Rendswührener Moor (Kreis Kiel)," SHLG (1872), 74-83. Handelman mentions ten prominent bog body finds up to that point, including one in Ireland and nine in the duchies and Denmark.

<sup>26</sup> P.V. Glob, *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved*, trans. Rupert Bruce-Mitford, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 68-82.

bodies in particular and the cultural practices and lifestyles of prehistoric peoples in general. Johanna Mestorf, for example, urged Handelsmann to conduct a larger excavation at the discovery site, hoping to recover additional items of clothing, arguing, "We still know absolutely nothing about the age of our Danish, Schleswig-Holstein, and Frisian bog people [*Moormenschen*]. Clothing and chemical analysis appear to me the only supporting points for some clues where other materials are lacking."<sup>27</sup>



The Rendswühren Man. From Michael Gebühr, *Moorleichen in Schleswig-Holstein*, 20.

Mestorf's comments, appearing only a few years after the rechartering of the Kiel Museum, were the first signal that the priorities of her institution had changed to include not only the collection and preservation of finds, but also their exploitation in the pursuit of new knowledge. They reflected the changing intellectual climate into which Wilhelmine-era archaeology was emerging, which, As Karel Sklenar has shown, was shaped by positivist, materialist, and neo-Kantian thinking. These currents came together to produce a growing belief that a scientific approach to the past could illuminate the secrets of prehistoric cultures.<sup>28</sup> The past no longer seemed so mysterious, but rather

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<sup>27</sup> Mestorf to F. Wibel, undated, ALM MuG 5b.

<sup>28</sup> Karel Sklenar, *Archaeology in Central Europe: The First 500 Years*, trans. Iris Lewitova, (New York: Leicester University Press, 1983), 102-4.

appeared as a new frontier to be conquered. This sense of confidence was further supported by the previous decades of labor from dozens of patriotic collecting organizations across Central Europe, which had produced a sizable body of prehistoric material and which lent itself to broader interpretations and more certain analyses.

The advent of this scientific approach to archaeology was made possible by a series of collaborations between prehistoric scholarship and other scientific disciplines such as chemistry, geography, geology, paleontology, and zoology. For instance, the application of nineteenth-century theories of geology to prehistory, particularly the notions of deep time and uniformitarianism,<sup>29</sup> had led antiquarians both to recognize the true antiquity of human beings and to create more accurate chronologies for prehistoric development. Geology thus opened the most remote periods of human prehistory and allowed the French scholars Edouard Lartet (1801-1871) and Gabriel de Mortillet (1821-1898) to revolutionize the understanding of the Stone Age and create new subdivisions for classifying its complex chronological development.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, biology and anatomical science, driven by Darwin's theories of evolution, became important for emerging questions about the physical origins of man. In Germany, such musings were fueled by Johann Carl Fuhlrott's (1803-1877) discovery of a skull fragment in the Neander Valley near Düsseldorf, which launched an intense debate over the age and diversity of the human species. The biologist Hermann Schaafhausen (1816-1893) later argued that Fuhlrott had uncovered a new type of humanoid, and although this first "Neandertal" find remained controversial for several decades, it nevertheless sparked a fresh interest in the physical remains of prehistoric peoples.<sup>31</sup>

Unlocking the secrets of these new discoveries, however, demanded further collaborations. In Schleswig-Holstein, the use of chemical analyses, which Mestorf had proposed for the Rendswühren Man, were also applied to preserving and analyzing metal

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<sup>29</sup> Uniformitarianism, first proposed by Charles Lyell (1797-1895), postulated that geologic processes occur evenly over long periods of time.

<sup>30</sup> Trigger, *Archaeological Thought*, 87-98.

<sup>31</sup> Gustav Schwantes cited this as one of the most significant finds in German prehistory. See Schwantes, *Aus Deutschlands Urgeschichte*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1913), 14-16.



artifacts in hopes of uncovering the typological sequences and diffusion of the Bronze and Iron Ages.<sup>32</sup> The Kiel Museum, under pressure to preserve the quality of its collection,<sup>33</sup> had been pursuing such analyses since the late 1860s, when they began sending metal artifacts to Ludwig Lindenschmidt (1809-1893), director of the Römisch-Germanisch Museum in Mainz.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, natural science also played a role in the research of the National Museum. The best example of this relationship is the work of Johannes Steenstrup (1813-1897), a zoologist at the University of Copenhagen who conducted studies on organic material at the Mejlgaard kitchen-midden (*Kjøkkenmøddinger*) to help determine the chronological progression of the stone age.<sup>35</sup> By examining pig skeletons recovered from the midden, he was able to show that the pigs were being consumed throughout the year, proving that stone age peoples in Denmark had come to live sedentary lifestyles, which also highlighted the value of examining waste sites.<sup>36</sup>

The principal difference between the German and Danish experiences was the much closer relationship in Germany between archaeology and the emerging disciplines of anthropology and ethnology. Among the leading promoters of this collaboration in Schleswig-Holstein was the physician Adolf Pansch, who described anthropology to his local audience as the holistic "teachings of man," and ethnology as a discipline for understanding "the totality of mankind in its emergence into different peoples."<sup>37</sup> Such lofty ambitions emerged in part from the colonial experiences that became so important during the Wilhelmine Era. In Pansch's case, his adoration of anthropology stemmed from his background in human anatomical studies, but it may also have been a product of his participation in a perilous journey to the North Pole in 1868 aboard the steamer

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 110-11.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> See Ludwig Lindenschmidt to Handelsmann, 14 November 1874, ALM AA 1874-049.

<sup>35</sup> Klindt-Jensen, *Scandinavian Archaeology*, 82-3.

<sup>36</sup> Mestorf, "Aus alten und ältesten Zeiten," *Die Heimat* (April, 1897), 69-73.

<sup>37</sup> Pansch, "Der anthropologische Verein."

*Germania*.<sup>38</sup> Although the expedition failed to reach the Pole, it succeeded in exploring much of eastern Greenland,<sup>39</sup> where Pansch encountered the Inuit eskimo cultures inhabiting the region.

We can thus see in his journey the repeated experience of so many European travelers abroad. Perhaps he, too, saw in the cultures of the colonized world impressions of European society in its ancient, primordial stage of development.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, as Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl have shown, his experience would not have been atypical, and although Germans lagged behind in the international race for colonies, they nevertheless traveled widely and developed a strong global reputation in natural science.<sup>41</sup> Above all, these travelers envisioned a standardized model of human development with progressive stages, and declared it to be a task of anthropology to chart these stages and to use archaeology to uncover them in the European past.



Adolf Pansch (1841-1887). Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

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<sup>38</sup> Edith Feiner, "Adolf Pansch," *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 4, eds. Olaf Klose and Eva Rudolph, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1976), 180-182. Cape Pansch on the eastern Greenlandic coast is named for him. Unfortunately, Pansch drowned in a boating accident in 1887, and wrote no memoirs detailing his earlier journeys.

<sup>39</sup> The expedition was recorded in K. Koldewey, *Die erste Deutsche Nordpolar-Expedition im Jahre 1868*, (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1871).

<sup>40</sup> McNiven and Russell, *Appropriated Pasts*, 23-33.

<sup>41</sup> Penny and Bunzl, "Introduction," in *Worldly Provincialism*, 14-15.

Pansch's journeys may thus explain why he first became so involved in broadening the work of the antiquities museum. By 1878, he succeeded in helping Handelsmann establish the Schleswig-Holstein Anthropological Society as a branch of the DAG, working against more traditional colleagues such as Ludwig Lindenschmidt in Mainz, who scorned the DAG's more novel approaches to the past. As Lindenschmidt complained to Handelsmann, "The earliest prehistory and the certainly premature anthropological investigations interest me far less than the transition periods in the use of metal objects this side of the Alps."<sup>42</sup> Pansch and Handelsmann proceeded in spite of this criticism because their archaeology, unlike the established Classical studies with which Lindenschmidt engaged in Mainz, lacked a disciplinary identity, and both recognized that the DAG provided a rare venue for scholars from assorted disciplines to work together in the pursuit of broader studies, including the exploration of prehistory. It brought a wealth of academic expertise to bear on questions beyond the purview of amateur antiquarians, and, conversely, made the study of prehistoric archaeology more widely relevant. Moreover, the DAG represented for the Germans as a whole the culmination of a long-standing desire for a centralized association to unite the study of prehistory in Germany,<sup>43</sup> and in Schleswig-Holstein it raised the profile of archaeology after the crises of the German-Danish Wars. Along with the reconstruction of the museum and visit of the Crown Prince Frederick in 1877,<sup>44</sup> the creation of the Schleswig-Holstein Anthropology Society marked the true rebirth of the Kiel Museum as a respected institution within German scholarship. It allowed Handelsmann to place local archaeology on a national plane and bring his institution into what was fast becoming the point of departure for a "German" archaeological tradition.

The upshot of these developments was the emergence of a scientific ideal to which archaeologists began to aspire. It was an ideal characterized first and foremost by a firm

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<sup>42</sup> Lindenschmidt to Handelsmann, 14 November 1874, ALM AA 1874-049.

<sup>43</sup> Susan Crane has discussed the early nineteenth-century yearning for a general organization, and its inherent problems, in *Collecting and Historical Consciousness*, 86-7.

<sup>44</sup> Schleswig-Holstein Oberpräsident Carl Theodor Scheel-Plessen to Handelsmann, 17 April 1877, ALM AA 1877-o.N.

commitment to objectivity, which was the principal tenet of positivist approaches. As Karel Sklénar has explained, “Perhaps the best definition of positivism in archaeology would be sober concentration on the material, and the putting aside of the great questions raised by Romanticism in favor of closer and more realistic questions.”<sup>45</sup> The earliest antiquarian work in Kiel had mused on the possibility of uncovering the secrets of the past through archaeological remains, but the focus had seldom looked beyond the immediate tasks of collecting and preserving. Under the influence of Rudolf Virchow, however, the DAG brought to Schleswig-Holstein, as elsewhere in Germany, a deep concern with a rigid adherence to empirical principles. According to Brent Maner, “In retrospect, Virchow's non-national archaeology is significant because it provided a strong word of caution to those who interpreted local finds as the remains of their German ancestors.”<sup>46</sup> In Kiel, the relationship with the DAG thus marked a shift away from the local antiquarianism that had colored the museum's work since its inception. It entailed a gradual abandonment of the primacy of philology in antiquarian research and a much more exclusive focus on the unbiased study of sites and artifacts in the museum's care. As a result, Handelsmann and Mestorf, despite the differences in their approaches, both eschewed the historical and political interpretations of prehistoric evidence common during the war years and instead emphasized careful description and representation of individual artifacts.

Such analyses became the norm in European archaeology at the end of the century and quickly began to yield measurable results. Above all, they made it possible for the first time to employ the thousands of artifact collections and sites from across Germany and Europe in large-scale comparative studies, which ultimately facilitated broad reconstructions of cultural patterns in prehistoric periods. In Denmark, of course, both C.J. Thomsen and J.J.A. Worsaae had long advocated this sort of approach, but in Germany these methods were simply not feasible before the establishment of a centralized network. The appearance of the DAG finally opened possibilities for locating

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<sup>45</sup> Sklénar, *Archaeology in Central Europe*, 108.

<sup>46</sup> Maner, “Buried Nation,” 141-2.

artifacts of similar design and composition and creating links between site and artifact types. These in turn suggested region-specific chronologies and potential traces of the diffusion of specific materials, techniques, and creative styles. Not only did these studies finally convince skeptics of the validity of the Three Age Theory, but they also led to calls for its refinement, as archaeologists came to realize that each of the three ages of Stone, Bronze, and Iron were in fact quite complex and uneven, and that each demanded some level of sub-periodization.

The potential for finding fresh clues about the spread of artifact technologies was an especially important development in Northern Europe, where questions remained about the introduction of bronze and iron technology. By 1881, the application of comparative methodology to these questions had produced its first significant breakthrough, when Ingvald Undset of Norway compared artifacts associated with iron finds and concluded that many predated Roman contact in northern Europe. As a result, Undset suggested that the Iron Age had been ushered into Scandinavia not by the Romans, as was the prevailing assumption at the time, but earlier by the so-called "La Tené" culture a few centuries before the Common Era.<sup>47</sup> Johanna Mestorf, who translated Undset's work into German, made an important contribution to this discussion a few years later, when she made similar comparisons of finds from Iron Age urn cemeteries in Schleswig-Holstein in 1886.<sup>48</sup> Her examination confirmed Undset's hypothesis that the northern Iron Age predated Roman contact, but her studies failed to find corresponding evidence of the broaches emblematic of the La Tene presence. She thus concluded that iron had been introduced even earlier, which heightened the mystery of the origins of civilization in northern Europe.<sup>49</sup>

Similar questions also underpinned the research of the Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius (1843-1921), whose pioneering work in relative chronological dating

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<sup>47</sup> See Ingvald Undset, *Jernalderens begyndelse i Nordeuropa*.

<sup>48</sup> See Mestorf, *Urnenfriedhöfe in Schleswig-Holstein*, (Hamburg: Meissner, 1886).

<sup>49</sup> Gustav Schwantes, "Rückblick auf Johanna Mestorf aus den Jahren 1940," reprinted in Dagmar Unverhau, "*Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität ergebenster Gustav Schwantes*": *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Gustav Schwantes und Johanna Mestorf 1899 bis 1909 und seine Verwendung im Prioritätsstreit mit Friedrich Knorr*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2000), 176-8.

techniques sparked a heated debate with Sophus Müller over the periodization of the Bronze Age. While both recognized that northern Europe, which lacked significant metal resources, stood in a "dependent and receptive relationship" to the south in terms of technology,<sup>50</sup> they disagreed over the method of bronze introduction or its relationship to the indigenous populations. Above all, Müller had interpreted stylistic differences in bronze objects as suggestive of multiple cultural migrations,<sup>51</sup> and looked for similarities in various geographic regions to the south to determine points of origin. Montelius, on the other hand, focused not on the objects themselves, but on associated finds and noted striking similarities in burial practices in both Stone- and Bronze-Age sites. He thus began to see the Bronze Age as a period of unbroken settlement characterized by the continuity of at least one cultural group, and explained stylistic variations as products of indigenous cultural evolution. Yet Müller remained skeptical, writing, "No Stone Age people suddenly makes the jump to metalworking, not to mention the complete transition to a difficult technique, and certainly not to the degree that it [not only] copies as well as possible introduced objects, but also produces them themselves in a beautiful, indeed complete form and in their own refined artistic style."<sup>52</sup>

Müller, however, gradually ceded the point to Montelius in the first decade of the twentieth century in light of a growing body of evidence suggesting settlement continuity.<sup>53</sup> He was also partly persuaded by the anthropological work of Rudolf Virchow, who used craniometric techniques to show the similarity between skulls found in late Stone Age burials in Denmark and those of modern Danes.<sup>54</sup> Such biological evidence, which had been virtually absent from previous archaeological reports, quickly became common in the wake of Virchow's success. Indeed, this type of research reflected a second key development stemming from scientific archaeology, which was the

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<sup>50</sup> Müller, *nordische Bronzezeit*, v. 1, 115.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; For the origins of these interpretations, see Chapter 3.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>53</sup> Klindt-Jensen, *Scandinavian Archaeology*, 88-94.

<sup>54</sup> Rudolf Virchow, "Die altnordischen Schädel zu Kopenhagen," *Archiv für Anthropologie* 4 (1871), 55.

search for the physical origins of mankind. Just as archaeologists found that material artifacts yielded spectacular results under comparative study, so too they came to believe that skeletal analyses might reveal the ethnic dimension of cultural and material change in the distant past. It was this very turn to anthropology that had heightened the interest in the Rendswühren Man, since he had appeared only a few short months after the discovery of a mass burial near the village of Kuden in the Dithmarschen region of Holstein. The find included eighteen skulls similar to that of the Rendswühren Man,<sup>55</sup> one of which Mestorf sent to the anatomist Hermann Schaafhausen at the University of Bonn, who replied:

The skull is small and rounded but showing strong muscle connections and is in any case masculine; his color shows he has lain in the bog. In northern Germany there are two very different forms of old skulls, long, which are called Germanic and more rounded, which could be Roman or also Slavic or also Lappish. The same is seen in Scandinavia . . . such skulls probably represent the earliest people of the country and point to an Asiatic origin. Yet this skull does not show so much the Lappish form, and it could be a middle form, emerging from the mixing of both races.<sup>56</sup>

There was, clearly, already an interest in the concept of race in the early 1870s, but what was lacking was the chauvinistic nationalism that colored later scholarship. Rather, Virchow and the members of the anthropological society generally rejected the notion of finding past nations in prehistoric times,<sup>57</sup> and they remained committed to a liberal, "monogenist" view of prehistory that stressed the unity of mankind in the distant past and argued that differences had only emerged in the intervening years.<sup>58</sup>

The final and perhaps most significant product of these collective trends of liberalization and scientific positivism was the creation of a more organized, unified, and academically credible discipline for the investigation of the distant past. The successful preservation of sites and artifacts, which before had rested upon an almost inarticulable

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<sup>55</sup> Mestorf to Wibel, undated, ALM MuG 5b.

<sup>56</sup> Hermann Schaafhausen to Johanna Mestorf, 11 April 1871, ALM MuG 5b.

<sup>57</sup> Maner, "Buried Nation," 140.

<sup>58</sup> Massin, "Virchow to Fischer," 86-7.

sense of Romantic or political value, now became an integral part of an overarching intellectual project to reconstruct the lost cultures of prehistory. The eventual success of this project seemed assured at the time, and even today we might say that we feel its imminence as we continue to anticipate new archaeological discoveries. It brought Danish archaeology into a wider European relevance and was the central, if forgotten, foundation of German archaeology. Yet, if we are to explain why the discipline took a decidedly nationalist and conservative turn in the early twentieth century, we must also acknowledge that there were clear limits to the ambitions of Rudolf Virchow, Adolf Pansch, and Heinrich Handelmann. Their vision of archaeology was one of a discipline participating in an ideal model of science, but in the end it remained an ideal, and in many ways the process of supplanting local antiquarianism with a national scientific archaeology was an incomplete one at best.

In Schleswig-Holstein, for example, the rejection of nationalism and the disdain of parochialism did not fully temper the provincial outlook of local scholars. Indeed, the structure of the DAG, with its affiliated *Zweigvereine*, made it possible for local prehistorians to carve out scholarly fiefdoms and preserve a distinctly provincial orientation. This was especially the case for Johanna Mestorf, who endorsed her Museum's collaboration with the DAG,<sup>59</sup> but whose tenure as director of the museum after 1891 was marked by a jealous guardianship of her institution's authority in the province and harsh criticism for potential challengers. Such was the case for the Hamburger Museum für Völkerkunde, whom she criticized in a 1906 letter to the young archaeologist Gustav Schwantes:

I would regret if you devoted your expertise to the exploitative Hamburg Museum. There you will find self-important gentlemen, but no prehistorians. They encroach into every foreign region, be it Hannover, Schleswig-Holstein, all the way into Jutland; always surreptitiously, never openly or in good faith. Hamburg is not the place for prehistoric collections, since it has no territory, but rather lives on theft and exploitation.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Mestorf, "Der anthropologische Verein."

<sup>60</sup> Mestorf to Gustav Schwantes, 15 December 1906, ALM Nachlass Gustav Schwantes, reprinted in Dagmar Unverhau, *Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität*, 91.



Above all, the new “scientific” archaeology never sundered the connections between the past and modern identities, and as a result the new practices of archaeology engaged not only old assumptions and new political pressures, but also a growing need to derive a present-day meaning from a past so quickly emerging from the earth. Ultimately, it would be this need that would once again render prehistory into such a powerful plane for the projection of identities on both the local and national stages.

### **The Archaeology of the *Volk/Folke*: Mythic Symbolism and Gustaf Kossinna’s *Siedlungsarchäologie***

Despite the success of the DAG in the late 1870s and the ostensible triumph of the German human sciences by the late 1870s, the evolving perspectives on European prehistory did not spell an end to the Romantic impulses that had shaped archaeology in both Germany and Denmark during the early nineteenth century. Rather, the Wars of Unification and the emergence of the German *Kaiserreich* engendered in both countries a resurgence of Volkish nationalist sentiment in the years before World War I. This was hardly surprising, since it was the Volkish ideology of figures such as Jacob Grimm that had been so instrumental in shaping what James Sheehan has called the “national culture in aspiration,”<sup>61</sup> which the borders of the new Germany purported to demarcate. In Germany, discussions of the Germanic past had been especially important in the spheres of Volkish thought, such as that found in Grimm’s writings,<sup>62</sup> since it helped generate territorial ambitions for the German nation-state, and because it created a sense of depth and authenticity for a German national identity. The declaration in Versailles of a German nation-state in 1871 was thus in many ways the culmination of decades of nationalist hopes and dreams, and it was an event celebrated among Prussian historians as

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<sup>61</sup> Sheehan, James, “What is German History?: Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography,” *Journal of Modern History* 53/1 (March, 1981), 9.

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 2.

an almost inevitable outcome, the denouement of an emerging “master narrative” of German history.<sup>63</sup>

For the Danes, however, the founding of the *Kaiserreich* entailed not the possibilities of rebirth, but the realities of loss, as the Wars of Unification had cost it both the duchy of Holstein and all of Schleswig, including the areas north of Flensburg with predominantly Danish-speaking or pro-Danish populations. Bismarck's machinations thus sparked a movement in Denmark in which the popular fascination with the past soon became not a matter of fulfillment of long-awaited expectations, but a search for new sources of unity and lasting connections with a diminished borderland. It was a trend that took on a national significance following the death of the Danish national prophet, N.F.S. Grundtvig, in 1872. Throughout Denmark, the resulting Volkish, or *folkelig*, resurgence reflected the mixture of spiritual and intellectual influences that had colored Grundtvig's life, and blended a renewed interest in the ancient past with a renewed sense of “Christian awakening.”<sup>64</sup> Consequently, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed both a sudden explosion in the number of Christian-oriented grundtvigian Folk High Schools and a new artistic interest in the symbolism of the Old Norse pantheon. As Inge Adriansen has shown, the movement inspired a number of new monuments in Copenhagen, including a statue of the Norse fertility goddess Gelfion, erected by Anders Bundgaard in 1908, and another of a Valkyrie from Stephan Sindring the same year in the city's central square (*Rådhuspladsen*).<sup>65</sup>

This *folkelig* movement became especially critical in the border region after the 1880s, when the promises of a plebiscite and generous concessions to the Danish minority after 1864 gave way to what Manfred Jessen-Klingenberg has described as policies of

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<sup>63</sup> von See, *Freiheit und Gemeinschaft*, 112; On the birth of the national master narrative, see for example Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, rev. ed., (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), esp. 90-123.

<sup>64</sup> Vagn Dybahl, *Danmarks Historie*, Bd.12, eds. John Danstrup and Hal Koch, (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1965), 51.

<sup>65</sup> Adriansen, *National Symboler*, Bd. 2, 109. The Valkyrie statue now rests in Churchhill Park in Copenhagen.

"Germanization" in North Schleswig.<sup>66</sup> The removal of pro-Danish officials and religious leaders and pressure on Danish language instruction had created a backlash in the province and led to the formation of cultural preservation groups such as the Association for the Preservation of the Danish Language in North Schleswig (*Foreningen til det danske Sprogs Bevarelse i Nordslesvig*) and the North Schleswig School Association (*Den nordslesvigske Skoleforeningen*). Vocal protests from these groups and criticism from pro-Danish newspapers such as *Flensborg Avis* eventually drew a harsh response from the German government, particularly during the tenure of the Schleswig-Holstein Oberpräsident Ernst Matthias von Köller (1897-1901).<sup>67</sup>

In the face of pressure from the German side, many Danes abandoned the idea of bringing all of Schleswig back into Denmark, and focused instead on regaining the northern part of the region (*Nordslesvig*), which was home to most of the Danish minority population. The idea of Danish nationhood consequently became less bound to the territories lost than to the ties forged with citizens who remained culturally Danish, a view that hearkened back to Grundtvig's notion of a popular spirit (*folkelig ånd*) as the core of Danish national identity. Danes began to speak not of the former duchy of *Slesvig*, but of "Southern Jutland" (*Sønderjylland*), a term that evoked the feeling of separation from their former lands. Leading this changing perception was the historian Peter Lauridsen (1846-1923), who argued that accepting the loss of southern Schleswig was an important conciliatory gesture to German Schleswig-Holsteiners,<sup>68</sup> many of whom shared the Danish distaste for the local Prussian administration. In this view we may recognize the sense of "anti-nationalism," alluded to by Povl Bagge,<sup>69</sup> but there was no doubt that such sentiments remained tied to Danish nationalism. In encouraging Danes to let go of southern Schleswig, activists like Lauridsen, who recounted the

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<sup>66</sup> Jessen-Klingenberg, "Zum Nordschleswig-Problem 1864-1914," in *Standpunkte zur neueren Geschichte*, 129.

<sup>67</sup> Vagn Dybahl, *Danmarks Historie*, Bd.12, 257-66.

<sup>68</sup> Carl S. Petersen, "Peter Lauridsen," *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, Bd. 14, ed. Povl Engestoft, (Copenhagen, 1938), 153-4.

<sup>69</sup> Bagge, "Antinationalismus."

region's struggles in his much-lauded eight-volume work, *When Sønderjylland Awakened* (*Da Sønderjylland vaagnede*) (1909-1922), found themselves free to advocate forcefully the preservation of Danish cultural life in the northern part of the province.

The turn of the century thus witnessed new Danish attempts to appropriate the past as a means of crafting unifying symbols for the sundered region. For instance, as Johanna Mestorf was reporting on the increasing number of Danish visitors to the Danewall in the 1890s,<sup>70</sup> local Danes were revisiting the memory of the Golden Horns of Gallehus, which had been discovered in Schleswig and had vanished from Copenhagen exactly a century earlier. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Sophus Müller and the National Museum supported a local move to determine the precise area in North Schleswig where the peasants Kirsten Svendsdatter and Erik Lauritzen had stumbled upon the horns in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The research was conducted by Lauridsen, whose work in cartographic and agrarian history made him ideally suited for the task but whose involvement signaled the strongly nationalist undertones of the project. The Golden Horn project might thus have been a delicate affair, given the tense relations between the German government and local Danes, but by 1906 Müller's cooperative work at the Haithabu site lent him a measure of cross-national credibility in the region. Moreover, his own studies of the horns had tempered their national worth by claiming their engraved symbols were not, as Worsaae had earlier argued, affiliated with the Norse pantheon, but rather had been fashioned earlier during the Migration Period.<sup>71</sup>

Lauridsen's research ultimately placed the original sites near the western city of Tønder on a patch of private farmland, and in December 1907, the landowner approved the erection of a small memorial stone.<sup>72</sup> The monument, though small, underscored the ties between the lost Schleswig region and the Kingdom of Denmark by assuring its place in the modern mythology of the Golden Horns, one of the nation's most potent symbols,

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<sup>70</sup> Mestorf to the Oberpräsident in Schleswig, Staatsminister von Köller, 25 February 1898, ALM OA Haithabu 1898-033a.

<sup>71</sup> Ludwig Andresen, "Die goldenen Hörner von Gallehus," *Die Heimat* (September, 1906), 221-3.

<sup>72</sup> Idem., "Die Fundstelle der goldenen Hörner von Gallehus," *Die Heimat* (May, 1911), 115-18.

tragically lost in Copenhagen and memorialized by the Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger.<sup>73</sup>

Antiquity also continued to play a role in Germany after unification, but the links were much more tenuous than in Denmark. This was because the Danish relationship with the distant past remained largely a private affair before World War I, and did not involve the crown or the state. In Germany, by contrast, the Wilhelmine government tried on several occasions to enhance its own legitimacy by linking itself to the national past, but experienced only mixed results. State visits to local museums, such as that of the crown prince in Kiel in 1877, proved very successful, since they highlighted the Prussian-centered government's willingness to recognize some degree of provincial autonomy. Attempts to appropriate the past directly, however, often fell short, because the idea of Germanic antiquity was so closely tied to a Volkish conception of the German nation that not only lacked a consistent vision, but had also reached such mythic proportions among nationalists that it proved incompatible with political reality.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the Volkish conception of Germany created unrealistic expectations for a German nation-state born from a *Kleindeutsch* solution to the long-standing German Question. While many, especially those middle class groups supporting the National Liberal Party, saw the *Kaiserreich* as the most pragmatic fulfillment of nationalist ambitions and supported the nation-state Bismarck had crafted, others saw the new Germany as only a fragment of what they had anticipated for so long. They pointed out that the *Kaiserreich* omitted vast German-speaking areas, was rife with internal ethnic, religious, and class cleavages, remained dominated by the Prussian Hohenzollerns, and failed to inaugurate what many ideologues saw as the revolution needed to bring about the rebirth of the German spirit.<sup>75</sup>

Such incongruities troubled most attempts to link the state with a national past. In 1875, for example, Kaiser Wilhelm I, hoping to associate his imperial reign with the heroes of Germany's ancient past, attended the unveiling of an enormous memorial to the legendary Arminius, a Germanic tribal chieftain who had defeated the Romans at

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<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>74</sup> See Hannu Salmi, *Imagined Germany: Richard Wagner's National Utopia*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 32-4.

<sup>75</sup> Jost Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 26-30.

Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9. The large crowds of spectators hinted at the potential popularity of such a gesture, but, unfortunately, Arminius proved to be anything but an unambiguous symbol. Critics quickly blasted the Kaiser for aligning himself with what they considered a blatant bourgeois agenda, while Catholics decried the anti-Roman bias, and socialists portrayed Arminius as the usurper of the power of the German people.<sup>76</sup> In other cases, international and domestic pressures made strong Volkish symbolism inappropriate for the *Kaiserreich*. For these reasons, Bismarck shied away from supporting Richard Wagner (1813-1883) in his grandiose *Ring der Nibelungen* production in Bayreuth in 1876. Wagner, the self-proclaimed national artist, naturally wanted to associate his work with the architect of the nation, but, as David C. Large has explained, Bismarck found Wagner's anti-French rhetoric to be a potential obstacle to his diplomacy both at home and abroad in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>77</sup>

The Germanic past thus proved a poor model for the German nation-state. In response, the Volkish movement, which had grown and diversified during the course of the early Wilhelmine Era, soon became something of a pressure group on the cultural periphery of the *Kaiserreich*.<sup>78</sup> In this context, the dreams of nation continued unabated, and Romantic visions of Germanic antiquity continued to circulate in art, literature, and music. Within these underlying intellectual and cultural currents was a continuing attachment to Scandinavia stemming from the work of the early nineteenth-century philologists. In artistic circles, the most prominent promoter of such northern European motifs was none other than Richard Wagner, whose work helped solidify the connections between the Nordic and Germanic traditions in the public consciousness by bundling the myths of northern Europe into an organic whole. An amateur student of *Germanistik*, Wagner shared the Grimms' interest in presenting Germanic mythology in its most

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<sup>76</sup> Andreas Dörner, "Der Mythos der nationalen Einheit: Symbolpolitik und Deutungskämpfe bei der Einweihung der Hermannsdenkmal im Jahre 1875," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 79/2 (1997), 396-402; 410.

<sup>77</sup> David C. Large, "The Political Background of the Foundation of the Bayreuth Festival, 1876," *Central European History* 11/2 (June, 1978), 166-8. Aside from concerns over the reaction from the French, Bismarck, in the interests of preserving his fragile union, hesitated to usurp the prerogatives of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, who had been Wagner's original sponsor.

<sup>78</sup> See for example Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich*, 47-64. Hermand refers to this group as a "Volkish Opposition," though this term may be a bit of an overstatement for what was essentially a cultural movement.

unadulterated form in order to highlight his work's significance to the nation.<sup>79</sup> Yet while philologists debated the validity of connecting the Nordic and Germanic mythical traditions, Wagner considered such connections to be given facts. Thus, his famous opera cycle, *Der Ring der Nibelungen*, represented an eclectic mix of Scandinavian religious symbolism and German legend, as when Nordic Valkyries come to whisk the Germanic Siegmund to Valhalla in *Die Walküre*. His art blurred the lines between the two traditions and brought them together under the same rubric of Germandom (*Deutschtum*).<sup>80</sup> While many accepted this amalgamation as natural, it did not go entirely unnoticed. Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, commented, "Let the German friends of Wagner ponder whether there is in Wagner's art anything outright German, or whether it is not just its distinction that it derives from *supra-German* sources and impulses."<sup>81</sup>

The impact of Wagner's art further popularized a specific vision of national identity based on an interpretation of the German past. In doing so, it helped move the national ideal away from the realm of language and onto history (albeit a fantastic one at best), where national differences between Germany and Scandinavia became less distinct. Moreover, Nordic mythology became an integral part of Wagner's historical worldview. As he showed in his 1848 prose work, *Die Wibelungen: Weltgeschichte aus der Sage*, Wagner saw little distinction between myth and historical fact as he portrayed German history as a continuous struggle for independence. The Scandinavian elements he had blended into his art necessarily became a part of his national worldview, and his work was intended to carry them over into the minds of his audiences.<sup>82</sup>

Such thinking also continued to have a noticeable impact on philological scholarship. The birth of a dedicated discipline of *Germanistik* in the German university during this period continued the Grimms' tradition of looking north for the source of the Germanic spirit. Karl Müllenhoff, for example, who was now a Professor at the University of Berlin, concluded in the late 1870s that the Germanic myths existed in their purest form

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<sup>79</sup> Williamson, *Longing for Myth*, 250-9.

<sup>80</sup> Salmi, *Imagined Germany*, 32.

<sup>81</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: A Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), 197. Emphasis added.

<sup>82</sup> Salmi, *Imagined Germany*, 32.

in Iceland and devoted most of the fifth volume of his *Deutsche Altertumskunde* series to defending the originality of the Icelandic Eddas.<sup>83</sup> Müllenhoff interpreted these myths as evidence of a cultural unity that existed at some point in the distant past, and he suggested that variations in Germanic and Nordic myths might stem from the Migration Period (*Völkerwanderungszeit*), when massive demographic shifts interrupted the cultural continuity of Germanic tribal groups. The cultural core of Germandom remained, however, in the surviving mythic representations.

The *Deutsche Altertumskunde* series represented a significant step in Müllenhoff's intellectual development and was halted only by his unexpected death in 1883, which prevented him from finishing the fifth volume. In pursuing this research, Müllenhoff transcended the parochial pursuits of his home region and had embraced a search for the origins of the German nation, for the remains of an irreducible German *Volk*, and for a clue to their original geographic homeland. His work had supposedly bolstered the links among tribal groups and illustrated their common cultural roots, but, despite his insistence on using philological approaches, his methodology ultimately exhausted itself in the more distant prehistoric past, where the threads of myth grew too faint and the earliest writings and oral traditions faded into silence.

Müllenhoff's search entered archaeological circles after his death through the work of his student, Gustaf Kossinna (1858-1931). For Kossinna, the question of German origins became nothing short of a grail quest in which he linked the search for the original Germanic homeland (*Urheimat*) with the hunt for traces of an original core European cultural group, variously known as "Indoeuropean" or "Indogerman."<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Kossinna's intense research into this question at the turn of the century has since earned him a prominent place in modern historiography. In addition to a very good recent

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<sup>83</sup> Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, vol. 5, (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1883). Müllenhoff especially argued against the writings of the Norwegian philologist Christian Bang, who had traced similarities between the motifs in the Eddas and established Greek and Roman mythology.

<sup>84</sup> According to Andreas Häusler, the designation for the original bearers of the European parent language was the subject of controversy. In 1823, the German philologist Julius von Klaproth (1783-1835) used the term "Indogerman," while his colleagues in England were already using the term "Indoeuropean." The two words nevertheless refer to the same group. See Häusler, "Zum Ursprung der Indogermanen: Archäologische, anthropologische und sprachwissenschaftlicher Gesichtspunkte," *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift* 39 (1998), 3.



biography from Heinz Grünert,<sup>85</sup> a number of archaeologists, along with Brent Maner, have provided strong accounts of Kossinna's central place in the history of German archaeology,<sup>86</sup> so only a brief overview is needed here. Above all, Kossinna entered the discipline in the mid-1890s with an ambitious research agenda that catapulted him to the highest echelon of professional archaeology and challenged both the objectivity and liberal scientific orientation of previous German archeology. He played a key role in bringing a distinctly nationalist strain to the discipline in the early twentieth century, but what also made him a particularly significant figure was that he did so by tying together the ostensibly disparate trends of Volkish thinking and positivist science. While he shared the philologists' agenda of seeking the prehistoric roots of the German *Volk*, he did so by employing rigid archaeological empiricism and a large-scale comparative methodology to create a broad narrative of German prehistory that resonated with the visions of Volkish nationalists. As a result, Kossinna's brand of prehistory resurrected the broadest conceptions of German identity from the early nineteenth century and placed them on a scientific footing.

