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The discovery of the hidden Middle Ages: the research history of medieval archaeology in Germany

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The origins of medieval archaeology in Germany lie in the 19th century. Archaeological research was conducted by building historians, architects and prehistorians. The progress achieved in excavation methodology in the first half of the 20th century formed the basis for the development of the subject as its own discipline in both German states since the end of WWII. In recent times it developed toward a "historical archaeology" by including material remains of the post-medieval and present age.
Keywords: research history, development as a discipline of its own, present state of affairs and tendencies

Die Anfänge der Archäologie des Mittelalters in Deutschland liegen im 19. Jahrhundert. Archäologische Forschungen wurden von Bauhistorikern, Architekten und Prähistorikern durchgeführt. Die in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts erzielten grabungsmethodischen Fortschritte bildeten die Basis für die Entwicklung des Fachs als eigenständiger Disziplin seit dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs in beiden deutschen Staaten. In jüngster Zeit entwickelt es sich zur „historischen Archäologie" unter Einbeziehung der materiellen Quellen der Neuzeit und Gegenwart.
***Schlüsselbegriffe**: Forschungsgeschichte, Entwicklung als eigenständige Disziplin, gegenwärtiger Stand und Tendenzen*

1. Preliminary remark

Medieval archaeology in Germany is, as in other European countries, the youngest branch "on the mighty tree of the archaeological sciences" (Hinz 1982, p. 15). As an academic discipline, it emerged during the second half of the 20th century, and in archaeological practice as well as in research, it has developed its own methods and profile since the 1960s. Research into the remains of the medieval past has, however, been con-

ducted for longer, and buildings as well as objects of material culture have found acknowledgement as material witnesses of the middle ages. A number of archaeological excavations marked important steps on the way of the discipline to an independent discipline. This history of scholarship has decisively formed modern archaeological medieval research in Germany and had an impact on research goals as well as questions. The history will be introduced in the following[1], as well as the current situation of the subject, its new developments and perspectives.

2. "Medieval Archaeology" during medieval and post-medieval times

2.1. Searching for saints and ancestors

The origins of medieval archaeology go back to the pre-scientific era. Excavations were carried out as early as medieval and post-medieval times (see Meier 2001, 2003). Interest focussed almost completely on burials. The reason for this was on the one hand the search for reliquaries, and the effort to verify through material witness the legends associated with them. A known example of this is the exhumation of the bones that are today in the treasure vault of the church of St Ursula in Cologne. According to tradition, the saint was interred here with a number of her companions who had died a martyr's death along with her. Since the church had been built on a late antique graveyard, so many skeletons were found that in the end the number of virgins jumped to 11 000.

From other places too such excavations in search of the bones of saints are recorded, and sometimes the exploratory trenches of theses diggings can still be traced in modern archaeological investigations. An example is the search for the body of Saint Chrischona, who was venerated in a church near Basel (Switzerland). A a papal legate, visiting the town in 1504, commisioned a search for her bones. In the St. Chrischonakirche a grave was located underneath the church floor, in which the bones of the saint were thought to have been found. The dust lying on top was cited as proof of their age. During an archaeological excavation in 1974/75 this grave with an exploratory cut could actually be identified; the grave was, however, an early medieval stone cist grave (Moosbrugger-Leu 1985, pp. 43-45).

[1] This contribution is based on a description of the history of research of the subject (Scholkmann 2009, pp. 15-26). It was expanded and references added. See also Fehring 1991, pp. 3-13, 1995, pp. 9-14. I want thank Bruno Wiedermann for helping me with this.

Excavation was not always was so successful. In the Church of the Holy Trinity in Protestant Ulm (Baden-Württemberg), built on the foundations of the church of the Dominician monastery, a search was conducted during the Thirty Years War, while under Catholic occupation, for the grave of the beatified mystic Suso, who had been interred there (Scholkmann 2008, pp. 37-38). To assist the search the pleasant smells supposed to be emanating from his body were assumed to be a help. A latrine pit was found instead, which lead to pointed barbs from an attending Protestant councillor, who remarked that this saint seemed to stink very badly.

On the other hand investigations of the graves of one's own ancestors, famous persons or donors were also instigated. A notable example is the opening of the tomb of Charlemagne in Aachen by Otto III in the year 1000 (Meier 2003, pp. 17-18). To trace the graves of their ancestors, whose exact location was no longer known, Duke Ernst of Weimar in 1638 as well as Prince-Elector Johann Georg II of Saxony in 1678 ordered excavations in the church on the old grounds of the monastery Paulinzella in Thuringia, whereat even plans were drawn (Meier 2003, pp. 18-19). In the Cistercian monastery of Bebenhausen (Baden-Württemberg) the grave of the

