# discussion article

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doi:10.1017/S1380203817000022

## Beyond antiquarianism. A review of current theoretical issues in German-speaking prehistoric archaeology

*Kerstin P. Hofmann and Philipp W. Stockhammer**


## Abstract

Whereas German-speaking archaeology (GSA) has long been understood as generally uninterested in theoretical debates, the situation has taken a most interesting development since the year 2000. Archaeologists tried to escape the general decline of the small university disciplines by getting more and more involved in the overarching research questions of cultural studies and in large-scale collaborative projects. The necessity of integrating a clear theoretical and methodological approach for a successful proposal and the subsequent research changed the significance of theoretical discussions. As a consequence, theme-oriented research has developed which aims at addressing overarching themes in the cultural and social sciences. We have chosen five of the most prominent themes in German-speaking archaeology – self-reflexivity, identities, space, cultural encounter and knowledge transfer – as well as material culture, and shed light on their theoretical conceptualization and methodological implementation in recent publications. Despite the lack of dominant schools of thinking, its strong rootedness in the evaluation of empirical sources, and its close link to the discipline of history, current GSA can contribute to the overall theoretical discourse of the discipline.



## Keywords

theory; German-speaking archaeology; self-reflexivity; identity; cultural encounter; knowledge transfer; material culture


## Introduction

For many years post-war German-speaking prehistoric archaeology (or GSA for short), as part of Central European archaeology, with its material-oriented publications (see Gramsch and Sommer 2011; Gramsch 2011),

*Kerstin P. Hofmann, Römisch-Germanische Kommission des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Palmengartenstraße 10-12, 60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Email: kerstin.hofmann@dainst.de. Philipp W. Stockhammer, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Institut für vor- und frühgeschichtliche Archäologie und provinzialrömische Archäologie, Schellingstr. 12, 80799 München, Germany. Email: philipp.stockhammer@lmu.de.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

has been perceived as rather uninterested in theoretical debates and has been understood as mostly antiquarian in its approach. This assessment has resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy: as no one expected GSA to publish on theoretical issues, no one would search for them – especially as this would require reading through thick monographs and anthologies predominantly published in German. This has led to a lack of interest in the current emerging theoretical discussions in German-speaking academia. We want to overcome this unsatisfying situation by shedding light on recent developments in GSA and current themes: self-reflexivity, identity, social space, intercultural encounter and knowledge exchange, as well as material culture. We hope that we can thereby awaken people's interest in getting further involved in these discussions.

Writing about the current theoretical discourse in GSA is neither an easy nor an unproblematic task. We have to raise the question whether, in the age of intense international academic entanglement, we can still speak about territorially restricted discourses, and whether we do not run the risk of essentializing a more or less internationally connected archaeological community.[1] So what do we mean when speaking of 'theoretical issues in German-speaking prehistoric archaeology'? In this article, we take as the basis for our reflections theoretical and problem-oriented approaches developed and published after the year 2000 by researchers who enjoyed most of their academic education in prehistory and protohistory at a German-speaking university.[2] We will not focus on those scholars who fit this definition but who have been working mostly outside German-speaking institutions since the new millennium. These restrictions are, of course, artificial, but explicitly formulated by the editors of *Archaeological dialogues*, as Ulrike Sommer already published a statement on archaeological theory in GSA in the 1990s (Sommer 2000b).[3]

Our understanding of 'theory' in archaeology is a very broad one (cf. Gramsch 2011; Johnson 2006; Veit 2002a), comprising all reflections on and assumptions about archaeological practice (including excavation, interpretation, dissemination of knowledge etc.) and their operationalization as methods in order to be used in the epistemological process. It is important to understand that monographs or articles with a purely theoretical focus are largely missing in GSA. Therefore our contribution does not aim to present 'grand theory' in a rather philosophical sense, but concentrates on theory-based and problem-oriented research (cf. Ziegert 1980) that even cuts across major theoretical schools established in British archaeology. As a consequence, our approach is similar to Michelle Hegmon's (2003) perspective on theory in North American archaeology, which she based on the analysis of selected themes. As we will argue below, due to important changes in the structure and funding of research in German academia, GSA has increasingly focused on overarching themes in the cultural and social sciences.

We are aware that our overview is neither objective nor comprehensive. Other scholars might have chosen different themes and references. Both of us academically grew up around the turn of the millenium inside particular academic and theoretical discourses and within particular university

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

structures. We both are specialized in the European Metal Ages. For almost a decade, both of us conducted research within large interdisciplinary research collaborations, which are based in cultural and social studies and which promoted extensive interdisciplinary exchange. Thus the following overview reflects our specific perspectives on German-speaking prehistoric and protohistoric archaeology, with a focus on the Metal Ages, since 2000.

## Recent developments in German-speaking archaeology

Since the late 1980s and especially around the year 2000, a considerable number of articles and books have been published in GSA which reviewed either the state of art of theoretical discussions in GSA mostly for anglophone academia or summarized recent trends in anglophone archaeology for a German-speaking audience (Bernbeck 1997; Eggert 2001; Eggert and Veit 1998; Karl 2004; Siegmund and Zimmermann 2000; Sommer 2000b). These publications were attempts to self-assure theoretical interest and to recognize the position of GSA in order to build bridges between the different traditions of research. In these years, dealing with theoretical issues in GSA did not find broader interest and was considered as hindering rather than advancing an academic career in Germany. Neverthless, several theoretically interested research groups were founded and the German T-AG (Theorie-ArbeitsGemeinschaft) sessions (renamed AG TidA in 2012) have found an increasingly broad audience.[4]

Since the 1990s, archaeologists felt threatened by what was perceived as the crisis of the 'small disciplines' (*kleine Fächer*) and severe funding cuts (Burmeister 2005). At the same time, the Bologna process and connected academic reforms forced archaeologists to rethink their positions at universities and forced coalitions for joint bachelor and master's programmes (Siegmund 2003). The best way out of this crisis since the 1990s seemed to be intensified joint application for DFG (German Research Foundation)-financed large-scale coordination projects (*Verbundforschungsprojekte*), i.e. so-called priority programmes (*Schwerpunktprogramm*, SPP) and collaborative research centres (*Sonderforschungsbereich*, SFB).[5] Interdisciplinary collaboration also seemed to become one of the prerequisites for a successful application to most other third-party donors. These funding lines offered new financial possibilities but required clearly problem-oriented approaches and multi- or even interdisciplinary collaboration.[6] The necessity of integrating a clear theoretical and methodological approach for a successful proposal changed the significance of theoretical discussions in archaeology.

The new focus on issue-related research also led to a stronger interconnection of research within the German Archaeological Institute, which introduced several research clusters on key issues in order to better interconnect the research of the different departments. The development towards problem-oriented collaborative research gained momentum with the Bologna process and the establishment of the German Universities Excellence Initiative, namely the Human Development in Landscapes graduate school at Kiel University, the Topoi: The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilization cluster of excellence in Berlin, and the Asia

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality cluster of excellence at Heidelberg University since 2007. These projects triggered transdisciplinary research on socially relevant themes and English became more popular as a language for publication. Many already theoretically interested archaeologists participated in the realization of these large-scale collaborations, which again further encouraged archaeologists to participate in the creation and elaboration of current epistemes and theorems. Last but not least, the graduate schools and clusters of excellence financed numerous issue-related research projects, Ph.D. grants, international conferences and networking. Inside and outside these collaborative projects, a large number of monographs and anthologies with a clear focus on methodological and theoretical issues have been published in the last decade (see Eggert and Veit 2013). Furthermore, a number of handbooks and introductions were published that focused on interpretive approaches, themes and questions (e. g. Bernbeck 1997; Eggert 2006; Eggert and Samida 2009; Haupt 2012; Mölders and Wolfram 2014; Samida, Eggert and Hahn 2014), which are increasingly used in bachelor's and master's programmes, where theoretical perspectives for a long time had not played a significant role at all.

However, the large-scale funding of research by the German Research Foundation and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research reduced scholarly interest in applications for ERC grants which have rarely been awarded to GSA. The few ERC grants were mostly awarded to projects with a highly innovative and interdisciplinary scientific approach.[7] The EU funding of museums and heritage has had almost no impact on theoretical debates (cf. Gramsch 2000a; 2005; and Mante 2005 for a critical assessment).

Whereas, in the year 2000, Ulrike Sommer stated that 'there is almost no methodological and theoretical debate' in GSA (Sommer 2000b, 160), vivid debates on modi of interpretation in archaeology gained momentum at the very same time, e.g. the dispute about the interpretation of the princely sites and graves of the Early Iron Age (e.g. Eggert 1999; Krausse 1999; Schweizer 2012); the debate on the possibilities and constraints of conclusions by analogy (e.g. Eggert 1998; Gramsch 2000b); the 'new fight about Troy' focusing on the understanding of early urbanism and the concept of Orient and Occident (e.g. Schweizer and Kienlin 2001–2; Ulf 2003); and the debate on the role of tradition, cultural patterns and material culture in ethnic interpretation (e.g. Bierbrauer 2004 versus Brather 2000; Brather and Wotzka 2006 versus Siegmund 2006; Eger 2011; 2015 versus Rummel 2007; cf. Siegmund 2009; 2014). The Interpretierte Eisenzeiten: Fallstudien, Methoden, Theorien (Interpreted Iron Ages: Case Studies, Method, Theory) annual workshop series was launched in 2004 by Jutta Leskovar and Raimund Karl in order to bring new theoretical and methodological impulses into research on Iron Age Central Europe. In addition to the *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* and the *Archäologische Informationen* journals, where more theoretical contributions have been printed, the *Forum Kritische Archäologie* (http://www.kritischearchaeologie.de) was founded in 2012 in order to enhance theoretical discourse on key issues in archaeology. However, we still need more courage to present innovative theoretical approaches without fearing harsh rejection (e.g. Holtorf and Veit 2006). In GSA it is

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rather uncommon to bring first thoughts up for discussion even at conferences, because what is presented is still expected to be 'final and authoritative treatise' (Sommer 2000b, 161).

Meanwhile, it is much easier for students to participate in theoretical and methodological debates (cf. Hachmann 1987 for a very early example). This is enhanced by theoretically oriented workshops (e.g. Göbel and Zech 2011; Furholt, Hinz and Mischka 2012; Hofmann and Schreiber 2015a; Stockhammer and Hahn 2015), which enabled vivid discussions and even publications of undergraduates and graduate students on these issues. Nevertheless, exclusively theoretical academic theses are still hindering rather than promoting individual careers. One is still confronted with the notion that theoretical debates are rather more avant-garde than helpful when evaluating the empirical data and archaeological practices. Even if it is now broadly expected that theoretical and methodological chapters should be integrated into such works, the deep knowledge of material culture and excavation skills are still considered to be the most important qualification in GSA.

In contrast to British archaeology (cf. Bintliff 2011a), German-speaking archaeologists have never had the need to root themselves in already existing general theories – beyond the general link to historicism and positivism. The strong focus on material culture and the lack of necessity of writing an introductory theoretical chapter or paragraph in publications created a free space for individual decisions about what ideas to appropriate and along which lines to think (cf. Hegmon 2003).[8] Therefore GSA is rather characterized by a very vivid eclecticism of approaches, which is generated around certain major themes. For a long time and still today, these themes have been linked to the archaeological record of the period of interest, and methods and theories were developed in order to best evaluate the respective sources – burials (e.g. Hofmann 2008; Meier 2002a; Meyer-Orlac 1982; Müller-Scheeßel 2013b), settlements (e.g. Mattheußer and Sommer 1991; Stockhammer 2008), depositions (Hansen 1994; Hansen, Neumann and Vachta 2012) or particular categories of objects or materials (Dietz and Jockenhövel 2011; Stockhammer 2009). Meanwhile, however, major topics are often shaped in the framework of the preparation and the conduct of large-scale collaborative research projects, as those offered funding and resources to realize the potential of a small discipline. The selection of the following themes is, as already mentioned, nevertheless a result of our own academic background.

***Self-reflexivity*** In the decades after the Second World War, self-reflection only took place in the very restricted field of source criticism (e.g. Eggers 1959; Narr 1972; Torbrügge 1958).[9] It was rather unwanted to critically analyse the discipline's involvement in the cruelties of the Nazi regime until the late 1990s (cf. Grunwald 2010; for an early exception cf. Smolla 1979–80). The growing distance from Nazi archaeologists, however, enabled a new critical perspective analysing political enmeshments of GSA in Nazi and immediate post-war Germany.[10] Moreover, there was a shift from history of research (e.g. Coblenz 1998; 2000; Kossack 1992; 1999; Kühn 1976) to history of archaeological thinking and/or history of science (cf. Veit 2011; Zimmermann

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2003),[11] often written by historically trained young scholars (e.g. Gramsch 2006; Gramsch and Sommer 2011; Härke 2000; Mante 2007; Perschke 2014; Reichenbach and Rohrer 2011; Veit 2002b). This new reflexivity has been the focus of several projects at the Universities of Leipzig and Freiburg – especially in the context of the Collaborative Research Centres SFB 417 on regional processes of identification at Leipzig and SFB 541, Identities and Alterities, at Freiburg, as well as in the framework of the EU-financed Archives of European Archaeology.[12] Another centre of discussion for the history of archaeological research has been in Berlin (e.g. Callmer *et al.* 2006; Eberhardt and Link 2015; Leube and Hegewisch 2002). Moreover, the German Archaeological Institute chose this perspective as one of its research clusters in order to shed light on the institute's political and societal role through time (e.g. Jansen 2008; Vigener 2012).