There is no question that Kossinna, born in Tilsit in East Prussia, entered the field from a strongly national-conservative background that shaped his research agenda. His works are peppered with stirring quotes from his ideological forebears. When he wrote, for example, "Because I learned, that its language, its law, and its past had been placed far too low, I wanted to lift up my Fatherland,"<sup>87</sup> he was quoting none other than Jacob Grimm. Moreover, he shared not only Müllenhoff's Volkish orientation, but also his passion for linking the distant past to the history of the nation. Borrowing from Heinrich von Sybel, he wrote, "A nation that does not maintain a connection to its past is as much in danger of drying up as a tree separated from the roots,"<sup>88</sup> and while visiting Kiel in

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<sup>85</sup> Heinz Grünert, *Gustaf Kossinna (1858-1931): Vom Germanisten zum Prähistoriker. Ein Wissenschaftler im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik*, (Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2002).

<sup>86</sup> Maner, "Buried Nation," 218-26.

<sup>87</sup> Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte. Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, (Leipzig: C. Kabitzsch, 1911), 237.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

1900, he scribbled a quote from his mentor in the corner of his diary, “Without the awareness and establishment of the oldest living conditions of our people (*unseres Volkes*), a vital and proper treatment of its later history is absolutely impossible.”<sup>89</sup>

Although Kossinna studied only briefly under Karl Müllenhoff in Berlin, he was nevertheless profoundly influenced by his mentor’s work both as a philologist and as an antiquarian.<sup>90</sup> As a point of departure for his research, Kossinna drew upon relevant Greek and Roman sources to identify the physical location of various Germanic tribes during the Roman period. Here his thinking reflected the influence of Müllenhoff, who in the fourth volume of *Deutsche Altertumskunde* had suggested that Tacitus’ *Germania* might prove useful as a guide for the future study of German prehistory.<sup>91</sup> Kossinna accepted this thinking, and used works from other classical authors, including writings from Pliny and maps from Ptolemy to assist him in ascertaining the geographical locations of various Germanic groups.<sup>92</sup> Where Müllenhoff and Kossinna parted ways, however, was in the priority of language as a research tool. Kossinna’s scholarly maturation had occurred just as linguistic searches had begun to exhaust themselves, and he quickly recognized the empirical limits of using classical authors and other philological evidence to solve a problem so far removed from textual resources. He therefore maintained a tenuous distance from philology, writing, “I soon recognized that classical and linguistic studies based on history and geography would not alone suffice, rather that domestic archaeology . . . must be used as a founding method.”<sup>93</sup> By 1890, he had rejected the dominance of text-centered methods of classical prehistoric scholarship and argued instead for a new approach to German prehistory that would view material

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<sup>89</sup> Kossinna, Museum Diary, Kiel, September 1900, HU Nachlass Kossinna A-VII-1, 1.

<sup>90</sup> Heinz Grünert, *Gustaf Kossinna*, 47-9; Kossinna openly admitted his debt to Müllenhoff in *Die Herkunft der Germanen. Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie*, 2nd ed., (Leipzig: Carl Kabitisch, 1920), 1.

<sup>91</sup> Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, vol. 4, x-xi.

<sup>92</sup> Kossinna, *Die Herkunft der Germanen*, 18-19.

<sup>93</sup> Idem., *Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in Vor-und Frühgeschichtlicher Zeit* (Leipzig: Kabitisch, 1936), 2.

remains as documents in themselves by seeking continuities and commonalities in artifacts to piece together the story that the ancient texts omitted.

During this period, Kossinna, unable to secure a university position, worked in libraries in Halle, Bonn, and Berlin,<sup>94</sup> where he read voluminously and had access to dozens of catalogues of European artifact collections, which placed at his fingertips the product of decades of meticulous collection and descriptive analyses from local patriotic preservation societies. In his studies, he found himself drawn to the methods emerging from Scandinavian scholarship, in particular those stemming from the Müller-Montelius debate, which convinced him of the importance of Montelius' notions about continuities in the northern European archaeological record. This was especially exciting, because it seemed to confirm what text researchers had long believed about long-standing settlement patterns for Germanic cultural groups. Moreover, because Montelius traced the continuities into the early Bronze Age, Kossinna became interested in the possibility of also finding links between the Germanic tribes of Tacitus' day and the ancient Indogermanic culture, whose presence may have been marked by an introduction of sophisticated metal technology. Indeed, when Kossinna compared the geographic distribution of Germanic tribes drawn from literary sources to known artifact assemblage patterns throughout Germany, he concluded, "The result is the surprising similarity of both depictions, only with the difference, that the map of the settlement patterns accomplished through archaeological means is much more exact in the indication of the borders of cultural areas of larger tribal groups."<sup>95</sup> Kossinna thus began to embrace archaeology both as an affirmation of known texts and as a more certain means of establishing the whereabouts of historically known groups. Moreover, his ability to establish the locations of Germanic groups in Roman times implied that he could trace similar continuities into more remote times beyond the reach of extant literature.

As a practicing archaeologist, however, Kossinna remained largely an amateur, and while his methods were based on solid archaeological theories, they were nevertheless

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<sup>94</sup> Grünert, *Kossinna*, 57-8.

<sup>95</sup> Kossinna, *Die Herkunft der Germanen*, 18-19.

deeply flawed from the beginning. He never conducted excavations or worked under the tutelage of an established prehistorian, but relied instead almost exclusively on the work of local societies and established archaeologists. Beyond his library work, he conducted extensive tours of collections and museums in Germany and Scandinavia, including visits to Kiel in 1900 and 1913 and to Copenhagen in 1900, 1904, and 1912.<sup>96</sup> Kossinna's observations, which he recorded in a series of private journals, reveal an ambitious approach to prehistoric research that contrasted sharply with the more narrow focus of scholars such as Johanna Mestorf or even the young Sophus Müller and more closely resembled the large-scale projects of advanced archaeologists at the height of their careers. Rather than mastering the discipline through micro- or regional studies, Kossinna seems even in his earlier journals to have looked at the various collections as pieces of a much larger puzzle that promised to illuminate grander patterns. He took notes on a variety of artifact types: ceramics, brooches, stone implements, jewelry, weapons, and then reassembled them to find that they fit preconceived notions about Germanic origins.

Kossinna made his entrance into archaeological circles in 1895, when he delivered an address at the annual meeting of the DAG in Kassel entitled, "The Prehistoric Diffusion of the Germanic Peoples in Germany," ("*Die vorgeschichtliche Ausbreitung der Germanen in Deutschland*"). In 1902, he advanced his ideas in a more detailed essay in the journal *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, "The Indogerman Question Answered Archaeologically" ("*Die indogermanische Frage archäologisch beantwortet*"). In these texts, Kossinna stressed the long-standing continuity among Germanic tribal cultures stretching back into the Bronze Age, which he claimed connected them directly to Indogermanic peoples who had inhabited an *Urheimat* located within northern and western Europe. This idea was in fact nothing new, but had already been postulated both by Müllenhoff, who claimed to have identified the German *Urheimat* as lying in "the area of the Oder and the Elbe,"<sup>97</sup> and by members of the DAG such as Otto Georg Ammon (1842-1916) and Ludwig Wilser

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<sup>96</sup> Kossinna, *Museumstagebücher 1900-1901*, HU Nachlass Kossinna A-VIII, 1,3,5.

<sup>97</sup> Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, vol. 5, 1.

(1850-1923).<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Kossinna acknowledged their work as key contributions to a “new dogma” placing the Germanic homeland in northern Europe. What made his claims different was his use of archaeological evidence to provide a more “exact” empirical basis for proving this theory.<sup>99</sup>

In doing so, however, Kossinna was required to forward a bold challenge to the accepted *ex oriente lux* paradigm of cultural evolution. Specifically, he maintained the validity of a northern *Urheimat* by rejecting the notion that civilization had entered the region from the Near East, writing:

For me one of the most clearly recognizable guiding methodological principles was that the [impression of] rushing diffusion waves of culture from south to north are by contrast to be seen in general as culture waves in a north-to-south oriented transplantation of related cultures or characteristic parts of the same as products of mass migrations. [This principle] yielded as the *Urheimat* of the Germanic people the western coastlands of the Baltic as well as the bordering regions of the North Sea, including Southern Scandinavia, Denmark, and Northwest Germany.<sup>100</sup>

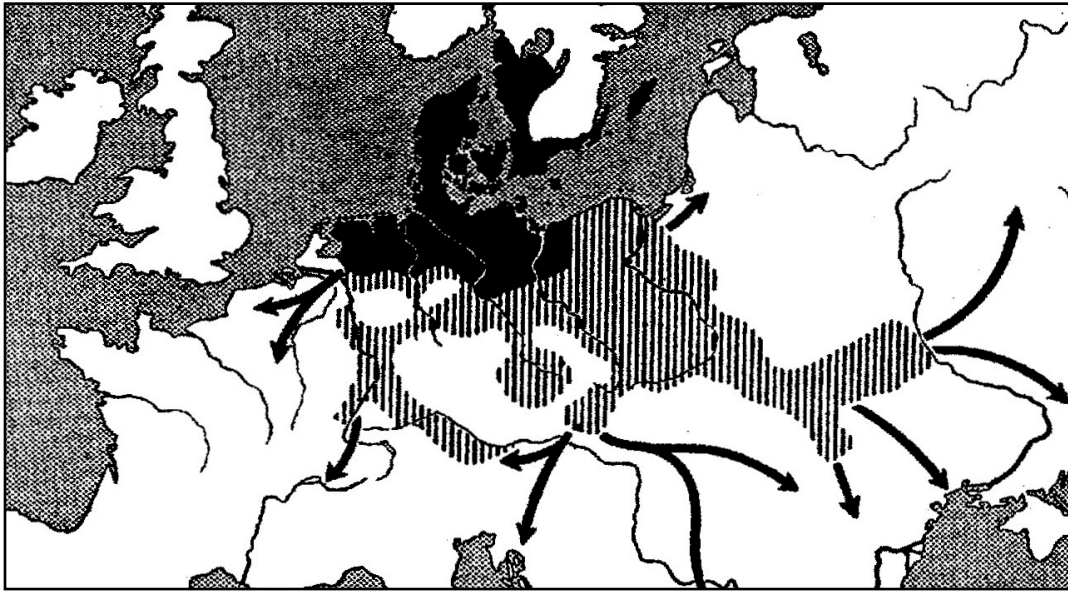
In other words, Kossinna was overturning the course of accepted cultural diffusion and arguing for a view that afforded the Germanic *Volk* and their Indogermanic ancestors a valued status as progenitors of European civilization. While it was a popular theory among students of *Germanistik* and anthropologists such as Ammon and Wilser, it was unprecedented in mainstream archaeology, and went against the views specifically postulated by both Sophus Müller and Oscar Montelius.

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<sup>98</sup> Bernard Mees, “Völkische Altnordistik: The Politics of Nordic Studies in German-Speaking Countries, 1926-1945” in *Old Norse Myths, Literature, and Society: Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference, 2-7 July 2000, University of Sydney*, eds. Geraldine Barnes and Margaret Clunies Ross, (Sydney: Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney, 2000), 319.

<sup>99</sup> Kossinna, “Die indogermanisch Frage archäologisch beantwortet,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 34 (1902), 161-2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.



The *Urheimat* of the Indogermans, according to Gustaf Kossinna. From Kossinna, *Das Weichselland: Ein uralter Heimatboden der Germanen*, 3rd ed., (Leipzig, Kabitzsch Verlag, 1940), 17.

To support his theory, Kossinna refined his methodology during the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1911, he published *The Origins of the Germanic People* (*Die Herkunft der Germanen*), in which he established the tenets of what he referred to as the Settlement Method of Archaeology (*Siedlungsarchäologie*). According to Kossinna, the key to determining the geographic extent of prehistoric groups was to identify the outlines of specific artifact styles or site configurations. The corresponding principle, “*Kulturgebiete sind Volksgebiete*,”<sup>101</sup> meant that such cultural continuities implied the presence of a homogenous people. As he famously explained, “Sharply defined archaeological cultural provinces correspond continuously with completely distinct peoples (*Völker*) or tribes (*Volksstämme*).”<sup>102</sup> Locating the core homeland of these groups was a matter of tracing recognizable artifact and site patterns to their indivisible center. Using this methodology, Kossinna ultimately pushed the temporal borders of Germanic culture back even further into the Stone Age by noting continuities in a series of megalithic graves in the vicinity of northern Germany, Denmark, and southern

<sup>101</sup> Kossinna, *Herkunft der Germanen*, 4.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Sweden. He interpreted these Neolithic structures as the borders of an area in which the earliest Indogermans emerged with the advent of Neolithic technology and sedentary farming around 4000 BC. Kossinna thus clearly intended to lump modern Scandinavians and Germans into the same core historical group, but his new label did not discourage his nationalist presuppositions. He wrote, “*Here we fully have the right to speak of Germans in Scandinavia.*”<sup>103</sup>

By examining surrounding assemblages, Kossinna determined that Indogermanic peoples spread in all directions over the course of a few millennia. These migratory periods occurred in distinct waves correlating to specific artifact types.<sup>104</sup> As they moved away from the center, migrating Indogermanic peoples intermingled with other groups and thereby formed new cultures. In this manner, Kossinna sought to recast the relationship between Indogermans and the civilizations of the Greeks and Romans. After pointing out the connections between the Classical Greeks and their Mycenaean ancestors, Kossinna attempted to show how Mycenaean grave finds indicated an Indogermanic influence. He claimed, for example, that so-called “hanging spiral” decorative motifs found on recovered jewelry and ceramics were clearly of Northern origin, and stemmed from the “eleventh Indogermanic migratory period” around 1500 BC.<sup>105</sup> In another instance, he depicted a similar Germanic material influence in Northern Italy during the Bronze Age, when he sought to prove through an analysis of brooches that these objects were copies of an earlier type found in Northern and Central Europe. Kossinna extrapolated from such finds that the Indogermans had provided some of the cultural underpinnings of the later Classical World. Here he directly refuted Montelius’ previous research on brooches, arguing that his colleague had misinterpreted

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 28-9. Emphasis added.

<sup>104</sup> Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte*, 13.; Kossinna, *Ursprung*, 112.

<sup>105</sup> Kossinna, *Ursprung*, 180-2.

the dates of the finds under study.<sup>106</sup> The European pins, Kossinna countered, were in fact older than the ones in Italy in terms of other contextual evidence.<sup>107</sup>

Brooches and spiraled jewelry are but two examples of the ways in which Kossinna tried to prove his claims archaeologically. While he was not suggesting that all Greco-Roman culture developed entirely from Northern Europe, he was claiming that the Germanic regions, far from being merely grateful recipients of Mediterranean civilization, had in fact made valuable contributions to high cultural development. Moreover, since the evolution of Germanic culture had occurred earlier, it had consequently exerted a great deal of influence on the Classical World. In a nationalist context, this kind of thinking was an attempt to justify the value of the supposedly “barbaric” German heritage and to distance German national culture from Classical influences while affording it a corresponding comparability.

In doing so, however, Kossinna contradicted classical scholars and professional archaeologists in Germany and established what essentially amounted to a entirely new paradigm for interpreting archaeological evidence. It was a way of thinking about the past that corresponded well to the Volkish national ideal, since it rejected the notion of external influence on German prehistory and stressed the independence, uniqueness, and achievements of the *Volk*. Moreover, it left space for Kossinna to link the notion of a biologically distinct German ethnic or racial group to the cultural continuities evident in the artifact record. As Kossinna himself explained just before the First World War, “The Blood first makes the Spirit,”<sup>108</sup> by which he equated the spiritual *Volk* with a definable German ethnicity. His method opened new space for the collaboration between archaeology and anthropology, which was also beginning to experience a conservative and racialized orientation after Rudolf Virchow’s death in 1902.<sup>109</sup> The result was an affirmation of German national identity in the distant past and a renewed vision of the

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<sup>106</sup> Klindt-Jensen, *Scandinavian Archaeology*, 86. Kossinna was specifically attacking two of Montelius’ key works: *Brooches from the Bronze Age* (1880), and *On the Dating of the Bronze Age, Particularly in Relation to Scandinavia* (1885).

<sup>107</sup> Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte*, 108-22.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Massin, “Virchow to Fischer,” 115-17.



traditional boundaries of a Germanic homeland. Yet at the same time it cast an image of the German *Volk* that ostensibly included Scandinavian peoples, which stood in contrast to the sharper distinctions made by German nationalist thinkers during the mid-nineteenth century.

### **Reactions to *Siedlungsarchäologie* in Schleswig-Holstein and Scandinavia**

Given the weight that Kossinna's theories must have carried in an increasingly illiberal German academic climate, it is perhaps not too surprising that he should have quickly found success in the University. Indeed, as early as 1902, the same year as Rudolf Virchow's death, Kossinna was granted what had eluded even Virchow himself: the first chair in Prehistoric Studies at the University of Berlin. Yet this meteoric rise in the discipline was not without controversy. Many professional archaeologists were bewildered by Kossinna's professional success. As one correspondent commented to Friedrich Knorr in Kiel, "Kossinna has yet never excavated, he always only watches, because he is himself too impatient, it is certainly better that he doesn't. It only occurs to one as strange that he occupies a university chair."<sup>110</sup> Moreover, few professional archaeologists were prepared to denounce openly Kossinna's methods, but fewer still showed a willingness to embrace his conclusions, and in fact the response was mixed among prehistorians in both Germany and Scandinavia, with reactions ranging from dismay to uncertainty. Many scholars in northern Europe were clearly unsettled by Kossinna's penchant for biting criticism, and Kossinna at least once found himself obliged to apologize to Oscar Montelius for his "sharp pen."<sup>111</sup> The result, nevertheless, was a measurable distance between Kossinna and his colleagues in Schleswig-Holstein and Scandinavia. Sophus Müller, after reading Kossinna's work in 1903, referred to his work as "attractive," but otherwise simply commented:

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<sup>110</sup> Kaethe Riecken to Friedrich Knorr, 17 July 1909, ALM AA 1909-o.N.

<sup>111</sup> Kossinna to Montelius, 19 December 1902, HU Nachlass Kossinna, reprinted in Hildegard Gräfin Schwerin von Krosigk, *Gustaf Kossinna. Der Nachlaß: Versuch einer Analyse*, (Neumünster, Wachholtz, 1982), 173.

I have followed you in these studies with genuine interest. I would have much to note to you; but it is not possible to touch upon scholarly questions of such a delicate nature in a letter. I hope to meet you again here or there well prepared, if you want to have a thorough discussion . . .<sup>112</sup>

For both Müller and Montelius, there were aspects of Kossinna's research that were appealing. Montelius expressed gratitude for Kossinna's promotion of his views on continuities as the fundamental premise of periodizing northern European archaeology,<sup>113</sup> while Müller could see in Kossinna's work affirmations of his own connections between artifact types and ethnological characteristics.<sup>114</sup> The result was a sense of uncertainty among Scandinavian scholars that would only turn to disapproval in the context of renewed border agitation before World War I.<sup>115</sup>

Kossinna's most prominent critic from the beginning was certainly Carl Schuchhardt (1858-1943), who in 1908 became the director of the prehistory section of the Berlin Museum of Ethnology (*Museum für Völkerkunde*). Like Kossinna, Schuchhardt had entered archaeology from a background in classical philology and in his later career engaged in broad, overarching surveys of European prehistory, but unlike his rival he had cultivated his expertise through extensive fieldwork in both Europe and the Near East.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Schuchhardt approached the Indogerman problem from a perspective rooted in archaeology's liberal scientific tradition and in the Oriental paradigm of classical archaeological scholarship. He objected to Kossinna first on the grounds that there was no empirical link between cultural and ethnic continuities, and second because he saw Kossinna's depiction of Indogermanic diffusion as overly simplistic and narrow-minded. He explained:

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<sup>112</sup> Müller to Kossinna, 9 February 1903, HU Nachlass Kossinna, reprinted in von Krosigk, *Kossinna, Der Nachlaß*, 176.

<sup>113</sup> See for example Montelius to Kossinna, 1 May 1900, HU Nachlass Kossinna, reprinted in von Krosigk, *Kossinna, Der Nachlaß*, 170-1.

<sup>114</sup> Kristian Kristiansen, "Dansk arkaeologi," 292.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>116</sup> Grünert, "Von Pergamon bis Garz: Carl Schuchhardt - Begründer der prähistorischen Burgenarchäologie in Mitteleuropa," *Das Altertum* 33/2 (1987): 104-5.

Archaeological observation ultimately teaches us that diffusion does not follow a course in this or that direction, that no distinct people (*Volk*) wanders from the North Sea to Troy or Mycenae, that the development much more often pauses, collects its strength and constitutes a new cultural source (*Kulturherd*), whose impact is once again felt in different directions.<sup>117</sup>

The methodological split between Kossinna and Schuchhardt became especially intense in 1906, two years after Schuchhardt endorsed the creation of a Union of Prehistory Museums (*Verband vorgeschichtlicher Museen*) attached to the DAG, which was intended to bring provincial museums into a closer relationship with the growing Royal Museums (*Königliche Museen*) in Berlin and which drew the support of both Mestorf's Schleswig-Holstein Museum and the new Museum of Ethnology and Prehistory (*Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte*) in Hamburg.<sup>118</sup> Schuchhardt also took the lead in forming a new journal for prehistoric research entitled *Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, which he intended to preserve the liberal scientific orientation of professional archaeology.<sup>119</sup> Initially, Schuchhardt expressed interest in including Kossinna in these endeavors, but by 1908 found himself discouraged by the nature of Kossinna's vitriolic criticism, complaining to his colleague:

It seems to me that our remaining differences hinge on the term "collegial." I take collegial to mean that the one looks upon the other as *equal*, gladly accepting what the other has to give and for his part gladly giving what the other can use. It means that when the one has disabused the other it is not spoken of as "victories." In contrast to this collegial however is the *overbearing* sentiment, which he takes who views everyone of a dissenting opinion as an adversarial intrusion into his field, which he believes must be beaten back with all means.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Carl Schuchhardt, *Alteuropa: Eine Vorgeschichte unseres Erdteils*, 2nd. ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926), 284.

<sup>118</sup> Protokoll der Konferenz von Vertretern vorgeschichtlichen Museen Berlin, 9 June 1906, ALM AA 1906-117b.

<sup>119</sup> Georg Thilenius to the Schleswig-Holstein anthropologischer Verein, 1 March 1909, ALM AA 1909-o.N. Thilenius was since 1904 the director of the new Hamburg Museum.

<sup>120</sup> Schuchhardt to Kossinna, 28 November 1908, reprinted in von Krosigk, *Kossinna, Der Nachlaß*, 189.

The personal nature of this rivalry hastened what was in all likelihood an inevitable disciplinary split, which occurred that same year when Kossinna formed his own archaeological society, the German Society for Prehistory (*Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Vorgeschichte*), and by creating his own journal, *Mannus*, which he saw from the beginning as a key means of legitimizing and popularizing his brand of scholarship:

Thus our independent organization, which serves only scholarly purposes borne from scholarly necessity, will prove itself in spite of the “Unions” [*Verbände*] recently arrayed against us that make a power issue from the condition of our scholarship, in which case archaeology cannot “be free,” - in our sense [of the word].<sup>121</sup>

*Mannus* soon attracted a growing crowd of amateur archaeologists and Kossinna students, whose articles reflected an increasing commitment to ethnic, racial, and even anti-Semitic perspectives on European prehistory. In the first issue, for example, the young philologist Hermann Schneider (1886-1961) published an article contrasting the prehistoric Germanic and Semitic races, writing, “Where the Germans arise, a glittering chivalry develops, an art full of innocent subjectivity, a worldview full of deep mysticism; where Semites appear, arrogant clerics and callous *Geldmenschen* reign, art dies off, the worldview preaches despotic, hard-hearted gods.”<sup>122</sup> For his part, Kossinna never engaged in such blatantly anti-Semitic rhetoric, and his own acceptance of race theories did not fully mature until after 1918, but he nevertheless managed a journal that fostered a wide range of national-conservative and Volkish perspectives. Moreover, he used it as a platform to continue exercising his penchant for sharp polemic against the Schuchhardt camp and openly injecting a nationalist orientation into the discipline. He even sought to rewrite the history of the discipline, rejecting for example the “Nordic” origins ascribed to the famous Three-Age Theory and arguing instead for a new recognition of the German contribution to its theoretical development.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Kossinna, “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Vorgeschichte. Verhandlungsbericht der gründenden Versammlung am 3. Januar 1909 im Vortragsaal des Märkischen Museums,” *Mannus* 1 (1909), 6.

<sup>122</sup> Hermann Schneider, “Rassereinheit und Kultur,” *Mannus* 1 (1909), 247.

<sup>123</sup> Kossinna, “Zum Dreiperiodensystem,” *Mannus* 2 (1910), 309-12.

The increasingly polarizing nature of the Kossinna-Schuchhardt dispute forced archaeologists across Germany to make choices as to which theories they would subscribe in interpreting archaeological material. This was an especially difficult dilemma for young archaeologists entering the profession at the turn of the century, and for many the response was a feeling of ambivalence. Perhaps the best example can be found in the German-Danish borderland in the case of a young schoolteacher-turned-archaeologist named Gustav Schwantes (1881-1960), who conducted his first excavations in 1899 and eventually became director of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum in 1929. According to Michael Gebühr, Schwantes, who was born in Blankenese just west of Hamburg, grew up in a “rural-middle-class” family with national-conservative political leanings.<sup>124</sup> In this respect, he shared a similar background to Kossinna, but his interest in prehistory stemmed from a love of the outdoors and a sense of *Heimat*-patriotism.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, his scholarly development occurred under the tutelage of Johanna Mestorf, with whom Schwantes maintained a ten-year correspondence. Schwantes was actually something of a prodigy, already making important contributions at the age of eighteen to the study of Iron Age burial urns,<sup>126</sup> a topic that ultimately helped locate the origins of Iron-Age culture in northern Europe. It was a research interest shared by Mestorf, who quickly offered Schwantes a position in the Schleswig-Holstein Museum after the death of Wilhelm Splieth without realizing that her protégé was then only nineteen years old.<sup>127</sup>

Schwantes was thus coming of age at the very moment of the disciplinary split. In the first decade of the twentieth century, he became interested in writing a general text for schoolchildren on European prehistory. As he neared completion of the text in 1907, he

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<sup>124</sup> Gebühr, “Gustav Schwantes und die Ethnogenese der Germanen,” Paper presented at “Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft’: Arbeitsgespräch im Rahmen des Sonderforschungsbereichs 541,” Freiburg, 2-3 July, 1999, 37.

<sup>125</sup> Schwantes, *Frühe Jahre eines Urgeschichtsforschers (1881-1914)*, (Kiel: Wachholtz, 1983), 89-95.

<sup>126</sup> See Schwantes, “Der Urnenfriedhof bei Jastorf im Kreise Uelzen,” *Jahrbuch für das Provinzialmuseum Hannover* (1904), 13-26.

<sup>127</sup> Mestorf to Schwantes, 20 February 1901, ALM Nachlass Gustaf Schwantes, reprinted in Unverhau, *Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität*, 51. Because he had not yet finished his studies, Schwantes was finally obliged to decline the position.

sent a letter to Mestorf that year seeking her guidance on how to evaluate Kossinna's theories:

What do you think . . . of the new ethnological direction of prehistory? When I read the works of a type like Kossinna or the more reasonable work of Much, Wilsen, and others, I have the feeling, as if our discipline will become a shipwreck under the leadership of these men as earlier under the influence of the first enthusiastic and uncritically won results of philology. I find that the borders of prehistory are in many cases misjudged and would like to see brought to light those aspects that are unfortunately condemned to silence on account of a one-sided set of facts. The newness and more or less ingenious reasoning exquisitely ensnares the reader, and this direction breeds imitators, but is it not in large part a kind of fashion trend, or do I see it too darkly? . . . The cool and objectively-thinking researcher of the Scandinavian North placed prehistory on scientifically incontrovertible ground of factual observation and freed it from the direction of historical scholarship. It seems to me that we Germans allow ourselves to be bedazzled more easily through creative speculations . . . to develop an *a priori* opinion and to allow it to work on our heads more emotionally - unfortunately often through unsupportable polemic - rather than through clear factual reasoning.<sup>128</sup>

In response, Mestorf wrote:

I congratulate you on the completion of your little manuscript. I would not have the courage to write such a book in this troubled, quarrelsome time. The struggles of these scholars, whose theories are based not on well-founded factual material but on literary documents as well as visits to collections that they do not fundamentally understand, must expend themselves. We cannot agree with the Eolithicans and the erudite alike who see all culture coming from north to south . . . All of these authors, including Sophus Müller and Montelius, must be read critically, although the latter have a great familiarity with the material and broad perspective. The products of our objectively, not subjectively-colored, research are to be in a position justifiably to reject old theories or to accept them as correct.<sup>129</sup>

Mestorf and Schwantes thus seemed to have held deep misgivings about the type of research espoused by archaeologists such as Gustaf Kossinna. It did not, they seemed to

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<sup>128</sup> Schwantes to Mestorf, 4 December 1907, ALM AA 1907-216, reprinted in Unverhau, *Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität*, 95-6.

<sup>129</sup> Mestorf to Schwantes, 7 December 1907, ALM Nachlass Schwantes, reprinted in Unverhau, *Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität*, 98.

believe, adhere to the exacting standards of proper archaeological scholarship. Indeed, Mestorf expressed skepticism about the very possibility of creating a broad prehistoric narrative, and this is in fact what makes her letter so interesting. While it affirmed Mestorf's commitment to the liberal-scientific orientation of archaeology, it also suggested her unwillingness to engage these scholars on a national level. This letter, which was not published during her lifetime, was the only strong statement from Mestorf against the Nordic Paradigm and the Settlement Method. In this case, it seems that what amounted to the regional feudalization of archaeological scholarship created real limits for noted scholars who might have opposed the new methodologies, and thereby underscored the inherent weaknesses in the scientific maturation of German archaeology.

Schwantes' text, which was published in 1908 as *From Germany's Prehistory* (*Aus Deutschlands Urgeschichte*), took a balanced view of the material in the Kossinna-Schuchhardt debate, which has led to some recent controversy about his position on ethnological archaeology. While Allan A. Lund and Wiebke Künnemann have labeled him a "Germanophile racist,"<sup>130</sup> a more intensive reading of Schwantes' writings by Michael Gebühr purports to show that Schwantes never fully embraced racial thinking in his research. In analyzing Schwantes' publications before 1933, Gebühr points to Schwantes' rejection of a northern origin for Indogermanic peoples and his agreement with the Jewish philologist Sigmund Feist that the Germans and Indogermans were not directly related as evidence that he was not in line with the Kossinna camp. In fact, Schwantes did not directly reject the northern origin of the Indogermans in northern Europe, but reported it as a possible theory advanced by other prehistorians. In the second edition of *Aus Deutschlands Urgeschichte* (1913), he added, "Some researchers, however, are not satisfied with this and narrow down the borders of the [Indogermanic] region by viewing Scandinavia or northern Germany as the point of origin."<sup>131</sup> A few sentences later, Schwantes seemed to side more closely with Schuchhardt when he argued first that the Indogermans must have received their knowledge of metals from Near

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<sup>130</sup> Allan A. Lund, *Germanenideologie im Nationalsozialismus: Zur Rezeption der 'Germanien' des Tacitus im Dritten Reich*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1995), 79; Wiebke Künnemann, "Jastorf, Geschichte und Inhalt eines archäologischen Kulturbegriffs," *Die Kunde* NF 46, 1995, 71.

<sup>131</sup> Schwantes, *Aus Deutschlands Urgeschichte*, 2nd ed., (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1913), 104.

Eastern cultures and second that a second group from the so-called “Danube Culture” in southeastern Europe might also have been good candidates as the original Indogermans. “What then,” he asked, “is the difference between Danube Culture and North German-Scandinavian Culture?”<sup>132</sup>

It is therefore difficult to give a certain assessment of Schwantes’ views. Certainly he was no outright nationalist Germanophile as Kossinna was, but he also never took a strong stand against such scholarship before 1933. He remained ambivalent, and it was this uncertainty that silenced much potential criticism of the new nationalist strain. For Schwantes, there was much in the Kossinna method that was distasteful to the normal pattern of scholarship, and indeed he neglected to cite Kossinna in most of his work.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, he was willing to engage racial and nationalist theories without much criticism, and there was within this work a fundamental question that he deemed legitimate and that he himself posed in 1926: “How far back does the German *Volk* allow itself to be traced beyond written history into primitive times . . .?”<sup>134</sup> In other words, Schwantes, like many of his colleagues, was drawn by the possibility of probing the extent to which he could peer into the archeological record and still recognize himself and his nation.

### **Conclusion: A Fractured Field?**

Given the dramatic transformation implicit in Kossinna’s school of archaeological thought, it is imperative to ask why he was so successful, despite the sharp criticism leveled against him by Schuchhardt and others. Part of the reason was the inherent logic in his overarching claims. It made some degree of sense to contemporaries that if historically-identifiable national groups exhibited unique behaviors and material production within stable geographic areas, then these trends should remain constant as

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 105-7.

<sup>133</sup> Gebühr, “Schwantes,” 5, 19. The first citation Schwantes gives to Kossinna was in the 6th ed. of *Aus Deutschlands Urgeschichte* in 1935, and even here he misspells the title of Kossinna’s work, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte*.

<sup>134</sup> Schwantes, “Die Germanen,” *Volk und Rasse: Vierteljahrsschrift für Deutsches Volkstum* 1 (1926), 73.



one traces groups into prehistoric periods. Indeed, Kossinna himself highlighted this in his methodological text:

If our axiom that '*Kulturgebiete sind Volksgebiete*' has absolute validity for the historical, early-historical, and in the transition to the prehistorical periods, so it is completely incomprehensible, from whence scholars . . . get the courage to reject this axiom without appropriate justification and thereby . . . to simply deny my investigations and conclusions.<sup>135</sup>

Moreover, according to Ulrich Veit, the fact that much of his methodology was based on sound and established archaeological practice obscured the inherent flaws in Kossinna's approach. "Thus," he writes, "it is typical of much of the lively debate about the 'Kossinna Method' that, under the guise of examining the method, it mainly criticized its applications."<sup>136</sup> Finally, by tracing Gustav Schwantes' musings about the Nordic Paradigm, we find what may be the most significant factor explaining the seductive power of Volkish strains of archeological thought. Simply put, these theories succeeded because they resonated with the public and professionals alike. They linked long-standing ideas about the German nation to modern scholarship and provided a firmer prehistoric basis for finding the authentic nation. Kossinna's theories injected a powerful set of meanings into thousands of sites and artifacts and bound them together in a system that transcended their provincial contexts and gave them a new value on the national level.

By the eve of the First World War, archaeologists in Germany had essentially completed a rapid process of professionalization, but at the same time their discipline had become something of a polarized field. The advent of Volkish thinking at odds with the liberal, scientific view, followed by its legitimization in new associations and journals, produced a diversification of orthodoxy that disrupted the formation of "normal" practices common to all archaeologists. It yielded paradigms that, in contrast to the

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<sup>135</sup> Kossinna, *Herkunft der Germanen*, 4.

<sup>136</sup> Veit, "Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory: A Case Study on the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Archaeological Objectivity." In *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, ed. Stephan Shennan, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 40.

model of paradigmatic change delineated by Thomas Kuhn, competed with rather than supplanted older theories.<sup>137</sup> Yet we must not be tempted into seeing the sum of these developments as a fundamental split in archaeological practice. German archaeology may have professionalized later than its counterparts in Scandinavia, but this does not mean that it followed its own *Sonderweg* at odds with the practices of its neighbors. As we have seen, some aspects of even the most nationalist archeological theories had a certain appeal for Danish and Swedish archaeologists, and the absence of criticism in the early twentieth century is highly suggestive of its close affiliation with mainstream scholarship. Moreover, the differences between “liberal” and “Volkish” science were not always as clear-cut as they may now appear. Advocates of the Volkish variant generally leaned heavily on empirical models of scholarship, and tended to avoid political corollaries for their research before World War I. For his part, Kossinna remained politically neutral before 1914, and did not openly endorse the ambitions of groups such as the Pan-German League.<sup>138</sup> By the same token, even the most objectively-minded archaeologist tended to see their work as having a national value. They may have preserved a measure of distance between past and present identities, but they nevertheless were pleased to promote the interests of “German” scholarship and to place it on par with the achievements of Denmark, Sweden, or France. Nationalist thinking thus remained firmly embedded in archaeology in both Germany and Denmark, where the cause of Sønderjylland lent itself to the appropriation of symbols.