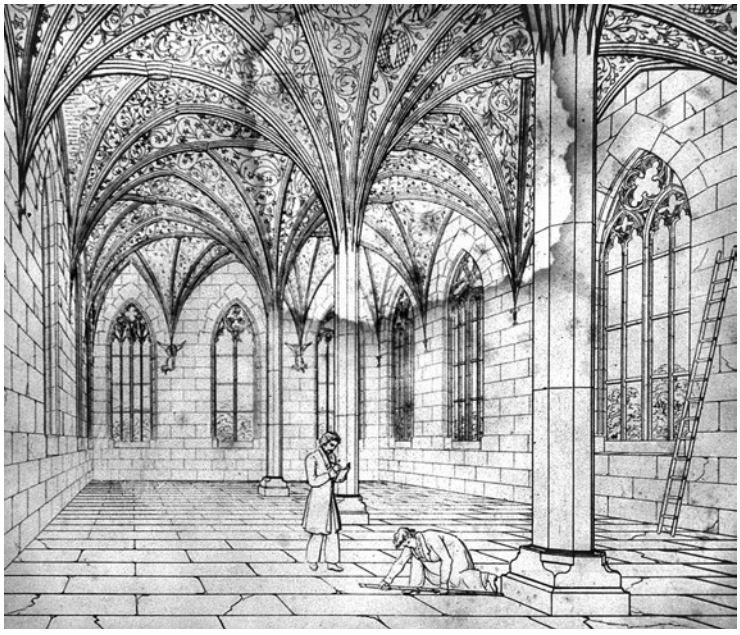

Fig. 1. An example of the documentation of a medieval building in the 19th century: the refectory of the monastery of Bebenhausen (Baden-Württemberg), 1828 (*Stadtmuseum Tübingen*).

donor couple from the Tübingen count palatines was opened after the Reformation and a detailed report was drawn up (Scholkmann 2008, p. 38). It admittedly contains fabulous elements, as the countess palatine was said to have been found undecayed and with rosy cheeks.

3. "The *archaeology of the German middle ages*" in the 19th century

The rediscovery of the middle ages in the 19th century during the Romantic period led to interest being awakened for monuments of the period, and building historians and architects started to engage with them. Against this backdrop the concept of an "archaeology of the middle ages" emerged, which could be attested for the first time in a constitutional meeting of all the German historical and antiquarian societies in 1852 (Fehring 1991, p. 1). The phrase was coined as a contrast to the "heathen antiquarianism", which dealt with material from the pre-Christian epochs. Early medieval cemeteries were counted among these, and first excavations now took place[2]. As a result, the archaeology of the Merovingian period is to this day part of prehistoric archaeology in German-speaking areas. Building historical research of medieval standing buildings was, in contrast, understood as "archaeology of the middle ages". This became a central aim of the heritage management, which started up from 1835 onward in the states of the then German Empire. It was carried out within the framework of inventories of the great building monuments, often associated with renovation or complete reconstruction.

3.1. Monasteries, churches and palatines

It soon became standard practise to excavate when undertaking a complete research of monumental buildings, especially where they were partly destroyed. It probably helped that at the same time, in connection with the beginnings of prehistoric research, the excavation of archaeological remains as a research tool became increasingly important. The excavations concentrated on the more or less meticulous exposure of the foundation walls. Either their course was followed or they were located by purposefully set trenches. The documentation was recorded with sketches or scale drawings, sometimes notes were made or a site diary was kept. A periodic classification of the features was attempted via building-historical criteria or through documentary evidence.

[2] One example of an excavation of an Alamannic cemetery is from Oberflacht (Baden-Württemberg), see Dürrich, Menzel 1847.

Thus, especially in the second half of the 19th century, many more or less extensive excavations in important church buildings and monasteries were carried out. A good example are the studies of Rudolf von Adamy in the imperial abbey of Lorsch (Adamy 1891) in South Hessia. The same is true for prominent profane buildings, especially palatines, such as Goslar (Lower Saxony) or Eger (now Czech Republic). In Ingelheim (Rhineland-Palatinate), palatine of Charlemagne on the Rhine, the royal conservator for the Prussian province Hesse-Nassau led the first excavations in 1852, which were resumed between 1904 and 1914. The photos and plans still existing from this research convey a vivid impression of the excavation methods (Rauch 1976). Finds were also recovered, however only as far as they excited art historical interest, such as spolia or pieces of plaster.

3.2. The beginnings of research on castles and the "Pompeii of the North"

Castles, where no walls remained and which could only be identified as such by ramparts and ditches, were usually considered to be prehistoric and investigated by prehistoric researchers. This is true for the great early medieval fortifications in Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The prehistorian Carl Schuchardt investigated them in connection with the creation of an encyclopaedia of these pre- and early historic monuments, in which medieval castles were also recorded (Schuchardt 1916). He undertook excavations in some of them and on this basis developed a "typology of castles" which was accepted as relevant well into the 20th century (Schuchardt 1931).