A particular focus has been placed on individual researchers of the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g. Fries and Gutsmiedl-Schühmann 2013; Grünert 2002; Koch and Mertens 2002; Mahsarski 2011; Steuer 2001) and in the field of Nazi archaeology (e.g. Arnold and Hassmann 1995; Geringer *et al.* 2013; Halle 2002). GSA of the post-war area has also been studied with a focus on inherent and more or less explicit theoretical and methodological arguments in order to better understand theoretical approaches – many very functionalist in their line of thinking – within a supposedly 'purely antiquarian' archaeology (Andresen 1997; Stockhammer 2011b). Only recently, the interpretation of groups of monuments (Link 2011; 2014; Müller-Scheeßel 2011a; Rieckhoff, Grunwald and Reichenbach 2009) or paradigms of interpretation (Brather 2014; Wiwjorra 2006) have been studied more intensively.

This went hand in hand with a more general reflection on archaeologists' practices like excavating (Eberhardt 2008; 2011), mapping (Grunwald 2012; 2016; Hofmann 2016b) and reading of traces (Holtorf 2007; Kümmel 2009; Veit *et al.* 2003). Moreover, scholars discussed the generation or logic of archaeological knowledge (Davidovic 2009; Jung 2006; Mölders 2013) and the role of the archaeologist as artist, storyteller, scientist or cultural historian (Kümmel, Müller-Scheeßel and Schülke 1999; Leskovar 2005; Niklasson and Meier 2013; Rieckhoff 2007b; Rieckhoff, Veit and Wolfram 2010; Samida and Eggert 2013a; Veit 2006a). In the 1990s and early 2000s, vivid discussions on the cognitive identity of the discipline arose at the University of Tübingen triggered by Manfred K.H. Eggert's and Ulrich Veit's aim to reconceptualize the discipline as a *historische Kulturwissenschaft* (Eggert 2005; 2006; Heinz, Eggert and Veit 2003; Samida and Eggert 2013a; Veit 1995; cf. Angeli 1999; 2003). Soon, other scholars engaged in these concepts, developed these thoughts further (Frommer 2007; Mante 2007) and defined archaeology as a branch of history and part of a new comprehensive anthropology (Hofmann 2004; 2006–7).

The role of archaeology in the present public sphere has consequently been analysed in order to contrast current political enmeshments (e.g. in the framework of EU-financed attempts towards transregional identity) with past experiences (e.g. Gramsch 2000a; 2005; Mante 2005; 2007, 195–217). The construction of images of the past in exhibitions, popular film and other media was the focus of several publications (e.g. Gehrke and Sénécheau

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2010; Ickerodt 2004; Kaenel and Jud 2002; Kerig 2005; Mainka-Mehling 2008; Rahemipour 2009; Röder 2015; Samida 2011), as were practices of re-enactment, living history (Ickerodt 2009; Samida 2014) and gender stereotypes (Röder 2014).

The analysis of archaeological thinking and the aim of reconceptualizing the discipline raised the question whether archaeologists should again be more engaged in current political discourse and – vice versa – what power structures and discourses influence archaeological thinking (Wolfram and Sommer 1993; Gramsch 2000a; cf. also http://archaeologik.blogspot.de). For the first time since the Second World War, GSA seemed to be willing again to get involved in political and societal discourse – albeit this time in a critical and reflective manner (Editorial Collective 2012; Meier 2012).

To sum up: due to the strong tradition in GSA of localizing one's own study in pre-existing research, interest in the history of research of archaeological sites, scholars and institutions has continuously been increasing. We consider it typical of GSA that this kind of research is heavily based on archival studies and the methodological toolbox of historiography. In addition, approaches from the sociology of knowledge have been introduced and also further strengthened self-reflexivity from an epistemological and praxeological perspective. It is the intense interaction with pre-existing systems of knowledge and concepts and their influence on ongoing research that can also help scholars outside GSA to further reflect on their own approaches.

***Identities*** The topic of identity – albeit under different labels – has always been crucial for archaeology (Gardner 2011, 11; Hofmann 2012a). Before and during the Second World War, the term *Volk* was very popular to describe the relation between material culture and people. Due to the abuse of ethnic interpretations by nationalist approaches, the term *Volk* was replaced by seemingly more neutral terms like 'culture' and 'ethnicity' in the post-war decades (Rieckhoff 2007a, 9). Whereas the term 'identity' was introduced as 'social identity' in anglophone archaeology in the 1970s (Gillespie 2001, 77), a different understanding of 'identity' was introduced in GSA in the context of the aforementioned rise of critical self-reflection from the end of the 1990s and terms like 'ethnicity' were replaced by 'cultural identity' or 'ethnic identity'. Closely related to contemporaneous research in historical studies (Pohl 2004; Pohl and Mehofer 2010; Pohl and Reimitz 1998; Steinacher 2011; 2012), the importance of self-identification, consciousness and imagination, as well as situational affiliation, has been stressed (Brather 2004, 79; Fehr 2010a; Müller-Scheeßel and Burmeister 2006; Rieckhoff and Sommer 2007). Moreover, researchers emphasized the ambivalence of meaning of dress (Brather 2007; Burmeister 1997; 2003), pottery (Hahn 2009; Furholt and Stockhammer 2008; Zeeb-Lanz 2006) and burial practices (Brather 2010; Hinz 2009) from new perspectives inspired by semiotics and communication theory. They argued for a more sophisticated approach to non-verbal communication with the help of objects beyond simple markers of identities. This went hand in hand with a growing scepticism regarding the possibility of identifying prehistoric and protohistoric ethnic identities

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the archaeological record at all. In particular, scholars from Freiburg often interpreted those sources as a means of social distinction, which had formerly been understood as a means of ethnic differentiation (Brather 2007; Jentgens 2001; Rummel 2007). Other scholars have been trying to maintain the ethnic interpretation (Bierbrauer 2004; Eger 2011; 2012; Koch 2004) or to propose alternatives (e.g. Fernández-Götz 2009; 2014). Instead of focusing on the presence or absence of single diacritical features, several scholars (Furholt 2009; Müller 2006; Nakoinz 2009a; 2013; Siegmund 2000; Zimmermann 1995; 2007) argued for identifying spaces of communication and/or collectives in the archaeological record on the basis of quantitative analysis of features. Sometimes, these assumed collectives were afterwards thought to be the traces of tribes or identity groups (Furholt 2009, 236; Zimmermann 2007), or even labelled with historiographical ethnonyms (Siegmund 2000, 307–13). Brather and Wotzka (2006) argued, however, that these data are also shaped by structural and economic conditions as well as by traditions and related social practices without a clear link to ethnicity.

Other lines of discussion can be framed as identity politics. The late onset of feminist approaches in GSA since the 1990s first aimed at visualizing and acknowledging the role of women in history (cf. Auffermann and Weniger 1998; Bergmann-Kickenberg, Kästner and Mertens 2004; Brandt 1996; Karlisch, Kästner and Mertens 1997) and at supplying gender studies with a prehistoric perspective (e.g. Rambuscheck 2009). A new critical approach towards unquestioned narratives and research paradigms gained momentum – especially against androcentric or other simplistic reconstructions of prehistoric life worlds (e.g. Fries and Koch 2005; Koch 2009; R. Röder 2004; B. Röder 2010b; Röder, Hummel and Kunz 2001). Meanwhile, GSA sometimes distinguishes between 'women research' and 'men research' (e.g. Müller-Scheeßel 2011b), 'gender research' and 'feminist research', as well as queer studies (e.g. Matić 2012; Wiermann 1997). However, a strict differentiation between these lines of research seems impossible (Fries 2005, 94). Most of these approaches in GSA have focused on the analysis of burials and the question of how to identify sex or gender (e.g. Alt and Röder 2009; Derks 2012; Hofmann 2009a). Furthermore, gender-related iconographies and divisions of labour have been discussed (e.g. Allinger 2007; Fries and Rambuscheck 2011; Owen 2005). Inspired by current anglophone discussions, recent research has studied embodiment and 'doing gender' (e.g. Gramsch 2008; 2010; Harris and Hofmann 2014; Rebay-Salisbury 2013b). However, a systematic discussion of third-wave feminism and queer studies is still largely missing.

Parallel to the critique of the androcentric world view, the lack of age-differentiated perceptions was problematized. Interest in the topic of age started with the differentiation of age groups and classes (e.g. Gebühr 1994; critique by Jung 2004; Müller 1994). Initially the focus was mainly on children and childhood (e.g. Beilke-Voigt 2008; Kraus 2006; Lohrke 2004; Röder 2008; 2010a) and only rarely were old people selected as a research topic (e.g. Stauch 2008). Relatively soon it became common to differentiate between different types of age – for example chronological, physiological and

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sociocultural age – and to investigate ageing instead of age (e.g. Röder, de Jong and Alt 2012).

A particular interest has been placed on the analysis of the social structures of past societies (for a critical review of recent German social archaeology cf. Veit 2012), however, with a clear focus on so-called elites. Vivid discussions arose around the Early Iron Age princely burial of Hochdorf (Veit 2000b; Karl 2005) and especially the social status of the deceased. The suggestions vary from the village elder of a segmented and micro-regionally organized society (Burmeister 2000b, 208–11; Eggert 1999; 2003; Nortmann 2007) to the sacral king of an early state with a possible super-regional organization (Egg 1996a; 1996b; Krausse 1996a, 337–53; 1999). Although published in 1974, the seminal article of Georg Kossack (1974) on prestigious burials is still the starting point of many discussions (cf. von Carnap-Bornheim *et al.* 2006; Nortmann 2002; Schier 1998). For example, Detlef Gronenborn (2009b) interpreted prestigious burials as political monuments at the transition from corporate to network strategies (cf. Blanton *et al.* 1996) or vice versa. Whereas most approaches have emphasized the eminent role of the deceased individual, Ulrich Veit (2005) and Tobias L. Kienlin (2008a) pointed to the relevance of such burial practices for the construction of regional traditions and cultural memory, which again are highly important for integrating a local community. These ideas have also been picked up for Neolithic megaliths (Furholt *et al.* 2011). Moreover, the notion of *Gefolgschaften* (allegiances) has been analysed in GSA (Knöpke 2009; Steuer 1982, 54–59; 2009). Qualitative judgements have been supplemented by different quantitative approaches based on statistical evaluation of big data in order to elucidate the differing ranks and status of the inhabitants of a particular region, or of all buried individuals within a burial ground (Burmeister 2000b; Hinz 2009; Müller 2001; Müller-Scheeßel 2013b; Rebay 2006). Interest in ordinary people (Trebsche *et al.* 2007) or 'beyond-elites' (Kienlin and Zimmermann 2012) has only started recently.

Whereas in the beginning, researchers focused on specific partial identities, the interplay between different social categories has gained in interest recently. Meanwhile, sex and gender are regularly combined in analyses with age (Gramsch 2010; Müller 2005; Moraw and Kieburg 2014; Owen, Porr and Struwe 2004) – sometimes also in relation to status and power (Burmeister 2000b; Rebay-Salisbury 2013a) – or space (e.g. S. Reinhold 2005; R. Reinhold 2013). Relationships between parents and children (Hausmair 2013; Krausse 1998) and life course (Hausmair 2013; Koch 2010; Koch and Kupke 2012) have been added as new perspectives. The role of human mobility as a crucial factor for identity constitution was also discussed within the EU-funded Forging Identities: The Mobility of Culture in Bronze Age Europe (2009–12) network for initial training, where several partners from GSA were involved (e.g. Reiter *et al.* 2014). The transformation of identity found more interest – especially due to events like death and related *rites de passage* (e.g. Gramsch 2010). Furthermore, the constitutions of the identities and the communities of the dead are discussed (Hausmair 2015; Hofmann 2016c).

Moreover, some scholars have emphasized that the application of modern-day categories and concepts of identity to prehistory has to be problematized.

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Therefore, alternative notions like 'subjectivization' (Bernbeck 2008; Pollock 2007) and 'multitude' (Bernbeck 2012) have been proposed. Due to the importance of 'identity' in current discussions in society, in politics and in the humanities, most scholars have continued to speak about 'identities' – albeit while explicitly aware that the term has not been able to solve all the pitfalls of essentialization and exclusion. Furthermore, identities are more often understood as processes rather than as states, and the focus of analysis is placed on the dynamics of identities, the interplay between self-attribution and external attributions, and the relevance of alterity and alienness for the constitution of selfness (e.g. Brather 2004; Hofmann 2014a; Kienlin 2015b). Practices and discourses of creating and transforming identities are studied and, therefore, we now think in terms of 'doing identity' instead of 'having identity'.

To sum up, research on 'identity' has played a major role in anglophone archaeology due to the introduction of questions arising from current societal issues. However, in GSA 'identity' has rather been studied with a focus on the history of science and epistemology, and scholars have asked whether 'ethnicity', 'gender' and other social and cultural groups can be identified in the archaeological record at all. As a result, the emphasis has been placed on the constructedness and processuality of identities and on their de-essentialization. Moreover, there has always been the effort to develop qualitative and quantitative methodologies for such an attempt – which might be of interest for the international research community.

### *Space*

> *Wir lesen im Raum die Zeit*
> *(In space we read time)*

This quote from the German human geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1904, 28) was true for GSA for many decades – and is partially valid even today (cf. Veit 2014, 36–37). As a logical consequence, GSA has developed its own methodological approach to space, 'chorology' (cf. Perner 2005), and has intensively reflected on the epistemological potential of distribution maps and horizontal stratigraphies (cf. Eggert 2001, 222–47; 270–83; Steuer 2006; Stockhammer 2004). For a long time, the attribution of particular spaces to a particular culture – the so-called *Kulturkreise* (culture areas) or *Kulturprovinzen* (culture provinces) – and the change of these areas through time was of major interest. Consequently, these spaces were often interpreted as ethnically or politically meaningful territories (cf. Gramsch 1996a, 19–21; Müller-Scheeßel 2000). In the last few years, redefined cultural-historical approaches (Müller-Scheeßel 2013a, 105–9) have gained new popularity. In this framework, distribution maps have been analysed with regard to similarities and differences, spaces of communication and the drawing of boundaries and borders (e.g. Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2006; Doppler and Ebersbach 2011; Furholt 2009; Hofmann 2009b; 2016b; Krausse and Nakoinz 2009; Nakoinz 2009a; 2013; Müller 2000; 2009; Zimmermann 1995).