What ultimately made the Volkish variant different was its powerful narrative of prehistory and its potential for linking the distant past with a turbulent present. Above all, this new archaeology revived a grandiose vision of northern Europe and provided it with scientific credibility. The borderland and southern Scandinavia, the alleged homeland of the German *Volk*, was cast as a site of national reverence and, in its most extreme form, a Valhalla to be reclaimed. For German archaeologists working in Schleswig-Holstein, however, the consequence of not directly challenging such thinking was a difficult paradox that would leave them struggling to reconcile overtly nationalist

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962).

<sup>138</sup> Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886-1914*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 239-40; Ulrich Veit, “Gustaf Kossinna,” 51.

methodologies not only with the traditional practices shared with Scandinavian archaeologists, but also with local and national identity constructions framed around the border question. The carefully articulated and defended differences between Germans and Danes would now be thrown into question by broad rubrics emphasizing the prehistoric and racial kinship of German and Scandinavian peoples. Even if there was no direct threat from these theories at the turn of the century, there was nevertheless buried within them the same threat of German *overmagt* that had alarmed Danes during the border conflict,<sup>139</sup> and that would once again color relations between Germans and Danes in the crucible of the early twentieth century.

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<sup>139</sup> See Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 5

### **BETWEEN HEROES AND *HEIMAT*: Borderland Archaeology and the Popular Imagination in the Interwar Period**

After eighteen years as Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum in Kiel, Johanna Mestorf, now eighty-one years old and in poor health, at last decided to retire in April 1909.<sup>1</sup> To mark the occasion, the German government honored Mestorf with a special award, while in Denmark, local newspapers commented on her fantastic success as a woman in “conservative Germany,” noting, “There is also reason to express warm thanks from the Danish side for many years of faithful work.”<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing months, she contemplated writing a history of the museum, but soon fell ill and died in July 1909.<sup>3</sup> Her legacy, aside from a respectable body of archaeological scholarship, was a museum that she had helped transform from a withering antiquarian collection into one of the leading institutions for archaeological research in Germany. To ensure that legacy, she entrusted the museum to her custodian, Friedrich Knorr, who had trained in Denmark and had led the early excavations at the Haithabu and Danewall sites, and to Carl Rothmann, who had served as the museum’s second assistant since 1901.

There was consequently every reason to believe that the network of German and Danish archaeologists, which Mestorf and Sophus Müller had so painstakingly cultivated in the late nineteenth century, would continue to produce strong scholarship. For his part, Knorr assured Müller, “I am firmly convinced, that the good relations that brought Kiel and the Danish National Museum together during Mestorf’s tenure are the best

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<sup>1</sup> Mestorf to Müller, 9 March 1909, NM Afd. 1 200/09.

<sup>2</sup> “Professor Johanna Mestorf,” *Berlingske Tidende* (19 April 1909), in NM Afd. 1 203/09.

<sup>3</sup> Knorr, “Johanna Mestorf,” 3.

foundations upon which the work of the Kiel Museum can rely and grow.”<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the continuities in leadership suggested that the Schleswig-Holstein Museum would retain an unchallenged dominance over the investigation and interpretation of regional prehistory. Yet, in the two decades between Mestorf’s retirement and the 1929 accession of her third protégé, Gustav Schwantes, the museum experienced a dramatic decline in both its international standing and in its ability to conduct research. Above all, Friedrich Knorr’s tenure as director was very quickly marred by a series of crises, beginning with the outbreak of the First World War, which drained his resources and threatened many of his ties abroad, and was followed by a slow process of recovery during the early Weimar Era. The peace settlements, meanwhile, created opportunities for pro-Danish populations seeking to reunify Denmark with the North Schleswig region of the borderland. The resulting plebiscites of 1920 raised anew the border question and reopened old psychological wounds between Germans and Danes. Moreover, it led scholars on both sides to mobilize their research once again in the interests of contemporary political questions and draw parallels between prehistoric settlement and modern frontiers. Coupled with the growing popularity of Volkish, racial, and “Nordic” models for understanding prehistory,<sup>5</sup> these activities spurred a sudden rise in public interest in archaeology, even as scholarly leadership from Kiel temporarily diminished.

The weakness of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum during these years can now be seen in the poor quality of its records after World War I, which create challenges for assessing the ways in which professional archaeologists in Schleswig-Holstein responded to the crises of the period. The careful system of cataloguing and preserving correspondence before 1914 broke down during this period, and much of the material dating from 1911 to 1945 has since been lost. The fate of these records remains unclear even today, though it is likely that many were destroyed during the intense bombing of Kiel in World War II.<sup>6</sup> It is, nevertheless, possible to piece together much of what happened during the war and interwar periods, since the decline in the museum’s fortunes shifted the initiative for

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<sup>4</sup> Knorr to Müller, 18 June 1909, NM Afd. 1 312/09. Knorr was writing to thank Müller and his colleagues for an earlier letter congratulating Knorr on his appointment.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup> Volker Hilberg, personal communication, 4 February 2004.

interpreting the distant past very much more into the public sphere. Newspapers and popular books and journals, which had always carried archaeological finds to an eager public, became critical sources of information about the past in the early 1920s, as notions of objectivity and scholarly credibility became much more fluid. To a lesser degree, this was also the case in Denmark, where the public managed to wrest more control over interpretations of prehistory from the scholars in the National Museum, as Danes adapted ancient symbolism to the new political opportunities arising after World War I.

As a result, both countries, but especially Germany, experienced an intermingling of long-standing practices and beliefs about prehistory with a new symbolic lexicon for prehistoric material and new theories about Germanic origins, religion, and race. While these trends were tied to pre-war conceptions of the past, they grew increasingly more radical in the turbulent climate of Weimar Germany, as the distant past was drawn into a new search for solace from defeat and alternatives to Wilhelmine political identities. This period of crisis in the borderland thus contributed to the national-conservative and Volkish turn in German archaeology begun in the early twentieth century. In the context of mounting pressures from the experience of war and defeat and the changes to the map following the end of the war, the power of legitimate scholars, and indeed that sense of legitimacy itself, became a question mark in Schleswig-Holstein. What, then, was the impact of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum's decline in the interwar period? How did scholars react to the rising popularity of the "Nordic Paradigm" in Weimar Germany? In what ways did such thinking influence popular thinking about the past in the region? And finally, to what degree did scholars in Kiel manage to shape these emerging popular ideas?

Such questions, of course, are especially relevant to understanding developments after 1933, when archaeology became a critical component of propaganda and ideology in the Third Reich.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as we will see, the ideas circulating during the Weimar Era played a critical role in the relationship between professional archaeology and the Third Reich in the borderland. They remain, however, valuable in their own context as well, since they

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 6.

reveal much about scholarly activity in the interwar period and about the engagement of archaeologists with the broader public.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the place of professional archaeologists in the changing views of Germanic prehistory during the interwar years sheds light in a broader sense on their relative power to shape the discourse about the past.

### **Borderland Prehistory in War and Peace, 1914-1922**

When Friedrich Knorr and Carl Rothmann joined the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, they were something of a dying breed in that they were among the last professional archaeologists to enter the field without formal training. Knorr, born in the Holstein town of Eutin, had studied art in Karlsruhe and Paris before entering the University of Kiel in 1895 to prepare for a career in art history.<sup>9</sup> Carl Rothmann, meanwhile, was a schoolteacher in Karl Müllenhoff's hometown of Meldorf in Süderdithmarschen. He had come to Mestorf's attention through his friendship with the director of the local *Kreismuseum*, Hermann Goos.<sup>10</sup> Upon the death of Wilhelm Splieth in 1901, Mestorf received permission to hire two assistants to replace him. She had offered the first assistant's position to Gustav Schwantes, whom she knew to be an experienced excavator, but he had been too young to accept the post.<sup>11</sup> She ultimately chose Knorr and Rothmann because their experiences as student and schoolteacher provided them with the necessary educational background while allowing Professor Mestorf to retain her authority with her new male colleagues.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The work of German scientists and scholars during this period is currently an important component of a large project underway from the Forschergruppe zur Geschichte der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1920-1970. See <http://projekte.geschichte.uni-freiburg.de/DFG-Geschichte>. As the group explains, "While one focus is on the Nazi era, the period of investigation was deliberately not narrowed down to the Third Reich only. Rather, the intention is to contextualise the DFG's history, which is characterized by continuities and breaks in terms of the DFG's institutional history, and people and projects involved, within the history of science and research in general."

<sup>9</sup> Unverhau, "Möchte nun Hedeby," 34.

<sup>10</sup> Christina Rothmann, "Lebenslauf von Professor Carl Rothmann, 9 August 1973," ALM Nachlass Rothmann.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup> Mestorf to Montelius, 25 March 1901, quoted in Unverhau, "Möchte nun Hedeby," 32.

Though disappointed by her assistants' lack of experience, Mestorf nevertheless took advantage of the chance to direct their introduction into the discipline and thereby to preserve the museum's scholarly orientation. Between 1901 and 1909, she made sure that both spent time in the field directing excavations, and that they developed a familiarity with a broad variety of texts. Furthermore, she expressed an earnest desire for Knorr to train in Scandinavia, in which case Sophus Müller proved helpful. A short time later, she also managed to send Knorr to Stockholm for several weeks to work with Oscar Montelius. This was especially significant to Mestorf, who explained to Montelius:

It is is extraordinarily desirable, not only that he should learn from you in the [Swedish] museum, but also that he should in general keep company with experts, because both of my gentlemen should not only become museum employees, but also prehistorians, and as long as Knorr had to work for his exams, I could not push him with the archaeological literature. There is much that he has to do, until he can take a firm position, for example, in relation to Kossinna and Reinecke, Schumacher, etc., and that is something that Kiel must do.<sup>13</sup>

The sudden death of Wilhelm Splieth had left the future of Mestorf's museum in jeopardy, but she made every effort to ensure that her new successors would be able to preserve the Schleswig-Holstein Museum's status as a regional leader of archaeological scholarship and an important bridge to prehistorians and institutions in Scandinavia. Unfortunately, few clues remain as to the effectiveness of Knorr's leadership, but he seemed to his colleagues to possess the qualities of a respectable scholar and the drive and energy necessary to the museum's continued success. For her part, Mestorf seems to have been impressed, writing glowing reports on his growth as an archaeologist:

I can only say good things about Herr Knorr's work in the museum. Talent, diligence, and performance leave nothing to be desired. Knorr does not shy away from the rarely accepted technical work, and this he fulfills with skill. His artistically-trained eye aids him in his study of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 35. The references are to Gustaf Kossinna, Paul Reinecke (1842-1958), Chief Conservator of the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments, and Karl Schumacher (1860-1934), classical archaeologist known for his work on the German Limes.



the professional materials, so that within half a year he has gained competency that some archaeologists never acquire.<sup>14</sup>

Carl Rothmann also remembered Knorr's work fondly, and in a letter to Knorr in 1928 tried to put into perspective the difficulties of the preceding decade:

To all those many things that were necessary but not achieved, the war and postwar periods were not without effect. But notably the years from Fräulein Mestorf's departure to the beginning of the war, when we were both still young, were still extraordinarily important for the growth of the collection.<sup>15</sup>

The contributions to which Rothmann alluded included Knorr's updated synthesis of the most recent finds of early Iron Age urn graves, which had been one of Mestorf's key research areas. As Knorr acknowledged in his text, the number of early iron artifact finds had grown dramatically in the twentieth century, including numerous finds appearing in grave hills associated with the late Bronze Age, which provided new ways to understand the transition between the Bronze and Iron Ages in northern Europe.<sup>16</sup> Above all, the growing number of finds led archaeologists to realize that the introduction of iron technology had occurred much earlier than Mestorf and Ingvald Undset had previously believed, occurring not during the La Tené period but rather through the influence of Halstatt cultures from southern Germany around the sixth century BC.<sup>17</sup> In addition to his work with the museum's collection, Knorr also led a series of digs at the Haithabu site on an annual basis until 1915. His work included the supervision of over 360 pits within

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<sup>14</sup> Mestorf to the Universitätskurator in Kiel, 7 March 1900, quoted in *ibid.* 34.

<sup>15</sup> Rothmann to Knorr, 2 May 1928, ALM MuG 19.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Knorr, *Friedhöfe der älteren Eisenzeit in Schleswig-Holstein*, (Kiel: Lipsius & Fischer, 1910), 5-7.

<sup>17</sup> Schwantes, "Rückblick auf Johanna Mestorf aus dem Jahre 1940," reprinted in Unverhau *Hochachtungsvoll Ihrer Autorität*, 176.

the inner walls and the exciting discovery of a Viking-age boat burial (*Bootkammergrab*) on a hill outside the southwestern earthwork.<sup>18</sup>

Knorr's significant progress, however, was cut short after the 1915 season by the demands of the First World War, which, aside from a very short dig in 1921,<sup>19</sup> ended archaeological work at Haithabu for fifteen years. The war also effectively curtailed the museum's other projects, even though the conflict left Schleswig-Holstein physically unscarred. Initially, the widening war and realities of trench warfare created mounting financial and labor shortages that left Knorr forced to suspend ongoing projects, and with Rothmann was called away to the Eastern Front, Knorr could do little more than take steps to protect the museum from potential destruction.



The Disruption of War. Carl Rothmann on the Eastern Front, May 1917.  
Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

The situation worsened in the following year, when the Allies established an effective naval blockade that produced near starvation in Kiel during the winters of 1916/1917 and 1917/1918 and also raised the specter of a British naval attack on the city via the Kiel

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<sup>18</sup> Joachim Stark, *Haithabu-Schleswig-Danewerk: Aspekte einer Forschungsgeschichte mittelalterlicher Anlagen in Schleswig-Holstein*, (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988), 16-17, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Knorr, "Bericht über Sicherung und Ausgrabung des Museums vaterländischer Altertümer an der Oldenburg und Danewerk," unpublished report, 20 February 1926, ALM Nachlass Heinrich Philippsen.

Fjord.<sup>20</sup> Such an attack would have had devastating consequences for the museum, which lay within easy range of the harbor. As a result, Knorr elected to pack away many of the museum's artifacts and move them from the harbor. What remained, as one commentator recalled, "appeared unfit for showing to the larger public," and the museum closed to the public for almost a decade.<sup>21</sup>

Even before these interruptions, however, the war had begun to sour relations between Kiel and the National Museum in Copenhagen. In November, 1914, Sophus Müller proposed an exchange of artifacts with Knorr, offering a number of Holstein pieces in the National Museum in return for some Danish pieces at Kiel.<sup>22</sup> Knorr's response was initially positive,<sup>23</sup> but the circumstances changed after Müller sent a list specifying his requested artifacts, which included eight pieces found near Haderslev and one near Tønder, both in North Schleswig. By December 1915, Knorr was obliged to inform his colleague that, after a conversation with the Cultural Ministry in Berlin, there "were few prospects" of convincing the German government to approve the exchange, and that he was "momentarily unable to do anything more in this matter."<sup>24</sup>

The rejection of Müller's offer came a full year before the museum officially closed, and so it is uncertain exactly why the exchange was refused. It is likely, however, that Müller's specific requests for items from North Schleswig may not have been well-received at a time of reemerging tensions between Germans and Danes over the North Schleswig region. When the conflict began, Denmark declared itself neutral, but there remained concern in Germany that the Danes would eventually enter the war on the side of the Allies, especially in view of the growing agitation over North Schleswig.<sup>25</sup> In many ways, however, the German government heightened this agitation by immediately

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<sup>20</sup> Ulrich Lange, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 2nd ed. (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2003), 514.

<sup>21</sup> "Das Museum vaterländischer Altertümer in Kiel," *Sonntagsbeilage der Kieler Zeitung*, (1921), Excerpt from ALM MuG 15.

<sup>22</sup> Müller to Knorr, 2 November 1914, NM Afd. 2 735/14.

<sup>23</sup> Knorr to Müller, 20 November 1914, ALM OA Haithabu-Danewerk 1914-o.N.

<sup>24</sup> Knorr to Müller, 14 December 1915, NM Afd. 2 115/15.

<sup>25</sup> Niels Finn Christiansen, Karl Christian Lammers, and Henrik S. Nissen, *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 7, ed. Søren Mørch, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1988), 82-4.

enacting a number of tough measures designed to stamp out any potential disquiet in the borderland. They quickly censored the Danish-speaking press, placed a number of pro-Danish leaders in North Schleswig under arrest,<sup>26</sup> and fortified the border with a strong defense line and contingents of soldiers.<sup>27</sup> Members of the Danish minority, meanwhile, found themselves struggling with the morally ambiguous implications of serving in the German military, even as they hoped for its defeat.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, Danes across the border contributed to the escalating tensions by producing a new set of images and texts stressing the linkages between Denmark and Sønderjylland, which included the appropriation of local prehistoric symbols. In general, nationalist sentiments were rising in Denmark just as in Germany, and in this climate the use of the ancient past as symbol was becoming increasingly popular, taking its place among a complex matrix of bucolic, landscape, and historical imagery. The Danish Women's Movement, for example, adopted images associated with the Golden Horns of Gallehus in 1915, which they memorialized in a banner during a suffrage march in Copenhagen.<sup>29</sup> In this case, Danish suffragettes focused on Kirsten Svendsdatter, the peasant girl who had first discovered the Horns, as the focus of a peasant representation of the "Mother Denmark" symbol. Svendsdatter's name and likeness had a powerful resonance among Danes and allowed the suffragettes to exploit the rural sensibilities of Danish identity. The result was a twist on previous representations of "Mother Denmark," in which she was portrayed as a militant, almost Wagnerian Norse valkyrie, in that the new image allowed the women's movement to draw on the symbolic language of

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<sup>26</sup> Terry Hunt Tooley, "Fighting without Arms: The Defense of German Interests in Schleswig, East and West Prussia, and Upper Silesia, 1918-1921," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1986, 15.

<sup>27</sup> The fortification of the border stemmed largely from fears of a Anglo-Danish alliance and a British invasion from the Jutland Peninsula, which led to the creation of the defenses in 1916, dubbed *Sicherungsstellung Nord*, and which is discussed in Mogens Scott Hansen, *Sikringstilling Nord: en tysk befæstningslinie i Sønderjylland*, (Hørsholm, Miljøministeriet, Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> On the Danish experience in the borderland during the First World War, see Inge Adriansen, *Første verdenskrig i mikroperspektive: Maria Gørrigsens åbenbaringer*, (Sønderborg: Historisk Samfund for Als og Sundeved, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> "Historical Odyssey behind Golden Horns," *Copenhagen Post* (24 August 2004).

Danish unity while promoting an unassuming and non-threatening image of neutral Denmark.<sup>30</sup>

Danish historians and archaeologists, meanwhile, began taking up the issue of Sønderjylland in a series of new studies after 1915, where they found themselves treading the fine line between their nationalist sympathies and the conventions of objectivity established within their scholarship. For the most part, this trend involved a focus on historical geography,<sup>31</sup> inspired in part by Peter Lauridsen's 1896 study of land usage and agricultural design in Sønderjylland.<sup>32</sup> Using eighteenth-century maps, Lauridsen worked to demonstrate the consistency of farm layouts stretching into the late medieval period, from which he deduced continuities in cultural settlement. Two decades later, the historian H.V. Clausen (1861-1929) conducted an analysis of place names with the Old Danish stems *-lev*, *-høi*, and *-løse*.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, Sophus Müller published a three-part study of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages in Sønderjylland. In his article on "Sønderjylland's Bronze Age," Müller firmly abandoned his earlier opposition to Oscar Montelius on the issue of cultural continuity, and identified the Eider River, which Danish nationalists had long seen as the true border with Germany, as the limit of a culturally distinct group inhabiting the Jutland Peninsula and Danish Islands. Müller argued that even in the early Bronze Age, which reached into the second millennium B.C., unique styles separated Sønderjylland from the lands south of the Eider. He explained:

The Bronze Age began differently in northern Germany. There is found here an older period with domestic bronze manufacture, which coincides with the period of the late Stone Age in the North . . . The difference between the Danish and the North German regions is also stressed by German writers; but Sønderjylland from this period onwards is united with the Danish territory. <sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Inge Adriansen, "Danish and German National Symbols," *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 21 (1991), 36-8.

<sup>31</sup> For a survey of the emergence of historical geography in Denmark, see Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, "Agriculture and Settlement in Medieval and Early Modern Zealand: A Historical-Geographical Survey of Danish Agriculture and Settlement Conditions, c.1000-1688," M.A. thesis, University of Roskilde, 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Lauridsen, "Om de gamle danske Landsbyformer," *Aarbøger for Oldkyndighed og Historie* (1896), 97-110

<sup>33</sup> H.V. Clausen, "Studier over Danmarks Oldtidsbebyggelse," *Aarbøger* (1916): 1-226.

<sup>34</sup> Idem., "Sønderjyllands Bronzealder," 245-6.

When he mentioned “German writers,” Müller was referring specifically to Gustaf Kossinna, and he cited Kossinna’s 1911 *Origin of the Germanic Peoples* as evidence. Yet Müller’s work was no imitation of the brand of “Settlement Archaeology” practiced by Kossinna in Germany, and, indeed, Müller had by this time become firmly opposed to Kossinna’s scholarship. Rather, Müller limited his study to identifying patterns of artifact distribution without openly attaching ethnic labels. The result was a survey based on a more rigorous analysis of archaeological evidence bearing a much more indirect form of political criticism. In the context of an avalanche of new scholarly attachment to the border region, however, it was clear that Müller and his colleagues were directing their energies towards providing an academic underpinning for Danish dreams of reunification, even as they continued to adhere to credible archaeological research practices in doing so.

With the German defeat, the musings of Danish scholars on the status of borderland took on more threatening overtones for Germans, and the process of redrawing the map of Europe after World War I thus gave rise to a similar resurgence of academic nationalism on the German side. In Schleswig and parts of eastern Prussia, the Allies stipulated that plebiscites would determine whether frontier regions with large minority populations should stay within Germany. The possibility of losing large swaths of territory prompted some German archaeologists, particularly those already adhering to nationalist orientations, to bring their scholarship directly into the political debate. Most notably, Gustaf Kossinna employed his *Siedlungsarchäologie* in an effort to justify Germany’s claims to territory in the former East Prussia. In 1919, he produced *The Weichselland: An Ancient Homeland of the Germanic People* (*Das Weichselland: Ein uralter Heimatboden der Germanen*), which he hoped would sway the opinion of Allied leaders considering a plebiscite for the eastern marches.<sup>35</sup> Arguing against Polish and Russian scholars who claimed through linguistic study to have identified continuous Slavic cultural settlement east of the Elbe River, Kossinna named a list of specific artifact types, ranging from small bone hunting tools to large megalithic structures, as proof of the cultural affinities between peoples in the eastern territories and those in the original

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<sup>35</sup> Veit, “Kossinna,” 50-1.

Indogermanic *Urheimat* north of the Elbe. This showed, he argued, that the region had borne a strongly Germanic presence since at least the early Neolithic Period.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, in a move designed to temper the perception of a legacy of Germanic conquest in the East, Kossinna added:

And moreover the German won this land not . . . [through] his war violence, his lust for conquest, his militarism or imperialism, as the false bywords may all be called, rather by his purely peaceful works, his pure, culture-bringing creativity.<sup>37</sup>

Kossinna's defense of East Prussia was joined in 1919 by the publication of Johannes Neuhaus' study of the German-Danish borderland, *The Question of North Schleswig in Light of the Most Recent Prehistorical Investigations (Die Frage von Nord-Schleswig im Lichte der neuesten vorgeschichtlichen Untersuchungen)*, which he claimed was the culmination of fifteen years of continuous research.<sup>38</sup> Neuhaus (1869-1922), a lecturer in Scandinavian languages at the University of Berlin, based his arguments on folklore evidence that allegedly demonstrated the presence of "Eastern Germanic" tribes in the Schleswig region during the late Roman era. Yet when he searched for proof beyond philological remains, he was disappointed by the absence of archaeological studies. Ignoring Sophus Müller's contributions, Neuhaus complained, "Up to the present day, no single work has ventured to take up the task of illuminating the periods of different northern settlements."<sup>39</sup> Neuhaus' book thus became a call for serious archaeological study of ethnic settlement in Schleswig, but it also forwarded suppositions based on linguistic evidence that the Danes, rather than representing long-term inhabitants of the borderland, were in fact distinct from the Jutes and Angles who first settled the region.

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<sup>36</sup> Kossinna, *Das Weichselland: Ein uralter Heimatboden der Germanen*, 3rd ed., (Leipzig: Kabitzsch, 1940), 10-14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Johannes Neuhaus, *Die Frage von Nordschleswig im Lichte der neuesten vorgeschichtlichen Untersuchungen*, (Jena: Diederichs, 1919) 26.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

“The Danes,” he concluded, “not only did not have the lead in coming to the Eider, but rather are to be counted as number three among the tribes that appeared there.”<sup>40</sup>

Such arguments did not have a measurable impact on the thinking of Allied leaders, and, in the case of North Schleswig, prehistory proved to have less resonance than issues of language and culture. As the war neared its end, a group of Danish nationalists led by Ernst Christiansen (1877-1941), chief editor of *Flensborg Avis*, asked the Danish government to go to the Allies with a proposal for moving the Danish border south to the Danewall, which would place Denmark’s frontiers on a firm historical and prehistorical foundation.<sup>41</sup> On this issue, however, the Danish government wished to avoid a situation that would promote further revanchism from Germany if it used the international community to force a settlement. The Danes thus elected to maintain their neutrality and achieve reunification by leaving the matter in the hands of the Danish minority.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the leaders of the minority movement had already begun to work on a different reunification plan even before the Armistice had been signed. In October, 1918, H.P. Hanssen, (1862-1936), a moderate nationalist who was the editor of the Danish-minded newspaper *Hjemdal* and a representative in the German Reichstag, spoke out in Berlin in favor of a plebiscite in North Schleswig in accordance with Paragraph 5 of the 1866 Treaty of Vienna. When he received favorable responses from members of the German government,<sup>43</sup> he convinced his colleagues to accept a new border based on the so-called Clausen Line, which stemmed from the demographic work of H.V. Clausen in 1894 and ran across the peninsula a few kilometers north of Flensburg.<sup>44</sup>

The result was the Åbenrå Resolution of November 17th, 1918, which secured a general consensus among *Sønderjyder* that the area of North Schleswig north of the Clausen Line should be permitted to vote in a plebiscite. A Danish advisory panel took the resolution to the Allies, who included the plebiscite stipulations in Section XII,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>41</sup> Hans Lund, “Ernst Christiansen,” *Dansk Biografi*, Bd. 5, (Copenhagen: Schultz Forlag, 1934), 206-7.

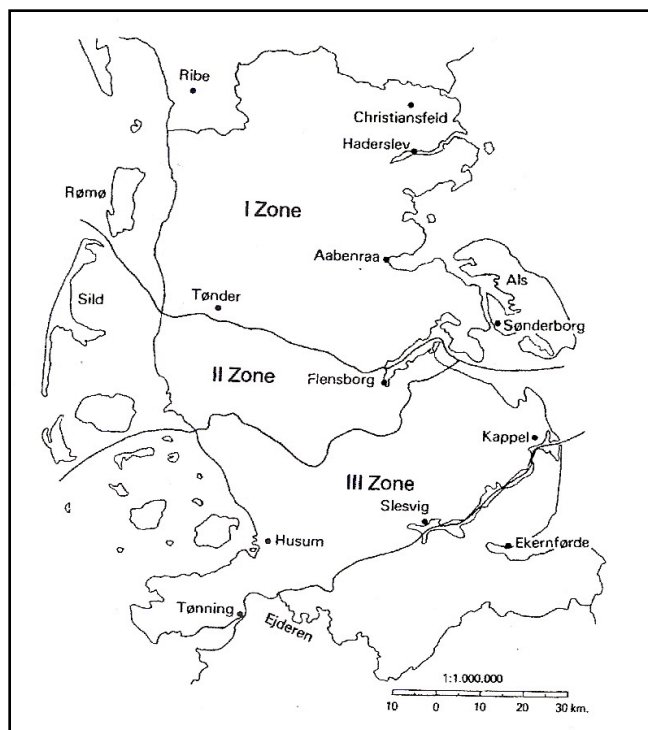
<sup>42</sup> Christiansen, et al., *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 7, 115-16.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See Clausen, *Nordslesvig, 1863-1893. Den nationale stilling på landet*, (Flensburg: Möller & Rasmussen, 1894).



Articles 109-114 of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>45</sup> In accordance with the treaty, the region was divided into three zones: Zone 1 including the northern third of the duchy and the cities of Tønder, Sønderborg, and Haderslev, Zone 2 encompassing a narrow strip of land from the island of Sylt to the city of Flensburg, and Zone 3 covering the southern third and the cities of Schleswig and Husum. Despite pressure from Christiansen's "Danewall Movement" (*Danevirkebevægelsen*),<sup>46</sup> most Danes recognized that Zone 3 stood almost no chance of turning away from Germany, and consequently that region was not included in the plebiscite.<sup>47</sup>



Plebiscite Zones in Schleswig. From Henrik Becker-Christensen, "Den nye Grænse," in *Grænsen i 75 Aar, 1920-1995*, ed. Becker-Christensen, (Åbenrå: Institut for Grænseregionsforskning, 1995), 36.

<sup>45</sup> Christiansen, et al., *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 7, 117; The delegation also included Ernst Christiansen, whose more ambitious proposals failed to find an audience, though he did help secure a plebiscite for Central Schleswig. See Lund, "Christiansen," 207.

<sup>46</sup> On the Danewall Movement, see Axel Johnson, *Danevirkemænd og Ejderfolk: Den grænsepolitiske opposition i Danmark, 1920-1940*, (Flensburg: Studiefdelingen ved Dansk Centralbibliothek for Sydslesvig, 2005). The specific incident is also reported in "Danevirkebevægelsen," *Grænseforeningen*, <http://www.graenseforening.dk>.

<sup>47</sup> The disagreement over the disposition of Central Schleswig ultimately led King Christian X, who sided with the Eiderdane faction, to dismiss the government of Carl Theodor Zahle, which precipitated the so-called Easter Crisis (*Påskekrisen*) of 1920 that marked Denmark's transition to a strictly constitutional monarchy. See Christiansen, et al., *Danmarks Historie*, Bd. 7, 125-31.

The real contest was thus for Zone 2 and especially for the city of Flensburg. In the run-up to the plebiscite, Eiderdane nationalists under Ernst Christiansen and Pro-German Schleswig-Holsteiners took to the pages of Flensburg newspapers to carry out a debate over the prehistory of the city, as each side looked to the distant past to persuade voters to see one choice or the other as both right and natural or to view Flensburg as inherently Danish or German. Early in 1920, Christiansen wrote a series of articles stressing Flensburg's strong historical roots in Danish culture, which included a legal tradition stemming from the old Jutish language. In response, the German historian Christian Voigt wrote, "The first settlements on our city's soil stem from a time lying far from that of the migration of the Danes."<sup>48</sup> Voigt cited the work of Johannes Neuhaus to argue that not only did Flensburg "lie on Angle soil," but that its Jutish tradition was in fact evidence of its German pedigree, since Neuhaus had made firm distinctions between Jutes and Danes.<sup>49</sup>



Prehistory and the Plebiscite. "Awaken and vote for Denmark," Danish Voting Placard, 1920. Reprinted at <http://www.graenseforeningen.dk>.

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<sup>48</sup> Christian Voigt, "Die alte dänische Stadt Flensburg!" *Flensburger Tageblatt* (29 January, 1920).

<sup>49</sup> Idem., "Flensburg deutsch," *Flensburger Tageblatt* (4 February, 1920).

The plebiscite took place on 10 February 1920 for Zone 1 and on 14 March 1920 for Zone 2. As expected, residents in Zone 1 voted overwhelmingly to return to Denmark. In Zone 2, prehistoric arguments proved ineffective in altering an outcome that was largely based on modern linguistic and cultural affinities, and the region opted to stay in Germany. The involvement of prehistory in the debate, however, made it a visible part of the physical transfer of territory, which occurred on 9 July 1920. The event itself, which took place over several days, turned into a momentous celebration for pro-Danish residents across North Schleswig. On 10 July, King Christian X (1870-1947) marked the moment of reunification (*Genforeningen*) by riding across the border on a white horse. He and the royal family then toured the province by motor car, and in each city were greeted by throngs of enthusiastic *Sønderjyder*. According to one report, the King's halt in Haderslev was especially jubilant, as "The city vanished in a sea of Danish flags [*Dannebrog*]." <sup>50</sup> The crowning moment of the tour was the visit to Sønderborg, where the King attended a celebration atop the Dybbøl Redoubt, which had been a key battleground in both German-Danish Wars. At the height of the ceremony, the Commandant of the town of Åbenrå presented the King first with a *Dannebrog* from the 1864 war, symbolizing the final victory of the Danes in the conflict, and then with replicas of the two Golden Horns of Gallehus, thus affirming the ancient and unbreakable bonds between Denmark and Sønderjylland.<sup>51</sup>

In the wake of the ceremony, Germans and Danes began the task of adjusting to the newly-redrawn border. Among the most complex issues were those relating to the final disposition of cultural goods. As early as January 1919, only a few months after the November Armistice and a full year before the plebiscite, both Sophus Müller and Mourtiz Mackeprang (1869-1959), who succeeded Müller as director of the National Museum in 1922, expressed interest in using the German defeat in the war as an opportunity to recover the artifacts from the former Flensburg Collection. As with the plebiscite, the Germans and Danes opened a direct dialogue, and in November 1921, delegations from both sides met to discuss the issue, with Mackeprang representing

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<sup>50</sup> "Die 'Wieder'vereinigung," *Kieler Zeitung* (14 July, 1920).

<sup>51</sup> "Die Uebernahme der ersten Zone," *Kieler Neueste Nachrichten* (14 July, 1920).

Denmark. Mackeprang had been a long-time supporter of reunification, but although he was highly critical of the German government's treatment of the Danish minority in his seminal 1910 work, *Nordslesvig, 1864-1909*,<sup>52</sup> he also made conciliatory gestures to local Schleswig-Holsteiners, writing, "For the sake of our [German] adversary I have made every effort to avoid sharp words and have never forgotten, that the German people does not coincide with the Prussian government."<sup>53</sup> Such sentiments thus made him a strong candidate to represent the Danish side.<sup>54</sup> His German counterpart in the negotiations was Ernst Sauermann, the curator of the Thaulow Museum of Art in Kiel, who was on hand to represent his institution as well as the Flensburg Stadtmuseum and the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Museum.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, neither Knorr nor Rothmann took part in the negotiations.

Among the Danes' most significant requests, of course, was the return of the former Flensburg Collection. The Danes based their claim on the fact that most of the artifacts had originated in North Schleswig and had been recovered by an archaeologist (Conrad Engelhardt) later affiliated with the Danish National Museum. Moreover, the Danes complained that the Nydam Boat, the centerpiece of the Flensburg Collection, was being improperly stored in an "inaccessible and dark attic" in the museum.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, Mackeprang expressed his willingness to have the artifacts displayed in the city of Sønderborg, which was close to the marsh site where the artifacts had originally been found. The German report later claimed that Sauermann asked whether the Danes might be willing to accept a series of exchanges based on the new border, with objects stemming from the northern side to be turned over to Denmark and those from the south

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<sup>52</sup> Erik Moltke, "M. Mackeprang, 1869-1959," *Fortid og Nutid* 20 (1957-9), 308-9.

<sup>53</sup> Mouritz Mackeprang, *Nord-Schleswig von 1864-1911*, trans., (Jena: Diederichs, 1912), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Mackeprang was also an ideal choice because of his expertise in regional church history and architecture, which was helpful to a negotiation over mostly church property. See for example Mackeprang, "Sønderjyllands Middelalderlige Landsbykirker. Deres Forhold til samtidig Dansk og Tysk Arkitektur," *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (1914): 95-138.