In contrast, architects and building historians were fascinated by castle ruins and investigated them. Many had been thought to be Roman until this time, and their dating to the middle ages was an important scientific discovery. Excavations played a subordinate role; instead the most important method, was the registration and documentation of the preserved buildings as well as a comparison of the building types. This can be recognised in the pivotal work "Burgenkunde" of the castle researcher Otto Piper (Piper 1895). The archaeological research in the castle of Tannenberg, a castle ruin in south Hesse, was an exception and a remarkable project for the time period. The excavations in the castle, mostly destroyed in 1399, started in 1848 and had been induced and funded by the Hessian Grand Duke. The Grand Duke and the two excavators Jakob Heinrich von Hefner and Johannes Wilhelm Wolf were so delighted by the many finds which were unearthed that they called the place "the Pompeii of the North". In 1850 the results were released in an elaborately styled publication (Hefner, Wolf 1850). Notable are not only the detailed plans of the

Fig. 2. A drawing from the publication of the excavation of the castle of Tannenberg showing several kinds of metal objects (J. von Hefner, J. Wolf 1850, *Die Burg Tannenberg und ihre Ausgrabungen, Frankfurt/Main Tafel VI*).

excavated wall remains but also the drawings of the extensive number of finds and the method of their chronological and functional classification by using contemporary pictorial evidence or dated grave monuments.

3.3. Rural settlements and towns

Rural settlements of the middle ages could not be detected with the excavation methods known at that time as their buildings were constructed of wood and had completely vanished Therefore they did not come into the focus of researchers' interest. Excavations in towns were being led but only where antique earlier-settlements were known, since interest focused solely on the buildings of Roman times. Foundation remains and earth layers above, dating to the Middle Ages, were removed without investigation.

3.4. "The German way of life": the beginning of material culture studies

In contrast, medieval tools and objects of many different types that were recovered from the ground, did indeed cause interest. Thus in some towns – such as Konstanz (Baden-Württemberg) and Zürich (Switzerland) – such objects were collected and placed in the recently founded local museums. Culture historical questions were also considered, for example by the founder of the town museum of Göttingen (Lower Saxony) Moritz Heyne. His work on "Ancient Objects of the German Domestic Home " was published in three volumes between 1899 and 1903 (Heyne 1899, 1901, 1903). A philologist by training he compiled material objects, pictures and written evidence in a comprehensive culture historical approach and conceived a picture of medieval daily life that thematically dealt with topics such as food, clothing, dwelling and personal hygiene. Moritz Heyne can therefore be spoken of as the pioneer of contemporary archaeological study of material culture; using methods that appear quite modern but have, however, only in the last few decades been re-examined and explored further.

4. New methods – new questions – new objects Medieval archaeology in the first decades of the 20th century

In the first decades of the 20th century important methodical progress especially in prehistoric archaeology led to an expanded view of medieval remains preserved in the ground. Thanks to the "discovery of the posthole" by the prehistorian Carl Schuchardt (see Eggers 1959, pp. 220-221)

stains in the soil could now be identified as the remains of past settlement buildings, which was crucial for the exploration of rural medieval settlements. Knowledge acquired by German archaeologists on excavations in the Orient were adopted in church archaeology, for example the possibility of identifying robbed-out foundations by back-filled foundation trenches or the linking of earth layers and foundation remains. For the archaeological examination of medieval towns the development of historical town research gained importance. Questions emerged which could only be answered through excavations. In addition, objects of material culture were classified, systematically registered, described and dated. Concerning castle research interest focussed on early medieval fortifications and Slavic hill forts especially in Northern and Eastern Germany (Fehring 1991, p. 11; Grunwald, Reichenbach 2009). The trendsetting methodical approach applied in the castle of Tannenberg was not, however, used in the high and late medieval castles. Instead, the building historical method developed by Otto Piper remained for many decades the only research approach.

4.1. Important excavations: milestones on the way to a medieval archaeology

Excavations at the time were conducted either by prehistorians or building and art historians, sometimes even by amateurs without archaeological training. The idea of an archaeology of the middle ages as its own discipline was still unknown; therefore there were no skilled professionals in the subject. The respective researchers purely dealt with medieval sites out of personal interest. A few significant archaeological investigations can be considered to be milestones in the evolution of modern archaeological medieval studies. They mainly took place from 1930 onward, and after 1933 they were affected by the political situation of the Third Reich. Workers of the Reich Labour Service or so-called forced labourers were employed. Often the research into the "Germanic past" formed the ideological background, and the results were interpreted in this light, for example the excavations from 1933 onwards on the so-called "Externsteine", a prominent rock formation in eastern Westphalia, whose man-made grottos were interpreted as Germanic sacred sites[3].

Some of these excavations were supported by the organisation "Ahnenerbe", which was under direct control of the leader of the SS, Heinrich Himmler. This is true for the excavations of the Viking era trading post Haithabu on the Schlei in present Schleswig-Holstein, under the

[3] See Halle 2002. The structures were constructed in medieval and post-medieval times.

leadership of the prehistorian Herbert Jankuhn (Jankuhn 1943). For Jankuhn, who was an officer in the SS and during the war also in the Waffen-SS, Haithabu was a "great germanic trading town" and a symbol of the "unbroken power of Germanentum" (Mahsarski 2011, p. 83). This interpretation is representative for the prominent role archaeologists played in the construction of germanic-german superiority in the nationalsocialist period. After 1939 excavation activity seized, as many prehistorians served on the front line. Jankuhn was among the chief players in the "securing" (i.e. plundering) of cultural heritage in the occupied territories (Mahsarski 2011, p. 283). After WWII he and most others continued their careers; Jankuhn became professor for prehistory in Göttingen in 1956. The strong ideological presuppositions of the 1930s and 40s were however largely banned from archaological discourse. A comprehensive discussion on the entanglement of the establishment of prehistoric archaeology with nationalsocialism only began in the late 1990s (Leube 2002; Steuer 2001).