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Another line of research has focused on the impact, use and appropriation of material space often from a functionalist perspective. In the early 20th century, natural regions and climatic conditions were considered to be of major importance for the character of the inhabitants. Later, both factors were seen as drivers for socio-economic processes (e.g. Daim, Gronenborn and Schreg 2011; Gronenborn 2009a; Meller *et al.* 2013) and/or as background for so-called *historic-genetic settlement research* (see Gramsch 1996a, 21–22; Jankuhn 1952–55; 1977). Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing discussion on the conceptualization of settlement and cultural landscape archaeology, as well as on the analysis of scales of different kinds in GSA (e.g. Schier 1990; Saile 1997; Schade 2000; Schier 2002). In addition, older socio-topographical concepts were critically re-evaluated, e.g. the notion of the *Herrenhöfe* (chiefly farmsteads), which had formerly been proposed for the Roman Iron Age in northern Germany (Burmeister and Wendowski-Schünemann 2006; 2010), and the *Hofplatzmodel* (yard model), which was very popular in the reconstruction of settlements of the *Bandkeramik* (Rück 2007; Wolfram and Stäuble 2012, 11–46).

New questions and methods derived from geography, such as GIS, statistical analysis and geographical modelling, have been tested on the basis of already conducted large-scale research projects (for a list of German projects see Brather 2005, 85). For example, a hierarchical scale model was developed by Andreas Zimmermann and his colleagues which enables researchers to change between different scales and to estimate population densities for different regions (e.g. Wendt and Zimmermann 2009; Zimmermann *et al.* 2004; Zimmermann *et al.* 2009). Further sophisticated GIS and statistically based approaches for archaeology have been developed by Axel Poluschny (e.g. Posluschny 2002; 2006; Posluschny, Lambers and Herzog 2008; Posluschny *et al.* 2012) and Oliver Nakoinz (e.g. Nakoinz 2005; 2009a; 2013) – both members of Priority Programme 1171, Frühe Zentralisierungs- und Urbanisierungsprozesse. Surprisingly, central-place theory has recently found wider interest again (Gringmuth-Dallmer 1996; Krausse and Beilharz 2010; U. Müller 2010; Nakoinz 2009b; 2010; Schade 2004), whereas social-network theories have found only sparse interest in GSA (Claßen 2009; 2011; Kleingärtner and Zeilinger 2012; U. Müller 2009) – despite their popularity in current anglophone archaeology. Another focus has been on quantifying the potential of particular environments and their specific exploitation through time (e.g. Mischka 2007) and on the predictive modelling of landscapes (Kunow and Müller 2003; see also Furholt 2009; 2011; Hinz *et al.* 2012).

In spite of these vivid discussions, the problem of an implicit assumption or explicit theorem of a nature–culture dichotomy has not successfully been solved (cf. Brück 2005). In GSA, landscape has often been perceived as the surroundings or as a background, and not as an integral part of human life worlds. There are only a small number of recent studies which aim at a better understanding of the perception and constitution of landscapes (e.g. Gramsch 2003; Kleingärtner *et al.* 2013; Meier 2006; 2009; Schülke 2007; Doneus 2013). Almut Schülke (2011) developed her ideas by integrating GIS data with a diachronic analysis of a particular region in north-eastern

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Germany. Visual field analyses have been conducted to better understand potential past landscape perception (e.g. Posluschny and Schierhold 2010; Steffen 2008). Moreover, the histories of monuments (e.g. Holtorf 2000–8; Mischka 2011) and of early monumentality have also been a focus of study (e.g. Gramsch 1996b; SPP 1400, Frühe Monumentalität und soziale Differenzierung), mostly in their relevance for the creation of landscape (e.g. Müller *et al.* 2013).

Furthermore, a new kind of environmental archaeology has been developed which focuses on the historicization of human–environment interactions (cf. Knopf 2004; 2008; 2013; Meier and Tillessen 2011). It emphasizes the relevance of the perception of environment and its inherent temporal dynamics. In this line of thought, the constitution and utilization of resources through cultural practices (Knopf 2010; SFB 1070, RessourcenKulturen) and the archaeology of economics (e.g. Eggert 2007; Kerig 2013; Kerig and Zimmermann 2013; Roth 2008; GRK 1878, Archäologie vormoderner Wirtschaftsräume; Ramminger 2007) have recently found much interest.

In recent years, space has increasingly been understood as the product of social practices – inspired by Henri Lefebvre (1991) and with reference to the sociology of space as developed by Martina Löw (2001). Moreover, theories and concepts of the so-called spatial turn (cf. Bachmann-Medick 2016) have been translated for archaeological research (cf. Hofmann 2014–15; Hofmann and Schreiber 2015b). On this basis, the constructed space of past societies has been studied with a particular focus on social differentiation and the construction of power (e.g. Maran *et al.* 2006; Paliou, Lieberwirth and Polla 2014; Trebsche, Müller-Scheeßel and Reinhold 2010). It has been emphasized that constructed space represents societal structures, and at the same time structures societies in a highly interesting dynamic relationship. This was very convincingly exemplified in the novel interpretation of social spaces in Mycenaean palaces (Maran 2012a; Maran *et al.* 2006). In this context, the space-syntax models of Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson (1984) were applied to the study of spaces of movement (see especially Thaler 2005; 2010), and the notion of performative space (Maran 2006) has been conceptualized. The latter has also been used to study Bronze Age hoards and hoarding as a social practice within space (Ballmer 2010; Gramsch and Meier 2013; Hansen 2008; Hansen, Neumann and Vachta 2012; Neumann 2015). Another focus of interest has been funeral spatial concepts (Härke 2001; Hofmann 2013b; 2016c). In the latter contexts, theoretical approaches have been based on Michel Foucault's (2005) *heterotopia*, as well as on Anthony Giddens's (1984, esp. 118–123) *locales* and Peter Weichhart's (2003) *action settings*. Most recently, parallel concepts of space, multiple spaces and their localization have been studied (e.g. Hofmann and Schreiber 2015a; Meyer and Hansen 2013).

To sum up, in GSA, research on space and spatial practices has long been informed by approaches from physical geography, which focus on material space and its appropriation. Distribution maps still play a crucial role and scholars aim to improve their evaluation by integrating different statistical as well as practice-oriented approaches. Phenomenology and semiotics have so far played only minor roles. A major current focus of GSA is the analysis of the production of space by applying approaches from the sociology of space

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and human geography. We are convinced that an international audience could profit from the long tradition in GSA of studying distribution maps and their epistemological potential, as well as performative and/or processual concepts of space.

***Cultural encounter and knowledge exchange*** There has been a long history of interest in cultural encounter in GSA, as from the 19th century onwards archaeologists have been aware of the mobility of humans and things and the connected exchange of knowledge in past times.[13] From early on, there has been a particular interest in the identification of 'foreign objects' as well as 'foreign people' and their mapping (cf. Grunwald *et al.* forthcoming). In the beginning, this was particularly motivated by diffusionism and the *Kulturkreislehre* (for a critical review cf. Maran 2007; 2012b; Rebay-Salisbury 2011). Early interest in the mobility and movement of people also had an impact on the definition of 'culture' in GSA (Veit 1984; 2000a). A new and more sophisticated understanding of cultural encounter resulted from the critical evaluation of the concept of 'culture' in GSA, which started in the late 1970s (Eggert 1978; Hachmann 1987; Narr 1985) and gained momentum from the 1990s (e.g. Angeli 2002; Eggert 2013; Fröhlich 2000; Sommer 2007; Wotzka 1993; 1997). Nowadays, different notions of 'culture' exist in GSA, ranging from a reductionist notion of 'material culture' via semiotic approaches (e.g. Veit *et al.* 2003; U. Müller 2006; Hofmann 2008) to the understanding of culture as compromise after Andreas Wimmer (1996; 2011; e.g. Hofmann 2014a, 28; Schreiber 2013, 51–54). The redefinition of 'culture' in GSA was accompanied by a critical discussion of the understanding of 'culture' in world-systems theory and connected conceptualizations of core and periphery (Friesinger and Stuppner 2004; Kienlin 2015a; Kümmel 2001; Maran 2004a; 2004b; 2007; 2011b) – both very vibrant in contemporaneous anglophone archaeology.[14] Moreover, traditional notions of 'migration' have been revised and individual as well as group mobility redefined in order to modify still-existing ideas of the 'migration of people' (Andresen 2004; Burmeister 2000a; 2013a; Jockenhövel 1991; 2007; Kaiser and Schier 2013; Koch 2010; Prien 2005). This was most important, as human mobility and migration had always been considered crucial factors for culture change in GSA (cf. Burmeister 2013b; Härke 1997).

The rethinking of human mobility has also been crucial for the conceptualization of 'encounter' in GSA. In this context, spaces, actors and practices have been discussed – albeit to different degrees. GSA still lacks a convincing concept of the contact zone, although first steps towards a better understanding of spaces of encounter have been made (Brandt 2001; Hofmann 2014a; Horejs 2007; Kistler 2015). At the same time, actor-centred approaches emphasized individual cultural brokers who play a key role in the transmission of knowledge, objects and practices (Kistler and Ulf 2012). So-called 'cultural-transfer research' (Espagne and Werner 1988; Mitterbauer and Scherke 2005) has been proposed, which focuses strongly on individual actors' roles in situations of cultural encounter (Klammt and Rossignol 2009).

Inspired by practice-oriented approaches in the social sciences, scholars have focused on human practices and related phenomena in situations

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of cultural encounter (Maran and Stockhammer 2012a; Stockhammer 2011c; 2012d). Archaeologists have realized that this will enable them to demonstrate the historical dimension of phenomena which have so far been discussed as outcomes of modernity in the social sciences. In consequence, archaeologists have rethought and revised relevant concepts, e.g. 'glocalization', 'globalization' and 'translation' (Maran 2011b; 2012b; Theel 2009; Hofmann and Stockhammer forthcoming), as well as 'hybridity', 'appropriation', 'copying' and 'entanglement'[15] (Schreiber 2011; 2013; Forberg and Stockhammer forthcoming; Stockhammer 2012a; 2012b; 2012d). At the same time, archaeologists have continued to use 'older' terminology like 'acculturation' and tried to refine related notions in the framework of recent research (e.g. Hofmann 2014a; Meyer 2008; Schörner 2005) in order to avoid the creation of ever new and at the same time very short-lived terminologies (cf. Bintliff's 2011a, 8, critique of the 'use-and-discard' approach). Taking these considerations as a basis for an innovative approach to archaeological sources, the analyses of several case studies have been aimed at demonstrating the transformative potential of cultural entanglement (e.g. Hofmann 2014a; Maran 2011a; 2011b; 2013; Maran and Stockhammer 2012b; Rüden 2011; 2013; 2015; Schreiber 2013; Stockhammer 2011a; 2012c; 2012d; 2013).

This new interest in past cultural encounters also enabled archaeology to successfully (co-)apply for large-scale research projects with an explicit focus on past globalization phenomena, especially the Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality cluster of excellence at Heidelberg mentioned above. Their transcultural approach argues that cultures are invariably constituted by interaction, entanglement and reconfiguration, and assumes that cultural encounter and related phenomena are by no means restricted to modernity but are basic constituents of human life worlds (e.g. Maran and Stockhammer 2012b; Forberg and Stockhammer forthcoming). At the same time, a transcultural approach is understood as a research agenda, which aims to relativize disciplinary and national discourses and to accept manifold understandings of the world (Stockhammer 2012e; 2013). This new reflexivity and conceptualization of cultural encounter has been enforced by the German Archaeological Institute, which chose Connecting Cultures: Forms, Channels and Spaces of Cultural Interaction as one of its fields of focus.[16]

At the same time, when interest in a new conceptualization of cultural encounter started in GSA, new approaches to the role and potential of knowledge exchange – especially in the form of innovations – arose. At the beginning of this discussion, innovation was understood as an alternative approach to the explanation of cultural change (Eisenhauer 1999; 2002; Strahm 1994). Since then, archaeologists have further developed models of social continuity and change (Hofmann 2012b; Knopf 2002; Stockhammer 2008, 1–4) and at the same time more and more intensively integrated insights from sociology – especially the sociology of technology – and science and technology studies. Since the year 2000, GSA has mostly focused on those innovations. Therefore GSA has developed novel conceptualizations and models for understanding the process of neolithization (Benz 2000;

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Gronenborn and Petrasch 2010; Kienlin 2006; Scharl 2004). Andrew Sherratt's (1981) secondary-products revolution has been deconstructed and the innovation of the wheeled vehicle has been redefined as a complex of entangled technologies, each of which had a crucial impact on local appropriations (Burmeister 2011; 2013a; Maran 2004a; 2004b). Furthermore, there has been growing interest in exploring the breeding of woolly sheep and related practices as a bundle of innovation (Becker *et al.* 2016), and the development of water management technologies has been viewed in a similar way (Klimscha *et al.* 2012). The complexity of the spread of metallurgies has been emphasized and their belated spread in different regions of Central Europe has been studied in numerous publications (e.g. Burmeister *et al.* 2013; Kienlin 2008b; 2010; Klimscha 2010; Stockhammer 2015c; Strahm 2009). Whereas those interested have been mostly focusing on technical innovations, in the meantime other kinds of innovation have also found attention, for example the introduction of cremation as an intellectual innovation (Hofmann 2008; 2012b) and *Überausstattung* (over-endowment) as a social innovation (Hansen 2011, 174–78).