<sup>55</sup> "Die Verteidigung des Nydamer Bootes," ALM OA Nydam 60. The archive retains a copy of the reports from the German delegation prepared for the Landeskonservator on 27 November 1966. The reports are unsigned and undated, but were certainly prepared after 1924, which is the date mentioned for the transfer of the Nydam Boat to its new facility in Kiel.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

to Germany. According to the report, “This question was rejected by the Danish side on the grounds that Schleswig is ancient Danish land and antiquities from all of Schleswig must be valued as Danish antiquity.”<sup>57</sup> Such sentiments hardened the position of German negotiators, who allegedly asked whether the region’s cultural goods might not also have inherent value for Germany.<sup>58</sup> The issue was further complicated by an early agreement among the negotiators to respect private property, which proved troublesome in the case of the Flensburg Collection, because the property status of many of the items was unclear at best.<sup>59</sup>

The antagonistic nature of the statements coming from both sides suggests that the negotiations were somewhat premature. They took place, after all, only a few years after the armistice and a year after the acrimonious debate over the plebiscite. Because these were direct negotiations, there was no third party to compel a favorable settlement, and the German government was unwavering in its refusal to relinquish the Nydam Boat, even rejecting an offer of one million Danish Kroner with a curt telegram to Sauermann reading, “NYDAM BOAT NON-NEGOTIABLE.”<sup>60</sup> In the end, both sides left the meeting with some measure of disappointment. The Germans did agree to send a large body of church property, having been convinced that they belonged to the Danish state church, while the Danes reluctantly surrendered their claim to the Flensburg Collection and returned the famous Hüttener Altar, but the archaeological artifacts in the Schleswig-Holstein Museum remained untouched.<sup>61</sup>

The Flensburg Collection had thus been “saved” for Germany,<sup>62</sup> but the episode was by no means a victory for the Schleswig-Holstein Museum. Indeed, the archaeologists in Kiel were conspicuous by their absence, and throughout the negotiations, Friedrich Knorr played a surprisingly small role. Stine Wiell reports that he was in Berlin during the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Wiell, *Flensborgsamlingen*, 225-8.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 230-1.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-2.

<sup>62</sup> This was the term used in “Verteidigung des Nydamer Bootes,” 3.

meetings, where he sought proof that parts of the Flensburg Collection were privately owned.<sup>63</sup> He was otherwise silent during the entire controversy, which underscored the museum's diminishing status during the early 1920s. Moreover, it highlighted the growing rift between German and Danish prehistorians working in the borderland. The negotiations, which might have been an avenue for rebuilding broken ties, merely settled the issue for the moment, but did nothing to stem the Danish longing for the artifacts or the German determination to retain them.

### **The Nordic Paradigm in the Interwar Period**

The same wartime trauma and peacetime crisis that had depleted the power and influence of Schleswig-Holstein's leading archaeological institution also bred a new enthusiasm for the past amid the rising popularity of Volkish and nationalist thought in interwar Germany. The war brought home to many middle-class conservative Germans the pitfalls and failures of a modernity that could produce such a catastrophe. It fueled a sense of "cultural pessimism," and of disillusionment with the notion of the progress of civilization.<sup>64</sup> They were sensibilities that manifested themselves as a withdrawal from modern life, a retreat into a vision of the past, and the adoption of a brand of nationalism that was, according to Fritz Stern, "an idealistic abstraction and recollection of an ideal Germanic type that was supposed to have flourished once, but had since been betrayed."<sup>65</sup> The result was a new purpose for prehistoric study and a fresh desire among Volkish ideologues to envision ancient "Germanic" history as an anchor to a nation facing a shattered present and seeking alternatives to an uncertain future. Finally, the period was one of opening political and intellectual space that allowed the ideas of previously marginalized thinkers to flourish and become a greater part of mainstream public discourse.

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<sup>63</sup> *Flensborgsamlingen*, 228. The report in the ALM archive does not mention Knorr's involvement.

<sup>64</sup> As in Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, 2 vols., (München: Beck, 1922-1923).

<sup>65</sup> Fritz Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 268.

In some ways, the trends that emerged were reminiscent of the Volkish resurgence of the early Wilhelmine Era, but they were markedly different in their stronger incorporation of racial theory, their revival of the “scientific” practice of physiognomy,<sup>66</sup> and above all in their increasing interest in the so-called “Nordic” character of the German *Volk*.<sup>67</sup> During the second half of the Weimar Era, theorists such as the Swiss Germanist Andreas Heusler (1865-1940) drew on literary studies to proclaim Germany the true spiritual heir of Scandinavian saga and myth,<sup>68</sup> while anthropologists like Hans F.K. Günther (1891-1968) branded the German nation as part of a “Nordic” race in his seminal 1922 work, *Racial Study of the German People (Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes)*.<sup>69</sup> The result was the emergence of what Günther referred to as “Nordic Thought among the Germans.”<sup>70</sup>

Thus the “Nordic Paradigm” that Kossinna had fostered in his archaeological search for Germanic origins became increasingly more ambitious and radical in its ties to the contemporary German nation. Kossinna’s use of *Siedlungsarchäologie* to defend the eastern territories made him very much a part of this new trend, as did his growing enchantment with racial theory and the work of Günther. By 1928, Kossinna had incorporated Günther’s theories into his narrative of prehistory, where he made a direct link between ancient Germans and a distinct “Nordic” racial group. In *Origin and Spread of the Germans in Pre- and Early Historical Times (Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit)*, he drew specifically on Günther’s collection of skulls to define what the Nordic racial type was and where it first appeared in the archaeological record. According to Kossinna, a Nordic skull was characterized by

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<sup>66</sup> Richard T. Gray, *About Face: German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 219-72.

<sup>67</sup> On this “Nordic” strain, see especially Hans-Jürgen Luthhöft, *Der nordische Gedanke in Deutschland, 1920-1940*, (Stuttgart: Klett, 1971).

<sup>68</sup> Bernard Mees, “Völkische Altnordistik,” 319-21; A new anthology on Heusler’s work, *Germanentum im Fin de Siecle: Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studien zum Werk Andreas Heusler*, is forthcoming from Schwabe Verlag.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Proctor, “From *Anthropologie* to *Rassenkunde* in the German Anthropological Tradition,” in *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr., (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 149-51.

<sup>70</sup> From the title of Hans F.K. Günther, *Die nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen*, 2nd. ed. (Munich: Lehmann, 1927).

an exceptional length and relatively narrow breadth, and further revealed by deep and narrow nasal cavities, receding brow, and pronounced eye sockets. This particular type emerged from a mix of two early types of hominids that Kossinna called “Cro-Magnon” and “Aurignacian.”<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, Kossinna claimed that the first distinctive Nordic skulls appeared around 4000 BC in Northern Germany and Southern Scandinavia, which corresponded exactly to the time period and location he had designated for the early Indogermanic culture, thus linking racial aptitude to the emergence of technological and cultural advances. Accordingly, by examining skull specimens in outlying areas, Kossinna concluded that racial purity began to fall away in relation to the distance from the pure racial center.<sup>72</sup> Despite this decline, however, Kossinna maintained that the root area of the Germanic race and culture remained the pure core of the Nordic type, making his case through contemporary skull measurements, including that of the daughter of Otto von Bismarck.<sup>73</sup>

As a corollary to the early prehistorical focus of “Nordic Thought,” a number of Nordic enthusiasts adopted a new-found appreciation for proto-historical Viking culture.<sup>74</sup> Above all, they viewed the Vikings as emblematic of the values of purity and strength thought to be in short supply in the modern age.<sup>75</sup> Leading the way in this trend was the historian Karl Theodor Strasser (1888-1936) and the philologist Bernhard Kummer (1897-1962), who shared a view of the Vikings as the historical remnants of the ancient Germanic *Volk* in its purest form. Strasser’s 1928 work *Vikings and Normans* (*Wikinger und Normannen*) emphasized the Vikings as exemplars of the Volkish spirit and reminders of its continuing force. “In the essence of the North lies eternity,” Strasser proclaimed, “That which is unseen and introspective is its life’s source.”<sup>76</sup> The spiritual

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<sup>71</sup> Kossinna, *Ursprung*, 58-68.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., *Ursprung*, 84-5.

<sup>74</sup> The term “Viking” is a problematic one, since it represents a cultural label applied in hindsight to peoples who would have seen themselves as more diverse. See, for example, Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, trans. Susan M. Margeson and Kirsten Williams, (London: Penguin, 1990), 9.

<sup>75</sup> Mosse, *German Ideology*, 65-9.

<sup>76</sup> Karl Theodor Strasser, *Wikinger und Normannen*, (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1928), 14.



longevity he celebrated in the legacy of the Vikings stood in contrast to the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean such as in pharaonic Egypt, which Strasser considered to be finite and as removed from the North as “two different worlds.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Strasser portrayed Viking society as the antithesis of Western Civilization, and his histories emphasized its struggle against Western Europe. By contrast, Kummer, whose work developed from studies of Germanic myth and religious practice,<sup>78</sup> sought not to set the Vikings apart from the West, but to defend their historical reputation, which he claimed had been maligned by a history written by Christians who had eventually become the destroyers of the traditional Nordic way of life. Kummer emphasized the loss of the Viking homeland as a result of war and population displacement to the south, and argued that it was these pressures rather than simple bloodlust that led them to take to the sea and earn a most undeserving infamy as robbers and pirates.<sup>79</sup>

Kossinna was also not immune to this sense of enchantment with the Vikings, and in 1930, he published his own work, *Wikinger und Wärringer*, in which he responded to Strasser’s claim that the Vikings were “without counterpart in world history.”<sup>80</sup> In Kossinna’s view, the Vikings were especially tantalizing not as a unique example of the Nordic spirit but as the capstone of his narrative of prehistory. Although stemming from Scandinavia, the Vikings were for Kossinna the carriers of old Germanic culture into the historical period. Because many of the records of their ways and deeds remained extant, the Vikings could, to a degree, cast off part of the shroud of mystery surrounding the ancient Germans and stand out as a historical representation of the vanished lifestyle that Kossinna exalted in his writing. He referred to the Viking journeys as a “repetition of the colossal events of the Germanic migration (*Völkerwanderung*) of the fifth through seventh centuries.”<sup>81</sup> Kossinna, in other words, placed the Vikings and their long ships as

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>78</sup> See Bernhard Kummer, *Midgards Untergang: Germanischer Kult und Glaube in den letzten heidnischen Jahrhunderten*, (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1927).

<sup>79</sup> Idem., *Der Nordische Mensch der Wikingerzeit*, (Leipzig: A. Klein, 1937), 11-17.

<sup>80</sup> Kossinna, *Wikinger und Wärringer*, (Bonn: Mannus Verlag Peter Wegener, 1930), 39-41.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

the latest in the long series of Germanic movements that he viewed as the primary shaping force of European history.

Attached to the adoration for Viking culture was a special fascination with Schleswig-Holstein and the lost city of Haithabu. Not only did Haithabu offer a tangible landmark of Viking history on modern German soil, but it also stood as proof of the sophistication and “civilized” quality of Viking society. Strasser, for example, envisioned Haithabu as the seat of a “Nordic kingdom” whose rune stones were the last reminders of the noble blood that had once dwelt there,<sup>82</sup> while Haithabu entered Kummer’s work as the seat of the Danish “King” Göttrick, whom Kummer placed at the center of a valiant attempt to save the pure Germanic way of life against the encroachments of the Christian world and above all of Charlemagne. The site gained a status of sanctity as a bastion of a doomed but noble culture, since the conflict against Christendom eventually ended in the splintering of the Germanic *Volk*. “The Christian empire,” Kummer wrote, “erected the border of religious hatred between the blood-related, in which the new brotherhood of confession united all the races of the world . . .”<sup>83</sup>

Given this interest in the region, it is perhaps not surprising that northern Germany should be a focus of Nordic enthusiasm. As early as 1921, Lübeck became the center of the newly-established Nordic Society (*Nordische Gesellschaft*), which promoted scholarship on Scandinavia and built connections with like-minded Scandinavian scholars.<sup>84</sup> The Society’s members included Günther, Kummer, and Strasser, as well as the German anthropologist Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß (1892-1974), who incorporated Nordic thinking into studies of ethnopsychology.<sup>85</sup> The group also attracted a few peripheral Scandinavian scholars, including the Germanophile Swedish geographer Sven Hedin (1865-1952) and the Norwegian eugenicist Jon Alfred Hansen Mjöen

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<sup>82</sup> Strasser, *Wikinger und Normannen*, 74-6.

<sup>83</sup> Kummer, *Nordische Mensch*, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Luthhöft, “Nordische Gedanke,” 55.

<sup>85</sup> Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß, *Die nordische Seele: Artung, Prägung, Ausdruck*, (Halle: Niemeyer, 1923).

(1860-1939).<sup>86</sup> Ultimately, the rather unwieldy, grandiose visions of the Society met with only limited success in the crowded nationalist intellectual space of Weimar Germany. They did, however, manage to propagate a specific idea about the German *Volk* that was tied to an imagined Pan-Nordic past. As Geoffrey Field has since explained, "The Nordicists helped publicize a romantic, *völkisch* pre-industrial Scandinavia, using it as a kind of negative mirror through which Germans might be made aware of the depersonalizing effects of modernity and the extent to which they had trespassed from their true racial path."<sup>87</sup>

In the absence of scholarly leadership from Kiel, Nordic Thought and the Nordic Paradigm of German prehistory had something of an aggregate effect on the popular consciousness in Schleswig-Holstein. On the one hand, the years after World War I witnessed a splintering of prehistoric studies in which the rising interest in the distant past led local non-specialists to take the initiative away from professional archaeologists in interpreting regional prehistory. Much of this thinking was in turn influenced by nationalist and Nordicist trends. On the other hand, these trends manifested themselves in a variety of ways that reflected the unique context of the borderland. Here there was also a distinctly introspective form of nationalist interpretation, which included a fresh interest in agrarian *Volksgeschichte* and a renewed zeal for *Heimat* studies. This particular brand of interest in *Heimat* was, however, somewhat removed from the kind of broad, anti-modernist and anti-Semitic variant espoused by figures such as Adolf Bartels that flourished in the 1920s. Rather, it was, as Celia Applegate has shown for the Rhenish Palatinate, an attempt by provincials to rediscover their provincial roots.<sup>88</sup> It entailed the production of a number of small texts providing historical narratives for cities and regions across Schleswig-Holstein, which amounted to something of a renaissance for the kind of parochial antiquarian studies that had flourished during the first half of the nineteenth century. The purpose of these new authors, was first, as Willi Oberkrome has

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<sup>86</sup> Geoffrey G. Field, "Nordic Racism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38/3 (Jul.-Sep., 1977), 532.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Celia Applegate, "Localism and the German Bourgeoisie: The 'Heimat' Movement in the Rhenish Palatinate before 1914," in *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, eds. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans, (London: Routledge, 1991), 225-26.

pointed out, to employ a kind of *Volksgeschichte* and rediscover the core of German national values as represented in the German peasant,<sup>89</sup> and second, as Andrea-Katharina Hanke has argued in the case of Lower Saxony, to reach out to a younger generation to strengthen traditional values through an appreciation of the past.<sup>90</sup>

Some of these studies maintained a high level of scholarly credibility. One of the earliest, for example, was published in 1924 by Heinrich Philippsen (1858-1936) for the city of Flensburg, where interest in local prehistory carried over from the plebiscite debate. Though working as a museum director in Hamburg, Philippsen hailed originally from the town of Schleswig and had long been an advocate of *Heimat* studies in the Angeln region of eastern Schleswig.<sup>91</sup> He had also gained experience excavating archaeological sites under Mestorf's supervision during the late nineteenth century, and was somewhat familiar with archaeological scholarship.<sup>92</sup> Consequently, his work, *The Prehistory of Flensburg and Environs (Die Vorgeschichte von Flensburg und Umgegend)*, opened with a sophisticated survey of Three-Age periodization in the district. Philippsen's writing also eschewed ethnic or racial claims to the region, though he did acknowledge, "All prehistorians are in agreement that the entirety of northern Europe, as well as our country, has been settled by Germanic peoples since the Neolithic Stone Age."<sup>93</sup> The current scholarly question, he maintained, was whether the area was first settled by West or North Germanic groups. Here, however, he departed from the

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<sup>89</sup> Willi Oberkrome, "Entwicklungen und Varianten der deutschen Volksgeschichte, 1900-1960," in *Volksgeschichten im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Manfred Hettling, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 73-5; See also idem., *Volksgeschichte: Methodische Innovationen und Völkische Ideologisierung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft, 1918-1945*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1993)

<sup>90</sup> Andrea-Katharina Hanke, *Die niedersächsische Heimatbewegung im ideologisch-politischen Kräftespiel zwischen 1920 und 1945*, (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2004), 99.

<sup>91</sup> Helgo Klatt, "Heinrich Philippsen," *Schleswig-Holstein Biographisches Lexikon*, Bd. 1 (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1970), 222-23.

<sup>92</sup> Philippsen had conducted private digs on the island of Föhr since 1893. See Philippsen to Mestorf, 5 September 1892, ALM OA Untersum/Föhr 1893-071. His excavations continued until at least 1901. See especially Philippsen to Mestorf, 11 August 1899, ALM OA Dunsum/Föhr 1899-090b; Philippsen to Mestorf, 31 January 1901, ALM OA Untersum/Föhr 1901-018.

<sup>93</sup> Heinrich Philippsen, *Die Vorgeschichte von Flensburg und Umgegend. Funde aus der Stein-, Bronze- und Eisenzeit von Flensburg und der weiteren Umgebung, besonders Angeln*, (Flensburg: Flensburger Nachrichten, 1924), 48.

polemics of 1920 by adding, “Certainly the answer to this question is important enough scientifically, but it is wrong to want to derive from it the right to land and soil.”<sup>94</sup>

Other, less erudite, works proved more eclectic in their use of prehistoric evidence. Among these was a prehistory of Neumünster in Holstein written by the numismatist Max Kirmis (d. 1926), and another of the western Schleswig region of Eiderstedt written in 1926 by the pastor Emil Bruhn (1860-1940). Their motives included the inculcation of tradition in the younger generation, which Bruhn discussed openly in the introduction to his work. “The main concern for me . . . “ he wrote, ‘was to convey to the pupils of the agricultural school in Garding love and understanding of the homeland (*Heimat*).’<sup>95</sup> Kirmis, meanwhile, took the opportunity to stress the value of artifacts stored in the local schools.<sup>96</sup> Unlike Philippsen, neither Bruhn nor Kirmis had training in archaeology, but gathered their material from a variety of sources, including Classical authors, Norse mythology, and assorted historical, archaeological and ethnological texts, the sum of which was reflected in a blend of racist, nationalist, and Christian themes that colored their work.

Kirmis, for example, cited Müller’s chronology for the Bronze Age in Holstein, but argued against the presence of ethnic Danes on the Jutland peninsula, claiming instead that the area was firmly settled by “South Germans” from “the earliest historical period.”<sup>97</sup> Writing about a region far south of the Eider, Kirmis was more concerned with marking the differences between the Germanic and Slavic peoples who settled the area around modern Neumünster in the late Neolithic Period:

And as the Slavic flood surrounded the Neumünster district but never seized the land from [the Germans], so let it be said that on this inhospitable, secluded corner of the land the same Germanic people has been settled here up to the time of [St.] Vicelinus.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>95</sup> Emil Bruhn, *Zur Heimatgeschichte Eiderstedts, Heft 1: Aus der Urgeschichte: Zur Geschichte der Besiedlung und der Bevölkerung*, (Garding: H. Lühr & Dircks, 1926), 4.

<sup>96</sup> Max Kirmis, *Die Urgeschichte von Neumünster: ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte Holsteins*, (Neumünster: Dittmann, 1921), 32.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

By ending with St. Vicelinus, the patron saint of Holstein who struggled to convert Slavic groups in northern Germany during the twelfth century, Kirmis concluded a narrative that, like Kossinna's, placed the mantle of civilization upon the ancient Germans. Emil Bruhn's prehistory, meanwhile, made stronger links with a traditional Christian narrative, beginning his account with the Biblical Flood, whose "direst consequence" was the driving of "Aryan" Germanic peoples to the south. Not surprisingly, Bruhn also worked to pinpoint the ethnic prehistoric origins of the Frisian peoples in the area of the North Frisian coast around Eiderstedt. Here he drew on historical sources, which he claimed revealed the presence of "pure" Frisian peoples in the area as late as the sixteenth century. He also made a clear distinction between prehistoric tribal groups at the Eider River, maintaining that the area was inhabited by the Suebians mentioned in Tacitus, who were allegedly of "pre-Danish Germanic origin,"<sup>99</sup>

In light of these very different manipulations of established archaeological theory, it seems clear that neither Kossinna's Nordic Paradigm, which made few distinctions among Germanic cultures, nor Günther's Nordic racial theory, which stressed the unity of German and Scandinavian peoples, were good models for explaining prehistory from a local, Schleswig-Holstein perspective. Yet these strains of thought were appropriated by Schleswig-Holsteiners precisely because they were so malleable and because the nationalist spirit that they carried transferred so easily to alternative depictions of the past. Indeed, this makes the works represented by Kirmis and Bruhn especially interesting, since they demonstrate the degree to which Volkish archaeological and racial thought was so easily adaptable for the culturally diverse circumstances of the German-Danish borderland. Moreover, they explain how these trends by the late 1920s could become so deeply imprinted on the local and national consciousness during the interwar period.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 6-15.

## Viking Town, German City: Gustav Schwantes and the Return to Haithabu

Between the overarching Pan-Nordic and parochial visions of regional prehistory was the struggling Schleswig-Holstein Museum. Throughout the early 1920s, there had been repeated calls from established scholars for the reemergence of the museum, but even these at times were clothed in the language of nationalism. Ever since they had been forced to close the museum during the war, Knorr and Rothmann had repeatedly expressed an interest in taking the opportunity to renovate the displays. It was not, however, until 1923 that the Prussian Landtag found the funds to permit the museum to move to a larger facility formerly housing the University's hippodrome.<sup>100</sup> Over the next three years, the Museum underwent a laborious transformation process, during which time many of their primary projects, particularly along the Danewall and at Haithabu, lay fallow and unprotected. It is unclear whether this inactivity was the result of poor leadership from Knorr, or the early appearance of the illness that would shortly force his retirement.<sup>101</sup> In any case, there was by the mid-1920s a growing chorus of voices demanding the return of professional scholarship. In early 1926, Heinrich Philippsen led a push to resume work at the Danewall under the auspices of the Union of Schleswig-Holstein History Teachers (*Verband Schleswig-Holsteinischer Geschichtslehrer*). In the opening paragraph of his research proposal, Philippsen compared the Danewall to the Roman Limes in western Germany and declared that the work at the site was a "matter of honor for German scholarship,"<sup>102</sup> He bemoaned the fact that it was the Danes in North Schleswig who seemed more interested in the site's preservation. Philippsen's plan called for a large-scale cartographic survey followed by the cross-sectioning of parts of the wall to determine building methods.<sup>103</sup> At a meeting of the Union in February, 1926, Carl Rothmann volunteered his museum's resources and technical leadership for the

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<sup>100</sup> "Erweiterung des Museums vaterländischer Altertümer," *Kieler Zeitung* (22 September, 1923).

<sup>101</sup> "Friedrich-Knorr-Ausstellung im Eutiner Kreisheimatmuseum," *Ostholstein Anzeiger* (18 November, 1972).

<sup>102</sup> Philippsen, "Forderungen des Verbandes Schleswig-Holsteinischer Geschichtslehrer zur Förderung der Danewerkforschung," unpublished manuscript, 20 February 1926, ALM Nachlass Heinrich Philippsen.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

project, but a number of the Union's leading members proved critical of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, even looking into the possibility of asking the archaeologist Hermann Hofmeister from Hannover to oversee the overall project while relegating Knorr and Rothmann to the work at the Oldenburg.<sup>104</sup>

Much of this criticism was silenced in November of that year, when the Museum reopened to positive reviews.<sup>105</sup> The renovation, reported one regional newspaper, "'progressed in silence, without much . . . opening fanfare. The good impression of the [exhibit] hall is thus all the more surprising.'" <sup>106</sup> The new facility offered five Bronze Age exhibits and a new dramatic space for displaying the Nydam Boat that greeted the visitor with a view of the soaring bow of the craft rising between two magnificent rune stones. To promote the opening, Rothmann wrote to regional teachers, "In the wake of the war the appreciation for the narrower *Heimat* has awakened as we have never before known, and the most far-flung pupils of our Schleswig-Holstein region must therefore take a peek in the national museum on their excursions." <sup>107</sup>

In addition to a new facility, the Museum further strengthened its reputation a year later with a search for a new director to replace Friedrich Knorr, who decided to retire in March 1928.<sup>108</sup> From the beginning, Rothmann and Knorr were under pressure from Carl Schuchhardt to consider Gustav Schwantes, who was then teaching prehistory at the University of Hamburg, as the "only and best" candidate.<sup>109</sup> Knorr was reluctant to do so, since he remained somewhat bitter over a long-running and very public dispute with

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<sup>104</sup> "Wiederaufnahme der Dannewerkforschung," *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (22 February, 1926). The History Society was interested in inviting Hofmeister to oversee the project, since the society had helped finance his work, which was later published as *Die Wehranlagen Nordalbigiens: Zusammenstellung und Untersuchung der urgeschichtlichen und geschichtlichen Burgen und Befestigung*, (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1917).

<sup>105</sup> "Die Neugestaltung des Museums vaterländischer Altertümer. Ein Rundgang," *Kieler Neueste Nachrichten* (23 November 1926); "Das Museum Vaterländischer Altertümer in Kiel," *Eutiner Zeitung* (29 June, 1927).

<sup>106</sup> "Vor 2000 Jahren," *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, (9 September, 1927).

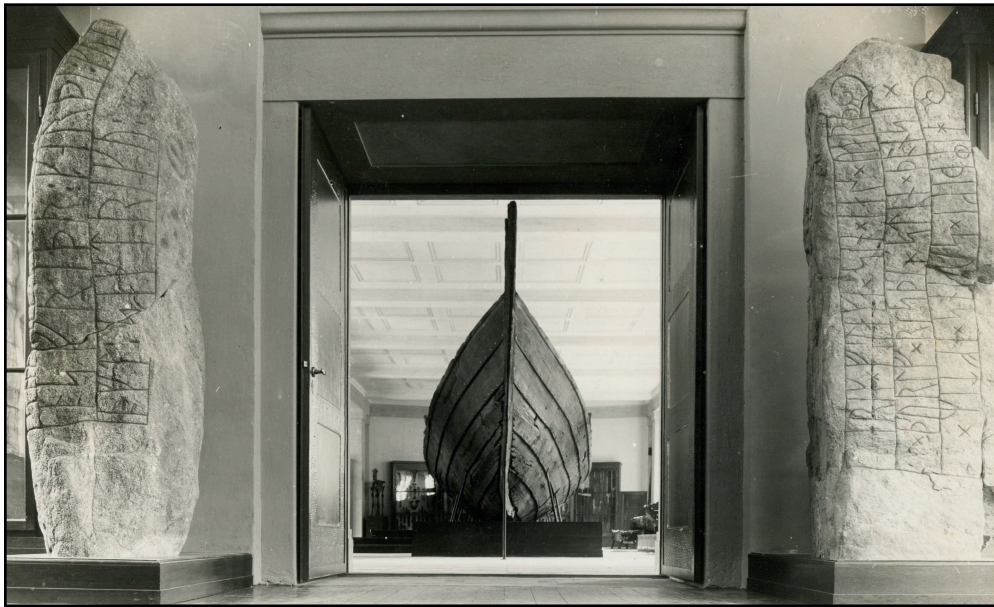
<sup>107</sup> Carl Rothmann, "Schleswig-Holsteinisches Museum vaterländischer Altertümer," *Schleswig-Holsteinische Schulzeitung* (18 December, 1926).

<sup>108</sup> Mentioned in Rothmann to Knorr, 2 May 1928, ALM MuG 19. Knorr was forced to resign due to complications from an "incurable, excruciating" illness, which was reported in "Friedrich-Knorr-Ausstellung im Eutiner Kreisheimatmuseum," *Ostholstein Anzeiger*.

<sup>109</sup> Wilhelm Unverzagt to Rothmann, 17 February 1928, ALM MuG 19.



Schwantes over the priority of discoveries from the late Iron Age.<sup>110</sup> The German government, however, very quickly rejected Knorr's chosen candidate, Ernst Wahle (1889-1981), on the grounds that he was unqualified for the position.<sup>111</sup> Ultimately, Carl Rothmann persuaded his colleague to accept Schwantes, pointing out that Mestorf had always wanted him for the Museum and writing, "He also has very good relations with the North, which is so important for our borderland."<sup>112</sup> Rothmann, however, was not without his reservations, recommending him to Knorr but not, as he wrote, "without the thought that he is not a man of action."<sup>113</sup>



The Nydam Boat Exhibit in the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, ca. 1927. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Rothmann's concern was, in fact, quite significant, since the dynamism that he missed in Schwantes' personality was just what was needed to restore the diminished reputation of the Museum. Schwantes nevertheless brought with him an impressive reputation of

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<sup>110</sup> See Unverzagt, *Hochachtungsvoll*, 141-156. Here she reprints the disgruntled letters between Schwantes and Knorr in the years from 1910 to 1911.

<sup>111</sup> Unverzagt to Rothmann, 17 February 1928.

<sup>112</sup> Rothmann to Unverzagt, 20 February 1928, ALM MuG 19.

<sup>113</sup> Rothmann to Knorr, 2 May 1928, ALM MuG 19.

his own, and vast experience in both local and national archaeology. Part of that experience, however, came from years as a private collector, which shaped the perspective that he brought into his new institution. When he accepted the post in March 1929, Schwantes wrote to Rothmann to outline the changes he intended to make in the Museum's policies. Chief among these was its relationship with private antiquarian enthusiasts. As Schwantes explained:

One of the points in which I, as I understand it, am very much in opposition to the tradition of the museum, is the treatment of local museums and private collectors. I believe that one absolutely cannot do without them, especially under the present circumstances, that one should therefore support them and not hinder them. Of course that applies only if one helps them where their knowledge and ability fall short and leads them to good work.<sup>114</sup>

This statement was important because in changing this policy of the museum, which had been so ruthlessly enforced during Johanna Mestorf's tenure,<sup>115</sup> Schwantes signaled that he was keenly interested to promote the public's fascination with archaeology, but he was less willing than Mestorf to establish firm control over public discourse about the past.

Schwantes soon brought his institution into closer contact with the public when he initiated a resumption of fieldwork, which in his view remained an important role of the museum. In the late summer of 1930, Schwantes announced to his Danish colleagues that he would be, at long last, resuming excavations at the Haithabu site beginning in September, with the new round of digs promising to be the most ambitious undertaken at the site.<sup>116</sup> Schwantes had spent over a year preparing for the excavation, and he was supported by a parallel historical project directed by Otto Scheel (1876-1954), who held the chair in Schleswig-Holstein regional history at the University of Kiel. Scheel had been deeply involved in the calls for resuming work at the Danewall, and Schwantes credited him with securing the necessary funding for the excavation.<sup>117</sup> Just before the

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<sup>114</sup> Schwantes to Rothmann, 28 March 1929, ALM MuG 19.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>116</sup> Schwantes to Mackeprang, 2 August 1930, ALM OA Haithabu-Danewerk.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

start of the dig, Scheel and his student, Peter Paulsen (1902-1985), published a historical survey of extant literature on the site. “We hope,” he wrote with great anticipation, “that with a final effort we will begin to understand the historical treasures beneath this ground. The literary sources cannot offer enough information.”<sup>118</sup>



Gustav Schwantes (1881-1960) Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

In addition to exploring the new possibilities of discovery at Haithabu, both Schwantes and Scheel held out hopes that the new excavations would help them reconnect with scholars in Scandinavia. Indeed, Schwantes had already made an important conciliatory gesture toward Copenhagen earlier in the year, when he permitted the publication of a new study of the Nydam Boat in the inaugural edition of the journal *Acta Archaeologica*. Intended as an organ for prehistory scholarship across Scandinavia, *Acta Archaeologica* was edited by, among others, Johannes Brøndsted (1890-1965), now co-director of the National Museum. The Nydam Boat piece, written by the Norwegian archaeologist Haakon Shetelig (1877-1955), widely regarded as an authority on Iron Age ship construction, had previously been intended for publication by the Schleswig-

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<sup>118</sup> Otto Scheel and Peter Paulsen, *Quellen zur Frage Schleswig-Haithabu im Rahmen der fränkischen, sächsischen und nordischen Beziehungen*, (Kiel: Walter G. Muhlau, 1930), v.

Holstein Museum,<sup>119</sup> but Schwantes had yielded to appeals from Brøndsted and Shetelig, who wrote, “The task of the *Acta* is at the moment so extraordinarily important for Nordic [Scandinavian] Archaeology, that I am obliged to favor it.”<sup>120</sup>

The digs at Haithabu thus represented an opportunity to build on this goodwill and resume cooperative work with Copenhagen, and as early as July, 1930, Otto Scheel invited archaeologists at the National Museum to attend the beginning of the dig.<sup>121</sup> There appears to have been some controversy among scholars in the National Museum about whether to accept the invitation. Clearly, there remained a great deal of interest in the site, but there was no immediate response from Copenhagen. In early August, Schwantes sent a second invitation, writing:

Since the problem of Haithabu is in many respects also of great interest to our admirable colleagues in Denmark and this interest has, as the literature shows, recently grown a great deal, and since the experience of our Danish colleagues in the area of excavation and conservation would furthermore be of benefit to our undertaking, it would be a great pleasure for Professor Scheel and me, if many Danish colleagues would come to view and participate in this year's and of course also in the following [years'] excavations.<sup>122</sup>

Two weeks later, Mackeprang at last announced that the decision to participate would be left up to individual scholars at the museum, adding, “But I shall simply note, that it would also in general certainly be proper if at least one representative paid a visit.”<sup>123</sup>

The long-awaited excavations began on 10 September 1930.<sup>124</sup> Although it is unclear who, if anyone, represented the National Museum in the first month of the dig, a number of scholars from Scandinavia did tour the site on the 23rd of September, as did officials

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<sup>119</sup> Shetelig to Schwantes, 16 January 1929; Rothmann to Shetelig, 19 January 1929, ALM OA Nydam 47.

<sup>120</sup> Shetelig to Schwantes 14 March 1930, ALM OA Nydam 47.

<sup>121</sup> Scheel to Mackeprang, 30 July 1930, ALM OA Haithabu-Danewerk.

<sup>122</sup> Schwantes to the Directors of the National Museum, 2 August 1930, ALM OA Haithabu-Danewerk.

<sup>123</sup> Mackeprang to the First Department of the National Museum, 16 August 1930, NM Afd. 1 KA 583/30.

<sup>124</sup> ”Hatihabu-Hollingstedt: Zum Beginn der Ausgrabungen in der Oldenburg,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (10 September, 1930).

and scholars from Berlin.<sup>125</sup> There was no question that the digs aroused intense interest among local Germans, and Schwantes actively encouraged the public to visit the daily discoveries. “Not only scientists should undertake the pilgrimage to this venerable memorial of the last period of German heathendom,” he wrote, “but rather each whose mind is receptive to the powerful speech of the monument.”<sup>126</sup> Schwantes, who in his youth had worked as a school teacher, encouraged school groups to take field trips to the site,<sup>127</sup> and in October asked his university students, who were assisting in the dig, to present a public photo exhibition of the dig’s progress.<sup>128</sup>

The public was not disappointed by the finds they came to see. Schwantes, who had the benefit of learning from the work of Hermann Hofmeister and Carl Schuchardt on ancient fortifications,<sup>129</sup> had decided to approach the site with a methodology vastly different from that of Friedrich Knorr. Where Knorr had relied on a series of test pits, Schwantes divided the land within the semi-circular earthwork into quadrants before excavating along a series of perpendicular linear trenches. He directed that the trenches were to be exactly one meter broad and reveal no more than ten centimeters at a time, allowing him to create both a horizontal and vertical grid and map the floor of the site.<sup>130</sup> In 1930, the trenches ran on north-south and east-west axes, stopping just short of the edge of the waters of the Schlei.<sup>131</sup> Within the first few days, these trenches began to yield signs of housing foundations, which he surmised represented the earliest examples of home construction from the Viking Age in Germany.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the digs revealed a

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<sup>125</sup> “Die Weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung Haithabus,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (25 September, 1930).

<sup>126</sup> Schwantes, “Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnographie* 63 (1931), 240.

<sup>127</sup> “Neue Funde in der Oldenburg,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (14 September, 1930).

<sup>128</sup> “Die Ausgrabungen in der Oldenburg. Lichtbildervortrag im Kunstverein,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (27 October, 1930).

<sup>129</sup> Hofmeister, *Die Wehranlagen Nordalbigiens*; On Schuchardt, see Grünert, “Von Pergamon bis Garz: Carl Schuchardt,” 104-13.

<sup>130</sup> Schwantes, “Ausgrabungen,” 239.