The Haithabu-excavation, however – with Jankuhn's inclusion of economic and social historical aspects that had been developed by the historical sciences of the time – forms nontheless an important step on the way to a modern medieval archaeology. Not only with regard to contents but also methodically this was a great step on the way to a modern medieval archaeology. Of equal importance are the urban archaeological excavations in Switzerland that were carried out at the same time, which however were hardly acknowledged in Germany. Karl Heid, an archaeological amateur, who also conducted excavations in castles, explored the abandoned town of Glanzenberg in canton Zürich between 1937 and 1940 (Heid 1953). Above all the historian Hektor Amman published an essay as early as 1943 with the programmatic title: “The feasibilities of the spade in the research of medieval towns in Switzerland” (Amman 1943), in which he developed a programme for urban archaeology still worthy of note today.

The investigation of rural settlements of the early medieval period does not surprise, as this era belonged to the traditional field of activity of prehistorians. In 1937 the Frankish village Gladbach near Neuwied in the Rhineland (Sage 1969) and in 1940 the Alamanic settlement Merdingen near Freiburg im Breisgau (Baden-Würrtemberg) were excavated (Fingerlin 1971). The latter was discovered during the construction of the Siegfried Line. The first systematic archaeological research of an abandoned rural settlement of the high and late middle ages, the deserted village of Hohenrode in the Harz (Sachsen-Anhalt), was already carried out in the years 1935-37 (Grimm 1939). Paul Grimm, a trained pre-historian, implemented the method developed in prehistoric excava-

ed a sequence of two settlement phases. Also remarkable are the approaches used to interpret and date the excavation results in his publication two years later. He not only compared the finds to those of other places but also used pictorial evidence and connected the excavated house sites with still standing buildings in villages of the region.

Concerning the research of sacral sites, the excavations conducted by Friedrich Behn on the Imperial monastery of Lorsch (Hessen) between 1927 and 1937 need to be mentioned (Behn 1949). They led to a considerably altered picture of the building development of this site from that obtained in the 19th century. This was achieved by tracing the foundation trenches of the walls, from which all stone material had been removed, and thus reconstructing the ground plan. Another, important step for the future of excavation methodology was therefore taken. Earth profiles were also documented. That the skeleton finds became the subject of an anthropological examination was in accordance with the zeitgeist, i.e. the preoccupation with "racial issues"; just as the corresponding investigations into the burials found in the church of the monastery of Reichenau-Mittelzell (Baden-Württemberg). The excavations conducted there between 1927 and 1941 by the director of the local building inspection office, Emil Reisser, rank among the important church excavations of the time (Zettler 1988).

Of an outstanding importance for the development of modern medieval archaeology were the excavations in the minster of Bonn and especially in the collegiate church of Xanten (both Northrhine-Westphalia), which were carried out by Walter Bader in 1933/34 (Bader 1960). This is in part due to the research approach, which did not only incorporate building historical questions but also comprehensive historical themes. The problem of continuity from late antique to early medieval Christianity afforded a close connection of the excavation results with written sources. New in reference to the excavation method was the consistent application of the principles of stratigraphy. The different building and floor layers were carefully observed and their relationship to the walls of the various building phases was documented in order to fix their chronology. Through the finds sandwiched in the deposit layers, such as coins, the foundations could be dated. Thus a modern excavation method was developed which is still employed even today.

The archaeological research into palatines took a backseat after the end of the German empire, and during the Third Reich too there were very few excavations. Research into the Saxon palatines Werla in 1935 and Pöhlde in 1934 (both Niedersachsen) as well as Tilleda (Sachsen-Anhalt) from 1935-39 should be mentioned (Binding 1996). In Switzerland

Fig. 3. The excavation in the collegiate church of Xanten in 1933/34 (W. Bader 1949, *Der Dom zu Xanten, Kevelaer. S.59*).

Emil Vogt conducted excavations on the so-called Lindenhof in Zürich and was able to thoroughly examine the palatine of the Dukes of Swabia situated there (Vogt 1948).

4.2. New insights into research

In the investigation of medieval material culture important advances were made during these decades. The biggest problem to begin with was to distinguish objects from the Middle Ages from prehistoric ones, and to assign them to this epoch. The most important finds were pottery. On the one hand, art historians or ethnographers such as Alfred Walcher von Molthein (von Molthein 1909) or Konrad Strauß (Strauß 1923) tried to develop typologies of medieval pottery or stove tiles and to allocate them to a specific time period. On the other hand excavators of medieval sites tried to date the pottery finds in order to set the dating of features on a secure basis. The chronology of pottery from the Viking Age settlement of Haithabu was established with the help of the sedimentation in the excavated bed of a creek running through it (Hübener 1959). Pottery sherds and other finds were deposited here together with coins, the

minting dates of which gave a terminus for the time of manufacture of the pottery. Paul Grimm tried to date pottery of the settlement of Hohenrode by comparing it to finds from other places and medieval pictorial evidence (Grimm 1939). Erwin Schirmer's doctoral thesis from 1939 dealt with pottery of the 11th to 15th centuries in central Germany. It was the first study using specific criteria of this medieval material group which are still relevant today (Schirmer 1939). Coin hoards which had been buried in pots were important for dating. Their minting dates provided secure evidence of the chronological classification of the pottery.