Taking these different case studies together, one can state that old linear models of the spread of past innovations in GSA have been more and more replaced by non-linear models (cf. Gramsch 2009; Hofmann 2012b). Interest in the origin of innovations (e.g. Fansa and Burmeister 2004) has been supplemented with a growing interest in their genealogies, i.e. their transmission and appropriation, as well as the technological impact and transformative potential in contexts of different kinds (e.g. Bernbeck *et al.* 2011; Burmeister 2013a; Hofmann and Patzke 2012; Zimmermann and Siegmund 2002). Innovations are now seen as processes and clusters, or networks, of knowledge and not as self-existing entities (e.g. Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2013). As a consequence, the respective local 'adaption environment' (Meir 1988) has been taken into account (e.g. Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2013; Maran 2004a; Schier 2013). Strategies of innovation management have been identified (Stockhammer 2015c) and the unsuccessful or belated spread of innovations due to local non-interest and rejection has been studied (e.g. Burmeister and Müller-Scheeßel 2013; Kienlin 2010). Moreover, ideas regarding different kinds of knowledge (discursive, embodied) and innovations (paradigmatic, incremental) have been adapted from the social sciences and conceptualized for archaeology (e.g. Hofmann 2012b; Kaiser and Schier 2013). On a broader scale, the Atlas of Innovations initiative at Berlin has been launched in order to digitally visualize the spread and local appearance of innovation (www.topoi.org/group/d-6). This went in line with discussion regarding whether we are able to identify periods with stronger willingness and openness towards innovation (Zimmermann 2012; Siegmund 2012).

To sum up, instead of searching for monocausal explanations of cultural change, current GSA analyses the complex dialectics of parallel intertwined processes triggered by human mobility and knowledge exchange. The scholars to whom we refer in this paper emphasize the transformative potential of intercultural encounter, and the dynamics and processualities of human existence, world views, knowledge etc., and have promoted the respective

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

field of research with publications which have also found much interest outside GSA (especially when published in the English language rather than in German). They have published on conceptual issues as well as case studies which introduce a practice-oriented perspective in order to better understand cultural encounter and knowledge exchange, mostly on a qualitative, but also on a quantitative, basis.

***Material culture*** Although material culture presents the basis of knowledge for prehistoric archaeology, GSA did not theorize material culture for a long time. Besides the strong antiquarian tradition, there has been a concern in post-war GSA to create a valid approach to its evaluation. This has been subsumed under the notion of *Quellenkritik* (source criticism) (Eggert 2001, 100–21; Hofmann 2016a; Stockhammer 2015b) and was inspired by historiography,[17] which has always had a strong methodological influence on GSA. Of great influence were Hans Jürgen Eggers's (1959, 258–62) distinction between a 'living good', a 'dying good' and a 'dead good',[18] Walter Torbrügge's (1965; 1970–71) methods of crosschecking distributions maps, and more recent discussions on taphonomy (Link and Schimmelpfennig 2012; Orschiedt 1999; Sommer 1991) and traces (Hofmann 2016a; Kümmel 2003; 2009; Mante 2003). Moreover, archaeological concepts like index fossils and current practices with things from the past like collecting, storing and editing large numbers of prehistoric objects have been questioned (Hofmann 2014b; 2016b; Hofmann *et al.* 2016; Holtorf and Veit 2006), and the relationship between things and knowledge has been studied, inter alia, under the heading 'object epistemologies'.[19]

Since the late 1980s, semiotic approaches have gained increasing interest in GSA. Only a decade later, vivid discussions on the conceptualization and interpretation of material culture emerged, which have spread along the lines of semiotics, practice-oriented approaches, object biographies, consumer research, object epistemologies and many more. Phenomenology has recently served as an inspiration, without, however, constituting the basis of case studies as in current anglophone archaeology.

Although semiotic approaches have lost their dominant role in recent material-culture studies, they have been of crucial importance in GSA to better understand the heuristic potential of material culture. Since the late 1980s, Ulrich Veit (1988; 1993; 1997) especially has aimed to establish a semiotic approach, which was picked up by students particularly from the University of Tübingen, where Veit was based at this time (e.g. Kienlin 2005; Kümmel, Schweizer and Veit 2008; Veit *et al.* 2003). A broad range of material evidence has been studied with regard to its symbolic meaning – be it Neolithic pottery (Furholt and Stockhammer 2008; Veit 1997; Zeeb-Lanz 2003; 2006), dress (e.g. Burmeister 1997; Veit 1988), art (Bagley 2014; Rieckhoff 2010), prestige objects and status symbols (Bagley and Schumann 2013; Burmeister 2003; Hildebrandt and Veit 2009; Müller and Bernbeck 1996; Schumann 2014), architecture (Meier 2002b), burials and body postures (Augstein 2009; 2013; Meier 2002a; Müller-Scheeßel 2005; 2008) or even whole cemeteries (Hofmann 2008). Several studies were inspired by approaches from cultural semiotics (Hofmann 2008; Kümmel, Schweizer and Veit 2008;

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Veit 2005). Whereas the possibility of reconstructing past symbolic grammars is widely acknowledged, the potential of a semantic evaluation is regarded with scepticism (Hinz 2009; Furholt and Stockhammer 2008). Only a few authors developed more reflective approaches to determine past sign contents, mostly on the structural notion of anthropological constants (e.g. Hofmann 2008; Jung 2005). Besides the more common notion of objects as symbols, material culture has also been understood primarily as traces or indicators – i.e. without intentional messages (see Bystřina 1989, 63–78; Ginzburg 1983; e.g. Hofmann 2008; Veit *et al.* 2003). Former attributions of objects, styles, etc. to seemingly stable categories have been questioned by emphasizing the changeability of the functions and meanings of objects (Hofmann and Schreiber 2011; Kistler 2015; Schreiber 2013; Stockhammer 2012d) and the changeabilities of objects themselves (Stockhammer 2015a; 2015b).

Current theories of material culture have also been stimulated by empirical culture studies (cf. König 2003), which can look back on a long but rather shadowy existence even from the perspective of GSA (Fansa 1996; Samida and Eggert 2013b). Whereas the largest part of German cultural anthropology has not been interested in material culture for the last few decades, the important influence of the anthropologist Hans Peter Hahn on GSA has to be emphasized (e.g. Hahn 2004; 2005; 2007; Hahn and Soentgen 2011; Samida, Eggert and Hahn 2014). Inspired by Hahn's concepts of the *Aneignung* (appropriation) and *Eigensinn* (obstinacy) of things, by actor-network theory and by anglophone archaeology and anthropology, GSA has recently tried to develop a better understanding of complex human–thing interactions or entanglements,[20] and to better understand the role of material culture in this relationship. Within the framework of the practice turn, these interactions are studied through the lens of human practices with things (cf. Hofmann and Schreiber 2011; Kerig 2008; Maran and Stockhammer 2012b; Meier, Ott and Sauer 2015; Stockhammer 2011c). Topics that have been discussed include whether the notion of agency can also be applied to objects, whether the strong dichotomy between humans and things should be relativized (contra: Jung 2012; 2015; pro: Schreiber 2016), whether agency has to be redefined in this case (e.g. agency dissolved from the notion of intentionality; cf. Stockhammer 2012d) and how to approach the possibility that from one emic perspective objects could have acted intentionally and from another one not (Stockhammer 2015a). In order to overcome the problem of 'agency', several solutions have been presented: some scholars have appropriated James J. Gibson's (1979) notion of 'affordance' (Hofmann and Schreiber 2011; Keßeler 2016). Following Max Weber and Ulrich Oevermann's objective hermeneutics, Matthias Jung (2003; 2015) speaks of *objektive Möglichkeiten* (objective possibilities). Philipp Stockhammer created the term 'effectancy' in order to express the objects' ability to shape, frame, inspire, distort, disappoint, stimulate, etc. human action and perceptions (Stockhammer 2015a). In contrast to anglophone archaeology, *materielle Kultur* (material culture) is still the most frequent term, whereas *Ding* (thing) has not achieved a popularity equal to that in current anglophone archaeology (Hahn, Eggert and Samida 2014, 2–3; Hofmann and Schreiber 2014).[21]

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The focus on social practices has resulted in a larger interest in the social and cultural dimension of the production, distribution, usage and disposal of objects. Their production is mostly discussed following the idea of a culturally shaped *chaîne opératoire* (Lemonnier 1992) and *tacit knowing* (Polanyi 1966; e.g. Kienlin 2011; 2014; Rüden 2015). Furthermore, the interaction between different *chaînes opératoires* in the sense of cross-craft interactions has been studied (Brysbaert and Vetters 2010). It has become clear that the creation, formation and change of substances and materialities in this process results in ever new meanings, functions and affordances of objects, which are rather processes than states (Stockhammer 2015a).

In line with this thought, the notion of object biographies has been finding more and more interest (e.g. Hofmann 2015; Krmnicek 2009) and several studies have evaluated the epistemological potential of such an approach by studying the biography of particular objects (e.g. Holtorf 2002; Kienlin and Kreuz 2015), types of object (e.g. Bagley 2015; Kistler 2010; Maran 2013; Metzner-Nebelsick and Nebelsick 1999) or monuments (e.g. Holtorf 2000–8; Mischka 2011). Moreover, the idea of 'biography' has been criticized and alternative terms like 'itineraries' have been suggested in order to avoid the anthropomorphization of objects (cf. Boschung, Kienlin and Kreuz 2015; Hahn and Weiss 2013). The study of gift exchange is discussed as one of the possibilities to enrich travelling objects with narratives and to adorn them with a particular value (Bernbeck 2009b; Hansen, Neumann and Vachta 2016; Kienlin and Kreuz 2015). Based on Arjun Appadurai's (1986; 1991) writings, an archaeology of consumption has been postulated (Scholz 2012; Schreiber 2011).

The biography of objects most often ended with their deposition or disposal – unless one wishes to write life histories of things until the present day. Systematic evaluations of rubbish and dirt only started in the 1990s (Fansa and Wolfram 2003; Sommer 1998), roughly contemporaneously with the idea of understanding rubbish as a means of cultural memory and of achieving unique insights into past human practices (Assmann 1996; Schmidt 2005; Veit 2005–6).

To sum up, nowadays things are no longer understood as stable and static. Recent approaches emphasize the changeability of their material, their functions, meanings and so on, and the different kinds of transformation which take place, but at the same time acknowledge the obstinacy of things. Scholars aim to further develop the idea of the *chaîne opératoire* and transform the notion of object biographies into object itineraries and thing narratives by rethinking existing approaches and integrating them with a thourough look at material objects. Concepts of human–thing relations have become much more complex and dynamic. One may hope that these concepts are now transferred from single objects to assemblages of things and the co-presence of humans, animals and things. We do not see much effort to link the current debates on materiality in GSA to the 'new materialism' which is finding more and more interest in current anglophone archaeology. This is due to the fact that there are ethical concerns to equalize humans and things because of the crimes conducted during the National Socialist past. Moreover, Max Weber's concept of intentional action is still the dominant

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reference when working on human practices. It seems it is rather the possibility of integrating the traditional focus on a thorough study of material culture with concepts that allows a better understanding of the evidence which has supported the general interest in material-culture theory in GSA.

## Conclusion and further perspectives

In a recently published paper on migration and ethnicity, Stefan Burmeister (2013b, 258–59) stated that German-speaking archaeologists are neither problem-solvers in the sense of Karl Popper (2001) nor puzzle-solvers in the sense of Thomas Kuhn (1962). In his view, German-speaking archaeologists are still collectors, who locate the epistemological problems in the lack of sufficient data, but do not question existing paradigms or other scholars' ideas or methods. On the basis of our survey of theories in GSA since the year 2000, we cannot agree with Burmeister any more. In our view, current theoretical approaches in GSA are characterized by a multitude of approaches ranging from describing, classifying and reconstructing via systemic–explanatory frameworks up to very conceptual and reflexive studies, which are very popular within theoretically interested GSA. We perceive this flexibility and the related lack of dominant theoretical schools of thinking as one of the most promising potentials of GSA. Theoretical discussions as well as material-oriented methodologies freely mix functional, semiotic and practice-oriented approaches without feeling the need to promote one approach and abolish others. In combination with a thorough knowledge and study of material remnants, this multidirectional mode of thinking opens up the way for a tailor-made approach to the study of archaeological contexts. We have shown for the issues of identity, space, cultural encounter and material culture how fruitful such attempts can be.

However, we have to admit that theory is still far from becoming something like the overall mainstream in GSA. A considerable number of researchers from very different backgrounds still do not show much interest in theoretically based approaches but continue rather traditional, antiquarian styles of research. This is due to many reasons: first, archaeological theory still plays a minor role in the educational curricula of bachelor's as well as master's programmes at most German-speaking universities. Second, an interest in archaeological theory has not been considered an important qualification in job selection processes – and the same has also been true for publications on theoretical issues. We are aware of the fact that theoretically interested archaeologists in GSA still have to argue from time to time that their research is also relevant for prehistoric archaeology. However, we also see that the situation has changed since the year 2000 and has been changing more and more rapidly in the last few years: interest in archaeological theory has risen in GSA, not only in a few ivory towers financed by the Excellence Initiative but – as the myriad publications quoted in our article attest – among a broad field of actors in GSA.