<sup>131</sup> “Lichtbildervortrag im Kunstverein.” The description of the excavation techniques was provided by Schwantes’ student, Kurt Langenheim.

<sup>132</sup> “Die weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung.”

number of trade goods, including Carolingian ceramics, which led Schwantes to tentatively date the beginning of the site from the early ninth century, AD.<sup>133</sup> Scheel cautioned that Haithabu, despite its urban character, paled by Mediterranean standards but noted that the finds from the first season put to rest any doubt that the Oldenburg was the site of a complete urban settlement at the center of an extensive trading network with “world-historical” importance.<sup>134</sup>

The scope of Schwantes’ digs also quickly revealed new clues about the culture of the Haithabu community. Specifically, they uncovered burial practices that demonstrated marked change over the course of the city’s development. In 1930, Schwantes and his students discovered two separate burial sites, the first of which contained some of the oldest artifacts recovered at the site, including coins dating to the period between 825 and 850 AD. The team also found several wooden burial chambers of a “decidedly heathen character,” lying beneath some of the housing foundations, further suggesting that it was among the earliest interment sites at Haithabu.<sup>135</sup> The second, larger, field contained material dating to the eleventh century AD and bearing the hallmarks of Christian influence. Schwantes thus concluded that Haithabu predated the establishment of a Christian church at Schleswig and that the two fields provided evidence for a massive religious conversion at some point in the city’s history.<sup>136</sup>

With these remarkable discoveries, the 1930 season at Haithabu clearly marked the firm reappearance of professional archaeological practice in Schleswig-Holstein. It was a return that enjoyed a great deal of popular interest, so much so in fact that Schwantes asked the local newspaper to print notices warning the crowds of onlookers to avoid traversing the work area.<sup>137</sup> For local antiquarian enthusiasts, the site brought together the most romantic elements of human history and natural beauty. As the well-known

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<sup>133</sup> Schwantes, “Die Schleswig-Haithabu Frage im neuen Licht,” *Nachrichtenblatt für deutsche Vorzeit* 7/12 (1931), 1.

<sup>134</sup> Scheel, “Haithabu als Problem des Ostseeraums,” *Die Heimat* (April, 1931), 81-4.

<sup>135</sup> Schwantes, “Die Schleswig-Haithabu Frage,” 1-2.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> “Neue Funde in der Oldenburg,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (14 September, 1930).

local *Heimatforscher* Felix Schmeißer wrote, “And then the magical white winter’s night once again lies motionless and deathly silent over Haithabu, and nothing more disturbs the millennial sleep of the Northern necropolis.”<sup>138</sup>

Schwantes’ project in fact very much depended on this public support. As Carl Rothmann’s widow, Christina, later recalled, the onset of the Great Depression placed severe financial stress on the museum in 1930,<sup>139</sup> but the tremendous enthusiasm for the Haithabu project helped keep it high among state spending priorities. As early as October, 1930, the prospects looked favorable for continued funding for the project’s second season.<sup>140</sup> The price of this support, however, was the appearance of alternative interpretations of the evidence from popular writers, and by the end of the first excavation season, which concluded in October 1930, the discoveries that were already emerging from the application of advanced techniques had begun to fuel the fantasies of dilettantes and Nordicists alike. Above all, Schwantes’ discoveries were seen as evidence for the validity of the sagas surrounding the ancient city, and a number of popular works soon appeared that blended archaeological scholarship with neo-Romantic visions of the history of Haithabu.

Among the earliest of these was a play from Paul Leuchsenring entitled, *Haithabu: A Nordic Play in Seven Scenes* (*Haithabu: Ein nordisches Schauspiel in Sieben Bildern*), which was first produced in September 1931 at the Nordmark-Landestheater in Schleswig.<sup>141</sup> Drawing on Schwantes’ discovery of heathen and Christian burial sites, Leuchsenring’s script highlighted the struggle between Heathendom and Christianity through the relationship between Chnuba, a Swedish chieftain and nominal King of

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<sup>138</sup> Felix Schmeißer, “Romantische Haithabu- und Dannewirke-Wanderungen,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (8 July, 1931).

<sup>139</sup> Christina Rothmann, “Lebenslauf Carl Rothmann.”

<sup>140</sup> “Die Ausgrabungen auf der Oldenburg für die nächsten Jahre gesichert,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (21 October, 1930).

<sup>141</sup> “Uraufführung im Nordmark-Landestheater Paul Leuchsenrings ‘Haithabu,’” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (14 September, 1931).

Denmark in the early 10th century, and his son Sigtrygg.<sup>142</sup> The story unfolded for the audience with Chnuba bowing to pressure from the Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich I (876-936) and forcing his realm's conversion to Christianity. Sigtrygg rejected the new beliefs, and in the battle to overthrow his father, the city of Haithabu burned to the ground. In the end, Sigtrygg departed, and a new Christian city was built over the old heathen town. The essence, however, of Leuchsenring's tragedy lay not with the relationship between father and son, but with the price of sacrificing the old ways. As one critic explained, "In Sigtrygg we see the tragic fate of the young man, whose nativeness force him to struggle and act against the New, against subservience and servitude . . ."<sup>143</sup>

While Leuchsenring mourned the inevitable loss of the free, heathen spirit of the Germanic *Volk*, Heinar Schilling (1894-1955) memorialized Haithabu as the final moment of racial unity in the North in his 1936 work, *Haithabu: A Germanic Troy* (*Haithabu: Ein germanisches Troja*). Schiller characterized the Saxon war against Charlemagne as a collaborative effort among Nordic peoples, saying, "It was, so to speak, the last opportunity for the old Germanic or, if one prefers, the Aryan homeland to unite in a single political creation, an opportunity that would pass just as it had in the time of Arminius....."<sup>144</sup> The repeated failures of Nordic unity served as the dramatic thrust of Schiller's account, with Haithabu playing the role of potential political center of these tragic attempts. As Schilling lamented, "Had [this] heroic work [come] to complete fruition, then there would be a single German empire, from Norway's hills, to Sweden's green pastures, to Finland's quiet seas, all the way to the Rhine and perhaps even to the

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<sup>142</sup> There is very little historical evidence for either Chnuba or Sigtrygg, though it is likely that they did rule at Haithabu during the tenth century. While Chnuba is mentioned in both the *Res gestae Saxonicae* (ca. 968 AD) and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* (ca. 1080), Sigtrygg is memorialized in two rune stones at the Haithabu site as the son of Chnuba and Astrid. Alternative spellings of Chnuba include Knuba and Gnupa.

<sup>143</sup> "Paul Leuchsenrings 'Haithabu.'"

<sup>144</sup> Heinar Schilling, *Haithabu: Ein germanisches Troja*, (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1935), 134. The reference to Arminius recalled the brief alliance of Germanic tribes before the victory over the Roman armies at the Battle of the Teutoberg Forest.



Danube – an empire of unmingled blood and unmingled spirit – a land of the Nordic race.”<sup>145</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The writing of Nordic enthusiasts such as Schilling and Leuchsenring had, by the 1930s, transformed Haithabu, the nondescript, empty field, into a monument to the vision of Germanic prehistory that had emerged in the 1920s. Interestingly, it also placed the site at the epicenter of a growing divide between professional archaeology and the popular imagination. Where Schwantes and Scheel laid to rest the myth of Haithabu through careful excavation, popular writers brought the legend back to life and invested it with a new set of symbolic meanings. Their accounts heightened the mystery of the ancient city even as the new archaeology promised to unlock its oldest secrets, a curious paradox that both promoted archaeological study and enriched nationalist fantasies. As a result, the site became a tangible reminder of that uneasy coexistence of Volkish nationalism and objective scholarship that had colored the practice of archaeology since the turn of the century.

By the time Schilling wrote his account, of course, the political situation had changed dramatically, and his portrayal of ancient Northern Europe carried a new significance in the ideological landscape of the Third Reich. It is critical to note, however, the degree to which Schilling’s ideas about northern Europe were anticipated in intellectual (and for that matter archaeological) circles during the previous four decades, with antecedents stretching back to the early nineteenth century. Indeed, we should not be tempted to see such fantastic claims about the northern European past as sudden arrivals in German thought during the late 1920s. Rather, Volkish, nationalist, and racist strains of thought about prehistory had evolved relatively slowly, even if, as we have seen, they were strongly influenced by the crises stemming from the First World War and the Weimar Era. Above all, the most tangible outcome of the years between 1914 and 1933 was the diversification and normalization of “Nordic Thought,” and the introduction of its mix of

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 248.

racist and nationalist ideology into scholarly discourse. It injected new meanings into the ancient past and reinforced the grand narratives of Germanic prehistory that had emerged in the early twentieth century.

These trends did not, however, necessarily signal a fundamental shift in the character of professional German archaeology. Indeed, the liberalism, positivism, and objectivity that had characterized professional archaeology in the late nineteenth century by no means disappeared from the discipline, and in fact remained dominant, particularly in Schleswig-Holstein. Throughout the period, traditional practices continued both to compete and blend with Volkish and nationalist visions of northern prehistory. But there is no question that they had attenuated dramatically by the early 1930s, and that this decline was instrumental in allowing new ideologies to blossom. The intellectual field shaping the discipline, which had once enjoyed a trajectory steering towards a narrow and tightly controlled set of orthodoxies, had by the eve of Hitler's *Machtergreifung* markedly diminished, leaving a great deal of space for various new interpretations. Moreover, the mantle of prehistorical scholarship had to a degree shifted from the professionally-trained archaeologist back to the layman and dilettante. As a result, the pressures of the wartime and interwar periods forced professional archaeologists to move from their earlier ambivalence about nationalist and racist orientations into a state of cohabitation with a diverse and increasingly radical set of interpretations of northern European prehistory. In Schleswig-Holstein, this change was profoundly influenced by the virtual disappearance of the region's key institution and the inactivity of scholars before the late 1920s.

Similar events had taken place in Denmark, where a spike in popular enthusiasm for the past following the plebiscite caused a dramatic change in leadership at the National Museum. The tight controls of Sophus Müller's tenure devolved under the direction of younger scholars such as Mouritz Mackeprang and Johannes Brøndsted.<sup>146</sup> Danish archaeologists proved their willingness to participate in the political drama surrounding the border question, and, like Schwantes in Kiel, tolerated the emergence of a proverbial cottage industry of popular writing about Denmark's prehistory.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, both Danes

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<sup>146</sup> Kristian Kristiansen, "Dansk arkæologi - fortid og fremtid," 292. Kristiansen describes Brøndsted's succession to the directorship of the First Department of the Museum as "a near palace coup."

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

and Germans continued to see the past as national heritage and national property. The difference between the two cases, however, is perhaps best seen through the ways in which the past was used in Denmark. There were, in contrast to Germany, no competing accounts of the past, rather the past became a reservoir of symbolic material. Danes used these symbols for a variety of nationalist and political causes, such as the ceremony at the Dybbøl, but they shied away from rewriting the narrative of prehistory from which the symbols had come.

Despite these differences in the style of appropriation, it is important to stress the degree of congruence between the German and Danish attitudes to prehistory in the interwar period. For both sides, prehistory became politicized in a manner reminiscent of the mid-nineteenth century. Just as in the border wars, the pressures of conflict and political change created pressures that led scholars to compromise the model of scientific study that had come to define the discipline. The upshot was a new series of challenges to the resumption of academic cooperation. The reluctance among Danes to participate in the Haithabu digs, for instance, revealed the depth of the chasm that had emerged within the transnational network. It was a rupture that would be pushed further with the advent of the Third Reich in the ensuing decade. At that moment, Schwantes and his students would find themselves suddenly forced to make a set of difficult interpretative and professional choices that would embroil them in Nazi ideology and realize for both Germans and Danes the political consequences of the nationalist paradigms at work within their discipline.

## CHAPTER 6

### FROM COOPERATION TO COMPLICITY: Borderland Archaeologists in the Third Reich and World War II

Tremendous fanfare surrounded the one-hundredth anniversary of the Schleswig-Holstein Antiquities Museum.<sup>1</sup> On 11 October 1936, crowds of well-wishers, archaeological enthusiasts, and regional officials flocked to the museum's home on the Kattenstraße for a celebration in the "White Hall" of the neighboring Kieler Schloss. There, with an enthusiasm reminiscent of Friedrich Warnstedt's address a century earlier,<sup>2</sup> Gustav Schwantes marked the occasion with reflections on the museum's past, present, and future.<sup>3</sup> Above all, he reminded his eager listeners that the museum's task in 1936 remained the same as in 1836: to house, preserve, and study what he called "the rich treasures of the pre- and early history of our region, whose place as a bridge between Germany and Scandinavia was already clearly evident in prehistorical times."<sup>4</sup> Yet, even as Schwantes evoked the memory of the museum's long-standing international and cross-border importance, his institution was moving closer to the extreme nationalism gripping German politics and culture in the 1930s.

With the rise of the National Socialist state in 1933, the popularity of prehistoric archaeology in Germany exploded as it became a central theme of Nazi ideology. For

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<sup>1</sup> The Museum had by now dropped the term "*vaterländisch*" from its title in order to reflect the museum's emphasis on local prehistory. Schwantes explained that many patrons had been confused by the term, which had led them to expect exhibits from the recent historical period. See Schwantes, "Vorwort," in *Festschrift zur Hunderjahrfeier des Museums vorgeschichtlicher Altertümer in Kiel*, ed. Schwantes, (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1936), *i*.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Die Hundertjahrfeier des Kieler Museums," *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (11 October, 1936). In ALM MuG 23.

<sup>4</sup> Schwantes, "Vorwort," *i*.

Nordicist and Volkish enthusiasts, Adolf Hitler's *Machtergreifung* marked the beginning of a shining new age promising the birth of a German nation-state attuned to the racial spirit of its people. Karl Theodor Strasser, the scholar of Viking culture, recognized the meaning of the political change instantly, and in the 1933 edition of *Wikinger und Normannen*, he abandoned the cultural pessimism that had colored earlier editions and celebrated an impending spiritual rebirth. "Everywhere in Germany," he proclaimed, "the old heroic spirit is once again awakened. The new *Führer* has manifested the Nordic courage within himself, and his deeds are comparable with the works of the Vikings."<sup>5</sup>

The Nazi regime actively promoted such ties to Germany's ancient ancestors as a source of both spiritual inspiration and symbolic propaganda. Prehistory thus became the subject of a host of new popular books, while films such as "The Flames of Prehistory" carried the past into the modern cinema,<sup>6</sup> and illustrated journals like *Germanien* and *Germanen-Erbe* brought archaeology into German living rooms. A number of leading Reich officials, most notably Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945) and Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), fancied themselves as aficionados of Germanic culture, and their own ideological interests made them leading patrons of archaeological scholarship.<sup>7</sup> The Propaganda Ministry, meanwhile, ensured that images of German prehistory became part of the public consciousness. The Ministry transformed ancient symbols into Party symbols and dressed Nazi rallies in the guise of *Thingstätten*, the councils of the early medieval Scandinavians.<sup>8</sup> Even in Denmark, the tiny *Danmarks National-Socialistiske Arbejderparti* (DNSAP) associated itself with the ancient past and adopted the stone dolmen and Thor's hammer as its most visible symbols.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Strasser, *Wikinger und Normannen*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Bettina Arnold, "The Past as Propaganda," *Archaeology*, (July/August, 1992): 30.

<sup>7</sup> On Himmler, see Peter Padfield, *Himmler: Reichsführer SS*, (London: MacMillan, 1990); On Rosenberg, see Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology*, (New York: Dodd Mead, 1972), 12-14.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Stommer, *Die inzenierte Volksgemeinschaft. Die 'Thing-Bewegung' im Dritten Reich*, (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1985). The Propaganda Ministry had envisioned such a *Thingplatz* for the Haithabu site. See Henning-Haßmann and Detlef Jantzen, "'Die deutsche Vorgeschichte - eine nationale Wissenschaft.' Das Kieler Museum vorgeschichtlicher Altertümer im Dritten Reich," *Offa-Zeitschrift* (1995): 15.

<sup>9</sup> Adriansen, *National Symboler*, Bd. 1, 113, 133-5.

Such growing zeal for northern European prehistory placed archaeology in Schleswig-Holstein once again at the center of interest. By 1937, for example, German newspapers such as *Die Welt* featured enormous photographs of the ongoing digs at Ahrensburg, where the archaeologist Alfred Rust (1900-1983) had discovered one of the earliest paleolithic cultures in northern Europe.<sup>10</sup> What was remarkable about the feature was first the scale of the dig, which underscored the level of Nazi commitment to prehistoric archaeology, and second the accompanying caption, in which one journalist quoted the Führer as saying, “It is my decision to preserve and promote the great cultural works of our people from prehistory and the past. The German *Volk* should acknowledge these creations of a truly noble culture with joyful pride.”<sup>11</sup>

Between the Nordicists embrace of National Socialism as a political affirmation of their ideology on the one hand, and the warm reception for glorified visions of prehistory from Nazi ideologues on the other, were the professional archaeologists. It was, after all, the cohort of trained excavators and researchers whose work discovered and preserved the precious remains. For this group, the advent of the Third Reich created an increasingly complex set of choices about how to respond to the regime. In Kiel, as in many other parts of the Reich, the majority of German archaeologists ultimately chose to place their scholarship to varying degrees at the service of the state. Indeed, archaeologists in this region became leading figures on the national stage during the 1930s both in academic and political circles. Most notable among these was Herbert Jankuhn (1905-1990), who in this decade succeeded Gustav Schwantes first as chief excavator at Haithabu and then as Director of the Kiel Museum. Jankuhn’s high ranking membership in Heinrich Himmler’s SS “Ancestral Heritage Society” (*Ahnenerbe*) and later in the Waffen SS made him politically one of the most powerful archaeologists in

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<sup>10</sup> Alfred Rust, *Vor 20.000 Jahren: Eiszeitliche Rentierjäger in Holstein*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1937).

<sup>11</sup> J. Weyh, “Vorgeschichtliche Stätten in Schleswig-Holstein,” *Die Welt: Sonntagsbeilage der Nordische Rundschau* (27 March, 1937).

Germany before 1945. It also made him among the more controversial figures in the postwar memory of the discipline.<sup>12</sup>

Jankuhn and his colleagues in Kiel were, of course, not alone in their engagement with the Reich; a large number of prehistorians from across Germany participated in Nazi organizations or projects both before and during the war. How, then, and to what degree, did these archaeologists come to collaborate with the Nazi regime? Perhaps more importantly, why did they choose to do so? Interestingly, these questions are relatively new to the historiography of archaeology, even as other scholars have long probed the issue of academic collaboration.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, most of the discussion has come from within the archaeological community, as the students of these archaeologists have come of age and since the 1990s have begun questioning the motives, impact, and implications of their mentors' activities from 1933-1945. Bettina Arnold and Henning Haßmann have attributed this strange silence to the large number of former Nazi-era archaeologists who retained their positions after the war. They claim that not only did former Nazi academics work to rebuild their reputations by suppressing discussion about their pasts, but also that the German academic system made it almost impossible for the students of these scholars to confront the issue without risk to their own careers.<sup>14</sup> Archaeologists thus finally began to address the issue only after the wartime generation had begun to retire in the 1980s, but concerted efforts to explain collaboration emerged only in the

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<sup>12</sup> The most recent treatment of Jankuhn appears in Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust*, (London: Fourth Estate, 2006), esp. 221-6. Pringle's presents a fairly one-dimensional portrayal of Jankuhn that highlights his work with the SS. For a more balanced appraisal, see Heiko Steuer, "Herbert Jankuhn und seine Darstellungen zur Germanen- und Wikingerzeit," in *Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, ed. Steuer, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 417-73.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Originally published in 1946. In the history science, see the aforementioned DFG project, as well as the Max-Planck Institut's project, Reinhard Rürup and Wolfgang Scheider, eds., *Geschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus*, 10 vols. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Bettina Arnold and Henning Haßmann, "Archaeology in Nazi Germany: The Legacy of the Faustian Bargain," in Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett, eds., *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72.

following decade.<sup>15</sup> This places this second generation of archaeologists on par with their colleagues in fields such as history, who have also only recently openly confronted the Nazi-era activities of their mentors.<sup>16</sup>

With the retirement and passing of the wartime generation, a serious discussion has at last become possible, and the topic now in fact dominates writing on the history of archaeology in Europe. Among the chief causal factors cited in this recent scholarship is the youth of the discipline, which made it more susceptible to Nazi manipulation than, for instance, classical studies.<sup>17</sup> Because their field was a relative latecomer to academia, these studies argue, prehistoric archaeologists were more willing to trade their objectivity for scarce funding and career opportunities, leading to what Henning Haßmann and Bettina Arnold have called a “Faustian bargain” with the Reich.<sup>18</sup> This is a good partial explanation, but it seems to suggest that German archaeologists operated objectively before the advent of Nazism, when in fact we have seen in this dissertation how many archaeologists were already conscious of their role in recovering and promoting national histories through their interpretations. Moreover, as this study has shown, archaeology, rather than emerging as a new field before 1933, was in fact relatively well-established as a research discipline in Germany by 1933, if not in the university then certainly in the museum. Finally, Arnold and Haßmann’s appraisal raises further questions about the

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<sup>15</sup> The first attempts at explanation came with Günter Smolla. “Das Kossinna-Syndrome.” *Fundberichte aus Hessen* 80/19 (1979/1980), 1-9. Other notable treatments include M. Bertram, “Zur Situation der deutschen Ur- und Frühgeschichtsforschung während der Zeit der Faschistischen Diktatur.” *Forschungen und Berichte* 31 (1991), 23-42, Heinrich Härke, ed. *Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000.), and Heiko Steuer, ed., *Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft: Deutsche Prähistoriker zwischen 1900 und 1995*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001). Historians had addressed the issue much earlier, but were primarily interested in exploring the machinations of the Nazi state, and focused on the institutions that supported Nazi archaeology. The two most notable works are Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1970), and Michael Kater, *Das Ahnenerbe der SS, 1935-1945. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> On the discussion among historians, see above all Rüdiger Hohls and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *Versäumte Fragen. Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2000). Historians, it seems, received much more criticism for their failure to engage their mentors’ pasts, particularly at the 1998 Frankfurt Historikertag. They were above all accused of complicity in perpetuating the mask of silence that protected the wartime generation after 1945. By contrast, I have seen little indication that archaeologists have as yet undergone the same level of torturous soul-searching.

<sup>17</sup> Bettina Arnold, “The Past as Propaganda,” 30.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold and Haßmann, “Faustian Bargain,” 70.



degree of ideological congruity between archaeologists and Nazi politicians. In other words, while archaeologists need not have been political adherents of National Socialism (though some undoubtedly were), they could possess world views similar enough to facilitate a working relationship. A more adequate description of collaboration might thus be one that places archaeologists among other professionals, including psychologists, psychotherapists, and medical doctors, whose role represented what Geoffrey Cocks has called a “*morally and intellectually ambiguous accommodation* to the established powers of Nazi Germany, on both the individual and collective level, in pursuit of professional and institutional status.”<sup>19</sup>

Such an increasingly nuanced approach must also work to represent collaboration not as a static condition but as a process of engagement or a changing relationship with the regime. It should investigate the ways in which archaeologists’ motives and roles within the regime changed over the course of the Nazi era, and how the outbreak of war and the changing fortunes of the Wehrmacht influenced the archaeologists’ thinking. Perhaps the most successful example of this dimension of the history of archaeology is Uta Halle’s account of the excavations at the famous Externsteine site in Nord-Rhein Westfalen, which she traces from the pre-Nazi years to the postwar period.<sup>20</sup> Above all, Halle’s study reveals the ways in which the Externsteine became a battleground for competing institutions within the chaotic and overlapping structure of the Nazi state. As she argues, both Alfred Rosenberg’s Amt Rosenberg and Heinrich Himmler’s SS “Ahnenerbe” organizations sought to control the excavations at the site, which placed further pressure on the archaeologists to choose sides. Halle ably demonstrates how this institutional struggle had a direct impact on the character of the involvement of the archaeologists, even if, as she points out, the conflict offered less of an either/or choice and more of a “double chance” for opportunistic prehistorians.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4. Emphasis added.

<sup>20</sup> Uta Halle, “*Die Externsteine sind bis auf weiteres germanisch!*” *Prähistorische Archäologie im Dritten Reich*, (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

Halle's work thus marks another important milestone, but many questions nevertheless remain about this period. Above all, what is still virtually unexplored is the role of the transnational context in the process of collaboration. Here it bears repeating that archaeology, with its material sources scattered across borders, depended to a tremendous degree on the cooperation and good will of scholars in neighboring countries. This was especially the case in Schleswig-Holstein, where local archaeologists conducted work of more-or-less equal national and international value. Consequently, no study of professional engagement during the Nazi period can be complete without a consideration of the influence of and impact on the broader archaeological community. Such an oversight relates to the general tendency in German historiography to neglect transnational factors and players, which has sparked Kiran Patel's recent plea for a "Transnational Historicization" that brings a broader perspective into the history of National Socialism. As he writes, "Our new frontier . . . is to overcome the dominating isolationist premise when studying Nazism. In our practical work, we should stop seeing the Nazi period exclusively as a part of the German past."<sup>22</sup>

The "bridge," then, to which Schwantes alluded at the anniversary celebration of his institution, raises interesting new questions about the pressures and limits that archaeologists faced when engaging the National Socialist state. How did participation in a transnational academic enterprise influence local engagement with the Nazis in Schleswig Holstein? Moreover, what effect did Nazi collaboration, particularly during the war and occupation of Scandinavia, have on this one-hundred year old relationship between Germans and Danes? And, finally, how did the Nazi Era transform the ways in which Germans and Danes in the borderland saw the ancient past . . . and each other?

### **Archaeology and Nazism, 1933-1934**

From the beginning of the Hitler Era, Nazism had a strong following among Germans in the borderland. Indeed, according to Manfred Jessen-Klingenberg, "As Adolf Hitler

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<sup>22</sup> Kiran Klaus Patel, "In Search of a Second Historicization: The History of National Socialism in Transnational Perspective," paper presented at the German Studies Association Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, 2006, 8.

and his Party seized power in Germany, National Socialism was already firmly rooted in Schleswig-Holstein.”<sup>23</sup> The effects of the Depression and high unemployment that drove thousands of Germans to support the NSDAP had long been felt especially sharply in cities like Kiel, which depended on those shipbuilding and military-oriented industries curtailed by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>24</sup> In the countryside, the agricultural crisis that preceded the 1929 crash had already sparked a powerful rural mass movement in opposition to the Weimar Republic.<sup>25</sup> The state of the border also remained an important source of tension and a key political cause, and the bitter memory of the territorial losses after the 1920 plebiscite helped cast the period of crisis as a threat to the national community.<sup>26</sup>

While these conditions did not necessarily make the majority of Schleswig-Holsteiners adherents of National Socialism, they nevertheless laid a groundwork for a strong NSDAP showing in regional polls.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, they undoubtedly played a role in the swift and comprehensive transformation that swept the province in 1933. Within the first few months of that year, the consolidating impulse that marked the first period of *Gleichschaltung* resulted in a series of plebiscites leading to the installation of National Socialist representatives in key government offices, including the Schleswig-Holstein *Oberpräsident* and *Regierungspräsident*, and the *Oberbürgermeister* of Kiel, Flensburg, and Neumünster.<sup>28</sup> The conforming energy also extended to leaders of cultural and educational institutions. As early as the first of May, for example, Ernst Sauermann, who had represented the Germans during the negotiations over the Flensburg Collection in 1922, joined the NSDAP and enjoyed the support of the Reich in a number of historical

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<sup>23</sup> Jessen-Klingenberg, “Die Christian-Albrechts-Universität in der Zeit der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur,” in *Standpunkte zur Neuen Geschichte*, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Lange, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 536.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 544; See also Rudolf Heberle, *Landbevölkerung und Nationalsozialismus. Eine soziologische Untersuchung der politischen Willensbildung in Schleswig-Holstein 1918 bis 1932*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1963).

<sup>26</sup> Jessen-Klingenberg, “Die Christian-Albrechts-Universität,” 134.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Lange, *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, 553-5.

reconstruction projects as Director of the Provincial Institute for the Preservation of Historical Monuments (*Provinzielles Institut für Denkmalpflege*).<sup>29</sup>

In light of these developments, it is perhaps not surprising that the community of professional archaeologists in Kiel should offer its first collective contribution under the auspices of the Nazi regime only eight months after Hitler's *Machtergreifung*. When the Prussian Ministry of Education issued an order in March, 1933 calling for a stronger emphasis on German prehistory in primary and secondary schools, Gustav Schwantes and his colleagues responded with a collection of new articles in a special issue of the *Schleswig-Holstein School Newspaper* (*Schleswig-Holsteinische Schulzeitung*). The journal was a publication of the so-called "Fighting League for German Culture" (*Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*), which Alfred Rosenberg had created in 1928 to organize the cultural mobilization efforts of the Nazi Party.<sup>30</sup> This publication was thus significant not only because it was the local archaeological community's first collaborative project with the regime, but also because it brought together scholars who would become leading figures in the ensuing years.

Most prominent among the contributors was Gustav Schwantes, who was still at this time Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum. Schwantes' piece on new research into the paleolithic in northern Europe was accompanied by articles from two of his students at the University of Kiel, Peter Paulsen (1902-1985) and Karl Kersten (1917-1992). Paulsen, who hailed from the small community of Klixbüll in Südtondern a few kilometers south of the post-1920 border, had finished a doctoral dissertation under Schwantes on the archeology of the early medieval Viking period in northern Germany.<sup>31</sup> He had studied widely in Scandinavia, and had worked with Johannes Brøndsted in Copenhagen.<sup>32</sup> Paulsen, however, was not a practicing archaeologist, but rather a

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Scheck, *Denkmalpflege und Diktatur. Die Erhaltung von Bau- und Kunstdenkmälern in Schleswig-Holstein und im Deutschen Reich zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> For more on the *Kampfbund*, see Alan E. Steinweis, "Weimar Culture and the Rise of National Socialism: The *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*," *Central European History* 24/4 (1991): 402-23.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Paulsen, *Studien zur Wikinger Kultur. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der Hohen Philosophischen Fakultät der CAU zu Kiel*. (Kiel: Buddenbrook Dekan, 1932), 108.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

historian and art historian whose experience came through work in the Thaulow-Museum of Art in Kiel. He had, nevertheless, joined the historian Otto Scheel in compiling the historical sources used in the 1930 Haithabu project.<sup>33</sup> By 1933, Paulsen had become director of the German Prehistory Section (*Fachgruppe für deutsche Vorgeschichte*) of the *Kampfbund*.<sup>34</sup> The much younger Kersten, meanwhile, was making a name for himself through his expertise on the northern European Bronze Age. Like Paulsen, Kersten had studied alongside Scandinavian colleagues in the 1920s, and had become close friends with Brøndsted. Kersten's emphasis, however, lay much more clearly with field archaeology, and his contribution to the *Schulzeitung* was a report on his excavations at the Bronze-Age grave hill at Grünhof-Tesperhude in Lauenburg in 1932.

The final substantive article concerned the "Germanic Migration Period." Its author, Herbert Jankuhn, was already establishing himself as a leading archaeologist of the late prehistoric and early medieval period. Unlike his colleagues, Jankuhn was not a native of northern Germany, but hailed from another borderland, in this case the region between East Prussia and Lithuania, which was also the homeland of Gustaf Kossinna. Although his background was thus strongly conservative, his university education as an archaeologist was not, and Jankuhn counted among his mentors none other than Carl Schuchhardt.<sup>35</sup> Such a background not only placed Jankuhn outside the Kossinna circle, but also afforded him opportunities to gain a rich field experience. Through Schuchhardt's influence, Jankuhn managed to join Schwantes' excavations at Haithabu in 1930, and then to participate in a study tour of the Near East with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in 1933.<sup>36</sup> Having earned his doctorate in 1931, Jankuhn was named the director of the Haithabu project when he completed his study tour in the

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<sup>33</sup> Paulsen and Scheel, *Quellen zur Frage Schleswig-Haithabu*; See Chapter 5.

<sup>34</sup> "Die Organisation der Fachgruppe für deutsche Vorgeschichte (im K.f.D.K.) im Schleswig-Holstein, Lauenburg, und Landesteil Lübeck," *Schleswig-Holsteinische Schulzeitung* (23 September, 1933), 579.

<sup>35</sup> Steuer, "Jankuhn," 417-20.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 420-1; Jankuhn is first mentioned as a member of the excavation team at Haithabu in a newspaper article, "Die Ausgrabung in der Oldenburg. Lichtbildervortrag im Kunstverein," *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (27 October, 1930).

late summer of 1933.<sup>37</sup> The *Schulzeitung* article was thus his first published work following his return to Kiel.



Schleswig-Holstein archaeologists at the University of Kiel in 1937. From the left are Erich Pieper, Albert Genrich, Herbert Jankuhn, Ekkehard Menke, Ekkehard Aner, Gustav Schwantes, Hans-Jürgen Spanuth, Karl Kersten, and Günther Haselhoff. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

The goal of this collection of articles was to bring the latest archaeological research to the attention of schoolteachers across the province.<sup>38</sup> Paulsen, who edited the collection, also envisioned the journal as the first of a series of collaborative projects, which would serve, as he explained, “to spread or otherwise deepen the knowledge of prehistory, particularly Germanic [prehistory].”<sup>39</sup> To accomplish this, Paulsen stressed the scholarly rigor that characterized the contributions. Indeed, there was a great deal of continuity between the articles in the *Schulzeitung* and previous scholarship. Kersten’s Bronze-Age study, for example, was strikingly similar to a report he had published earlier in the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Zylmann, “Der Lehrer und die Urgeschichte,” *Schleswig-Holstein Schulzeitung* (23 September, 1933): 590.

<sup>39</sup> Paulsen, “Aufgaben und Richtlinien der Fachgruppe für die deutsche Vorgeschichte (im K.f.D.K.) in den Herzogtümern Schleswig-Holstein, Lauenburg, und in dem Landesteil Lübeck,” *Schulzeitung*, 578.

journal, *Die Heimat*.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, however, there was no mistaking the nationalist overtones framing the collection. The very title of the issue, “German Prehistory - A National Science,” clearly evoked the work of the late Gustaf Kossinna, and the sentiments of his research echoed in the words of Paulsen, who declared:

As far as we have knowledge of the prehistory of our people, so should it be conveyed to today’s generation not only acquire a proper appreciation of the unique and sophisticated culture of its forbears, but also to build anew and recreate a German way of life (*Lebensordnung*).<sup>41</sup>

The goals of using prehistory to inculcate “a German way of life” was a direct reflection of the influence of the *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur*, and, as with other *Kampfbund* projects, the teaching of “national” prehistory in the classroom was part of what Alan Steinweis has described as the *Kampfbund*’s mission of “*völkisch* consciousness-raising.”<sup>42</sup>

The contributors could thus be under no illusions about the implications of the Nazi *Machtergreifung* for their research. In fact, as the archaeologist Peter Zylmann wrote in his article, “With the state revolution (*Staatsumwälzung*) the study of prehistory has received a joyful boost.”<sup>43</sup> At the same time, there was no mistaking the process of radicalization affecting not just the political scene, but also the climate of the University of Kiel. On 10 May 1933, students of the University, with the support of members of the faculty and the *Kampfbund*, staged a public book-burning of Socialist and Jewish works in Kiel’s Wilhelmplatz.<sup>44</sup> It was an event that also corresponded to the goals of the *Kampfbund*, in this case by assaulting elements at the University considered

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<sup>40</sup> Karl Kersten, “Die Untersuchung eines bronzzeitlichen Grabhügels in der Gemarkung Grünhof-Tesperhude,” *Die Heimat* 43 (1932): 62-7.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Paulsen, “Aufgaben und Richtlinien,” 578.

<sup>42</sup> Steinweis, “Weimar Culture and National Socialism,” 405.

<sup>43</sup> Zylmann, “Die Lehrer und die Urgeschichte,” 590.

<sup>44</sup> Jessen-Klingenberg, “Die Christian-Abrechts-Universität,” 133; The chief instigator of the event from the side of the faculty was the Professor of Philosophy Ferdinand Weinhandl. I have seen no evidence to indicate that the archaeologists at the Museum or the University participated in or condoned the event, but they must certainly have known that it occurred.

“ungermanic.”<sup>45</sup> In short, by the summer of 1933 the moral dilemma that would confront archaeologists throughout the Nazi period had already appeared.