5. The establishment of medieval archaeology as a science

As in other parts of Europe, in some cases a few decades before, medieval archaeology developed in Germany as an independent scientific discipline in the second half of the 20th century. This is true for both German states at the time. The establishment of the subject in European neighbouring states, especially in Great Britain and Scandinavia as well as Eastern European states such as former Czechoslovakia, Poland and Russia, helped considerably with the acceptance of archaeological research of medieval objects. In archaeological practice, excavations of medieval sites were increasingly carried out, initially without theoretical reflection about the significance of material remains in the ground for comprehensive research into the Middle Ages. But it was still by no means standard practice to investigate medieval archaeological remains in the same way as prehistoric periods or Roman times. A first impulse came from the destruction caused by WWII. Huge debris areas in many medieval urban centres allowed access to the "archive in the ground". However, in the aftermath of the War interest as well as the means for archaeological excavations was limited.

5.1. The Development in the Federal Republic of Germany

To start with archaeological excavations in the Federal Republic were limited to a few sites. The urban renewal of town centres was only occasionally used for archaeological research, so for example in Frankfurt/Main (Fischer, Stamm 1975), Hamburg (Schindler 1958) or Hanover (Plath 1959). Due to the need for the reconstruction of war damaged churches especially in the Rhineland church excavations were conducted, which had a substantial part in the development of today's church archaeology (Petrikovitz 1962). An example for research into rural

Fig. 4. Excavation in the old town of Lübeck after WWII. The finds from a latrine pit are examined (*Bereich Archäologie und Denkmalpflege der Hansestadt Lübeck*).

settlements is the excavation by Wilhelm Winkelmann in the Saxon settlement of Warendorf in Westphalia (Winkelmann 1954), and in 1957/8 excavations began of the terp Elisenhof on the north Friesian coast (Bantelmann 1975). An important watershed for castle research was the examination of wood and earth castles of the high middle ages in the Rhineland, for example the mottes of Husterknupp (1949-51) (Herrnbrodt 1958) or Holtrop (1958) (Müller-Wille 1966). In addition to the building historical research on castles therefore a new kind of investigation emerged which used the methods of modern medieval archaeology. The study of palatines was encouraged by the Max-Planck-Institut for research on palatines in Göttingen, which led to excavations in Ottonian palatines as well as Carolingian palatine sites in Ingelheim (Rheinland) or Paderborn (Westfalen) (Binding 1996). An intense examination of archaeological material culture on the other hand was slow to develop. The analysis of the object categories from the excavations gradually provided a basis which would flower in the following phase[4].

Since c. 1960 the archaeological record of the Middle Ages has slowly come to be accepted as being of equal rank as (archaeological) remains of other periods, both by researchers, the archaeological authorities and

[4] For example the processing of medieval pottery: Janssen 1966.