German-speaking archaeologists have cooperated with a broad range of scholars, especially in the natural sciences, since the 1920s – particularly in the framework of settlement archaeology. Recent interdisciplinary research continues a strong relation to the natural sciences (especially genetics,

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chemistry, isotopics and physical geography), as well as to historical disciplines. It is also characterized by a close exchange with cultural anthropology, cultural studies and sociology. Post-war GSA had for a long time tried to stay far away from any involvement in societal and political debates (as a result of its deep involvement in Nazi politics and a generally positivistic understanding of the sciences in post-war Germany). Well into the 1990s, theory in GSA was only present in the form of a small number of theoretical publications, most of which had a clear methodological or conceptual focus. Since the late 1990s, we have witnessed a growing interest in the epistemological basis and potential of our discipline and its history, as well as an internationalization of GSA – very much framed by growing participation in the German T-AG sessions. At the same time, GSA has increasingly discussed and contributed to overarching themes of cultural and social relevance. This tendency was supported by the establisment of new funding lines requiring interdisciplinary collaborations and social relevance. Therefore GSA has been increasingly involved in common discussions on global consumption, goods exchange, technology assessment, identity politics, cultural heritage, mobility and mass migration.[22] Within the German-speaking countries, GSA has also contributed to ongoing discussions on the understanding of culture. In this context, GSA has enforced the importance of materialty and the challenge of intentionally and unintenionally co-producing views on national culture and the prehistory of collective identities.[23]

Until today, an important feature of GSA is its self-understanding as a historical rather than an anthropological discipline. As a consequence, recent theories in GSA are marked by a strong interest in the history of science and – as we have shown in detail – self-reflexivity. Even if it is not explicitly stated, the still very vivid tradition of the Frankfurt school and critical theory might also have influenced this line of thinking. This self-reflexivity aims at analysing current scientific practices and the historicization of seemingly modern phenomena, as well as the deconstruction of supposed universalisms. In contrast to anglophone archaeology, it is difficult to trace cyclical shifts of paradigms in recent decades. Some lines of thought have never found great interest (e.g. systems theory), and other approaches very soon found a small number of highly interested scholars, but it took years for larger parts of GSA to start to work with them (e.g. semiotics). Moreover, one has been able to witness a vivid eclecticism and consider it unproblematic to integrate concepts of very different roots and schools in one approach. This is also due to the fact that there is rarely any academic advice or demand to follow a particular theory and students are also not supplied with a canon of theoretical texts which have to be read. In spite of following anglophone trends of replacing terminologies from time to time, several scholars continue to use terms (e.g. 'acculturation') that might seem to be outdated from an outsider's perspective. Furthermore, it is rather common to integrate processual and postprocessual approaches from anglophone archaeology and add some theoretical writings of German ethnologists or sociologists. Only in the last decade has it become more usual in GSA to appropriate innovative thoughts and approaches directly from other disciplines rather than indirectly via handbook articles or from anglophone scholars. Nevertheless, obligatory

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courses on archaeological theory are still missing in the academic curriculum of many university departments, and theoretical reflections are not necessarily part of academic theses or publications.

What is still remaining from old Central European archaeology? Definitely a special love for the most comprehensive catalogues of finds, classifications and definitions; extensive discussions of histories of notions, concepts and theories; long footnotes; countless maps; and endless biographies. Even in their theoretical and methodological writings, many scholars of GSA cannot deny their addiction to completeness. This is also true for the authors of this article. The reader can easily see this when having a look at the bibliography of our article. If a scholar is interested in theory, one aims at a most comprehensive discussion of the topic – including its historic and interdisciplinary contextualization. Another still very prominent feature is the idea of measuring the quality of theories in their methodological usefulness and in the way that they allow for a better understanding of particular case studies. The practicality of theories has always been a crucial concern. Therefore almost all theoretical or methodological writings are regularly combined with a quite comprehensive case study, which aims to underline the practicality of one's approach. In contrast to current anglophone archaeology, where it is not hard to find almost completely conceptual writings, the dominant notion in GSA emphasizes the rootedness of all thoughts in the evaluation of concrete archaeological sources. The comprehensive knowledge of sources and excavation skills are still one of the major criteria for evaluating the qualification of a scholar. Meanwhile, however, this is more and more being replaced by the way that these sources are evaluated, which again opens the chance for more theoretically interested scholars to demonstrate the usefulness of their approach. GSA still publishes mostly in German, in huge monographs full of details and thoughts or in often poorly accessible anthologies. For scholars who are not really fluent in German, many of the recent theoretical studies are even more difficult to read than the old-style editions of material culture. We would appreciate an increase of comprehensive publications in English, but we are nevertheless convinced that traditional multilinguality is also an advantage of GSA, which should not be abolished in favour of writing only in English.

Finally, what are the future challenges of GSA? We are convinced that the close interplay between theory and empirical research, as well as between local heritage institutions, museums and universities, has to be further developed. Moreover, we should continue to historicize and recontextualize concepts from current social and cultural sciences. In this line of thought, the concept of time,[24] as well as practices of stabilization and destabilization, continuity and discontinuity, seem to be particularly promising. A major challenge to present research is new scientific approaches, like isotope analyses and genetics, which stimulate debates on how to conceptualize past migrations.[25] Moreover, a debate has started about scales and their conceptualization in a more dynamic and dialectic way (cf. Clifford 1992). Last but not least, we have to continue to develop an archaeology of the recent past and present which includes an ethically reflexive handling also of inconvenient heritage.[26] All of this will further help to develop a theory of historical material culture.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

We are convinced that it is worth trying to overcome the outdated notion of a disinterest in, or even rejection of, theories in GSA. Things have changed! Whereas more and more anglophone archaeologists seem to be annoyed with theories and their side effects (Bintliff 2011a; Gardner 2013; Johnson 2006), in GSA theoretical approaches are becoming more and more established. First, GSA discovered the theoretical loadedness of empirical data and subsequently enjoyed the empirical loadedness of theory (cf. Hirschauer 2008). It is in the entanglement of empirical data and theory with the help of carefully contextualized concepts and methods that we see an important contribution for world archaeology – be it the approach to self-reflexivity, identity, space, cultural encounter or materiality. In our opinion, current developments will also be sustainable, because they are deeply embedded in the empirical study of archaeological finds and the daily practice of archaeology. 'Beyond antiquarianism' does not imply moving 'beyond sources and methods'. On the contrary, this leads to a reflected treatment of past material culture and to a relevant contribution to current societal discourse. Our contribution will serve as an overview and a first step into what is discussed and conceptualized and what has the potential to contribute to an international audience of archaeologists.

## Acknowledgements

First of all, we would like to thank Martin Furholt for inviting us to review the current state of theories in German-speaking archaeology. The respective research of Kerstin P. Hofmann has been financed by the Topoi cluster of excellence at the Freie Universität Berlin. Philipp W. Stockhammer's research has been financed by the BEFIM: Bedeutungen und Funktionen mediterraner Importe im früheisenzeitlichen Mitteleuropa collaborative project. Svend Hansen, Thomas Meier and Michael Meyer kindly supported our research by giving us information about research projects and access to so-far unpublished manuscripts. Moreover, we are very thankful to Joseph Maran, Stefan Schreiber, Sabine Rieckhoff and Brigitte Röder for most important and inspiring comments on a first draft of our article. The critical comments of two reviewers and the editorial board also helped us very much to improve our article.

## Notes

[1] We have witnessed a growing internationalization of archaeology in recent decades, which went hand in hand with the establishment of English as lingua franca also in archaeology. At the same time, publications in other languages than English have found less and less of an audience. Language competence beyond English constitutes an increasingly important obstacle.

[2] In some cases, we also included scholars who have made important contributions to the academic discourse in prehistoric archaeology but who are based in neighbouring disciplines, e.g. Matthias Jung, Erich Kistler and Beat Schweizer.

[3] It is beyond the aims of our review but nevertheless most interesting to compare earlier theoretical works in GSA before the year 2000 with the situation after 2000, and we have also not considered the dialectics between German-speaking scholars in exile and those who are still part of GSA. It would also have been interesting to

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track the developments of the theoretical works of German-speaking scholars after they left German-speaking academia. We must not forget that there is a considerable number of archaeologists with a German-speaking background who, due to their interest in and work on theoretical issues, left German-speaking academia and took positions in anglophone or Scandinavian countries – e.g. (in alphabetical order) Bettina Arnold, Reinhard Bernbeck (Near Eastern archaeologist, but with a strong interest in global archaeology and therefore also prehistoric archaeology), Peter F. Biehl, Heinrich Härke, Cornelius Holtorf, Raimund Karl, Tim Kerig, Martin Porr, Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, Almut Schülke, Ulrike Sommer. Meanwhile Bernbeck, Kerig and Rebay-Salisbury returned to academic positions in Germany or Austria.

[4] All societies promoting theoretical debates in GSA were founded by young archaeologists who felt uncomfortable with the academic establishment. For example, the DGUF, the German Society of Pre- and Protohistory (www.dguf.de) in 1969 (Banghard 2015; Eckert 2002); the Unkeler Kreis in 1983 (Härke 1989), which was then the basis of T-AG Germany founded in 1990 (Wolfram *et al.* 1991; Wolfram 2000, 193–95), now AG TidA (www.agtida.de); and FemArc, the Network of Archaeologically Working Women in 1991 (www.femarc.de; see further www.archaeology-gender-europe.org) (Mertens 2002). The founders of these societies argued for an alternative research agenda which also led to the association of theoretical interest with anti-establishment politics.

[5] Especially relevant are the following priority programmes and collaborative research centres: SPP 190, Kelten, Germanen, Römer im Mittelgebirgsraum zwischen Luxemburg und Thüringen: Archäologische und naturwissenschaftliche Forschungen zum Kulturwandel unter der Einwirkung Roms in den Jahrhunderten um Christi Geburt, 1993–2000 (cf. Krausse 1996b); SPP 1171, Frühe Zentralisierungs- und Urbanisierungsprozesse: Zur Genese und Entwicklung 'frühkeltischer Fürstensitze' und ihres territorialen Umlandes (www.fuerstensitze.de), 2004–2010; SPP 1400, Frühe Monumentalität und soziale Differenzierung (www.monument.ufg.uni-kiel.de), since 2009 (cf. Mischka 2012); SFB 417, Regionenbezogene Identifikationsprozesse: Das Beispiel Sachsen (www.uni-leipzig.de/~sfb417), 1999–2002; SFB 541, Identitäten und Alteritäten: Die Funktion von Alterität für die Konstitution und Konstruktion von Identität, 1997–2003; SFB 806, Unser Weg nach Europa: Kultur-Umwelt Interaktion und menschliche Mobilität im Späten Quartär (www.sfb806.uni-koeln.de), since 2009; SFB 933, Materiale Textkulturen: Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen in non-typographischen Gesellschaften (www.materiale-textkulturen.de), since 2011; SFB 1070, RessourcenKulturen: Soziokulturelle Dynamiken im Umgang mit Ressourcen (www.uni-tuebingen.de/forschung/forschungsschwerpunkte/sonderforschungsbereiche/sfb-1070.html), since 2013.

[6] In this line of thought, the so-called Altertumswissenschaftliche Kolleg Heidelberg was founded in 2004 with the aim of studying past societies on the basis of questions and phenomena which are crucial for present societies (www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zaw/akh/zielsetzung_en.html). Its first topics from 2004 to 2005 were 'Architecture and Society' and 'Globalization and Elites'.

[7] This situation changed in 2015, when Katharina Rebay-Salisbury and Philipp Stockhammer were successful in acquiring ERC starting grants with strongly theoretically oriented projects about practices of motherhood and the transformative power of globalization on food practices.

[8] The common introductory chapter on the history of research – a prerequisite for monographs in GSA – was more like an enumeration of previous excavations and studies without commenting on (mostly implicit) epistemologies and theoretical concepts.

[9] Early statements by Joachim Werner (1945–46) and Karl Heinz Jacob-Friesen (1950) are an exception, which were, however, not published in prominent places.

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[10] However, the relation between post-war archaeology in western and eastern Germany before reunification and the implications that arose from this interplay have not yet been the subject of much attention, with very few exceptions (e.g. Grunwald 2010; Härke 2000; Mante 2007, 91–160; Struwe 1998). This is also true for the ex-/incorporation of former GDR archaeologists in the newly reunified state.

[11] This history of research was either written by old men or in the form of obligatory introductory chapters to larger publications listing dates of discoveries and important publications.

[12] See e.g. Freiburg: Beck *et al.* (2004), Brather (2004), Fehr (2010b), Steuer (2001); Leipzig: Link (2011), Middell and Sommer (2004), Rieckhoff and Sommer (2007), Rieckhoff, Grunwald and Reichenbach (2009); AREA: Hakelberg and Wiwjorra (2010), cf. www.area-archives.org.

[13] Since the beginning of the discipline, the wish to date European prehistoric developments by linking them with historical sources very much stimulated interest in the material outcome of long-distance relations (for a critical review cf. Eggert and Wotzka 1987; Wotzka 1990).

[14] Cf. Brandt (2001) for one of the few attempts to apply core–periphery models in GSA in order to explain sociopolitical dynamics.

[15] One should note that the understandings of 'entanglement' in GSA differ markedly from Ian Hodder's (2012) recent definition of this concept (see also below). Stockhammer's concept of entanglement focuses on the transformations of humans, things and the relation between them in contexts of cultural encounter, thereby integrating approaches from transcultural and material-culture studies.

[16] One may add the recently initiated BEFIM: Meanings and Functions of Mediterranean Imports in Early Celtic Central Europe collaborative research project (www.befim.de), which aims at understanding the transformative power of encounters with foreign objects with the help of archaeometric and contextual analyses.

[17] Historiographical epistemology also stimulated radical constructivist perspectives in GSA (Holtorf 2004; Karl 2005; Meier 2012).

[18] These were later renamed by Manfred K.H. Eggert as 'living culture', 'dead culture' and 'recovered culture'. While 'living culture' comprises the sum of past cultural existences, 'dead culture' refers only to the section which has been preserved until today. It is only the 'dead culture' that can be found by archaeologists, and thus transformed into 'recovered culture' (Eggert 2001, 112–14).

[19] See e.g. Hilgert (2015) and the Objektepistemologien: Zum Verhältnis von Dingen und Wissen in 'multiplen Vergangenheiten' workshop (http://berliner-antike-kolleg.org/event/objektepistemologien-zum-verhaltnis-von-dingen-und-wissen-in-multiplen-vergangenheiten), which took place in July 2015 at the Berliner Antike-Kolleg.