Was this, then, the “Faustian Bargain,” to which Bettina Arnold and Henning Haßmann have alluded in their histories of Third Reich archaeology? In other words, was it opportunism that drove Schwantes and his students to unite with Nazi organizations in 1933? There was, on the one hand, no immediate financial gain for most archaeologists in 1933. In October, Schwantes was denied a raise in his salary,<sup>46</sup> while Herbert Jankuhn’s pay remained more or less unchanged from 1931 until 1936.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, there were certainly other tangible benefits to the “joyful boost” of Nazi support. Schwantes, for example, made his most blatantly Germanophile claim in a 1933 issue of the journal *Forschungen und Fortschritte* when he stressed the Bronze-Age collection in Kiel as the best in Germany for patrons to experience the remains of their “Germanic ancestors.”<sup>48</sup> But his intention, as the article revealed, was to call on the government to finance the expansion of his institution.<sup>49</sup> Younger archaeologists fared especially well. Perhaps the most prominent example was Peter Paulsen, who had earned his doctoral degree only a year before the *Machergreifung*, but who found a tremendous measure of success in his position as Director of the *Kampfbund’s* Prehistory Group. Therefore, for young professionals like Paulsen who were coming of age at the beginning of the Nazi period, engagement with the regime already seemed a sure path to success.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See Steinweis, “Weimar Culture,” 405.

<sup>46</sup> Kurator der Universität Kiel und Preußische Ministerium für Wissenschaft to Gustav Schwantes, 20 October 1933, SHLB Nachlass Schwantes Cb47-680.

<sup>47</sup> Jankuhn, Fragebogen, Military Government of Germany Part H., ALM Nachlass Jankuhn, o.N. Jankuhn’s reported income was 2400 RM for 1931, 1934, and 1935. He reported 2000 RM for 1932 and 1000 RM for 1933, but he was away from his post traveling in connection with his DAI study tour during this time. Presumably, then, his salary was unchanged in these years.

<sup>48</sup> Schwantes, “Welches europäische Volk kann seine Ahnenreihe in die älteste Zeit zurückführen?” *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 9 (1933), 107f; Gebühr discusses this article in “Ethnogenese der Germanen,” 16-17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> This stress on opportunism forms the thesis of Jörn Jacobs brief treatment of the career of Peter Paulsen during the Nazi Period. See Jacobs, “Peter Paulsen: Ein Wanderer zwischen zwei Welten,” in *Prähistorie und Nationalsozialismus*, 451-9.



Careerist motives alone, however, did not wholly account for the relationship between the new state and the archaeological community, even at this early stage. There were, in fact, a number of other factors stemming from both the transformation of 1933 and the previous history of local archaeology that fostered the engagement of prehistorians with the Reich. Above all, the cult status that attached to Gustaf Kossinna during the 1930s emphasized the nationalist significance that he had attached to the discipline at the turn of the century.<sup>51</sup> While Herbert Jankuhn later proclaimed that Kossinna's research methods were already becoming defunct in the late 1920s,<sup>52</sup> the nationalist message embedded within them had survived Kossinna and became a key value for the new generation of archaeologists. It was an issue that Jankuhn himself addressed in October 1933, when he gave a public lecture in Schleswig on behalf of the *Kampfbund* on the topic of "Prehistory as National Scholarship." Here he argued:

For centuries a foundational historical view has been drawn of the pre- and early historical period solely on the basis of written sources that has distanced it considerably from [recent history]. Since, however, the Germanic Peoples (*Germanen*) formed the most decisive element of our national body (*Volkskörper*), this sort of portrayal has misrepresented the oldest part of our national history and obscured the way to true understanding.<sup>53</sup>

This view reiterated Kossinna's arguments from three decades earlier about the use of archaeology as a historical tool and the linkages between the prehistoric and historic narratives of national history. Jankuhn also adopted the tenets of the Nordic Paradigm in the same speech, telling his audience, "The origins of Germandom lie here in Schleswig-Holstein and on the Danish Islands, and from 1500 BC can we speak for the first time of German Peoples."<sup>54</sup> These arguments, which in Kossinna's day had carried a certain level of controversy, had by 1933 become commonplace tropes for a new generation of

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<sup>51</sup> Kossinna had passed away in December, 1931. See Chapter 4.

<sup>52</sup> Kater, Gedächtnisprotokolle Kater-Jankuhn, Göttingen, 14 May 1963, ALM Nachlaß Jankuhn, GB 21. The document includes the notes from Kater's private interview of Jankuhn. This copy was sent to Jankuhn for review.

<sup>53</sup> Jankuhn, "Die Vorgeschichte als nationale Wissenschaft," reprinted in a special edition of *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (3-4 October, 1933), in ALM MuG 222.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

archaeologists. What had once sparked ambivalence in Schwantes became normalized for Jankuhn, and, while it did not make Kossinna's work National Socialist, it nevertheless couched the practice of domestic archaeology in nationalist terms that facilitated a working relationship with the regime. Above all, such thinking provided a positive affirmation of Germanic culture and history that formed a fitting corollary for the anti-Semitism and anti-modernism that characterized Nazi ideology.

It is interesting, however, to see the ways in which Jankuhn and his cohort blended the nationalist elements of their writing with more rigorous scholarship. In his speech, for example, Jankuhn highlighted research stressing the multicultural makeup of northern Europe in the Stone Age, which was a faithful reading of the artifact evidence but represented a challenge to Kossinna's notion of northern Europe as a homeland for a single Indogermanic people. A similar style appeared in Kersten's treatment of the grave hill site at Grünhof-Tesperhude. Kersten's principal question dealt with interpretations of Bronze-Age burial rituals, which he had advanced through his discovery of the remains of a "death house" atop the grave hill. "For the study of prehistory," he wrote, "the discovery of the death house from Grünhof-Tesperhude is of special importance because it is the first discovery of a death house from the Germanic Bronze Age not only in our province, but in the entire north."<sup>55</sup> To this assessment Kersten added a rather awkwardly-placed addendum proclaiming the site's significance, "not only for scholarship, but more generally for the knowledge of our forbears."<sup>56</sup>

What these juxtapositions seem to suggest is not merely a conscious manipulation of data for the purposes of National Socialist propaganda, but a continuation of a long-standing tradition of presenting the past differently for professional and public consumption. As we have seen, Schwantes, Mestorf, and even Jens Worsaae had written in a similar style (if not to a similar degree) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus the nationalist tradition of the discipline made it possible for German prehistorians to cooperate with the Nazi state without necessarily adhering to Nazi ideology. It also insulated them in the first year from the pressures facing scholars in

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<sup>55</sup> Kersten, "Das bronzezeitliche Totenhaus," 587.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

other fields. They did not, for instance, feel obliged to join the Nazi Party in 1933, as Ernst Sauer mann had done in order to protect cultural projects he feared would be labeled “degenerate” by the Nazis.<sup>57</sup> Rather, archaeologists in Schleswig-Holstein found themselves courted by Nazi officials, who wanted representations of Germanic antiquity that would be, as Paulsen described, “strictly scientific yet accessible.”<sup>58</sup>

The general desire of leading Nazi functionaries to promote prehistorical research contributed to the growing number of overlapping institutional opportunities presenting themselves to archaeologists within the Reich. In the first year of the regime, this created what Uta Halle has referred to as the “double chance” for archaeologists to benefit from state support. In the case of the borderland, just as the *Kampfbund*, which was affiliated with Alfred Rosenberg’s office, promoted archaeological scholarship in the schools, Heinrich Himmler’s “Ancestral Heritage Society” (*Ahnenerbe*) contributed money to the ongoing excavations at the Haithabu site.<sup>59</sup> This dual engagement on the part of Kiel archaeologists is important, because it challenges the notion that collaboration was strictly a product of the inner struggle of competing Nazi institutions and that collaboration entailed a wholly defensive turn to *Selbstgleichschaltung*. Instead, it seems to support the idea that multiple motives were at work in the first phase of the regime, and that it was only the process and level of engagement that were influenced by the cultural politics of the Himmler-Rosenberg rivalry.

### **A Contested *Gleichschaltung*?: Domestic Pressures and International Scholarship**

After 1934, the free choice that prehistorians in Kiel enjoyed within the Nazi state began to diminish as the process of *Gleichschaltung* pushed German archaeology in

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<sup>57</sup> Scheck, *Denkmalpflege und Diktatur*, 152-3. Specifically, Scheck mentions Sauer mann’s work to protect the *Geisteskampfer* sculpture at the St. Nikolai Church in Kiel, which was sculpted by Ernst Barlach in 1928.

<sup>58</sup> Paulsen, “Aufgaben und Richtlinien,” 579.

<sup>59</sup> Kater, *Ahnenerbe*, 81. Kater reports that Jankuhn had brought the site under Himmler’s “personal protection” at this time, but it is not clear what this meant exactly or how much financial support he afforded the excavation. Jankuhn first reported Himmler’s involvement in “Haithabu, der erste Ostseehafen des Deutschen Reiches,” *Germanien* 10 (1938): 309-19. By this time, the site was officially part of the Ahnenerbe. The question remains, however, whether Jankuhn was not rewriting the narrative to embellish Himmler’s involvement with the site.

directions that conflicted with established principles and practices. A long-running internal conflict began when the archaeologist Hans Reinerth (1900-1990) of the University of Tübingen issued a call for the discipline to unite under a single institution in accordance with Nazi principles. Reinerth was an adherent of the Kossinna School and a Nazi Party member with ties to Alferd Rosenberg going back to 1928.<sup>60</sup> He had already earned himself a poor reputation in his field through unsubstantiated accusations of misappropriation against his mentor, R.R. Schmidt, in 1930.<sup>61</sup> The Nazis, then, offered him a second chance to advance his career. By April 1932, Reinerth had become the national director of the Prehistory Section of the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*,<sup>62</sup> where he became an enthusiastic spokesperson for blending radical ideology with mainstream scholarship. “Just as racial science,” he declared in 1933, “and especially the awareness of the importance and uniqueness of the Nordic race is the basis of the National Socialist world view, so it must become the foundation of all science.”<sup>63</sup>

Reinerth’s desire to create a centralized Reich Institute for German Prehistory (*Reichsinstitut für deutsche Vorgeschichte*) quickly brought him into conflict with such long-established institutions as the DAI and Römisch-Germanisch Kommission (RGK).<sup>64</sup> The classical orientation of these institutions was inherently at odds with Reinerth’s goal of bringing the discipline into line with the racial world view of National Socialism. Although Reinerth never fully succeeded in creating a new dominating institution, his attacks led to a drop in the number of classical archaeologists by almost twenty-five percent during this period. The Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz, meanwhile, was renamed the Zentralmuseum für deutsche Vor- und Frühgeschichte.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, a number of noted classical scholars like Werner Jaeger responded by entering self-imposed exile, while others like the German-Jewish archaeologist Gerhard

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<sup>60</sup> Gunter Schöbel, “Hans Reinerth. Forscher - NS Funktionär - Museumsleiter,” in *Prähistorie und Nationalsozialismus*, 334-5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 337.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>64</sup> Bollmus, *Amt Rosenberg*, 154-8.

<sup>65</sup> Haßmann, “Third Reich,” 80; Arnold, “Propaganda,” 32.

Bersu were forced to retire. The DAI, meanwhile, survived by emphasizing its prehistoric projects in its budget reports.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, Reinerth's drive to consolidate the discipline had a polarizing effect on German prehistorians. In part, he merely exacerbated the long-standing split stemming from the antagonism between Kossinna and Schuchhardt in the early twentieth century. In May 1934, he brought Kossinna's prehistorical society (which he now renamed the *Reichsbund für deutsche Vorgeschichte*) under the control of *Kampfbund*, but, because of his agitation against classical scholarship, failed to convince most of his colleagues to recognize his authority as director.<sup>67</sup> In Berlin, he faced stiff opposition from both Schuchhardt and Wilhelm Unverzag, whose classical training made them sympathetic to the plight of the DAI and RGK. The ensuing power struggle within the discipline created space for Heinrich Himmler, who, like Rosenberg, harbored a deep fascination for Germanic antiquity, to bring his SS organization into archaeological scholarship.

The conflict underway at the national level had a distinct local dimension in Kiel. Both Peter Paulsen and the historian Otto Scheel were committed adherents of Reinerth and Rosenberg, while Schwantes, Jankuhn, and Kersten ultimately declined to support the new *Reichsbund*. Schwantes and Jankuhn reported that they had actually joined the *Reichsbund* in cooperation with Reinerth, but had withdrawn after Reinerth asked them to speak out against Carl Schuchhardt and Wilhelm Unverzag. In 1934 and 1935, however, there was still a measure of cooperation between the two camps. In September, 1935, for example, Jankuhn acceded to Reinerth's request to lead a *Reichsbund* group on a tour of the Haithabu site.<sup>68</sup>

Two key developments finally led to an irreparable institutional split in 1937. The first was an internal power struggle among the archaeologists of the University of Kiel that gripped the campus in the spring of 1936. The origins of this conflict reached back to 1932, when Peter Paulsen sought to replace Jankuhn as museum assistant and director of

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<sup>66</sup> Marchand, *Olympus*, 349-50.

<sup>67</sup> Bollmus, *Amt Rosenberg*, 171-5.

<sup>68</sup> Reinerth to Jankuhn, 5 September 1935 and Jankuhn to Reinerth, 10 September 1935, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

the Haithabu excavations. Jankuhn at the time was away on his DAI study tour, and in July 1933, museum custodian Carl Rothmann wrote to the Education Ministry in support of naming Paulsen to the position.<sup>69</sup> Schwantes, however, favored bringing Jankuhn back to Haithabu, arguing that he had excavated at the site previously and had much more field experience. Paulsen took his mentor's rejection as a personal insult, and when Schwantes further angered the leadership of the *Reichsbund* a year later by withdrawing his membership, Paulsen began to raise questions about the political loyalty of both Schwantes and Jankuhn. He based his accusations on Schwantes' relationship to the Jew Gerhard Bersu, and he added accusations that Schwantes was a socialist and freemason. Moreover, Paulsen highlighted Jankuhn's affiliation with the DAI from 1931-1933 to cast doubt on his level of commitment to the National Socialist cause.<sup>70</sup>

In March 1936, Jankuhn reported to the Rector of the University of Kiel that Paulsen had been spreading these accusations among the student body, and he requested a meeting to confront Paulsen about the rumors.<sup>71</sup> In April, Paulsen, Jankuhn, and Schwantes met with the Rector and the director of the Faculty League to address the charges. Paulsen, faced with written testimony from students, acknowledged his role not only in spreading accusations against Schwantes and Jankuhn, but also in launching further attacks against Karl Kersten, whom he had accused of Communist leanings. When asked by the Rector to sum up his view of the three men, "Herr Dr. Paulsen explained, that in his opinion neither Prof. Schwantes nor Dr. Jankuhn or Dr. Kersten were opponents of National Socialism and that his stated suspicions were baseless."<sup>72</sup> Paulsen claimed that the accusations had come originally from Hans Reinerth and the leadership of the *Reichsbund*, though he expected that they would deny making any

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<sup>69</sup> Rothmann to the Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst, und Volksbildung 4 July 1933, ALM Nachlass Rothmann.

<sup>70</sup> Jankuhn to the Rektor of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität, 30 March 1936, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Jankuhn, Akten-Notiz Besprechung zwischen CAU Rektor, Dahm, Ritterbusch, Schwantes, Paulsen und Jankuhn, undated, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

charges. In response, the Rector and Faculty League director reprimanded Paulsen and threatened him with dismissal in the event of further defamations.<sup>73</sup>

In many ways, a conflict of this nature was inevitable in the face of the changing structure of the profession. While the advent of Nazi organizations such as the *Reichsbund* provided new paths for advancement, the discipline was still bound by its own practices and expectations. This meant that the promise of success through participation in Nazi organizations did not go uncontested in the institutions of the so-called “young” discipline of archaeology. Yet the incident no doubt underscored for Jankuhn, Schwantes, and Kersten the political risks involved in opposing state-sponsored groups. Thus, while these archaeologists had already entered into a relationship with the Nazi regime on their own volition, they deepened their commitment and made choices after 1936 in response to internal pressures not only from high-level Nazi functionaries, but also from ambitious locals.

The second series of events that fueled the polarization of prehistoric archaeology surrounded efforts to preserve old relations and forge new ones with scholars in Scandinavia. In 1936, Jankuhn traveled to Copenhagen to visit the Viking collection of the National Museum, and there met the museum’s co-director, Johannes Brøndsted. The visit led to an exchange of artifacts for comparative analysis and raised again the possibility of a new German-Danish collaboration at Haithabu.<sup>74</sup> Brøndsted, like Sophus Müller before him, had long held a great interest in the course of research at the Oldenburg, and had been corresponding for over a year with Schwantes about the progress of work at the site.<sup>75</sup> Thus it was a great delight for Brøndsted when, in the spring of 1937, the two museums began considering a project that would include German, Danish, and Swedish archaeologists.

As Brøndsted might have expected, the proposal proved controversial within the National Museum because it raised for the Danes the thorny problem of participating in

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Jankuhn to Brøndsted, 18 March, 31 March, 4 April 1936; Brøndsted to Jankuhn, 20 February, 16 April 1936, NM Afd. 1 470/36.

<sup>75</sup> Brøndsted to Schwantes, 19 January, 5 February, 6 March, 6 September 1935; Schwantes to Brøndsted, 11 February 1935, NM Afd. 1 73/35.

an excavation conducted with the support of the Nazi regime. There were, after all, a number of conflicting issues at work in German-Danish relations after the Nazi rise to power that made any potential cross-border cooperation exceedingly complex. First of all, Nazi support in Schleswig-Holstein had depended on a sense of irredentism over the lost territory of Nordslesvig, and the fears of once again losing the territory to the Germans colored Danish relations with the Reich through 1940.<sup>76</sup> In reality, though the hopes of re-annexation were strong among many members of the German minority in Denmark,<sup>77</sup> Hitler harbored no such ambitions, and had in fact looked to the German minority to foster closer ties between the two countries.<sup>78</sup>



Johannes Brøndsted (1890-1965). Nationalmuseet.

Another factor was the pervasive influence of Volkish/Nordicist thinking in Germany during the 1930s and the close ties of Nordicist groups with the Reich. While National

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<sup>76</sup> Karen Gram-Skjoldager, "Herre i eget hus? Den danske regerings politik i Sønderjylland, 1933-1940," *Historie* 2 (2003): 299-336.

<sup>77</sup> Ingrid Riese, "Det tyske mindretals valgkamp 1939," *Historie* 20/2 (1994): 177-219.

<sup>78</sup> Vadis O. Lumans, "The Nordic Destiny: The Peculiar Role of the German Minority in Hitler's Plans and Policies for Denmark," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 15/2 (1990): 101-23.



Socialist ideology was hazy on the cultural value of Scandinavia, many Nazi leaders were in fact fascinated with the racial and cultural connections between Germany and the Nordic countries. Himmler and Rosenberg, for example, though bitterly divided by personal enmity, were actually not very far apart ideologically on this issue. Both adhered to a belief in the superiority of a “Nordic Race,” which led each of them to look to Scandinavia as the source of pure racial blood. Both were drawn to the “Blood and Soil” ideology of Walther Darré, whose work, *The Rural Community as the Life Source of the Nordic Race* (*Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse*), characterized Scandinavia as the home of the “rural ideal” for Nordacist thinkers and used it as an example in his celebration of the themes of hearth and home.<sup>79</sup> Finally, both Rosenberg and Himmler shared a belief in the need for a new elite in Germany composed of the purest examples of the “Nordic” type. It was a need that drew each of them to the study of the ancient Germanic past as crucial to delineating the qualities of the future elite and the creation of a new racial order.<sup>80</sup>

The endorsement of Nordacist thinking at the highest levels of the Reich government inspired a number of overtures to Scandinavian countries on both the political and cultural levels.<sup>81</sup> Taking the lead was the Nordic Society in Lübeck, for whom the advent of the Third Reich offered the tantalizing possibility of realizing some of their goals of a closer union between Germany and the North. Such thinking was also highly appealing to Hans Reinerth, who joined the members of the Nordic Society in organizing a series of international conferences on topics of Nordic archaeology. With these conferences, Reinerth clearly hoped to take the lead from the archeologists in Kiel in linking German and Scandinavian prehistoric scholarship. The first of these, “House and Court in the Nordic World,” (*Haus und Hof im nordischen Raum*) took place in 1935 in Lübeck. On the surface, the conference was a great success for Reinerth, since it attracted a mixed participation of Germans and Scandinavians. But it also brought Reinerth into further

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<sup>79</sup> Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Richard Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party,'* (Bourne End, Buckinghamshire: Kendal Press, 1985), 41, 50-3; Seppo Kuusisto, *Alfred Rosenberg in der nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik, 1933-39*, (Helsinki: SHS, 1984), 38.

<sup>80</sup> Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race*, 154-6.

<sup>81</sup> Lutzhöft, *Nordische Gedanke*, 303-11.

conflict with Herbert Jankuhn, who was incensed by Reinerth's treatment of his Scandinavian colleagues. When Reinerth sent a request in November 1936 for Jankuhn to give a presentation on Haithabu at a second conference,<sup>82</sup> Jankuhn replied:

To your request of the 20th of November of this year regarding a slideshow presentation on Haithabu, allow me to inform you that I am not in a position to hold this lecture. The incidents that occurred immediately following the Lübeck conference *Haus und Hof* make it impossible. These things are well known to you, so I may limit myself to a short summary. First it has had an alienating effect in Scandinavia that both of the German institutes which have laid their chief focus on researching Nordic house construction, namely the Stettin Museum through its excavations in Wollin and our museum through the investigations in Haithabu, Stellerburg, and Hodorf, were omitted [from the conference]. A very unfortunate situation arose however through the excursion to Haithabu itself . . . while the management of the excavation on site was not informed of the impending visit, the excursion group met there and was enlightened about the archaeological results by Herr Tode. The numerous Scandinavian experts, who through personal experience are much better oriented with the state of our work than many German colleagues, were simply not able to understand that a man was speaking here who clearly had no information about the results of our investigations, while they themselves had a much more exact knowledge of them . . . <sup>83</sup>

Jankuhn clearly was furious that Reinerth had undertaken a tour of his site without his permission or involvement, but beyond this turf war there was also a genuine concern that Reinerth's activities were damaging the reputation of German archaeology in Scandinavia.

The following year, two more incidents worsened relations. The first was the accusation from Poul Nørlund (1888-1951), the Director of the National Museum, that Reinerth had added an unauthorized introduction to the German translation of Nørlund's 1937 work, *Viking Settlements in Greenland: Their Origins and Fate*

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<sup>82</sup> Reinerth to Jankuhn, 20 November 1936, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21. The title of the conference was "Germany and the North in Pre- and Early History" (*Deutschland und der Norden in vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit*).

<sup>83</sup> Jankuhn to Reinerth, 3 December 1936, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21. The "Herr Tode" to whom Jankuhn referred was Alfred Tode, who had been released from his position as director of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum's Archaeological Photography Project in 1933 for misappropriating museum funds, which also resulted in court proceedings between Tode and Schwantes. See Jankuhn, "Gutachten über Dr. Tode" undated, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

(*Wikingersiedlungen in Grönland: Ihre Entstehung und Schicksal*). Nørlund reported that he had only been able to excise the introduction after a protracted struggle with the German publisher.<sup>84</sup> The same year, the Swedish archaeologist Holger Arbman (1904-1968), who had attended the *Haus und Hof* conference, complained that he had been denied access to the translation proofs of his published contribution. When he finally did receive a copy, Arbman reported to Jankuhn that the translation was a poor misrepresentation of his work.<sup>85</sup>

The result for Swedish and Danish archaeologists was first a concern about the quality of archaeology in Germany, which would have had a direct impact on Scandinavian research, and second a fear that cooperation might make Scandinavian archaeology a tool for Nazi propaganda. These factors necessarily gave them pause when considering a collaborative project at Haithabu. In May 1937, Brøndsted expressed these fears to his Swedish colleagues, writing:

I spoke today with Dr. Mackeprang about the question of German-Swedish-Danish collaborative work at Haithabu. Dr. Mackeprang had his concerns with reference to [the possibility] that Schwantes is indeed not independent and that one cannot know what for example Alfred Rosenberg would undertake or order undertaken . . .<sup>86</sup>

What is interesting in this letter is that Mouritz Mackeprang, while choosing not to distrust Schwantes on account of his Nazi connections, feared that Schwantes would be unable to prevent the Nazi Party from misusing any collaborative scholarship. For his part, Brøndsted shared Mackeprang's concerns, but was nevertheless mindful of the long history of cooperation with the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, adding, "I find it ill advised to say no to an outstretched hand from Kiel, precisely when the Swedes also come along."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Jankuhn, "Mein Verhältnis zu Reinerth," undated, ALM Nachlaß Jankuhn GB 21.

<sup>85</sup> Jankuhn to Richthofen, 18 March 1938.

<sup>86</sup> Brøndsted to C.A. Nordmann, 1 May 1937, NM Afd. 1 426/37.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

The Swedish and Danish representatives assembled in Copenhagen in June, where they reached agreement that a cooperative project was desirable, but that, as one participant observed, “the respective institutions must not be implicated.”<sup>88</sup> What the Scandinavians needed, therefore, was reassurance from Schwantes, and for that reason they called a second meeting with Schwantes in Copenhagen for October 1937.<sup>89</sup> At Schwantes’ insistence, they also invited Jankuhn, but Mackeprang voiced some reluctance about his participation, writing to Brøndsted, “That Jankuhn as the only director of the excavations comes along, is nothing to which we have any say.”<sup>90</sup> Despite such reservations, the meeting reached an agreement on plans for a collaborative excavation. The Danes and Swedes received a written promise from the German side guaranteeing the political safety of the project. According to the agreement, “There is consensus that the German invitation to shared and collegial cooperation at Haithabu will follow in the understanding that it does not involve institutional participation, rather purely factual, through experts who can stand both inside and outside of scholarly institutions.”<sup>91</sup> The project, the group decided, would consist of a Danish, Swedish, and Finnish archaeologist. In fact, there was some relief among the Danes that the Norwegians, who had declined the invitation to participate, would not be involved. As Mackeprang explained: “I am personally against it, both because their connections to Haithabu are even less than those of the Finns, and also because the entire enterprise can be viewed as a link in the Germans’ ongoing ‘Verbrüderungstendenz’ . . .”<sup>92</sup> By contrast, he argued, a project with just Danes, Swedes, and Finns, who had long worked on the Haithabu question, could present itself as a genuine undertaking “of general archaeological interest.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> “Møde paa Nationalmuseet den 19/6 1937,” NM Afd. 1 426/37.

<sup>89</sup> Schwantes to Mackeprang, 5 October 1937 NM Afd. 1 426/37.

<sup>90</sup> Mackprang to Brøndsted, 8 October 1937, NM Afd. 1 426/37.

<sup>91</sup> Report on the meeting of 26 October 1937 in the National Museum, Copenhagen, NM Afd. 1 426/37.

<sup>92</sup> Mackeprang to Brøndsted, 8 October 1937.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

As the controversy over Haithabu thus ended with a reaffirmation of the scholarly ties between Copenhagen and Kiel, a separate dilemma appeared that once again illustrated the threat of government pressure to the practice of transnational scholarship. For years, the archaeologists at the National Museum had been organizing a large Baltic Archaeological Congress, which was scheduled to be held in Riga in August 1937.<sup>94</sup> In May of that year, Reinerth and Otto Scheel wrote to Brøndsted requesting permission to join the list of presenters. Brøndsted and his colleagues, however, informed their colleagues at Kiel that they were open to the participation of certain German archaeologists but did not want anyone from Reinerth's organization to be involved.<sup>95</sup> Soon after, the Schleswig-Holstein Museum received a notice from an official in Rosenberg's office forbidding members of the *Reichsbund* to take part in the Riga conference on account of "the well-known measures taken by the Latvian government against Germandom in the Baltic."<sup>96</sup>

In response to the order, Jankuhn wrote to the Ministry of Education complaining that although the alleged political circumstances prevented German prehistorians from attending the conference, historians such as Otto Scheel, who was a member of the *Kampfbund* and had close ties to Reinerth and Paulsen, were permitted to attend.<sup>97</sup> He also reported what he called Reinerth's "sabotage" to the Professional League of German Prehistorians (*Berufsverein deutscher Vorgeschichtsforscher*).<sup>98</sup> Such pressure ultimately worked to convince the Education Ministry to reverse the prohibition in July and ask

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<sup>94</sup> Plans for the conference had been discussed as early as 1935. See Schwantes to Brøndsted, 11 February 1935, NM Afd. 1 73/35. I did not find a record of Brøndsted's reply to Reinerth.

<sup>95</sup> This was reported to Herbert Jankuhn's colleague, Erich Pieper, who was in Copenhagen in May, 1937. See Pieper to Jankuhn, 28 May 1937, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn, GB 21,

<sup>96</sup> Der Beauftragte des Führers für die gesamte geistige und weltanschauliche Erziehung der NSDAP to Gaubeauftragten für Vorgeschichte und Landesleiter des Reichsbundes für Deutsche Vorgeschichte, 9 June 1937, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

<sup>97</sup> Jankuhn to Buttler, Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, 16 June 1937, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

<sup>98</sup> Jankuhn to Richthofen, 16 June 1937, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

Jankuhn to join Paulsen and others in presenting in Riga on behalf of the German archaeological community.<sup>99</sup>

While neither Jankuhn nor Schwantes mentioned the Haithabu and Riga controversies as factors in the decision to place the Haithabu dig under the protection of the SS Ahnenerbe, they were clearly deeply troubled by the ways in which the domestic split in German archaeology was affecting its place in the international community. Indeed, Jankuhn voiced these concerns in 1938 following a two-week study tour to Sweden. It was in Stockholm that he had learned of the alleged mistreatment of Holger Arbman in the *Haus und Hof* volume. He was especially distressed to hear that Poul Nørlund had cautioned Arbman from allowing any more of his books from being translated into German, where they could be subjected to manipulation by German archaeologists. In another letter to the *Berufsverein*, Jankuhn expressed concern about the cumulative effect of these controversies, writing:

To you these things may be trivial; they gain meaning, when one places them in the context of the power struggle of the European North. The attempt has been made from two sides since the war and to a greater degree since 1933 to turn the Scandinavian countries against Germany . . . On the one side, the West European countries, namely France and England, have attempted to exploit the voice [in Scandinavia] against Germany in the interest of spreading the ideals of the great democracies, and on the other side Russia has attempted, namely in the northern part of the region, to hide its territorial ambitions through the ideology of the *Volksfront* . . . In our field the consequence has been that Scandinavian works begin to be translated more often into English or French rather than the previously predominant German. Now it can, of course, be of little importance for us, if these Scandinavian works receive an English or German summary. But with the strong infusion of the Western European languages into scholarly life comes a displacement of interest from Germany to Western Europe, that France and England will very skillfully exploit for cultural propaganda. For this reason, we urgently need to work for the preservation of German as the scholarly foreign language of Scandinavia . . . <sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung to Jankuhn, 14 July 1937, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

<sup>100</sup> Jankuhn to Richthofen, 18 March 1938, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 21.

In this letter, Jankuhn offered a rare glimpse into his world view as he made a case for opposing the *Reichsbund* that blended scholarly and nationalist interests. Clearly, he was disturbed by the ways in which the controversies of 1936 and 1937 had “damaged the image of all German prehistoric research in Scandinavia.”<sup>101</sup> His assessment tied the success of Germany’s international academic relations to questions of its political survival as a Great Power. It was a picture that in some ways evoked a sense of imminent threat not far removed from the rhetoric of the Nazi Party leadership. Jankuhn, however, was not writing to a Nazi official or government agency. He was relating his views in a personal letter to a close friend and colleague.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, he did not seem to be merely employing empty rhetoric, since he seems to have felt obliged to explain the significance of the problem to Richthofen, who he feared would otherwise not understand why the threat from such small controversies was in fact so serious.

This international context thus sheds important light on Jankuhn’s final decision to bring the Haithabu project under the official authority of the SS Ahnenerbe in 1938. It was a move that capped a trend of steadily-increasing SS engagement with both Jankuhn and the project. Following the recognition of Himmler as “patron” (*Schirmherr*) in 1934 and the acceptance of SS financial assistance in 1935,<sup>103</sup> Jankuhn had welcomed Himmler on a personal tour of the site in March 1937. During this visit, the two allegedly discussed the SS acquisition.<sup>104</sup> It was probably no coincidence that Jankuhn joined the Nazi Party in May 1937.<sup>105</sup> At the time, Jankuhn argued that the collaboration with the Ahnenerbe was purely for funding reasons:

With the adoption of the excavation by the Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police Heinrich Himmler and the transfer to the Ahnenerbe, the excavations and their handling have

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. The letter was marked, “Persönlich” at the top.

<sup>103</sup> Kater, *Ahnenerbe*, 89.

<sup>104</sup> Haßmann and Jansen, “Das Kieler Museum im Dritten Reich,” 15.

<sup>105</sup> “Beurteilung von SS Sturmbannführer Prof. Dr. Herbert Jankuhn,” 12 February 1945, BA NS 21 vorl. 51

removed [the site] from a condition of uncertainty caused by many factors and have placed it on a more secure foundation permitting grander planning.<sup>106</sup>

After the war, however, both Jankuhn and Schwantes insisted that the goal was to protect the site from a takeover by Alfred Rosenberg and Hans Reinerth.<sup>107</sup> He even claimed that his colleagues in Scandinavia had supported the decision, writing, “My entry into the SS occurred among other things on the direct request of Swedish colleagues, who said that only through such a step could the scholarly integrity of the excavations be assured.”<sup>108</sup> There are, in fact, a number of reasons to accept these arguments. First of all, as we have seen, there was, much internal pressure on Jankuhn, Schwantes, and Kersten from the *Reichsbund* and *Kampfbund*. Secondly, it is interesting to note that the discussions with Himmler in 1937 occurred only after the final break between Reinerth and Jankuhn in late 1936. In fact, as late as December, 1936, Jankuhn continued to affirm his interest in cooperating with the *Reichsbund*. Even in his letter to Reinerth condemning Reinerth’s mistreatment of Scandinavian archaeology, Jankuhn closed with a conciliatory note, writing, “The entire [complaint] does not mean that I am taking a position against the *Reichsbund*, because I also see in the *Reichsbund* the only organization for the . . . eagerly desired union of German researchers.”<sup>109</sup>

Less convincing is the argument that Jankuhn actively resisted the SS takeover, which appeared in a number of the letters supporting his release from an American POW camp following World War II.<sup>110</sup> It is true, as the archaeologist Günther Haselhoff recalled after 1945, that Jankuhn had pursued other alternatives for dealing with the *Reichsbund* controversy. Before joining the SS, he had turned to the University administration and to the *Berufsverein* to create counterweights to the power of Reinerth’s organization. Such

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<sup>106</sup> Jankuhn, *Haithabu. Eine germanische Stadt der Frühzeit*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1938), viii.

<sup>107</sup> This argument became a key factor in Jankuhn’s defense during his trial in 1949. See the proceedings of Jankuhn’s denazification hearing, 6 June 1949, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 15.

<sup>108</sup> Jankuhn to Rolf Seeliger, 27 May 1968, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 15. There is no document at hand to corroborate this account, and Jankuhn never mentioned which Swedes had endorsed his decision.

<sup>109</sup> Jankuhn to Reinerth, 3 December 1936.

<sup>110</sup> Günther Haselhoff, “Eidesstattliche Erklärung,” 12 June 1947, Schwantes, “Eidesstattliche Erklärung,” 16 April 1947, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn, GB 15.



efforts had helped him overcome the Paulsen and Riga controversies, but they occurred alongside the negotiations with the SS. Indeed, the success of these alternatives raises the question of why he finally felt compelled in 1938 to turn the Haithabu project completely over to Himmler.

Jankuhn's motives, in fact, lay in part beyond the scope of Haithabu, his scholarship, and his career. They rested with a larger concern for the fate of Germany's place in European archaeology, which he tied to the question of Germany's position in the international hierarchy. His decision stemmed from a genuine desire to defend traditional scholarly practice, to preserve the long-standing relations with Scandinavia, and from a nationalist view of his discipline that delicately situated it between international cooperation and competition. In this context, the pressure from domestic rivals was no greater than that coming from international colleagues in Scandinavia, and membership in the *Ahnenerbe* was a matter not only of protection but of power. With it, Jankuhn hoped to overcome both the threat at home and abroad.