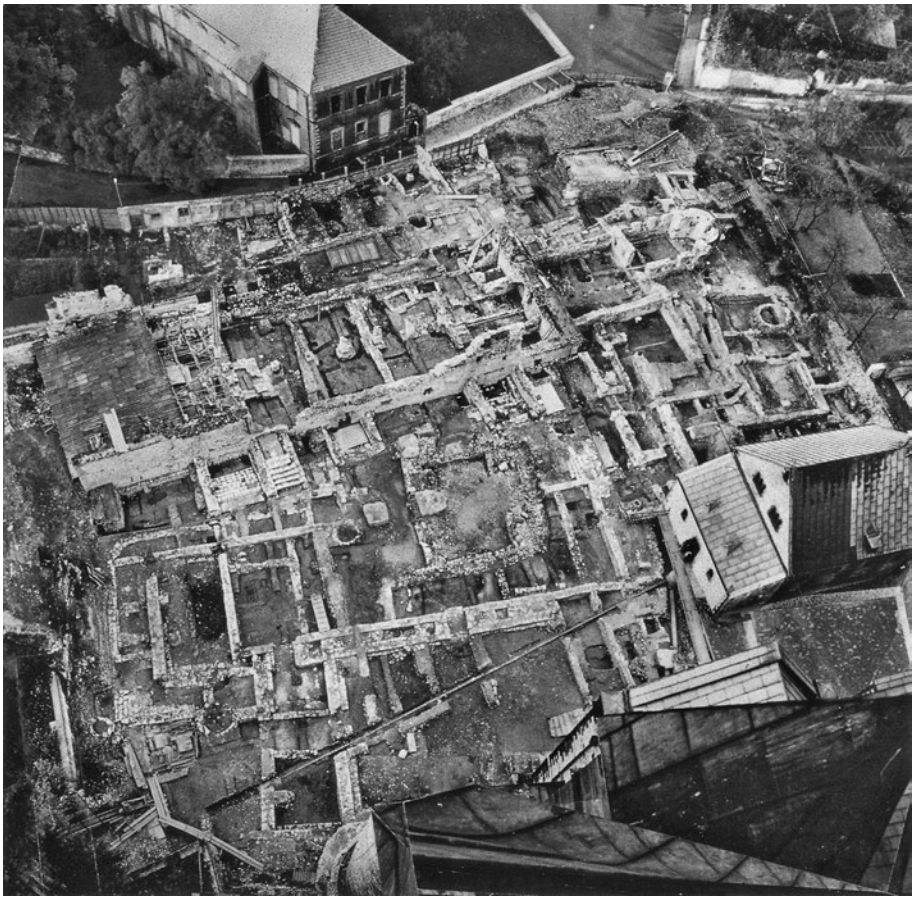

Fig. 5. The excavation of the Imperial palace of Paderborn in the 1960s (*Westfälisches Museum für Archäologie, Paderborn. Museum in der Kaiserpfalz).*

the public. In some institutions of archaeological heritage management special departments for medieval archaeology were established and the number of excavations increased steadily. However, medieval archaeological research grew at different paces in various federal states. Significant impulses came again from other countries: for castle research from Switzerland, for deserted medieval villages from Great Britain. It was important for the work in practical heritage management that excavations usually only came about as so-called rescue excavations, i.e. in the context of development and building projects, during which archaeological remains were destroyed. Research excavations were exceptions.

Large archaeological investigations, for example the imperial palatine in Paderborn (Winkelmann 1978), the town church St. Dionysius in Esslin-

gen (Baden-Württemberg) (Fehring 1966; Fehring, Scholkmann 1995), settlement archaeology research projects on the north coast area (Jankuhn, Kossack 1984), excavations in deserted medieval rural settlements such as the deserted village of Königshagen (Lower Saxony: Janssen 1965) as well as the intensifying of archaeological research in cities such as Lübeck (Schleswig-Holstein: Fehring 1994) or Münster (Northrhine-Westphalia: Winkelmann 1967) led to important insights for the discipline, which also attracted the attention of the public. The study of archaeological material culture was reinforced, and a growing number of monographs were published, at first mainly on medieval pottery (for example: Lobbedey 1968), then later, due to the rising volume of all kind of objects, also on other groups of archaeological finds (for example: Drescher 1969).

That medieval archaeology developed to be an equal and accepted subject in addition to prehistoric and provincial Roman archaeology and that the examination of material remains of the Middle Ages was no longer a doubtful part of archaeological research was made obvious during two large exhibitions in the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. Both presented a balance of activities of archaeology in the Federal Republic. The exhibition in Mainz presented "Excavations in Germany funded by the German Research Foundation" (RGZM 1975), the one in Cologne under the title "A New Picture of the Old World" showed excavations by the archaeological heritage management (RGM Köln 1975). Research into churches, urban centres, rural settlements and castles from the Middle Ages formed important parts of the presentations in both cases.

Two years earlier a special journal for the discipline had come into being[5]. In the first issue, Herbert Jankuhn set out a programme of topics for medieval archaeology from the viewpoint of a prehistorian which would dominate work in the following decades (Jankuhn 1973). In 1975 an association was founded within the German Association for Prehistoric Research (Steuer 1995), the Committee for Medieval Archaeology, since 2000 renamed as the German Society for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology (Falk 2001, pp. 5-8). Both were important signals for establishing the discipline in universities, which only followed later (Steuer 2001). However, through personal interest and the research focus of tenured professors at institutes for pre- and proto history, the subject was present at universities, especially from 1970 onward, without being named as such, for example at the universities of Kiel or Bonn. A first chair for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology was created at the university Bamberg in 1981. This bears witness to a new openness

[5] ZAM 1 (1973) – 39 (2011).

towards Post-Medieval Archaeology, which the Committee for Medieval Archaeology within the German Association for Prehistoric Research admitted in 1990 by adding it to its name[6].

Increasingly, archaeological research was now becoming accepted by the historical sciences, and an intensive discussion started about how to bring together the results of medieval archaeology and medieval history, as a conference project in 1974/5 showed. Its topic was "Historical Science and Archaeology". Questions and mutual problems were discussed and methodical possibilities to integrate results were searched for. The summary of the results of the conference by the historian Reinhard Wenskus would be the basis of interdisciplinary cooperation for the decades to come (Wenskus 1979). A further conference held in 1990, "Medieval Archaeology in Central Europe. Shifting tasks and targets" presented the current situation of medieval archaeology in the Federal Republic of Germany, not only regarding research strategies, questions and results but also the location of the discipline within its interdisciplinary context (Fehring, Sage 1995).

5.2. The development in the late German Democratic Republic

In the former GDR systematic archaeological research into medieval objects also began after WWII. However, the situation was completely different to the FRG concerning its organization. The Berlin Academy of Sciences was established as a large research foundation. It not only determined the research strategies and directions, but also operated and controlled research excavations. Investigations of medieval remains were also the responsibility of regional museums for pre-history and universities[7].

From the beginning of the GDR up to the 1960s, mostly prehistorians, who had had their positions since before the War, were responsible for investigations. From the middle of the 60s onwards, research was brought in line with a Marxist-Leninist methodology with the aim to reinforce the Marxian theory of cyclical change of the development of society. The concept of the "Middle Ages" was substituted by the term "feudalism". Joachim Herrmann, the director of the Central Institute for Ancient History and Archaeology, founded in 1969 in Berlin, was in charge.