[20] As mentioned above, the understandings of 'entanglement' in GSA differ from Ian Hodder's (2012) recent definition. Hodder's 'entanglement' and its related conceptual framework have been criticized due to their evolutionist and deterministic message (Pollock *et al.* 2014). For an alternative narratological approach see Hofmann (2015). In order to emphasize the unpredictability and flexibility of this relation, Hofmann and Schreiber (2011) speak of the 'interplay between humans and things'.

[21] In colloquial German, *Ding* (thing) is often used in a pejorative way in order to express a lack of interest or the low value of a particular object. In addition – and in contrast to anglophone archaeology – GSA has a very ambivalent perception of Heidegger due to his active role in Nazi Germany (see Eggert 2011, 229; Hofmann 2016a, 285; Sommer 2000a). Moreover, several scholars have critically reviewed the relevance of early 'thing theory' in German philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries (Hahn, Eggert and Samida 2014, 5, 10; Jung 2016).

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[22] As a positive consequence, conceptual studies of GSA have also been taken into account by scholars of globalization studies (e.g. Ritzer and Dean 2015, 215, 234).

[23] For a critical reaction against right-wing activists of prehistory cf. Mölders and Hoppadietz (2007) and Albrecht Jockenhövel's very prominent statement, the 'Mannheimer Erklärung' (www.uni-muenster.de/UrFruehGeschichte/aktuelles/mannheimererklaerung.html), against the enmeshment of enactment and nationalist ideology.

[24] For a first starting point cf. Reinhold and Hofmann (2014). The newly funded Center of the Einstein Foundation, 'Chronoi', investigating time and time consciousness, will further stimulate this discussion.

[25] Cf. Claßen and Schön (2014), Samida and Eggert (2013a), Wiwjorra (2009), www.genetic-history.com; see also the articles in *Medieval worlds* 4: *The genetic challenge to medieval history and archaeology* (2016), at www.medievalworlds.net.

[26] See e.g. Pollock and Bernbeck (2015), Theune (2010), Starzmann (2014).

Archaeological Dialogues 24 (1) 25–29 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S1380203817000010

## Farewell to antiquarianism. A new 'grand narrative' for German-speaking prehistoric archaeology?

*Ulrich Veit**

> *Jede Zeit neigt dazu, ihre akuten Problemlagen, aber auch ihre Theorien als naturgegeben zu empfinden. Die aktuell sich ereignende Gegenwart hat etwas von einer langsam ablaufenden Naturkatastrophe, der sich niemand entzieht. Anders und paradox gesagt: An ihrer Spitze ist die Gegenwart stumpf.*
>
> (Raulff 2014, 11)

I would first like to thank the editors of *Archaeological dialogues* for inviting me to comment on Kerstin P. Hofmann and Philipp W. Stockhammer's paper on the present situation of archaeological theory in German-speaking prehistoric archaeology (GSA). The message the authors wish to communicate to an international audience is relatively simple and straightforward. GSA, which for a long time seemed 'generally uninterested in theoretical debates' (p. 1), has since about the year 2000 radically changed its outlook. This change is seen reflected in a large corpus of theoretically oriented case studies (represented in a list of some four hundred titles added to the paper), that in the eyes of the authors deserves the attention of the international scientific community. This positive development is interpreted as a result both of a growing interest in overarching research questions of cultural studies and of the public funding of large-scale cooperative research projects.

The development described is in a certain sense mirrored in the academic careers of the authors, who both entered the scientific community around the year 2000 and after long years of engagement only recently took permanent

*Ulrich Veit, Historisches Seminar der Universität Leipzig, Germany. Email: ulrich.veit@uni-leipzig.de.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

positions. In this regard the paper might also be read as an attempt by the authors to put their own contributions to this academic field in a proper relation to their discipline's recent achievements. In any case the paper has to be looked on as a 'grand narrative', which formulates a new historical identity for GSA. This new identity is defined in opposition to two other academic traditions: traditional GSA before the year 2000 (as the historical basis for this new paradigm) and the theoretical archaeology of anglophone countries that greatly contributed to the recent developments within GSA by setting up new agendas for archaeological research which inspired young scholars even in the German-speaking countries.

Traditional GSA is characterized by the authors as 'antiquarianism', a term normally used to describe a complex of epistemological practices common in early modern times in dealing with material relics. In this sense it represents a paradigm which is strictly opposed to that of (modern) historiography. But this statement does not include a value judgement (e.g. Dick 1988, 155; cf. Sawilla 2012). Hofmann and Stockhammer, on the other hand, clearly use the term not only for a different historical context but also in a clearly pejorative sense: antiquarianism for them represents a practice of collecting, preserving and ordering of archaeological materials without a clearly formulated research agenda.

Such a positivistic orientation indeed has repeatedly been associated with post-war GSA in recent decades and there are, of course, some arguments supporting this thesis. Nevertheless it is fair to say that similar ideas are at least in part still present in the discipline today. Such a kind of reasoning, for example, forms the basis of modern archaeological heritage management (*Bodendenkmalpflege*), for which the preservation and classification of sites and finds are still imperative. The ideal here is not problem-oriented research, but the saving of monuments of the past, and the building of a broad archive still accessible in the distant future – and of practical value even under quite different epistemological premises compared with the present.

For this reason the rather strict distinction between an 'antiquarianism' of the past and a 'theory-based' archaeology of the present in the paper is misleading. The same applies to the term 'antiquarianism' itself. It would be better replaced by the term 'positivism', which points to a direction of reasoning that became fashionable in the sciences at the end of the 19th century far beyond Central Europe and archaeology. Among its leading exponents in the late 19th century in Germany were scholars like the pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) and the historian Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), who both exerted a strong influence on the early development of prehistoric archaeology (see Veit 2006b). Mommsen saw it as the central task of the historian to order the archives of the past, hoping that in future times it would become clear which items would prove worthy of preservation. In this context it is also worth mentioning that exactly this paradigm gave rise to the first large-scale collaborative state-financed research projects (*Großforschung*), an achievement that the authors of the present paper see as a constitutive element of the present theory-laden GSA.

Despite strong tendencies towards a historical individualization and strong reservations with regard to generalization, 19th-century positivism had a

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major impact on German prehistoric archaeology throughout the entire 20th century. It is popular in some contexts still today – even among theoretical archaeologists (cf. e.g. M.K.H. Eggert's (2006, 65–67) effusive reference to the work of Sophus Müller (1846–1934)).

What follows from these observations? Either the roots of theoretical archaeology go back in time much further than postulated by Hofmann and Stockhammer, or modern GSA is less modern (and theoretical) than presented to us here. In any case, the paper lacks a sound empirical grounding with regard to the characterization of GSA concerning epistemology. And the same applies with regard to the presentation of anglophone archaeology, which is portrayed as the shining counterpart of traditional GSA, but whose contours largely remain blurred. A closer look at the history of ideas would have shown more clearly the similarities and differences between these two traditions.

These points certainly weaken the central thesis of the authors, which they themselves qualify in the course of their presentation by pointing to the persistence of antiquarian-style research today. But the aim of my comment is neither to reject nor to confirm this thesis. Instead I am interested primarily in the concept of archaeological theory that becomes visible behind the narrative presented.

The authors overtly subscribe to a comparatively broad understanding of 'theory', which comprises 'all reflections on and assumptions about archaeological practice' (p. 2). They regard it as imperative that 'theories' be operationalized 'as methods in order to be used in the epistemological process' (p. 2). On the other hand they avoid '"grand theory" in a rather philosophical sense' (p. 2) and see the apparent lack of this kind of reasoning within modern GSA as not a major drawback. In this sense it seems fair to read this text as a plea for a kind of 'theory-lite'. Such a position clearly has the advantage of making theory attractive not only for a minority but for a comparatively large number of scholars. At the same time it is in contradiction to the self-understanding of theorists within the humanities and social sciences. For them theory always is in opposition to the mainstream. As avant-garde it promises a release from the shackles of the established scholarly world view and a questioning of common sense. As enlightenment, theory searches for rational explanations of what formerly had been accepted without further questioning. As a critique of ideology, theory uncovers the social biases of actual research, and makes explicit its hidden prejudices. For this reason theoretical debates of the past even in archaeology often were presented as a fight against the scholarly as well as against the political establishment, and in this sense as an engagement for the underprivileged.

In other words, 'theory' always is in opposition to 'normal science' and aims at a perpetuation of T.S. Kuhn's famous 'scientific revolution'. For the same reason, in the eyes of a 'practitioner' of archaeology, theory is primarily an offence, as in his eyes it hinders scientific progress. In this sense 'theory' has to be qualified as 'dangerous' and 'subversive'. That is also the reason why theoretical archaeologists are always in danger of being regarded as arrogant. In this way this fact also may help us to understand why adherence to theory by some scholars is experienced as a kind of stigma.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

These ideas are far away from the way 'theory' is presented in the present paper. For Hofmann and Stockhammer, theory clearly has not much to do with competition, conflict and crisis, but mainly with the peaceful coexistence of an array of diverging approaches that complement each other. Critical comments on allegedly 'innovative approaches' (described here as 'harsh rejection' (p. 4)) are seen as a danger for theoretical debate rather than as its indispensable prerequisite.

If we take 'theory' seriously, in my opinion we need to formulate our own theoretical position not only so that our ideas are intelligible. They also should be formulated as a challenge to former statements in order to provoke a reply. In any case, it is not enough to praise the multiplicity and complementarity of contributions within recent GSA and at the same time to ignore the existing incompatibilities between extant approaches. In this sense the apparent lack of dominant schools of thinking within modern GSA, positively interpreted by the authors as 'flexibility', perhaps more likely points to a lasting structural deficit in this scholarly tradition.

This situation is matched in the paper, in which a large number of contributions to different popular fields of investigation are presented, but only in exceptional cases is reference made to diverging positions. Apart from the wholesale condemnation of antiquarian archaeology, the authors themselves largely abstain from any critique. Only Burmeister is criticized for his adherence to old prejudices with regard to modern GSA. The actual fault lines between different factions within the community of German-speaking theoretical archaeologists remain largely unnoticed. This is especially unfortunate with regard to the international audience the authors wish to address, an observation which underlines the fact that the mission of the authors primarily is a 'political' and not a 'theoretical' one. In this sense the paper should primarily be read as a contribution to theory marketing.

This point is underlined by the fact that the more negative sides of recent theoretical discourse in GSA (and beyond) are ignored, as they would have become visible if the authors had studied in more detail the process of argumentation in some of the papers cited. When we take a closer look at recent publications, it is not unusual to find cases where name dropping replaces a critical evaluation of theories adopted from other disciplines or scholarly traditions within archaeology. At the same time we are often confronted with a lack of clear definitions of theoretical key terms, with the confusion of basic epistemological concepts and with sweeping statements and much too broad generalizations (e.g. Veit 2016).

In this respect I see an urgent need to critically evaluate the outcome of recent large-scale corporate research projects from the point of view of archaeological theory. Not all of these projects have been equally successful in this point, even in the sense that the research started from sound hypotheses and was framed by well-defined terms and concepts. The DFG Fürstensitz project (Krausse 2008), for example, produced some remarkable new insights with new fieldwork and the application of new methods and techniques, but with regard to (culture) theory the results were meagre.

Nevertheless there is no reason for despair with GSA, since from time to time positive examples could also be discovered within the recent theory

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

debate. In this sense we should perhaps for a moment forget our anger about missed chances and enjoy the rare moments when we find a wise comment, an unexpected comparison or a stunning new insight in a new theory-driven case study. And exactly these points seem worthy of being shared with the international community. Simple proclamations that GSA as a whole is back at the forefront of theoretical reasoning in archaeology instead are of rather limited value.

Taken altogether, the perspective offered by the present paper in my personal view is that of a 'theory-lite' that largely excludes contradiction and conflict. The central message is that antiquarianism is dead and those who chose to do theory are clearly on the right path. The question of which kind of 'theory' should be preferred, and for what reasons, is left open. At the same time some of the most worrying questions of contemporary theoretical debate are not even formulated: what shall we do with archaeologists or culture theorists who argue from a theoretical point of view (and for different reasons) for an at least partial return to 'antiquarianism' (e.g. Krausse 2006; Ernst 2004; Raulff 2014, 54 f.)? What is the position of GSA in relation to recent debates in the contemporary philosophy of both science and society? How can we accommodate the worrying recent debates about 'post-theory' (Jarvis and Oakley-Brown 2004; Grizelj and Jahraus 2011; Felsch 2015) and 'post-truth' with the image of archaeological theory that is presented here? And finally, is GSA today really as open with respect to theory in its proper sense as the authors would have us believe?

There remain doubts not only with regard to the position formulated in the present article but with regard to GSA as a whole. In a recent archaeological textbook the authors explicitly argue, for example, for a dissociation of archaeology from the theoretical avant-garde within the humanities and sciences. The widespread metaphorical use of the term 'archaeology' in modern culture studies (e.g. Ebeling and Altekamp 2004) is portrayed as a danger for what is called 'true' archaeology (Eggert and Samida 2009, 306). In my view such an erection of danger signs for students is not helpful for an archaeology that is proud of its theoretical orientation. And in the long run such a strategy might even prove not to be very effective, as obeying warnings in any way is at odds with the nature of theory.

Archaeological Dialogues 24 (1) 29–36 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S1380203817000034

## German-speaking archaeology is more *Thomas Meier**

In a way – as the authors admit themselves – Kerstin Hofmann's and Philipp Stockhammer's paper is very German. Most of their paper reads like a long catalogue, collecting and arranging as many recent GSA contributions to

*Thomas Meier, Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Vorderasiatische Archäologie, Heidelberg University, Germany. Email: thomas.meier@zaw.uni-heidelberg.de.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

anglophone debates as the authors could find. In the end their catalogue sums up to the impressive number of around four hundred references.