Almost immediately, the archaeological community began to reap the benefits of *Ahnenerbe* support. In the late summer of 1937, Schwantes accepted a newly-created chair of Pre- and Early History at the University of Kiel created by special order of Prussian Minister-President Hermann Göring.<sup>111</sup> A few months later, Heinrich Himmler worked to ensure Jankuhn's promotion to now-vacant position of Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, which confounded an attempt by Reinerth to apply for the post.<sup>112</sup> Himmler's *Ahnenerbe* also made Jankuhn's Haithabu project its top priority, devoting over 65,000 RM per year to expanded excavations there and offering another substantial sum for exhibitions and aerial photography along the Danewerk and surrounding sites.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> According to Alfred Haffner, the former director of the University's Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, in "Alfred Rust und die Rahmenbedingungen für die Archäologie im Dritten Reich," Public Forum, Ahrensburg, 24 November 2000, 13-14, transcript in ALM Nachlass Alfred Rust.

<sup>112</sup> Heinrich Himmler to Martin Bormann, 18 January 1938, BA NS 21 vorl. 346; On Reinerth's bid, see Sievers to Himmler, 11 April 1938, BA NS 21 vorl. 346.

<sup>113</sup> Kater, *Ahnenerbe*, 82; Jankuhn "Die Ausstellungen," in *Jahrestagungen. Bericht über die Kieler Tagung*, (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1944), 241-6.

It was in Himmler's interest to promote legitimate scholarship in these projects. He was painfully aware of his reputation as a dilettante, and his previous support of the fantastic and absurd research of figures such as Hermann Wirth had further damaged his reputation. Himmler's association with Jankuhn consequently represented an attempt to attract more recognized scholars and to grant them a measure of academic freedom.<sup>114</sup> As a result, the published work that followed the Haithabu excavations of the late 1930s maintained much of the same academic continuity with previous archaeological scholarship. This meant, of course, that Jankuhn's work replicated the association between national and ethnic types, but though he reaffirmed the Bronze-Age origins of the German *Volk*,<sup>115</sup> in places he approached the racial makeup of Haithabu as heterogeneous. "There were substantial numbers of Northern Germans, Saxons, Friesians, and related peoples," he wrote, "who came together there and buried their dead in the graveyards."<sup>116</sup> Jankuhn also entertained the possibility of mixed blood in this example of a "German city" when he wrote, "Perhaps one must also consider the scattered [skeletal] deposits from the Slavic region, but anthropological investigations of the northern and western Slavic areas has shown that noteworthy difference between the Germanic cultural sphere and the Slavic region was not yet firmly established during that time."<sup>117</sup>

Even as such research fueled the Nazi interest in the ancient past, it also afforded the Ahnenerbe the necessary legitimacy to maintain control of the most important prehistoric cultural sites in western Germany.<sup>118</sup> For Jankuhn, the firm establishment of the site under SS authority placed him in a powerful position to define mainstream archaeological scholarship and enabled him to thwart new political attacks from the Reinerth camp. When the young archaeologist Ekkehard Aner, for instance, publicly criticized the pro-Ahnenerbe Germanist Otto Höfler, Jankuhn responded by denying Aner access to the

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<sup>114</sup> Bollmus, *Amt Rosenberg*, 180-1.

<sup>115</sup> Steuer, "Jankuhn," 439-40.

<sup>116</sup> Jankuhn, *Haithabu. Eine germanische Stadt der Frühzeit*, 2nd ed., (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1938), 195.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Halle, *Externsteine*, 429-30.

Haithabu site, which threatened Aner's dissertation project and forced him to apologize.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, Jankuhn's close ties to the Ahnenerbe secretary Wolfram Sievers (1905-1947) allowed him to advance the careers of archaeologists whose views placed them at odds with Rosenberg's organization. This included the archaeologist Alfred Rust, who had abandoned a career as an electric technician to become a self-made archaeologist in the 1920s.<sup>120</sup> Rust's work at Ahrensburg had revolutionized the understanding of paleolithic culture by uncovering one of the earliest human archaeological sites in northern Europe, which had attracted tremendous worldwide interest. To protect his work from manipulation, Jankuhn and Sievers managed to provide funding to allow Rust to continue his excavations through the end of World War II as a corresponding member of the Ahnenerbe.<sup>121</sup> Sievers was even able to work with Schwantes to help Rust, who was an academic outsider, without a doctoral title, obtain a position in the Schleswig-Holstein Provincial Preservation Office.<sup>122</sup>

On the eve of World War II, Herbert Jankuhn had, according to Michael Kater, become a "parade horse" for the Third Reich, but he had also become one of the most powerful and most visible figures in his field. Perhaps more importantly, he and his colleagues at Kiel had found a new balance between the demands of rigorous, international scholarship and accommodation with the ideological goals of the National Socialist regime. Such a measure of equilibrium, however, would be challenged by the outbreak of war and the occupation of Denmark and Norway.

### **Borderland Archaeology in War and Occupation, 1940-1943**

Soon after the start of the war, the staff of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum arranged to transport some of its most significant holdings away from the naval bases in Kiel to relative

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<sup>119</sup> Jankuhn to Wolfram Sievers, 10 January 1939, Jankuhn to the Rector of the CAU, 8 February 1939, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 27; Aner retracted his statements in Aner to Jankuhn, 25 February 1939, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 27,

<sup>120</sup> "Alfred Rust und die Rahmenbedingung," 6-7.

<sup>121</sup> See Jankuhn to Sievers, 26 January 1939; Sievers to Rust, 7 February 1940, ALM Nachlass Rust.

<sup>122</sup> Schwantes to Sievers, 12 February 1940, ALM Nachlass Rust.

safety. Hired transport companies demolished one wall of the museum building to drag the Nydam boat onto a truck, where they paraded it through a crowd of onlookers on the streets of the city and carried it away to the famous Schierensee Manor in western Holstein.<sup>123</sup> Soon the halls of the museum stood empty save for a few scattered pieces and the two giant rune stones from the Haithabu site, which local engineers had declined to move for fear of damage. In a letter to the museum, the *Oberbürgermeister* of Kiel bemoaned the need to close the institution, but promised a grand new museum in the city's *Altstadt*. "In this location, it would form in connection with the Kieler Schloss an expanded Museum Quarter facing the Fjord," he wrote, "This 'Museum Island' would lie in the heart of the city traffic and thereby be accessible in the most convenient manner for locals and foreigners alike."<sup>124</sup>



The Nydam Boat on the Streets of Kiel in 1940. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

It was possible for the *Oberbürgermeister* to harbor grandiose dreams in 1942. Early in that year, the German war machine was still bedecked in the aura of success. With

<sup>123</sup> Karl Kersten, "Aktenvermerk," 8 December 1944, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1.

<sup>124</sup> Office of the Oberbürgermeister to Schleswig-Holstein Museum, 10 February 1942, ALM MuG 30.

victory on the horizon, the plans for the museum revealed the important role of archaeology in the Nazi vision of the postwar order. Indeed, between 1939 and 1943, the mounting conquests of the German war effort were closely tied to the territorial imperialism inherent in Nazi ideology,<sup>125</sup> particularly in relation to its invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.<sup>126</sup> Thus even as Herbert Jankuhn remembered “being of the firm opinion with almost all good Germans that World War II was imposed upon Hitler,”<sup>127</sup> he and his colleagues seem to have embraced the expansive ambitions of the Nazi state. Moreover, each, with the exception of the aging Schwantes, expressed a willingness to use their connections to the SS Ahnenerbe to serve the Reich through their scholarship. On the day of the Polish invasion, Jankuhn requested that he be allowed to join the aerial photography unit of the Luftwaffe,<sup>128</sup> while Alfred Rust, who was too old for front line units, wrote to Sievers to be allowed to serve from Ahrensburg:

I would like to come to the completion of the work in front of me and consider it for the moment as more important than if I were drafted as old bones at the *Kasernenhof* behind my flak cannon. I would immediately change my opinion if it were the case that I could conquer the Suez Canal in my second homeland or take the “lonely island” to the west . . . Should these wishes not be fulfilled, so I hope to be able to use my experiences from [my] mercenary’s life abroad after the victory.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Aristotle Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922-1945*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 160-4.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 530.

<sup>127</sup> Kater, “Gedächtnisprotokoll Jankuhn,” ALM Nachlaß Jankuhn GB 27.

<sup>128</sup> Jankuhn to Sievers, 8 October 1939, BA NS 21 vorl. 51. Jankuhn had made a similar request in April 1922; See Jankuhn to Luftfahrtsministerium, 22 April 1939, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn BG 15.

<sup>129</sup> Rust to Sievers, 18 December 1940, Nachlass Alfred Rust. In his reference to a “mercenary” lifestyle, Rust is no doubt thinking of his journey across the Near East on a bicycle in the early 1930s, where he conducted excavations and mastered his craft. In a commentary on this letter, Bernd Wegener has mentioned Rust’s “bizarre wit,” which makes his letters stand out from ordinary SS correspondence. Wegener thus warns against reading too much into his statements. While I agree with this assessment to a point, I would nevertheless argue that Rust is being sincere in offering his services to the Reich in the event of the capture of the Suez.

Peter Paulsen, meanwhile, traveled to Warsaw with a group of of colleagues from Berlin in the late autumn of 1939 and began systematically looting the museums and cultural institutions in the captured city.<sup>130</sup>

For Jankuhn, Schwantes, and Kersten, however, these heady imperialist ambitions were difficult to reconcile with the realities of war. Above all, the invasion of Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940 placed their military, political, and academic orientations into direct conflict and challenged their commitments to the Reich. Though the occupation of Scandinavia was a purely strategic measure in the fight against France and Britain,<sup>131</sup> the invasion nevertheless linked the long-held Volkish fantasies of “Greater Germany” and the kinship of “Nordic” peoples with the military needs of the Third Reich. As Hitler remarked to his invading forces, “Every member of the Wehrmacht must be aware that he is not going into enemy territory but that the army is entering Denmark for the protection of the country and security of the people.”<sup>132</sup> Indeed, Denmark and Norway became the focus of an intense propaganda effort to win northern Europeans to the National Socialist cause. The German government discouraged agitation from Danish Nazi groups and German minorities in part because it did not wish to disrupt political and economic relations with those countries.<sup>133</sup> Yet there was no denying that Norway and Denmark enjoyed a privileged status in occupied Europe because of German ideas about Scandinavians. Nordic cooperation was, after all, tantamount to an endorsement of Nazi ideology and was offered as proof of the inherent harmony of the Nordic race. Himmler personally sought to prove this notion with his aggressive recruiting operations for his SS divisions, whom he saw as “the advance guard of an idea.”<sup>134</sup> He drew on the symbolism of prehistory by awarding his Scandinavian

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<sup>130</sup> Pringle, *Master Plan*, 197. Jankuhn was accused of this crime after the war in an article in the East German journal *Hochschulwesen*, but Prof. Dr. Knorad Jazdzewski, who was assistant curator and later director of the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw recalled that he never met or came into contact with Jankuhn.

<sup>131</sup> Hans-Dietrich Looock, “Weserübung - a Step towards the Greater Germanic Reich,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 2 (1977), 67-88.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, (New York: Norton, 1974), 107.

<sup>133</sup> Lumans, “The Nordic Destiny,” 114-15.

<sup>134</sup> Mark P. Gingerich, “Waffen SS Recruitment in the ‘Germanic Lands,’ 1940-1941,” *Historian* 59/4 (1997), 821.

unit the title of SS *Wiking*.<sup>135</sup> To this group, Hitler spoke on the kinship between Germany and Northern Europe. “I understand that it may be hard for a young Dutchman or a young Norwegian to find himself called upon to fight a common war within the framework of the Reich,” he said, “But what is asked of them is no harder than what was asked of the Germanic tribes at the time of the great migrations... Confronted with the innumerable populations of the East, we cannot exist except on condition that all Germanics are united.”<sup>136</sup>

Nordic cooperation was also of obvious value to the German military, but the military’s needs in the field were at times harmful to cultural sites in the occupied territories, which in turn threatened the Nazi’s desire to project an image of racial and cultural harmony. Jankuhn was especially aware of the potential dangers, and wrote to Franz Walter Stahlecker, who was serving with the SS in Norway at the time, to request he be allowed to inspect cultural monuments there.<sup>137</sup> As a result, Sievers arranged to have Jankuhn’s military training cancelled before dispatching him to Oslo and Kersten to Copenhagen.<sup>138</sup> In the Norwegian capital, Jankuhn faced a tough battle against the occupation authorities when he not only recommended allowing Norwegian excavation projects to continue, but even proposed that the Germans fund an ongoing excavation at the massive Raknehaugen grave hill.<sup>139</sup> In his request for 12,000 RM for the project, Jankuhn engaged in a bitter argument with Stahlecker over the need and usefulness of such an expenditure. Ultimately, he used his own influence to convince Himmler to intercede in favor of the Norwegian Museum (*Oldsaksamling*). In a letter to Sievers, Himmler wrote:

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 829.

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941-44*, trans. Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1953), 327-8. This excerpt comes from a speech delivered in February, 1942.

<sup>137</sup> Stahlecker to Sievers, 19 April 1940, BA NS vorl 59.

<sup>138</sup> Sievers to Franz Walter Stahlecker, 24 April 1940, BA NS 21 vorl. 59. Jankuhn at the time was enrolled in the Police School in Prietzsh/Elbe.

<sup>139</sup> Jankuhn to the Commandant of the SD Einsatzkommando Oslo, 4 May 1940, BA NS 21 vorl 59.

Securing Norwegian monuments is a matter of honor for the SS and Police . . . I am making the 12,000 RM available for the excavation. I ask, however, that Jankuhn not take the dig away from the Norwegians, rather that the Ahnenerbe simply appear to be protecting and supportive. Jankuhn can function as expert friend and advisor. The matter calls for a great deal of tact. We must naturally be mindful of the feelings of the Norwegians, because it is understandable that they do not see us Germans as friends.<sup>140</sup>

Postwar historiography on Jankuhn has often repeated the charge that he was responsible for having the director of the Oldsaksamling, A.W. Brøgger, arrested for resistance activities in 1941.<sup>141</sup> Jankuhn adamantly denied the charges after the war, and in a 1949 letter Brøgger affirmed that he had never accused Jankuhn of the act. In fact, he reported, he had been arrested twice in 1941, the first time by Norwegian “Quislingers,” and the second time by occupation authorities.<sup>142</sup> Above all, Jankuhn, even as he earned a rather poor reputation in Norway after the war, seemed to have acted at least in part with his colleagues’ interests in mind.

In Denmark, meanwhile, Kersten encountered not only the resistance from the military, but also bitterness from the Danes. In one of his reports, he remarked:

There is no mistaking at the moment the strong resentment against Germany. I could not find among any of the numerous people of all classes with whom I spoke in Jutland an understanding for Germany’s situation and the necessity of the German invasion, rather [I found] without exception a growing rejection of Germany, indeed in part an outspoken hatred against Germany and an expression of sympathy for England. I had the impression that the voice among the Danish population has greatly worsened since the summer [of 1940]. Especially noticeable is also the widely-spread propaganda that I encountered everywhere in the train, in hotels, etc.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Himmler to Sievers, 29 May 1940, BA NS 21 vorl. 59.

<sup>141</sup> See for example Scott, “The Norwegian Example,” 333-4.

<sup>142</sup> Brøgger to Jankuhn, 24 March 1949, ALM Nachlass Jankuhn, unnumbered.

<sup>143</sup> Kersten, “Bericht über eine Reise durch Dänemark zum Schutz der vorgeschichtlichen Denkmäler im Auftrage des Reichsführers SS in der Zeit vom 23. Oktober bis zum 5. November 1940, BA NS 21 vorl. 86.



Moreover, Kersten soon discovered that the National Museum was not eager to cooperate with the Germans even in matters involving preservation. In Jutland, Kersten worked to preserve grave hills from destruction during the construction of Luftwaffe airfields and military barracks, but learned from Brøndsted, with whom he maintained friendly personal ties, that the National Museum would conduct excavations only with their own laborers.<sup>144</sup> Such freedom of choice was possible to a greater degree in Denmark, where the archaeologists of the National Museum operated almost completely autonomously, a condition that was impossible for archeologists in the much more tightly-controlled city of Oslo. Indeed, the archaeologists in Copenhagen completed a number of projects during the war years, including sixteen grave hills at Esbjerg in 1940.<sup>145</sup>

The greater autonomy also left Danish archaeologists faced with a personal choice of whether to cooperate with the Nazi occupation. Some, such as Gudmund Hatt and Mogens Mackeprang, did speak out on behalf of the German occupation.<sup>146</sup> A number of other archaeologists, however, actively participated in the Danish resistance, and there is some evidence to suggest that the Museum itself was a center of resistance activities.<sup>147</sup> In the middle of this activity was Karl Kersten, who gradually came to act as a liaison between the National Museum and the German occupation authorities. Kersten seems to have maintained friendly ties with the Danes, and Poul Nørlund later praised his efforts to preserve Danish sites.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, the rumor persists in both Kiel and Copenhagen that Kersten was somehow involved in warning Danes of an impending threat from German authorities late in the war and that he thus aided them in their resistance efforts.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Jes Martens, "Die nordische Archäologie und das 'Dritte Reich,'" in *Prähistorie und Nationalsozialismus*, 611-14. Mogens Mackeprang should not be confused with Mourtiz Mackeprang, who led the Danish negotiations for the Nydam Collection in 1922. See Chapter 5.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 609, note 44.

<sup>148</sup> Poul Nørlund, "Nationalmuseet i de onde aar," *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* (1946): 5-14.

<sup>149</sup> Martens, "Die nordische Archäologie," 609, note 44. Martens heard this from Georg Kunwald and Harald Andersen, who were active in the Museum during the war but who were not directly involved with Kersten. Before reading Martens' article, I had heard this account from Michael Gebühr, who worked with Kersten in Kiel after the war. Gebühr claimed to have heard the story from Kersten himself, that he had given the Danes advance notice to remove encoding equipment from the National Museum before a Nazi raid. There is, unfortunately, no firm written evidence that has yet appeared to prove this account.

Interestingly, this relationship continued even after Kersten joined the SS in the summer of 1942 in order to avoid Wehrmacht service and continue his scientific work.<sup>150</sup>

Whatever the case, Kersten and Jankuhn's activities in Scandinavia, which have gone largely unreported, raise fresh questions about their motives in Eastern Europe, where both became involved in archaeological activities after the invasion of the Soviet Union. Though Jankuhn denied it to Kater in the 1960s,<sup>151</sup> there now seems little doubt, as Heather Pringle has reported, that Jankuhn and Kersten, and possibly Alfred Rust,<sup>152</sup> took part in seizing artifacts from institutions in Southern Russia in 1942 and 1943.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, it is not difficult to imagine that they either witnessed or knew about the activities of *Einsatzgruppe D*, which was conducting a mass murder campaign in the wake of the SS *Wiking* division.<sup>154</sup> In light of these circumstances, there is little doubt, as Anja Heuss has reported, that Nazi archaeologists like Jankuhn and Kersten took an approach to their work in the East that was decidedly different and more exploitative than in Western Europe.<sup>155</sup>

For Himmler, Ahnenerbe activities in Russia marked an important step in the long-standing tradition of "Eastern Research" (*Ostforschung*), which in this case represented an incoherent set of academic practices that reinforced German territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe.<sup>156</sup> Just as Nazi propagandists began to place more stress upon a "War of Annihilation" (*Vernichtungskrieg*) against the Bolsheviks, so the rhetoric of

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<sup>150</sup> Sievers, Vermerk, 17 February 1942, BA NS vorl. 52. According to Sievers, "Dr. Kersten, born '08, expects that he will be drafted into the Wehrmacht sooner or later . . . It would be advisable, if we could effect Kersten's induction [into the SS] as quickly as possible . . . and then again have him available for our research tasks, particularly since Kersten is scheduled for assignment in Russia."

<sup>151</sup> Kater, "Gedächtnisprotokoll," ALM Nachlass Jankuhn GB 27.

<sup>152</sup> Rust was mentioned as scheduled to go to Russia in Karl Wolff to Rust, 20 April 1943, ALM Nachlass Rust. There is, however, no evidence that he undertook the trip. Unfortunately, Rust's family has not permitted access to his passport, so the mystery of his whereabouts remains. See "Alfred Rust und die Rahmenbedingungen," 26-27. According to his colleague Gernot Tromnau, Rust did not go to the Crimea, but received Crimean artifacts from Jankuhn at the end of the war.

<sup>153</sup> Pringle, *Master Plan*, 211-26.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>155</sup> See Anja Heuss, *Kunst- und Kulturgutraub. Eine vergleichende Studie zur Besatzungspolitik der Nationalsozialisten in Frankreich und der Sowjetunion*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000).

<sup>156</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 25.

archaeological writing changed and began casting the narrative of prehistory in terms of great struggle between West and East. As one archaeologist wrote:

It is a development of almost four thousand years. It teaches us in no uncertain terms how fateful the eastern region is for Europe and the whole of Indogermandom, and it is a warning and dutiful task. The decisive struggle in the East in spite of its uniqueness does not stand alone, but is the climax of millennia of opposition between the Indogermanic peoples of the Nordic race and the foreign strength of the eastern steppes . . .<sup>157</sup>

Archaeology was thus able to do what politics and history alone could not; it provided a unique sense of depth to a narrative of conflict and conquest in the East. It awarded continuity and hence legitimacy to massive invasions and war, and it could claim to be acting as part of an almost sacred patriotic duty of reading the past and conveying its message (and the state's) to a popular readership. Above all, its practitioners could do so without significantly breaking their own sense of continuity with the work of their teachers. Finding "Germanic" remains in the occupied territories of Russia and the Ukraine also validated occupation, and, for this reason, Himmler was eager to secure artifacts in the recently captured territories. In the summer of 1942 he cast his eye on southern Russia, where the Crimean city of Sevastopol was at last about to fall, and dispatched Jankuhn and Kersten to the area.

Here it is worth asking whether the intentions of Jankuhn and Kersten were completely in step with Himmler's dreams of *Großgermanentum*. While the surviving documentation on their work in Russia is sparse, the available letters from Jankuhn suggested that he endorsed the idea that the Caucasus was at one time the site of "Germanic" settlement and that he was eager to prove the connections through archaeological research. Indeed, one of the photos from his Russian travels, which are now among his papers at the Schleswig-Holstein Museum, depicts an ethnic German girl with a note on the back written in Jankuhn's handwriting, "Nina, blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl." At the same time, however, he seems to have recognized an urgent need to

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<sup>157</sup> Joseph Wiesner, "Der Osten als Schicksalsraum Europas und des Indogermanentums," *Germanien* 6 (June, 1942), 220.

safeguard sites and artifacts from depredations by both sides, even to the point of conducting investigations in the midst of the war zone. In fact, Jankuhn was equally critical of both Russian and German treatment of regional antiquity. In a letter to Hitler's personal staff office in August 1943, for example, he complained bitterly about the German destruction of the prehistory museum in Kharkov, writing, "And thus is one of the most important museums in Russia with invaluable scientific finds surrendered to destruction through the actions of the German civil administration."<sup>158</sup>



Jankuhn (in civilian attire) on one of his wartime travels. Archäologisches Landesmuseum.

Such examples, of course, do not warrant an absolution of borderland archaeologists during the Nazi conquest, but do suggest the need for a broader reevaluation of their reasons for participating in what can only be described as blatant acts of cultural imperialism. In the very least, it seems clear that the involvement of Jankuhn and Kersten in the occupation of conquered territories was beset by a certain level of ambiguity, even if there were vast differences between the degrees of their collaboration

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<sup>158</sup> Jankuhn to the Amt Ahnenerbe 13 August 1943, BA NS 15 vorl. 620.

in Scandinavia and the Soviet Union. In both cases, however, the experience proved the greatest challenge to reconciling the contradictions lurking within their professional relationship with the Third Reich, and, as became clear after the war, marked a turning point in the development of the discipline in Germany.

## Conclusion

The autumn of 1943, which began a period of unceasing German retreat on the Eastern Front, marked the end of the Ahnenerbe's archaeological expeditions. After his activities in Russia in 1943, Jankuhn disappeared from the record until 1945, when he was attached to the IV. SS Panzer Korps in an unknown capacity until the unit's surrender to the Americans in May 1945. Thereafter, Jankuhn entered an American prisoner of war camp and was investigated for war crimes on account of his service with the Waffen SS, which he had ended with the honorary rank of *Sturmbannführer*.<sup>159</sup> Kersten fared better, being sent back to Kiel in 1943, where his work at the Museum and in Copenhagen spared him further military service.<sup>160</sup> Following the war, he retained his position as Director, while Schwantes kept his chair at the university.

Placed in the broader history of archaeology in the German-Danish borderland, the period from the *Machtergreifung* to the first half of the Second World War represented a rather dramatic political denouement to the narrative of the nationalist tradition of regional archaeology. In many ways, the emerging dominance of a conservative national identity, formed in the context of the ongoing border question, created a common space where German archaeologists (and even some Danes) could fulfill the needs of the Third Reich without compromising their adherence to scientific principles. Yet, at first glance, the stunning acquiescence of Kiel archaeologists to the imperialist dreams of the Reich in 1942 and 1943 seemed to mark a sharp break with this delicate balance between academic and political commitments. It was a turn that, according to Pringle, even

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<sup>159</sup> Jankuhn, "Fragebogen," 4-6.

<sup>160</sup> See for example Werner Best to Sievers, 24 July 1944, BA NS vorl. 52.

Jankuhn himself was at a loss to explain.<sup>161</sup> Only by recognizing, as Konrad Jarausch has suggested,<sup>162</sup> the incremental process of engagement with the Nazi state, does the wartime picture become clearer. While the motives of archaeologists like Paulsen and Reinerth remain an open question, it seems clear that it in the case of Jankuhn, Schwatntes, and Kersten, it was not Nazism, but strains of nationalism that had for so long colored the discipline in the borderland, that facilitated the relationship between the Nazi state and Kiel prehistorians through the mid-1930s.

The fact that this relationship changed dramatically after 1937 related to a shifting set of priorities over time. Academic integrity was certainly among these, but perhaps equally important were academic relationships. As a result, it was less likely that German prehistorians would engage in the same kind of cultural plundering in Scandinavia that occurred in the Soviet Union. Indeed, Jankuhn and Kersten each showed a willingness to resist the Nazi government in an attempt to protect both antiquities and their colleagues in Germany and Norway. For this reason, the transnational and international dimension became an extremely salient motivation and justification for the decision to collaborate. On this point, it also important to note that the decision in Kiel to embrace the SS and Himmler's radical ideology was one that was either tacitly accepted or perhaps even welcomed by some Scandinavian scholars.<sup>163</sup>

Whatever the cause, however, the results remain appalling, and present an even more daunting question of how these archaeologists, like so many other professional Germans, managed to separate their work from the moral implications of collaboration. It is true, of course, that prehistoric research insulated German archaeologists from some of the more gruesome crimes of the Nazi regime, but these prehistorians could not have failed to notice what was happening around them, not when Gerhard Bersu and other Jewish colleagues were forced out of the profession, nor when the books of the library in Kiel

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<sup>161</sup> Pringle, *Master Plan*, 312-13.

<sup>162</sup> Jarausch, "The Conundrum of Complicity: German Professionals and the Final Solution," Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 11 June 2001, 16.

<sup>163</sup> This begs the question, of course, of how much Danes and Swedes knew about German collaboration. According to Jes Martens, most in the National Museum claimed to be unaware of the Ahnenerbe or of Kersten and Jankuhn's activities abroad. See Martens "nordische Archäologie," 609, note 40. Conversely, Jankuhn told Michael Kater that he had discussed his potential SS membership with Swedish and Danish archeologists during the meeting in Copenhagen in October 1937. See Kater, "Gedächtnisprotokoll."

fell victim to the Nazi bonfires, nor when thousands of Russians and Ukrainians were murdered at the hands of the SS Einsatzgruppen.

There were also dire consequences on the home front, where the war not only destroyed the infrastructure of the profession, but reopened the chasm between Germans and Danes following the experience of war, occupation, and the final defeat of Germany in 1945. The ensuing years would thus leave archaeologists on both sides grappling not only with the physical, political, and professional consequences of the end of the Second World War, but also the ethical and moral consequences of their allegiances and choices during the Nazi Era.

## CONCLUSION

Following several near misses, the intense Allied bombardment of the naval facilities in Kiel struck the Schleswig-Holstein Museum on May 22nd, 1944.<sup>1</sup> Although most of the artifacts were spared annihilation, dozens of volumes of archaeological scholarship and the collection's permanent home were lost. The crisis worsened in the autumn, when the German navy, without prior notice, decided to evict the museum's collection from its temporary quarters in Schierensee Manor. On a cold November morning in 1944, naval authorities deposited two railway cars in the tiny hamlet of Owschlag with a note addressed to Søren Telling (1895-1968),<sup>2</sup> a Danish antiquarian living in Germany and serving as the *de facto* caretaker of the Danewall.<sup>3</sup> Inside the carriages, Telling found to his astonishment the dented and battered boxes that held the artifacts of the Schleswig-Holstein Museum. Some of the crates had shattered, and a number of relics, including at least one Bronze-Age sword, lay strewn about the carriage floor.<sup>4</sup> With war regulations affording him only twenty-four hours to move the contents, Telling located an empty garage nearby and hastily unloaded the crates, where they awaited their fate in worsening winter conditions.<sup>5</sup> Gustav Schwantes and Karl Kersten ultimately managed to use their SS connections to convince the Navy to transport the artifacts to a guesthouse in the Hüttener Berg near Owschlag, but even these new quarters failed to provide a proper environment for the delicate material.

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<sup>1</sup> Schwantes, Denkschrift, 10 September 1946; Kersten, Aktenvermerk 8 December 1944, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1.

<sup>2</sup> Schwantes to Apotheker Sonder, 3 January 1945, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1.

<sup>3</sup> Søren Telling, *25 Aar paa Danevirke*, (Holbæk: Forlaget Norden, 1965), 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Kersten, Aktenvermerk, 8 December 1944.

<sup>5</sup> Schwantes to Apotheker Sonder, 3 January 1945, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1.



The incident, which Schwantes called “unprecedented in German history,”<sup>6</sup> underscored the deteriorating conditions for archaeologists at the end of the Second World War. The Nazis’ care and concern for the relics of Germanic and Nordic prehistory, which had been so strong in the 1930s, evaporated in the midst of a disintegrating state. The needs of the total war effort gradually eclipsed the impetus to exploit prehistory or even to preserve its remains from collateral destruction. Indeed, by the time the Germans surrendered to the Allies in May, 1945, archaeological activity had virtually ceased in the region, even though the progress of the war posed an increasing threat to ancient sites. Telling, for instance, had only just in time warned Kersten of the Wehrmacht’s plans to fortify the Danewall with anti-tank bunkers, which allowed him to prevent irreparable damage to the site.<sup>7</sup> The two men later wrangled with the German government over military service and travel restrictions as they sought to conduct limited archaeological salvage operations across the province before the arrival of British occupation forces.<sup>8</sup> Schwantes, meanwhile, escaped the devastation in Kiel by fleeing with his family to the town of Twedt, where he found himself forced to coordinate preservation efforts without a telephone connection.<sup>9</sup>

As the conflict drew to its tumultuous close in 1944 and 1945, the archaeological community in the borderland was suddenly confronted both with the physical hardships of war and with a nationalist legacy that had drawn some archaeologists into collaboration with the Third Reich. Following the capitulation, the archaeologists in the borderland began to face the physical, moral, and intellectual consequences of the Nazi Era. In concluding this study, it is important to ask how the stunning events of the 1930s and 1940s changed the nature of archaeological thought and of the academic community in the borderland. The reconstruction of the discipline in the first five years after the war entailed not only a battle to accomplish the physical rebuilding of institutions, but also a

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Schwantes to Rust, 10 November 1944, SHLB Nachlass Schwantes Cb 47-683.

<sup>8</sup> Schwantes related the story in a letter to the National Museum, 4 June 1945, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1. See also the Supplement to Søren Telling’s *Ausweis*, which grants him freedom of movement and excuses him from *Volkssturm* obligations, in ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.2.

<sup>9</sup> Schwantes to Schleswig-Holstein Oberpräsident, 2 November 1944, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.1.

struggle to save tarnished careers, to renew ties abroad, and to find a new theoretical foundation upon which to rest the practice of archaeology.

## **Ruin and Recovery**

As the humid conditions of the Hüttener Berg began to take their toll on the artifacts, Schwantes and Kersten, who were quickly reinstated after the German surrender by the British military occupation, raced to find a new home for the collection. As early as September, 1945, however, they realized that Kiel could no longer support the museum. “You could scarcely conjure an image of today’s Kiel in your wildest dreams,” Schwantes wrote to a friend, “It is unfortunately no longer a small city, but rather an erstwhile metropolis of widely scattered rubble.”<sup>10</sup> The sheer scale of the devastation in the city left few spaces available, and, as Schwantes complained, “The plan originally was to move the museum back to Kiel, but the *Oberbürgermeister* . . . was more interested in bringing a factory to the city than the museum.”<sup>11</sup> Schwantes and Kersten rejected an offer both from the University of Kiel to spare some space in the university library and from British Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Branch to move the collection into the Museum für Volkerkunde in Hamburg.<sup>12</sup> Rather, they continued to hold out hope that the museum might return to its former glory without surrendering its autonomy to another institution.

By April, 1946, the most likely candidates for the new museum included the towns of Schleswig and Husum, which lay on the western coast.<sup>13</sup> Both represented tremendous risks, since their relatively small populations did not lend themselves to supporting a large regional institution. This was especially the case for Husum, whose size was coupled with a lack of proximity to any major cities. For this reason, Schwantes and Kersten began making plans to move the museum to Schleswig in the summer of 1946.

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<sup>10</sup> Schwantes to Reinecke, 24 September 1946, SHLB Nachlass Schwantes Cb 47-681.

<sup>11</sup> Schwantes, Denkschrift.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Kersten, Aktenvermerk.

The local government in Schleswig, which was eager to reinvigorate the town with a tourist economy,<sup>14</sup> welcomed the move, and began working to afford the museum a facility in Schloss Gottorf, the famous residence of the former Dukes of Schleswig. Even this space, however, was in jeopardy, as thousands of refugees from eastern Germany poured into the region in search of safety and shelter. Before the museum could install its artifacts, the move was delayed by 800 refugees who took up residence in the upper floors of the castle.<sup>15</sup>

The growing refugee crisis in Schleswig-Holstein also fueled a resurgence of Danish nationalism in Denmark and southern Schleswig that served as a final reminder of the close ties between the fate of regional antiquities and the status of the border. The influx of refugees had sparked an unprecedented demographic transformation in the region that threatened the already precarious status of members of the Danish minority. Although the Danish government had declared at the end of the war that it had no territorial interests in the borderland,<sup>16</sup> this gesture did not correspond with the growing desire of many Danes on both sides of the border to bring South Schleswig into Denmark. Indeed, many Danish archaeologists also shared this sentiment, including Johannes Brøndsted, who in a public address in 1947 declared: “May Denmark as a healthy and vital state recognize its national obligation and hear this: don’t leave *Sydslesvig* in the lurch.”<sup>17</sup>

Accompanying the vocal demands for a “Free South Schleswig,” was a renewed call for the return of the Nydam and Thorsberg Collections. The impetus stemmed from the successful recovery of the contentious Lion of Idstedt (*Idstedsløven*), the Danish monument commemorating the victory at the Battle of Idstedt in 1851,<sup>18</sup> and by Søren

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<sup>14</sup> See “Slesvig, Slesvig. Omstridte Land - og Byen med,” *Flensborg Avis* (12 May, 1951).

<sup>15</sup> Captain Ewan Phillips to the Schleswig-Holstein Landesverwaltung, 17 January 1947 and 15 July 1948, ALM MuG 32.

<sup>16</sup> According to Norman Berdishevsky, the Danish Social Democratic Party had taken this step as a gesture to the German SPD in the hopes of future cooperation. See Berdishevsky, *German-Danish Border Dispute*, 113.

<sup>17</sup> Johannes Brøndsted and Lis Jacobsen, *Sydslesvig Frit: To Taler holdt i København*, (Copenhagen: Roesenkilde og Bagger, 1947), 8.

<sup>18</sup> “Neue Bestrebungen, das Nydam-Boat ins Schloss zu Sonderburg zu schaffen,” translated from *Sønderjyden* (23 September 1949), in ALM OA Nydam 60; On the history of the monument, see Bjørn Poulson and Ulrich Schulte-Wülwer, *Idstedløven: et national monument og dets skæbne*, (Herning: Poul Kristensens forlag, 1993).