The main interest during this time, and also politically motivated, fo-

[6] From now on it was named "Committee for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology", since 2000 "German Society for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology".

[7] Rounded-up accounts: Gringmuth-Dallmer 1993, 2001; Coblenz 2000.

cused on the archaeology of the Slavs. Many hill forts, but also settlements and grave fields were studied, in some cases quite extensively[8], such as the trading post of Ralswiek on the Baltic island Rügen, the hill fort and settlement of Tornow in Lower Lusatia (Brandenburg), the temple hill of Groß Raden and the hill fort of Behren-Lübchin (both in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) or the early Slavic settlement of Dessau-Mosigkau (Sachsen-Anhalt).

Excavations were carried out also in other medieval places. Thus in the post-War period research into early and high medieval fortifications was taken up again under the leadership of Wilhelm Unverzagt, the director of the Museum of Pre- and Proto-History in Berlin. Among these were castles from around 1300, such as the one in Lebus/Oder (Brandenburg), where work had begun already in 1938 (See Herrmann 1989, vol. 2). In a few urban centres destroyed by WWII excavations took place, so for example in Leipzig (Küas 1976), Dresden (Mechelk 1981) (both Saxony), or Frankfurt/Oder (Brandenburg: Huth 1975). The largest was the excavation undertaken from 1948 onwards in Magdeburg (Sachsen-Anhalt) by Ernst Nickel (Nickel 1964). In the centre of Berlin/Köpenick the Academy conducted excavations (Herrmann 1962; Reinbacher 1963). From the 1970s onwards urban archaeology was intensified and extended to other towns.

For the research into palatines the project of the Academy for Sciences in 1958 which resumed excavations in the palatine Tilleda (Sachsen-Anhalt) under the leadership of Paul Grimm can be seen as a milestone. Until 1969 the site was investigated in its entirety (Grimm 1968). The urban archaeological examinations in Magdeburg also brought important results for the local palatine. Inland developments and German settlement in the East were studied, with the methods of comparative and interdisciplinary settlement research. Excavations in German rural settlements were only conducted in a few cases, so in the deserted medieval village of Gommerstedt (Thuringia) (Timpel 1982). Church archaeology was also not a major research interest, with the result that – other than in the FRG – very few excavations took place, concentrating exclusively on large monuments such as the cathedrals of Magdeburg (Ullmann 1989) or Naumburg (both Sachsen-Anhalt: Schubert 1997). On the other hand material culture was investigated intensively. This is true for the Slavonic culture and also for objects of the high and late Middle Ages, so that until 1990, just as in the the FRG, important results concerning chronology and typology, manufacture and function of different groups of objects and for various regions were published (see Herrmann 1989, vol. 1, pp. 277-285).

[8] See the respective articles in: HERRMANN 1989, vol. 2.

An article, entitled "The contribution of archaeology to the research of the middle ages", published by Paul Grimm in 1966 became important for the foundation and theoretical reflection of the discipline. Similarly to what Herbert Jankuhn would say in the FRG only a few years later, he laid out the research questions and possibilities for the subject from the viewpoint of a pre-historian. However, the ranking of archaeological sources in relation to written sources was fundamentally different, being shaped by Marxist-Leninist historical philosophy in the GDR. This is shown programmatically in the conference proceedings edited by Joachim Hermann in 1977, with the title "Archaeology as Historical Science" (Herrmann 1977). In the FRG archaeologists as well as historians regarded the two sources as different kinds of sources yielding different forms of information and searched for possibilities to link them. In contrast, in the GDR the unity of written and archaeological sources was postulated and their equality justified by pointing out that both were societal manifestations generated by previous societies.

6. Medieval archaeology in the FRG since unification: on the way towards "Historical Archaeology"

During the last two decades new developments and transformations have emerged within the discipline. In the area of the former GDR unification also led to a significant change for medieval archaeology (Gringmuth-Dallmer 1993), especially in heritage management. The dissolution of the Central Institute for Ancient History and the restructuring of archaeological heritage management based on the pattern of the archaeological supervisory boards in the former FRG caused a considerable reorganization. Here too, just as in the former FRG, archaeological excavations were now usually only conducted as rescue operations. Redevelopment and building projects on a large scale in medieval urban centres led to excavations, for example in Dresden, Frankfurt/Oder, Leipzig or Chemnitz, that were unknown in their dimensions in the old FRG until then. Through the planning of new motorways and train tracks information about rural settlements was obtained, and renovations provided excavation possibilities in rural churches. Research into Slavic settlements was continued[9]. Investigation projects in opencast brown coal mining

[9] An overview is offered by the annual reports of the respective federal heritage boards. Saxony is an example: "Arbeits und Forschungsberichte zur sächsischen Bodendenkmalpflege" (1991-2008), since 2009: "Archäologie in Sachsen".

areas were especially important. For the first time, as happened earlier in the FRG, the development of rural settlements could be documented from their origins until their desertion (Smolnik 2011).