But – is this all German-speaking archaeology has to offer?

## What's 'German'?

Years ago, when I was contributing to a miscellany on medieval archaeology, the editors suddenly became aware that there was a wide range of implicit assumptions on what might be 'medieval'. They asked us, an international set of contributors, what we meant by 'medieval'. I bravely answered what 'medieval' implies in German history, art history and archaeology. Weeks later the editors thanked me for my response, but – consciously or unconsciously – didn't cut away their internal email correspondence regarding my original answer. And there was this line, which I remember very well still today: 'Thomas is very German. He knows what he means.' As I was never proud of being German – I still feel uneasy about being 'very German' – in this case it might have been a compliment. At the beginning of their paper, Hofmann and Stockhammer take the same 'very German' approach – they accurately define their topic. And I still adhere to my Germanness as I comment on their definition.

Indeed, it is tricky to approach something like German(-speaking) archaeology without coming under suspicion of essentializing 19th-century nationalism. Instead of warming up such *völkisch* essentialism, however, the authors take a very pragmatic approach of defining GSA as archaeological research done by persons 'who enjoyed most of their academic education in prehistory and protohistory at a German-speaking university' (p. 2), disregarding those 'who have been working mostly outside German-speaking institutions' (p. 2).[1]

But Hofmann's and Stockhammer's definition leaves us with the question of why something like a typically 'German' archaeology would exist. They explicitly refer to academic education as the common ground. This is a rather doubtful assumption if education refers to a unique and shared curriculum at German-speaking universities, as German university curricula in the wake of the Bologna Accord exploded into a myriad of rather incompatible local sets of courses. Disciplinary education, however, is more than a curriculum. It means socialization within a disciplinary community of knowledge (Bourdieu 1967, 147 f.). This includes learning and internalizing the specific habitus of a discipline, its modes of speaking, its modes of thinking, its modes of arguing and its modes of practice. These modes constitute the *dispositifs* (Deleuze 2014) of the disciplinary discourse; they control the orders of speaking and silencing and classify what is 'in the true' and what is not (Foucault 1971). At the same time, academic disciplining is connected to mentalities and discourses within the larger society – e.g. to specific forms of politeness (cf. the German *Sie* instead of 'you'), political awareness (cf. a raised awareness towards national chauvinism in great parts of German society) and reasoning. Admittedly, this asks us to accept that there are (still) specific differences in behaviour, culture and thought between countries, not for essentialist reasons, but because of traditions reaching back into at least the 19th century and beyond, that still roughly coincide with today's state borders.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mentalities and discourses not only are matters of language and thinking, but also manifest themselves in institutions, and institutional settings reaffirm mentalities and discourses. Tom Bloemers (2000) in his seminal, although little esteemed, analysis of German archaeology at the end of the second millennium has brilliantly demonstrated how general mentalities in German society also govern German archaeology. In his eyes, German society and thus German archaeology are dominated by the proverbial German *Angst*. Bloemers pays special attention to the institutional landscape as an important *dispositif* of discourses, and argues that the institutions of German archaeology focus on stability and the avoidance of risk, on the continuity of institutions and hierarchies. Accordingly, incentives for self-reflection, productive(!) competition and innovation are insufficiently represented, with a general lack of positive attitudes towards experiments; if nothing else, this results in a fearful research promotion with almost no venture capital (ibid.).

Sixteen years after Bloemers's evaluation of German archaeology, Hofmann and Stockhammer draw a much more optimistic picture of GSA and its mental setting, because – as they claim – the Excellence Initiative from 2007 has fostered many innovative research ventures in terms of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional projects.[2] I agree as far as concerns the three main projects with archaeological participation – the Topoi (Berlin) and Asia and Europe in a Global Context (Heidelberg) clusters of excellence and the Human Development in Landscapes (Kiel) graduate school. These large-scale projects indeed promote and conduct much more or less innovative research, while cutting across disciplines. But the two clusters and the graduate school should be seen as islands of bliss and as a rather closed and selective spaceship of richly funded archaeonauts who have little in common with the poor and sticky soils of GSA in general. If Hofmann and Stockhammer suggest that antiquarianism is vanishing in German archaeology, with archaeological theory 'still' not the mainstream of GSA, this is a gross misrepresentation. In fact, apart from a few universities, antiquarianism is still the prevailing theory in GSA – as can easily be proven at almost any German archaeological conference. And if there is any theory, e.g. as there already was in so many writings of Georg Kossack, one of the main exponents of 'traditional' GSA (Bintliff 2001), it was and still is bad manners to speak about it. Instead, the scientific reasoning is stuffed into an empiricist–inductive camouflage to conform to the positivist paradigm (Mante 2011, 117).

Regardless of different opinions on the state of archaeological institutions, the institutional infrastructure is an important asset of German archaeology, as it is the structural expression of the attitudes of wider German society and as such enables and limits German archaeological research. As its structural basis, this justifies speaking of a specific 'German' archaeology and should be an integral part of its definition.

## 'Speaking'

Matters of reasoning and plausibility connect to the question of language. Surprisingly enough, the authors write about German-*speaking* archaeology, but miss what would be the easiest criterion for GSA: to speak and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

publish (and sometimes teach) in German. This perspective not only avoids territorializations, but also brings the matter of language to the fore:

> Every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyzes, nature, notices or neglects types of relationships and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness (Whorf 1956, 252).

Further, 'language, thought and culture are deeply interlocked, so that each language might be claimed to have associated with it a distinctive worldview' (Gumperz and Levinson 1996, 2; see also Hill and Mannheim 1992). In the light of criticism on a purely lingual constructivism, this conviction of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis might sound exaggerated today, and Gábor Győri (2000) suggests an updated linguistic–cultural co-evolution of the world: language as a means of understanding the physical, social and cultural environment is transmitted and thus offers ready and traditional knowledge about the world, shaping thought and practice. But, likewise, language is permanently refreshed in order to adapt to a changing environment. Thus differences between languages indicate differences in sociocultural contexts.

With this background, it hardly comes as a surprise that the choice of language deeply influences modes of argumentation and patterns of plausibility. Most authors – at least in the humanities, with its focus on interpretation – who publish in different languages have already experienced that it is hardly possible to translate papers with a complex flow of arguments (cf. Eco 2003a; 2003b). It usually requires rewriting and rearranging the arguments in order to get to the same conclusions. Otherwise, the literal translation appears logically distorted, or associative at best, with much meaning lost in translation. Take, for example, the writings of Martin Heidegger, who actually celebrates a revival as a stylite of neo-realism/neo-phenomenology within the material turn: in the German text, Heidegger's dull romantic backwardness with its fascist connotations and allusive associations is immediately obvious, while the English translation (with so many words missing appropriate equivalents) appears much more consistent and modern and camouflages the intricate entanglement of Heidegger's philosophy with National Socialist ideology.

Each language, due to its structure, grammar and vocabulary, has strengths and weaknesses; it encourages or hinders specific modes of arguing and some lines of thought can only be thought and adequately expressed in a specific language. Compared to English, the German language provides hardly any synonyms, but each and every word, as closely related as they may be, has a slightly different meaning. This allows for extremely nuanced argumentation and – even more – requires permanent, distinctive reflections on which word fits exactly compared with other closely related words with slightly different meanings. As a result, (good) German papers tend to be highly precise, making full use of the wording capacities – and a German author usually has to know exactly what s/he means since otherwise s/he gets lost in the jungle of similar words. Moreover, German academic writing requires the connection of sentences mostly with *Adverbien*,[3] frequently indicating reasons

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(*Kausaladverbien*), while English writing rarely uses adverbs to connect sentences. As a result, German writing requires an explicit and precisely arranged order of arguments, since otherwise the *Kausaladverbien* do not connect logically. Thus I argue that the German love of precise definitions is not in the end an outcome of German language, which fosters and even requires such definitional precision. In contrast – perhaps symptomatic for English-speaking archaeology? – Colin Renfrew is afraid that 'it might be pedantic to spend too much time in the formulation of definitions' (Renfrew 2007, 112; cf. Meier and Tillessen 2014, 153).

Hofmann and Stockhammer hardly address such matters of language. They seem – at least in the way that I understood it – to celebrate 'the establishment of English as lingua franca also in archaeology' (p. 22 n.1). And they interpret English becoming 'more popular as a language for publication' (p. 4) as a sign of the internationalization of GSA. Consequently, the authors 'would appreciate an increase of comprehensive publications in English, but', they admit, 'we are nevertheless convinced that traditional multilinguality is also an advantage of GSA, which should not be abolished in favour of writing only in English' (p. 21). This multilingual advantage of GSA seems reduced to the ability to receive non-anglophone publications – which, of course, is a fundamental necessity in archaeology. But with the deep connection between language and thought in mind, I want to argue that not English as a lingua franca, but actual multilinguality is a necessary asset for a truly international archaeological discourse. In my experience, English publications are still read by rather few archaeologists in GSA (not to speak of French, Spanish or Russian publications),[4] while German publications are completely ignored in the anglophone sphere (cf. Meier and Tillessen 2014, 154–58). It comes as a big surprise to me that the authors postulate an existing international archaeological community while several studies since the 1990s (e.g. Lang 2000; Kristiansen 2001; Kristiansen, Cornell and Larsson 2004) repeatedly show that such an assumed community is counterfactual. 'International' means nothing more than a rather exclusive anglophone arena of discourse – with all the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the English (and only the English!) language brings to academic reasoning. Using English or any other language as the only language of internationality deprives academia of other modes of thinking and marginalizes anyone with a different mother tongue. Today language barriers and especially English monolinguality within wide academic fields are probably the largest obstacles for the exchange of ideas, and establish 'borders of ignorance' (Kristiansen 2001). Especially large archaeological communities like Britain, the USA, Germany and France tend to encapsulate themselves within their language universes, perverting the terms 'international' or 'transnational' into synonyms for language chauvinism – mistaking their parochial and ignorant navel gazing for internationality. If we accept the base assumptions of these arguments, speaking German indeed makes a difference to speaking English, French, Spanish, Russian or Chinese, and language as an important asset of mentalities is a solid basis to define a German-*speaking* archaeology.

To sum up: in my eyes, German-speaking archaeology is more than academic education at a German-speaking university: it is the sum total

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of archaeologies actually practised at German institutions – universities (including their research bodies), heritage boards, museums, research institutes etc. It includes speaking German and thus sharing related patterns of plausibility and a world view, and it includes the institutional constraints and liberties in Germany. It is a specific community of knowledge practices.

## German potentials

Hofmann and Stockhammer arrange most of their survey of GSA in terms of five topics. I am completely fine with these themes as they – appropriately – reflect the authors' expertise and interests. Much more important than adding one or another additional issue which is equally debated in GSA (religion, power, economies, heritage or the relation of archaeology to written sources and/or the natural sciences), a more fundamental question is whether there is something specific, something which only GSA could offer, to a truly international debate. When reading through the article I've asked myself whether it would read differently if the authors aimed to draft a sketch of anglophone archaeology in the early 21st century – except for other names in the bibliography. Although the authors make an effort at the end to discuss each theme in order to emphasize the specific German perspective, these perspectives look to me like minor nuances of the general anglophone discussion. From reading the authors' account of GSA, one gets the impression that during recent years, GSA has mainly dissolved into the 'international' (i.e. anglophone) mainstream.

More substantially than such debatable details, Hofmann and Stockhammer do not see long catalogues and footnotes as habitual hangovers from an antiquarian past, but they re-evaluate these techniques as an opportunity, as a strength in dealing with material culture – although rarely as a concept and with a severe lack of theorization. The long German antiquarian tradition needs not to publish on conceptual issues alone, but to combine concepts with 'case studies which introduce a practice-oriented perspective' (p. 16). Finally, this may turn out to be a major contribution to closing the actual, wide and much-lamented gap between highly theoretical concepts and dirty archaeological practice (e.g. Kluiving and Guttmann-Bond 2012, 27; Johnson 2012). Moreover, the exultant praise for the 'current theoretical approaches in GSA' mixing 'a multitude of approaches' and the 'flexibility and the related lack of dominant theoretical schools of thinking . . . without feeling the need to promote one approach and abolish others' (p. 19) perfectly corresponds to John Bintliff's (2011a, esp. 17 ff.) more general plea for theoretical and methodological eclecticism instead of intellectual monotheism. However, I cannot do away with the impression that this theoretical 'flexibility' is frequently not the result of a superior mastership of theories, but is grounded in a severe lack of awareness of theoretical problems and (in)compatibilities . . .