Telling's discovery of the associated Idsted-Løvens Medallions in the Kieler Schloss, which the British government returned to Denmark in late 1945.<sup>19</sup> For the South Schleswigers, the return of the Nydam Boat represented a symbolic affirmation of their broader wish for re-annexation and proof of their claim that South Schleswig, "has since time immemorial belonged to Denmark."<sup>20</sup>

There was, in fact, little support outside the border region for re-annexation. In the context of an emerging Cold War, none of the Western Allies were willing to create bad feeling in Germany over a border issue that had ostensibly been solved by a popular plebiscite in 1920. The British government, in cooperation with the Danish Parliament, even ordered Flensburgers to stop circulating their petitions.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, Major G.F. Wilmot, the head of the British Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives branch, informed Schwantes and Kersten that Flensburg was not a suitable location for the new museum, presumably because it might inflame separatist tensions.<sup>22</sup> The question of transferring antiquities, however, remained unclear in the first five years after the war, in part because the demands for repatriation received support from scholars in Copenhagen. According to press reports, Poul Nørlund approached the British government directly after the war and asked that they oversee the repatriation of the Nydam and Thorsberg Collections.<sup>23</sup> Nørlund, however, was apparently concerned less with the national significance of the artifacts and more with their endangered condition. There is no record that he sought to have the collections brought to Copenhagen, rather, he seems to have endorsed a proposal to move them to Sønderborg, where a suitable space was available at Sønderborg Slot, the home of Sønderjylland's largest provincial museum.<sup>24</sup> Nørlund's endorsement placed extraordinary pressure on Schwantes and Kersten to convince the

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<sup>19</sup> "Paa Jagt efter Isted-Løvens Medaillioner," *Flensborg Avis* (17 November, 1945).

<sup>20</sup> These words had appeared on a petition signed by 10,000 citizens of Flensburg calling for a new plebiscite. Quoted in Berdichevsky, *German-Danish Border Dispute*, 112.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-22.

<sup>22</sup> Schwantes, *Denkschrift*.

<sup>23</sup> "Neue Bestrebungen."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

British military authorities that Germany should retain possession. As Schwantes explained:

As Major Wilmot informed me, the Museum is in the possession of the Prussian state, whose property falls subject to reparations owed the occupying powers . . . This legally affords Denmark the possibility of collectively demanding as reparations all finds stemming from North Schleswig, including the Nydam finds.<sup>25</sup>

For Schwantes, the solution to the problem was to end the museum's status as national property. "This danger can only be faced," he wrote, "with an immediate transfer of the Antiquities Museum to the possession of the province."<sup>26</sup> Such a move, he argued, would remove the legal justification for seizing the artifacts. Moreover, Schwantes called for a new museum that could properly maintain and study the collection and thereby placate the archaeological community in Denmark. To that end, he recommended that the director of the Museum take a chair at the university and also supervise the activities of the Provincial Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments.<sup>27</sup>

The final step in Schwantes' plan was to ensure that the new facility would meet the museum's needs. Indeed, the controversy over the collections offered another incentive for moving the museum to Schleswig, which would place it within reach of Haithabu and the Danewall and make it more accessible to visitors from Denmark. In March, 1947, the British military evacuated all refugees from Schloss Gottorf and turned the building over to the control of the local German authorities.<sup>28</sup> Yet the castle still required important renovations, and for some time there was no adequate space for the Nydam Boat, which remained at risk from the winter weather.<sup>29</sup> When the condition had not

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<sup>25</sup> Schwantes to Prof. Dr. Burck, 6 August 1946, SHLB Nachlass Schwantes Cb 47-683.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Captain Ewan Phillips to the Landesverwaltung, 17 January 1947.

<sup>29</sup> Schwantes to Jankuhn, 28 February 1947, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.2.

improved two years later,<sup>30</sup> both Kersten and Schwantes began emphasizing the international importance of the collection to support their search for funding. As Kersten reported:

In light of such a great meaning of the Nydam Boat it is understandable that the Danish state in 1920 and more recently has demanded the transfer of the Nydam finds. The current situation therefore demands the prompt completion and opening of the Nydam Hall . . . Also in view of the extraordinarily frequent visits to our year-old special exhibit and the completely unfitting present condition of the displayed Nydam Boat, which above all can no longer be represented to the large numbers of Scandinavian visitors, we ask in consideration of these circumstances for the immediate preparation of the requested . . . funding from the 1949 budget.<sup>31</sup>

In his plea for aid, Schwantes gave specific figures, claiming that over 15,000 visitors had viewed the museum in August, 1949 alone. In echoing Kersten's request for funding for a special Nydam Hall, he added, "This [request] is all the more urgent in light of the international danger that exists for the Nydam Boat."<sup>32</sup>

Such pressure seems to have been effective in convincing sympathetic officials to release the needed funds. In the spring of 1950, the renovated Schleswig-Holstein Archäologisches Landesmuseum and the adjacent Nydam exhibit, which occupied a nineteenth-century Danish barracks adjacent the castle, opened to the public. Karl Kersten, whom Schwantes publicly called "one of my greatest discoveries,"<sup>33</sup> succeeded his retiring mentor as both Director of the Museum and of the Provincial Preservation Office. Kersten's reputation and history of friendly ties with Scandinavia lent the museum a level of credibility, but the question remained how international visitors, and more importantly international scholars, would respond. Søren Telling, who had risked his own safety to preserve the collection, promoted the museum in the Danish press while

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<sup>30</sup> Ref. Ohrenschall, Landesregierung, to Landesminister Dr. Schenk, Ministerium für Volksbildung, 14 February 1949, ALM MuG 32a.

<sup>31</sup> Kersten to the Ministerium für Volksbildung 2 June 1949, ALM OA Nydam 60.

<sup>32</sup> Schwantes to the Landesministerium für Volksbildung, 12 August 1949, ALM OA Nydam 60.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in "Schloß Gottorf: Erfüllung meines Lebenstraumes," *Kieler Nachrichten* (22 September, 1950).

praising the “congenial tone” of the city of Schleswig towards its Danish visitors.<sup>34</sup> Over the next year, Swedish and Danish archaeologists toured the museum, and began reporting positively on the product of Kersten’s labors. After his first visit in 1950, Poul Nørlund recognized Gottorf as one of the most significant museums in all of Europe. “All northern scholars must come to Schleswig,” he declared.<sup>35</sup> Brøndsted offered even more praise, saying, “It seems magical to me that such a museum could be built with such little money! I have in all my wide travels never seen a museum that can measure with this one in beauty and quality.”<sup>36</sup>



The Schleswig-Holstein Landesmuseum in Schloss Gottorf. Nils Jepsen.

Such endorsements from Nørlund and Brøndsted were significant because they effectively ended the discussion over the fate of the collections and the long-standing controversy over regional antiquities. Without the support of academics, the popular demand for repatriation lost much of its power and seemed out of place in a climate of increasing reconciliation. Only two years earlier, the Danish Social Democratic Party,

<sup>34</sup> Telling, “Gottorf som Museet,” *Jyllands Posten* (24 August, 1950).

<sup>35</sup> “Schloß Gottorf: Erfüllung meines Lebenstraumes,” *Kieler Nachrichten* (22 September, 1950).

<sup>36</sup> “Prof. Brøndsted in Schleswig Anerkennung für Gottorf-Museum,” *Schleswiger Nachrichten* (12 April, 1951).

whose interests in cooperating with the German SPD led it to oppose the agitation on the border, had won a convincing victory in national elections, and had laid to rest the possibility of a new plebiscite.<sup>37</sup>

Despite their widespread approval of the new museum, however, many Danes nevertheless struggled to come to terms with the possibility that the artifacts so critical to their national heritage would never return to Danish soil. In another early review, for example, the journalist Niels Friss sought to assuage yet another bitter loss by pointing out the significance of the site for Danish history. Schloss Gottorf, he reminded his readers, was the birthplace of two Danish Kings,<sup>38</sup> while the Nydam Hall was once the home of the Fourth Danish Dragoons. He recalled the long history of the struggle over antiquities in the borderland, arguing that though the collections must never come to Copenhagen, their current fate was somewhat fitting. He explained:

The Flensburg Collection's treasures, the Thorsberg and Nydam finds with the great boat . . . have returned to the disputed land from whose earth they emerged: Slesvig. Perhaps that would have pleased its finder, Conrad Engelhardt, when he could now no longer take them back to Flensburg or Copenhagen, to see them so beautifully displayed in the Danish Dragoon's drilling house at the historic Gottorf Castle - and to know that they will never again return to Kiel.<sup>39</sup>

Such words best expressed what was emerging as a new equilibrium between Germans and Danes and their shared claims to the remains of their pasts. With the calls for re-annexation fading and the hopes of recovering regional artifacts beginning to diminish, Friss encouraged his readers to see the collection's fate as a part of Danish history and an affirmation of Denmark's ties to the region. The result once again was not necessarily a solution satisfactory for all but rather a new compromise strong enough to support the overlapping claims to the past that had long gripped the region.

The new museum was, as a result, a success on a number of levels. Danish scholars accepted it because it provided a safe and accessible site for displaying the artifacts of the

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<sup>37</sup> Berdichevsky, *German-Danish Border Dispute*, 113.

<sup>38</sup> The two kings were Frederik I (1471-1533) and Christian III (1503-1559).

<sup>39</sup> Niels Friss, "Omstridte Fortidsminder atter paa slesvigske Grund," *Berlingske Tidende* (28 April, 1950).



region's ancient past. After decades of resting in an attic or in storage, the Nydam Boat at last found a place where it would be preserved from further decay and where visitors could appreciate its size and sophistication. The rest of the collection, meanwhile, could once again unfold the narrative of human development in prehistory for new generations, but now it could do so in a revered site whose own history stretched back to the Middle Ages. Moreover, the museum's place in Schleswig eased the memories of contested ownership associated with Flensburg and Kiel. It connected both Germans and Danes to their heritages in a city shaped between two cultures. Above all, the museum was a success because it reflected the transnational space that had proved so vital to the discovery of prehistory in the borderland.

### **Science, Nation, and the Impact of Borderland Archaeology**

The first five years following World War II, which witnessed the process of recovery within the discipline, served as a reminder of the many different and unexpected ways in which the transnational relationship among archaeologists shaped the linkages between antiquity and modern identity. On the one hand, the example of the German-Danish borderland is very similar to other cases where overlapping claims to the past have colored cross-border or cross-cultural conflicts. As we have seen, the peace settlements following the First World War encouraged similar activities from archaeologists working in the eastern marches of the *Kaiserreich*, where Gustaf Kossinna and his colleagues employed the same brand of nationalist scholarship to preserve Germany's claims to its eastern borders.<sup>40</sup> Such contested claims, moreover, are not unique to Northern Europe, but are in fact a worldwide phenomenon. In recent years, debate has raged over archaeological discoveries in India, Macedonia, and Israel. Here, as in other cases, divisions between religious, ethnic, and national groups have left archaeologists

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 5.

similarly tempted to make interpretations based upon the demands of a modern identity.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Schleswig-Holstein represents something of a unique case, since Germans and Danes wrestled to see differences in a Nordic/Germanic past widely viewed as shared between the two nations. This region is thus a fascinating area to begin uncovering the connections between archaeology and national identity, because the paradox inherent in distinguishing between modern Germans and Danes through prehistoric discovery reveals so clearly the agency of the scholars involved.

The central thread of this dissertation has been the network of scholars who cooperated and competed across the border from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. What has emerged in this study has been first of all the degree to which this network was itself a form of “imagined community” that generated for antiquarians and archaeologists a third level of identity alongside local and national self-conceptions. As we have seen, these scholars worked and collaborated within the confines of a distinct intellectual field that proved at once constitutive and dynamic. Rather than using the intellectual field as a static model for understanding the sociological production of knowledge, this dissertation has treated the concept as a historical phenomenon whose cumulative practices and orthodoxies shaped the powerful bonds among generations of scholars. The result was a conflicting set of priorities that often led archaeologists on both sides to transcend national interests and thereby shape their respective identities.

The transnational community of scholars was critical to the establishment and success of the provincial museums, especially the Kiel Museum. These institutions became not only centers for displaying the past, but also the principal sites of its discovery. It was in the museum, after all, that antiquarians and archaeologists coordinated the recovery of artifacts and the preservation of sites, regulated the efforts of collectors, and ultimately exercised a large measure of control over the interpretation of prehistory. Moreover, they were key to the professionalization of archaeology, which developed not under the

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<sup>41</sup> In India, controversy has erupted over the identification of the Babri Mosque as a possibly early Hindu site. See Reinhard Bernbeck and Susan Pollock, “Ayodha, Archaeology, and Identity,” *Current Anthropology* 37/1 (February, 1996): 138-42; In Greece, the possible discovery of the final resting place of Philip II of Macedon at Vergina in 1977 has become tied to the broader Macedonian question. On the tomb, see for example, Phyllis Williams Lehmann, “The so-called Tomb of Philip II: A Different Interpretation,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 82/3 (October 1980): 339-353; On the uses of archaeology in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, see Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

auspices of the university, but through a dialogue within the antiquarian community. Such findings thus call for a reconsideration of the ways in which the discipline developed and how its emergence shaped the relationship between past and present.

The cohort of specialists that emerged from these museums in the mid- to late nineteenth century became professionalized not only through the attainment of dedicated training, professorial titles, and state salaries, but also through the adoption of specific practices and norms. As was the case for Jens Worsaae and Johanna Mestorf, “professional” archaeology meant at times working in a volunteer capacity without pedigree or recognition. Rather, it was the advent first of dominant paradigms for recovering and ordering ancient remains and second of a set of rigid empirical standards that transformed dilettante antiquarianism into archaeological science. It stemmed from a process whose beginnings coincided with the high point of the German-Danish conflict and matured in a context of lingering bitterness and broader uncertainty over the question of German and Danish national identity. For this reason, the archaeologists, despite their transnational ties and deep commitment to the scientific nature of their endeavor, never fully succeeded in separating the past from either its Romantic connections or its nationalist connotations. Their obedience to rationalism never fully translated into a corresponding bond to objectivity. They remained, in many ways, true to their dilettante roots, seeing the past as property, just as it had been in the curiosity cabinets of eighteenth-century collectors. The existence and value of the nation lay at the heart of their assumptions and was seldom itself a subject of criticism or inquiry.

The resilience of the empirical model, however, acted to limit the ways in which professional archaeologists could manipulate artifact evidence. While writers uninitiated in the practices of scientific archeology, such as the local *Heimat* scholars of the interwar period, created fantastic renditions of prehistory with little regard for accuracy, at no time did the professionals obscure or manufacture data in the pursuit of a nationalist agenda. If their interpretations at times varied widely, each nevertheless adhered to the rules of the scientific system. Rather, it was the question of the modern-day significance of the distant past that colored archaeologists’ views of their discoveries, while the gaps

in the archaeological record permitted them to align their expectations and conclusions with their underlying assumptions.

The combination of unparalleled access to ancient remains and the growing scientific legitimacy of their enterprise placed the cohort of professional archaeologists in a powerful (although not exclusive) position to define the relationship between past and present. Above all, they allowed nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germans and Danes to appropriate antiquity in two specific ways. The first was a symbolic form of appropriation, by which high-status sites and artifacts became icons for nationalist ideologies or physical markers for territorial claims. The past had been used in this way before the nineteenth century, but the modern techniques and large-scale excavations of professional archaeologists made an unprecedented number of new artifacts, such as the Nydam Boat and Thorsberg Collection, available for symbolic consumption. These discoveries in turn fueled the conflict over the ownership of artifacts and placed archaeology at the center of the mid-nineteenth century struggles over the borderland. The second form of appropriation, meanwhile, stemmed from broader reconstructions of prehistory. By the turn of the century, these larger interpretations yielded grand narratives of the development of European peoples that gradually became part of national histories.

The result of such appropriations was both the use of regional prehistory to legitimize border claims and its embrace as an affirmation of the most radical conceptions of the German and Danish nations. Indeed, the pursuit of the past in Schleswig-Holstein was indispensable to the Volkish-nationalist and racial ideologies of Grimm, Kossinna, and later Himmler and Rosenberg. Each of these ideologues became fixated on the scholarship coming from Kiel and Copenhagen and more broadly on Schleswig-Holstein as an imagined link between the existing German nation-state and their utopian visions of a culturally and racially unified Germany. Consequently, in assessing the impact of regional archaeology, we must appreciate the degree to which the cross-border scholarly community had a tremendous impact on German and Danish discourses about identity, territory, and national destiny,

For the archaeologists, this larger significance of their work heightened the paradox of pursuing national archaeology in a transnational context and ultimately caused their

community to rupture in the crucible of the Second World War. As a result, the national paradigms governing the field proved no longer viable, and the discipline, particularly in Germany, moved away from its long-standing nationalist orientation, even shunning the more benign designation of a national discipline. While such a development was to some degree certainly a positive development given the catastrophic consequences of the Nazi Era, questions remain as to how the experience of the 1930s and 1940s has shaped the discipline, and whether the abandonment of national or nationalist connections has held any hidden cost for the archaeologists and the larger public.

### **Morality, Memory, and the Writing of Prehistory**

In 1956, Herbert Jankuhn, who made his career studying the prehistory of Schleswig-Holstein, joined other professors at the University of Kiel in having his accomplishments published in a brief biographical sketch. The article listed among his achievements his directorship of the Museum of Prehistoric Antiquities in Kiel, his professorship in Rostock, his lecture series at Hamburg, and his recent visiting professorship at the University of Kiel.<sup>42</sup> But what the article did not mention was most revealing, as it ignored his prominent role in state archaeology during the 1930's and 1940's, and his high-ranking membership as an officer of the SS and leading archaeologist in the Ahnenerbe organization. The Kiel biography instead represented the new professional face of Herbert Jankuhn, and thus became complicit in the cloud of silence that had descended upon his past. His role in cultural politics had indeed been extensive during the Third Reich, and his power within his profession almost unparalleled, yet even his former student Heinrich Härke was forced to admit that he had not learned the extent of his mentor's Nazi ties until almost fifty years later.<sup>43</sup>

Jankuhn in many ways typified the postwar situation of archaeologists working in West Germany who had emerged from the ashes of the Third Reich to carry on their research. While he readily condemned the overt political engagement of the “socialist

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<sup>42</sup> Friedrich Volbehr and Richard Weyl, *Professoren und Dozenten der Christian-Albrechts Universität zu Kiel*, (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1956), 49.

<sup>43</sup> Heinrich Härke, “German Experience,” 23.

rabble” of archaeologists in East Germany, he was unwilling to address his own political background.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, while Jankuhn awaited release from American captivity, he and his colleagues actively sought to recast the memory of the Nazi years as a series of impossible choices for the sake of archaeological research. In supporting his colleague, Peter Zylmann offered perhaps the most explicit explanations of Jankuhn’s actions, writing, “Jankuhn found himself between the Scylla Rosenberg and the Charybdis Himmler; had he not nominally chosen one side or the other, the the great work at Haithabu would have come to nothing or been given over to a less capable man.”<sup>45</sup> The result was a convincing retelling of the history of archaeology in Schleswig-Holstein, which helped secure Jankuhn’s release in 1949 and his eventual accession to a professor’s chair at the University of Göttingen.

The goal of this whitewashing was in part to save Jankuhn’s career. In the process of denazification, he might have been excluded from working after the war, but because so many promising German students of archaeology had been among the first to be killed in the war and so many others had fled into exile, there was a tremendous amount of space remaining for former collaborationist archaeologists to retain positions in the expanding West German academic system.<sup>46</sup> Even though the most radical prehistorians, especially those associated with Hans Reinerth, had their positions eliminated, many of those who remained had also been deeply engaged with Nazism, and their subsequent reticence consequently became a tool of professional survival.<sup>47</sup> Jankuhn had succeeded in this way and remade his career in the 1950’s. The silence he and his colleagues shared, however, left succeeding generations challenged to confront the complicity of the archaeological discipline.

Moreover, the reluctance resulted in what Günter Smolla has dubbed the “Kossinna Syndrome,” which entailed the massive rejection of theory in archaeological practice

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Zylmann, Gutachten für Herbert Jankuhn, 19 September 1946, SHLB Nachlass Schwantes Cb 47-681.

<sup>46</sup> Arnold and Haßmann, “Faustian Bargain,” 73-4.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

after the war.<sup>48</sup> Rather than facing the legacy of previous theory and seeking to sort out valuable insights from potentially negative elements, the postwar archaeological community became allergic to theory altogether, and fieldwork consequently became an exercise in precise excavation methodology with detailed descriptions but with little broader interpretation. As a result, domestic German archaeology turned a deaf ear to the theoretical developments taking place in Britain and the United States, where in the 1960's structuralism and neo-Marxism began to stress socio-economic analyses as an alternative to models of cultural diffusion.<sup>49</sup>

Such changes also created a divide between German archaeologists and their colleagues in Scandinavia. While cooperation between Scandinavian and German scholars had shaped archaeology during much of the nineteenth century, the rise and fall of the Nordic paradigm in World War II not only spelled the demise of the cooperative dream espoused by radicals such as Hans Reinerth, Alfred Rosenberg, and the Nordic Society, but also threatened the earlier vision of Johanna Mestorf and Sophus Müller. In the decades after 1945, Scandinavian archaeology drifted away from the German orbit and into the Anglo-American, as Scandinavian scholars embraced the social science theories of British and American colleagues such as Louis Binford, Colin Renfrew and David Clarke.<sup>50</sup>

Jankuhn, whose work on the coastal regions of Schleswig-Holstein continued to bring him into contact with Scandinavian researchers, represented one of the rare exceptions to the rule. During the 1950's and 1960's, he reached out to Scandinavian colleagues and became a pioneer in researching the economics and trading patterns of prehistoric Northern Europe.<sup>51</sup> Such work bore strong continuities with his previous research at Haithabu, where he had consistently stressed the site's value as a critical juncture of

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<sup>48</sup> Günter Smolla, "Das Kossinna-Syndrome," 1-9.

<sup>49</sup> S. J. Shennan, "Trends in the Study of Later European Prehistory," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987), 365-7.

<sup>50</sup> Björn Myhre, "Theory in Scandinavian Archaeology since 1960: A View from Norway," in *Archaeological Theory in Europe*, 164-73.

<sup>51</sup> Härke, "Western Front," 190.

trading networks.<sup>52</sup> His postwar writing, however, offered descriptions of regional sites that no longer sought to place them in historical narratives. The terms “Northern Germanic” and “Western Germanic” disappeared from his vocabulary and were replaced with more neutral designations like “Northern European.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, as Heiko Steuer has shown, he made major revisions to his 1938 popular work, *Haithabu. Eine germanische Stadt der Frühzeit*, and in 1956 published it as *Haithabu: A Trading Center of the Viking Age (Haithabu. Ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit)*. These changes included the omission of forewords that had mentioned Jankuhn’s SS sponsors, a new view of Slavs that recognized their contributions to regional trade, and the elimination of all nationalistic wording, including references to “*Germanentum*,” and “*Deutschtum*.”<sup>54</sup>

The excision of nationalist references helped make international cooperation possible again, but it has not fully rehabilitated the moral damage to German archaeological scholarship resulting from the war years. This became especially clear in 2000, when the town of Ahrensburg expressed interest in honoring the 100th birthday of Alfred Rust, whose discovery of rare paleolithic sites nearby had afforded the town a measure of celebrity. The city leaders planned to grant Rust an honorary citizenship and to build a walking trail in his honor near the site he had made famous. Upon learning of Rust’s connections to the SS, however, the mayor convened a town council, where residents discussed the issue with friends of Rust, historians, and archaeologists. At the conclusion of the podium discussion, one angry resident spoke up:

I have lived in Ahrensburg for 34 years and I am ashamed of what is happening here . . . Here it is a matter of a man whose scholarly reputation is completely beyond question. It is a political and

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<sup>52</sup> This focus on trade had even colored Jankuhn’s site reports in the propagandistic SS Ahnenerbe *Germanien* journals. See for example Jankuhn, “Haithabu und Birka,” *Germanien* 5 (May, 1941), 175-80. Here Jankuhn had differentiated between the function of Haithabu as an intermediary trading center and Birka as a regional market for goods from Western Europe.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Jankuhn, *Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu und ihre Bedeutung für die Handelsgeschichte des frühen Mittelalters*, (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1958), 17.

<sup>54</sup> Steuer, “Jankuhn,” 451-4.



moral question and not one of whether a great archaeologist should be honored. [This discussion] takes place in 2000, in which we struggle with the reemergence of Neo-Nazism . . .<sup>55</sup>

In the end, Rust was denied his honorary citizenship, but the walking path commemorating the find quietly opened in 2005. Clearly, the significance of Rust's discovery, like those of many of his colleagues, had been forever marred by the moral implications of their scholarship.

### **The Challenge of Meaning in Contemporary German and Danish Archaeology**

In search of a lasting peace and a new prosperity after World War II, both Germany and Denmark have joined twenty-three other nations in shaping a European Union that will transcend the vestiges of nationalism that lay at the heart of the conflicts of the twentieth century. The corollary for archaeologists across Europe has the desire to abandon nationalist orientations in research and writing, which is itself a reaction to the events of the Second World War. In fact, as early as 1947, one German researcher expressed the prevailing view in a letter to Gustav Schwantes. "I am adamantly convinced," he wrote, "that our children, if we ourselves do not live to experience it, will see a united Europe. This rage of nationalism that we [have seen] is but the last bacchanal before the collapse."<sup>56</sup>

Despite such sentiments, however, the legacy of nationalism remains a powerful force across Europe, and, as Konrad Jarausch has argued, the national quality of cultural memory continues to color the imagined canvas of a broader European identity.<sup>57</sup> Jarausch lists a number of surviving vestiges of nationalism, including interpretations of history and appropriations of European memory, to which I would add the continuing

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<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Jaenecke, quoted in "Alfred Rust und die Rahmenbedingungen," 35.

<sup>56</sup> Grenzlandmuseum Flensburg to Schwantes, 16 July 1947, ALM Reg-Akt 1.1.2.

<sup>57</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, "Konfligierende Erinnerungen. Nationale Prägungen, Verständigungsversuche und europäischer Geschichtsbilder," in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, ed. Konrad Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger, (Forthcoming from Berghahn Press).

appeal of prehistory, which in the German-Danish borderland (as elsewhere) stands as a component of identity on both sides of the border.

This passion has, on the one hand, manifested itself as a more benign appropriation of the past as kitsch, which reveals itself with a simple stroll through the centers of cities such as Schleswig or Copenhagen. In each town, souvenir shops greet passersby with windows proudly displaying rows of chocolate long ships, horned helmets, and Viking dolls with funny, fuzzy beards. On the other hand, the public remains fascinated by the ongoing discoveries of prehistory in northern and western Europe. In the summer of 2003, for example, the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle in Bonn hosted *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume: Archäologie in Deutschland*, which was the first national exhibition of archaeology in almost three decades. In stuffy exhibit rooms, crowds of patrons eagerly explored the countless stone carvings, bronze amulets, and iron swords on display. Through detailed technical explanations, the exhibition drew casual visitors into the archaeologist's world of grid coordinates, ground-penetrating radar, and painstaking laboratory analysis. During my own visit to the exhibition, I found that I could barely make my way through the massive crowds of curious spectators speaking German in excited whispers and peering into glass cases filled with the remains of their ancient past. But is it really their past?

In some ways, *Archäologie in Deutschland* was reminiscent of former national appeals to the value of prehistory. Its primary benefactor, the *ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister*, deemed it a matter of "national importance."<sup>58</sup> The organizers of the exhibition went one step further, claiming it was designed to "awaken the interest of the public with the first general German presentation of archaeological research," and "to promote the importance of archaeology."<sup>59</sup> Yet the exhibition struggled to meet these two goals. During my visit to the museum, I noticed that the "nation" was strangely absent from the event, despite the fact that the artifacts came from Germany, and that the texts

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<sup>58</sup> Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck, eds., *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume: Archäologie in Deutschland*, (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2003), 14.

<sup>59</sup> Manfred Nawroth, Rüdiger von Schnurbein, Rainer-Maria Weiss and Mathias Will, *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume: Ausstellungsführer*, (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2003), 7.

were written in German, and that thousands of Germans had visited and expressed their interest. I saw no conscious effort to distinguish German archaeology from that of its neighbors, no overarching presentation of the German past, and, above all, no appeal to the "national importance" of archaeology. Moreover, the exhibition, whose primary purpose was to build a connection between professional academics and the wider public, never fully explained why archaeology mattered to Germans today or why "their past" was worth preserving and studying.



The present-day symbolic value of Northern European pre- and early history in Copenhagen and Schleswig.  
J. Laurence Hare.

The issue, of course, is not limited to one museum or one project, but seems to pervade the entire discipline. This became clear while I was working in the archives of the Schleswig-Holstein Landesmuseum. Some of the archaeologists with whom I spoke mentioned frequent presentations to school groups and participation in creating new museum exhibits, but they admitted that their relationship with the public is a low priority compared to their academic research, and they expressed discomfort with articulating the value of archaeology on a national level. The result has been a disconnect between the work of scholars and the expectations of a non-specialist public. While some distance between layman and expert may be inevitable, this trend, as this study has shown, represents an important break with archaeology's long engagement with amateur antiquarians, and indeed with the public at large.

There is no question that the effort to purge the nationalist orientations of the discipline has been a necessary development in the history of the field. Yet it is worth asking what the price has been for this process of divestment in the postwar period. Above all, it means that archaeologists have surrendered much of the influence they once held to shape public opinion about prehistory. Archaeologists point out, of course, that academic research must remain a priority, and that one of the lessons they have learned from the troubled history of their discipline has been that scholars must approach the past on its own terms. This at least partly explains their reluctance to make linkages between the past and the present, because to do so threatens to remove prehistoric cultures from their proper context and can distort attempts at objective scholarship. Yet these same archaeologists have left little doubt that their discipline's disastrous experience with nationalism remains a factor in their difficult dialogue with the public. As one archaeologist told me, "It is easy to speak of national archaeology in a country such as Denmark, because nationalism there is not considered dangerous, but charming."<sup>60</sup>

The Danish presentation of the past is, indeed, quite different, as I discovered while working in Danish archives. In Denmark, visitors to museums are often reminded that they are seeing the remains of "our Viking ancestors."<sup>61</sup> Moreover, museums more consciously display their collections as part of a national enterprise. At the National Museum in Copenhagen, for example, one entire wing is devoted solely to "Danish Prehistory." At the same time, however, Danes have become more self-conscious of their stronger national orientations and have begun considering the implications of their discipline's history for their current work. This debate is similar to one underway among their German colleagues, but while Germans have primarily limited these discussions to academic circles, Danes have included them as part of exhibits at local museums, which allow the public to reflect on the present-day uses of the remote past. The National Museum, for instance, displays replicas of the famous Golden Horns of Gallehus alongside a detailed discussion of their political use in the ceremonies reclaiming

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<sup>60</sup> Volker Hilberg and Sven Kaltring, personal communication, Schleswig, Germany, 4 February 2004.

<sup>61</sup> I encountered this phrase in an educational film at the Vikingskibsmuseet in Roskilde during the summer of 2001.

northern Slesvig from Germany in 1920. The Danes also maintain a museum in Germany at the Danewall, which divides itself between one display of the Danewall fortifications in the pre-Christian period and one that discusses the modern use and abuse of the site by both Germans and Danes.<sup>62</sup>

German archaeology, by contrast, is no longer the battleground for cultural politics that it once was. Germans do, however, maintain a very active interest in prehistory. Thousands flock to museums and excavations each year, while magazines such as *Damals* and websites such as *Archäologie-Online* feed the public appetite for archaeological research. Yet, although professionals clearly play a critical role in meeting the general interest in prehistory, the question remains whether they work adequately to nurture this interest, or whether it is driven by its own momentum. The question is more than academic, because archaeologists depend to a great degree on the support of non-professionals in locating and preserving remains, while the interest of the public is essential for obtaining funding from government and private agencies.

Resolving these issues demands above all a strategic reappraisal of the ways in which archaeologists communicate with their national audience. During my research in Germany, I observed that this process is in part already underway, and that, despite the limitations of national representations of the past, a number of archaeologists have created some interesting alternatives for linking past and present and for actively engaging the public. Above all, these strategies have approached the issue of meaning by appealing to different levels of identification with prehistory. In Schleswig, for example, Michael Gebühr's work with the remains of so-called "bog bodies" has drawn on mathematical formulas to suggest the tantalizing possibility that the bodies on display may in fact be distant relatives, creating an individual bond between the visitor and the past. As Gebühr explains, "Seen from this perspective, the human remains in the bog body display lose some of their horror, and certainly some of their exoticism, while the graves of those vanished periods lose part of their remoteness and possibly acquire

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<sup>62</sup> This discussion also dominates the pedagogical texts of Danish museums. See for example Jørgen Kühl, *Danevirke: Myte, Symbol, Identitet* (Schleswig: Dannevirkegården, 1992).

something of a personal relationship."<sup>63</sup> Gebühr has used this connection to encourage museum guests to offer their opinions on the appropriateness of displaying the remains, allowing them to use their new-found personal attachment to become involved both with the exhibit and with the science behind its discovery.<sup>64</sup>

Just down the hall from the "bog body" exhibit, another labyrinthine chamber at the Landesmuseum chronicles prehistory in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. Within glass cabinets and behind exemplary pieces of antiquity, colored maps chart cultural development while accompanying texts explain the uniqueness of the past north of the Elbe River. Indeed, a number of museums have approached the question of meaning from a regional perspective, seeking to show the singularity of archaeology in each of the German *Bundesländer* and to highlight local claims to critical archaeological material. Such an approach recalls the earliest days of archaeology in Germany, when middle-class amateurs, inspired by a Romantic love of history and *Heimat*, banded together to find and preserve the prehistory of their own communities. Just as in the nineteenth century, this perspective is useful first because there are aspects of prehistory unique to specific German regions. Whether dealing with Romano-German contact in Baden-Württemberg or Viking trading networks in Schleswig-Holstein, the archaeologist is often confronted with questions appropriate to a more localized context. For this reason, many prehistorians specialize in specific chronological periods, cultural groups, or thematic issues, which naturally lend themselves to a regional focus.

Perhaps this explains why even the Bonn exhibit maintained something of a "federal character" to its display. One room of the exhibition, for example, highlighted some of the most interesting and most spectacular artifacts found in each of the German states. For the first time, the archaeological achievements of all sixteen German *Bundesländer*, including those in the former GDR, came together under one roof. This was certainly a fantastic assemblage, but at the same time it underscored the final limits of meaning in German archaeology. As the organizers of the exhibition themselves admitted, "This

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<sup>63</sup> Gebühr, "Sind die Moorleichen 'unsere Urururgroßeltern'?" *Die Heimat* 85 (1978), 324-5.

<sup>64</sup> Gebühr posted the responses he received on a board outside the exhibit. He also discusses this question in *Moorleichen in Schleswig-Holstein*, 56-7.

representation [of the past] is not, as in 1883, presented by states, but rather is built on the chronology of the body of finds. In this manner, it becomes clear that archaeology is a brand of scholarship that transcends discipline and region and requires cooperation at least on a national level."<sup>65</sup>

In light of its historical connotations, however, any return to more nationally-oriented connections within German archaeology is likely to be controversial. Yet the Bonn exhibition seems to suggest that a more integrated view of prehistory is at least desirable. What is important to note is that German archaeologists are not interested in reinventing nationalist narratives of prehistory, but rather in creating presentations of the past that remain rigorously academic while seeking to appeal to a broader audience on a national scale. Based on my research, I might suggest that such efforts should continue to view the past in its own context without assigning a negative or positive value. It should remain a cooperative and not a competitive scholarly endeavor, and should encourage the public to see the past within their borders as part of a broader continental or even global narrative of prehistory. This means that claims to archaeological material can no longer be exclusive, but must recognize that artifacts and sites may have an overlapping significance for neighboring countries. The value of German prehistory instead lies in the overall uniqueness of its characteristics and cultural make-up, in its problems and questions, and in the theories and practice that govern German archaeological scholarship.

Finally, German and Danish archaeologists must recognize that theirs is a discipline with its own past, and it is this aspect that they must continue to examine, not only for the sake of their scholarship, but also for the sake of their relationship with the audience. Historical considerations should move from the text to the exhibit itself, where members of the public can understand the historical dimension of the artifacts that they see behind the glass. They should see both the successes and failures of the discipline, and feel encouraged to become active participants and to voice their opinions about its future. Then they may better appreciate that what they are discovering in the museums is indeed

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<sup>65</sup> Menghin and Planck, *Archäologie in Deutschland*, 14.

their past, and that the treasures beneath their gardens, within their communities, and in their country as a whole are worth the tremendous efforts that have gone into understanding and preserving them.



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