In the former FRG too medieval archaeology continually developed further. Heritage management legislation is the responsibility of the *Länder*; there is no uniform legislation for the whole FRG. Just as in the new German federal states, excavations are regulated by differing legal requirements, political frameworks, heritage management decisions and research objectives with regards to their contents and main focus. In the following decades excavation practice was subjected to considerable changes. As a consequence, new and different research emphases were constantly developed. However, this also resulted in considerable variation in the breadth an depth of research in different areas.

6.1. New developments

New developments that emerged already in the last decade of the previous century (Scholkmann 2001) have grown in strength until today. Activities have spread considerably, concerning excavations as well as publications. Building archaeology which started from the 1970s onwards has gained more and more importance due in part to the substantial progress of dendrochronology. The output of medieval archaeology over the last few decades seems immense. The insights gained by the "Middle Ages from the ground" encompass various kinds of sites and categories of material culture, as can be seen by the annual reports and monographs released by the relevant authorities[10]. A very good overview of the current state of research is offered by the chapter on the Middle Ages in a recent compendium on archaeology in Germany published in 2002 (von Freeden, von Schnurbein 2002, pp. 316-445), as well as by the presentation of medieval archaeology in an exhibition in Berlin the same year (Menghin, Planck 2002, pp. 318-388), where the results of research into medieval archaeology since 1975 were presented.

Above all, the discipline – in the federal heritage sector as well as in academia – deals increasingly with the post-medieval period and its material remains (for example: Ericsson 2002; Schreg 2004), a development that has appeared for quite some time in other European countries. Quite different research fields thus appear in the focus of archaeology (see the

[10] See for example the monographic volumes: "Forschungen und Berichte der Archäologie des Mittelalters in Baden-Württemberg" , vol. 1 (1972) – 33 (2013) and the annual work reports "Ausgrabungen in Baden-Württemberg" 1981-2011.

overview by: Müller 2012; Scholkmann *et alii* 2009). For some time and increasingly since the fall of the wall the archaeological remains of the recent past, the Nazi regime (Kerndl 2002; Gechter 2010), the Second World War and the Cold War, for example the Berlin Wall (Dressler 2009; Wolfram 2009), form a part of this. Finally non-European regions have come into focus and some research into colonial archaeology is being conducted (Scholkmann *et alii* in press). But there are no developments for post medieval archaeology to become an independent discipline. Instead medieval archaeology is developing a self-concept of "historical" archaeology, the subject of which are the Middle Ages as well as the post-medieval periods.

A research field in the medieval period which is of increasing interest is the archaeology of Medieval Jewry. Excavations in synagogues, mikvahs and Jewish town quarters (ghettos) have brought many new insights (Wamers, Backhaus 2004; Altwasser *et alii* 2009). But cultural landscape and environmental archaeology have especially come into the focus of research interest in the last few years (Scholkmann 2009, pp. 32-41; Meier 2009, Daim *et alii* 2011). They will no doubt in future play an important role within scientific research.

6.2. The discipline within the university

In the universities the subject has been established on a broader basis (See Steuer 2001; Müller 2012). In 1994 a new chair was created in Tübingen, and in Halle in 2004. In other universities medieval archaeologists were appointed to existing chairs for pre-history, such as in Berlin or Greifswald. Some university institutes have integrated medieval archaeology and by this indicate a widening of their research understanding, for example in Freiburg. Others confirm that they have extended their research to the field of post-medieval archaeology by changing the name into "historic archaeology" as in Kiel. A survey of academic teaching in 2000 showed that courses on the subject were offered by nearly 20 universities in Germany. Despite this, its academic establishment must still be assessed as deficient, for in respect to the demand for well taught specialists in the field as well as in scientific analysis and research it is in no way adequate.

6.3. Theoretical approach

A discourse with the kind of theoretical archaeology developed among English-speaking archaeologists has not yet been conducted within the discipline. However, some reflections on a theoretical framework have

been carried out. The relationship to other archaeological disciplines, especially pre- and proto-history and medieval history has been discussed anew (Scholkmann 1997/98; Steuer 1997/98). In a number of conferences a state of affairs of the actual situation and perspectives of the subject have been laid out. This is true for a conference in Tübingen on the occasion of the 20-anniversary of the foundation of the Committee for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology in the year 1995 (Scholkmann, Falk 1996) or another organized by the German Society for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology in the year 2000 (Scholkmann 2001). New models for the interpretation of material culture were developed, concerning their potential as evidence for interpretation in various contexts as well as their linking to the non-material record (for example Müller 2006). In the light of the immense amount of available archaeological source evidence and the substantial written and pictorial sources existing for the late Middle Ages and post-medieval period such approaches are of great importance for future research.

Lately a paradigm shift can be seen in relation to the interdisciplinary position of the subject. While for a long time it was seen as a historic discipline and therefore understood to be part of a comprehensive historical science, now developments can be perceived that emphasize its definition as "historical cultural studies" (Schreg 2010; Eggert 2006, pp. 246-250) or "historical anthropology" (Müller 2008). Due to such a changed self-conception, the subject may open up new and pioneering trans-disciplinary approaches and perspectives.

Translated by Margret Sloan

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