The yardstick by which theories in GSA are measured – reflected or not – is anglophone archaeology despite Bintliff's warning: 'If German scholarship is to stand up as an independent and lively contributor to global debates on archaeological method and theory, it has to find a distinctive voice and not run after the disappearing image of core theorists in other countries' (Bintliff

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2011a, 172). With this warning in mind I return to the issue of language and thinking as an extremely high potential for GSA, because there is a long, vibrant philosophical tradition specifically connected to German language and thinking. Let me – arbitrarily – mention again Martin Heidegger, who today is excavated by neo-'realists' and neo-phenomenologists; Edmund Husserl should be added. In contemporary philosophy, Ulrich Oevermann (2005) relies on Husserl and Heidegger in developing his project of 'objective hermeneutics'. Admittedly, this philosophical concept is so far poorly received and Oevermann is hardly known in GSA, although he himself has already applied his concept to archaeological material. The same holds true for other theoretical concepts like the *Sattelzeiten* of Reinhard Koselleck (1972) or Niklas Luhmann's (e.g. 1997; 2004) theory of social systems, which are – sad to say – all poorly received in GSA. Another field of special expertise would be the matter of bridging the divide between the two academic cultures of the humanities and the sciences. While anglophone debate traces back the idea of such a categorial divide to a lecture of C.P. Snow in 1959 (Snow 1961), it was already a subject of debate in 19th-century German academia. Finally, the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1883) coined the dichotomy of scientific explanation (*Erklären*) through empiricism versus hermeneutical understanding (*Verstehen*) in the humanities. Ever since then, debate in German academia on how this divide could be bridged has not dwindled. After claims of an alleged unity of all academic reasoning (e.g. Mittelstraß 1991; 1999) could hardly be substantiated, today's attempts prevail to find intersections and/or platforms of exchange between the two cultures; they range from blurred terminologies (e.g. vulnerability: Collet 2012) and nature–culture hybrids (Zierhofer 2003) to the concept of social ecology, with humans themselves, as biological *and* cultural entities, being the nature–culture intersection (Fischer-Kowalski and Erb 2006), while the philosophy of transversal reason (Welsch 1996) has not yet been explored as a tool of interdisciplinarity. With these intellectual debates in philosophy, sociology and other disciplines, German archaeologists are in a brilliant position to profit from their own theoretical standing. With German as their mother tongue they have the best access to these writings and intellectually they belong to the same community of language and thinking. Adopting and translating a theory from its disciplinary place of birth into another discipline requires considerable rethinking and remodelling of this theory and is theory (trans)formation in itself. The rich German tradition of philosophy offers a great potential to GSA to contribute significantly to theoretical debates.

## National disclaimer

In this comment I claim that German-speaking archaeology is and should be much more than Hofmann and Stockhammer present. I explicitly do not complain about a missing book or an underscored/overemphasized theme. I do argue, however, that GSA is a specific community of knowledge practices formed by German education, institutions and language and is controlled by German mentalities, discourses and manners. I also argue that GSA has the potential to significantly contribute to archaeology not by running 'after the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

disappearing image of core theorists in other countries' (p. 34) but by the intellectual power of German-speaking academia as a whole.

To be clear, my enthusiastic claims that there is more to GSA and there should be even more to it is not driven by parochial or national pride. I would ask for very similar contributions from French, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Russian or any other archaeologies to bring their specific strengths into the debate. Quite on the contrary, I am driven by the ideal of a truly multivocal archaeological discourse fuelled by as many regional and theoretical perspectives as possible. Since the 1960s, theories in archaeology have been mainly set up by anglophone, mostly British, archaeologists, frequently on the basis of translations of philosophies from other languages (especially French and German). During the last decade, this innovative power of anglophone archaeology has slowed down remarkably. It is time for other language communities to step out of the shadow of anglophone discussions as the yardstick by which theory is measured and involve themselves in symmetrical entanglements of transnational and multilingual discourses based on the diversity and equal value of ideas, logics and traditions of all archaeological language communities.

## Notes

[1] Nevertheless they include Cornelius Holtorf and Ulrike Sommer – both with five references each – who have spent almost their entire careers in Sweden and the UK respectively.

[2] Until very recently, Hofmann and Stockhammer both had their academic backgrounds in either one of the clusters of excellence, which explains their very positive esteem of the Excellence Initiative and their conviction that these two clusters are going to change GSA as a whole.

[3] The German *Adverbien* are only a part of the words termed 'adverbs' in English. All adverbs derived from adjectives in particular are excluded from the group of *Adverbien*.

[4] Therefore, even if we accept English as an indicator of internationality, I strongly disagree with the authors' notion that GSA as a whole has entered an 'age of intense international academic entanglement' (p. 2). This is still only a rather small (but growing) young and elitist academic group, while the great majority of German archaeologists stay exclusively within the borders of the German language or even within their regions.

Archaeological Dialogues 24 (1) 36–41 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S1380203817000083

## **Framing matters** *Reinhard Bernbeck**

Kerstin Hofmann and Philipp Stockhammer's essay on theory in 'Beyond antiquarianism' displays a mood that lacks self-confidence, despite a more optimistic outlook on theoretical reflections in their field than an earlier paper by Ulrike Sommer (2000b). The citations, amounting to 60 per cent of the

*Reinhard Bernbeck, Institut für vorderasiatische Archäologie, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. Email: rbernbec@zedat.fu-berlin.de.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

text, are just an outward sign of that mood. A more revealing element is the essay's framing. Hofmann and Stockhammer do not discuss theory in German-speaking archaeology, as their abbreviation 'GSA' seems to imply, but rather restrict themselves to its prehistoric subdivision: the essay is actually only about 'GSPA'. What are the preconditions for and the consequences of this self-imposed disciplinary (and disciplining) restriction?

Traditionally, disciplinary boundaries in German academia are as insurmountable as the Berlin Wall. This has led to the establishment of disciplinary and subdisciplinary canons accompanied by a considerable lack of intellectual curiosity, something that persists up to today. One can have serious discussions about whether periods without written texts in ancient Western Asia are part of a subdiscipline called 'prehistory' or of 'Near Eastern archaeology'. The entry point to many discussions consists of situating one's research with respect to categorizations of pre-existing knowledge. Academic practice is imagined as firmly imprisoned in predefined cells. As a consequence, the most basic questions concerning paradigmatic choices and their ideological implications tend not to be asked.

This is where Hofmann and Stockhammer go only halfway toward assessing current questions in German-speaking archaeology. They stick to a framework that is traditionally German in its narrowness instead of discussing theory in archaeology *tout court*. Do they feel that they cannot speak for other small fields such as classical archaeology? By remaining within the traditional boundaries, the article does not consider archaeologists who have become influential intellectuals well beyond the *Altertumswissenschaften*, foremost among them Jan Assmann, an Egyptologist who is internationally known for his theory of collective memory (Assmann 1992). His work is also occupied with the history and political dimensions of monotheism, including elements of Freud's psychology (Assmann 1998), and with classical music: he interprets *The Magic Flute* from Mozart's contemporaries' perceptions of ancient Egypt (Assmann 2005). A classical archaeologist, Stefan Altekamp has done highly interesting work on media and archaeology as well as on *Archäologisierung*, which he sees as a kind of secretion of matter ('Absonderung von Materie', Altekamp 2004, 213) from social life that substantially differs from the quality of archives.

But let us look at this problem of boundary drawing more systematically. What does it mean to limit reflections on a discourse by submitting oneself to boundaries that are institutional rather than content-oriented? As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) have shown, discourses cannot easily be caged – except when there is a language boundary. But even language's imposition of discursive limits is complex. The use of the German language constitutes for most people in the world an unassailable boundary to understanding, while English is less restrictive by far. Anyone who posts papers in two languages on *academia.edu* and uses English in one of them can attest to this. English-language discourse 'sets the agenda' (see Yoffee und Sherratt 1993). A main – and justified – reason for Hofmann and Stockhammer's question whether there is a specific theoretical discourse in German-speaking archaeology lies exactly here. Theoretical or other discourses conducted in any language other than English include the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

potential for 'creative niches', for emerging new themes and directions that may at a later point become internationally relevant via translations into English. To take cases from the fields of epistemology and ancient history, Foucault's impact on social and cultural sciences, including archaeology, was predicated on translations into English; the same may be said of Giorgio Agamben's (1998) work. The 'ontological turn' is based on original texts written in French and Portuguese by Descola (2005), Latour (1991; 1999) and Viveiros de Castro (2002). It is noteworthy as well as difficult to explain that the intrusion of theoretical work into archaeology usually takes place once this work has been translated into English. It is not French, Italian or Portuguese archaeologists who immediately captured the wide-ranging implications of these writers. There are two reasons for this. I already mentioned disciplinary walling-in, something that is typical for continental European *Kulturwissenschaften* in general. A second reason is that archaeologists interested in the theoretical foundations of their field search for inspiration in English-language archaeological literature, rather than in writings in their own language, or in other non-English literatures outside their academic discipline. A self-imposed intellectual dependency emerges.

## Practices and *Verbundforschung*

Is there anything special about German-speaking archaeologies at this point in time? I would agree with Hofmann and Stockhammer that the question is to be answered in the affirmative. But the main reason is not a product of theoretical inquiry but an organizational one that they mention, the *Verbundforschung*. This consists of large-scale, well-funded groups of researchers who pursue a common goal using different methodological approaches. For example, Stockhammer himself is involved in a project that provides massive quantities of new data on aDNA, isotope analysis, chronology based on Bayesian statistics and other laboratory analyses, all of which are focused on the transitional period to the Early Bronze Age in a small region in southern Germany (Stockhammer *et al.* 2015). Such massive state-funded projects, but particularly the multi-year excellence clusters, are unlikely to be launched in the English-speaking world. They do not just provide new data; they can also lead to surprising new insights, but include as well a danger of throwing money at research that is not well coordinated. It is too early for a final verdict on the efficacy of large-scale *Verbundforschung*. The experience with the Topoi excellence cluster suggests that at least a partial melting of the above-mentioned disciplinary walls may be one very positive result.

## Prominent themes?

When reading Hofmann and Stockhammer's contribution, I asked myself which topics I would have listed as 'prominent themes' in theoretical discussions in Germany. I would agree with their assessment of 'identity' as a major issue that is discussed in various fora. Perhaps I would have included the other four as well, since they are elements of cross-disciplinary 'excellence clusters'. However, 'reflexivity' would certainly not have been my

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choice – if anything, it would rather have been the lack of reflexivity that reveals itself through an absence of serious theoretical debates. Theory is understood too much as a tool to work with or as an element to be described historically, rather than as a standpoint from which to argue and by which to critically judge. Hofmann and Stockhammer's text reveals this tendency in its own basic structure: it is an enumeration of topics and accompanying bibliographic entries, more than an account of differing opinions. For example, they name 'glocalization', 'globalization' and 'translation' as well as 'hybridity', 'appropriation', 'copying' and 'entanglement' as useful concepts for the analysis of cultural encounters. But what is it that leads authors to emphasize one term rather than another? Their use in anglophone literature? That some are more fashionable than others? The potential to insert them into larger theoretical frameworks such as Marxist, feminist, post-colonial, post-structuralist thought? We do not know. My guess is that if the latter frameworks played a significant role, theoretical limits would become sharper, while disciplinary ones would be loosened further.

There is also the question whether the five themes that Hofmann and Stockhammer chose for their review can or should be defined as proposed. Two of them, 'space' and 'identity', constitute an interesting pair, and I will limit further comments to them. I find the fascination of German-speaking archaeology with identity and space puzzling. The proverbial theoretical 'abstinence' caused by the aberrations of Nazi archaeologists would be most understandable in exactly these two fields. After all, they were the main elements of the revanchist theoretical apparatus developed by Kossinna and his acolytes. While there is no reason to suspect parallels in content, I wonder what the recent return to such interests means. Do these theoretical issues run so deep that they constitute an almost subconscious fascination in German intellectual circles, and, if so, why? Is this an attempt to rectify past misconceptualizations?

Hofmann and Stockhammer's list of projects and approaches rightly points out the methodological focus of current interests in space as a measured and measurable phenomenon. GIS, the reconstruction of palaeo-landscapes, statistical approaches to distributional patterns of sites and resources give me the feeling of being in a 1980s University of Michigan seminar, but with more advanced technological apparatus. However, present-day German archaeology is closer to geography than to the ecological concerns of a Michigan-style archaeology – strangely enough, given current existential environmental crises.

Identity is a topic of interest far beyond the realm of archaeology, both internationally and in Germany. I suspect that with the political populism of our times, this term and its problematic undertones are not going to leave us soon. The claim by right-wing politicians to speak for a fictitious entity they call 'the people' – in many cases a minority compared to the mostly apathetic non-voters – is partly the product of a troubling academic tendency since the 1990s: a turn away from political-economic analyses, from class and material inequality as facts of social life, to purely identitarian issues enshrined in notions such as religion, ethnicity, gender or age. But these dimensions of identity are themselves in need of some elaboration. There

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are several important differences between English-speaking and German-speaking discourses in this field. First, and on a purely formal level, I wonder why the strongly androcentric structure of German as a language remains silenced in Hofmann and Stockhammer's paper. In university teaching, I constantly fight with the issue, trying to convince students to use gender-neutral language. Second, the discussion by Hofmann and Stockhammer remains strangely unidimensional. They discuss gender, age or ethnicity sequentially, leaving out a lively and wide-ranging discussion in German on *Intersektionalität*, whose roots lie admittedly in US American feminist thought (Winker and Degeler 2010). Third, identity is linked to the brutal modern history of Germany and the attempted extermination of a whole group among its population because of their (not even in every case self-ascribed) Jewish identities. The Holocaust has left deep traces in academic disciplines such as history or medicine, physical anthropology or political science, but also in many other fields that investigate collectivities. The theoretical background to ideas of 'common consciousness' and identities has been treated critically in the opus magnum of Lutz Niethammer (2000), who tackles the issue from a historical perspective and delivers a devastating verdict for the whole idea. An archaeological engagement with this work would be highly desirable.

Hofmann and Stockhammer mention an alternative to the term 'identity' proposed by Susan Pollock and myself (e.g. Pollock 2007; Bernbeck 2009a; see also Smith 2004): instead of theorizing a pre-existing collective memory and consciousness, we contended that an Althusserian concept of subjectivity would lead us to new and fundamentally different questions than that of unidimensional identity differences (Charim 2009). Empirical investigations of subjectification processes, of material traces that contributed to the shaping of particular subjectivities, can free us from the assumption of a collective identity with temporal stability. I maintain that, despite an emphasis by Hofmann and Stockhammer on 'processes rather than … states' and on 'dynamics of identities' (p. 10), the unitary and essentializing associations connected to this term do not vanish.

In summary, GSA (including 'non-prehistoric' fields) still has major problems when it comes to theoretical discourse. Instead of a free-ranging curiosity about its own intellectual environment, German-speaking archaeology continues to watch timidly the anglophone archaeological discourse in the mistaken belief that it provides a hint of legitimation for those who are theoretically inclined. The reasoning is that if archaeologists abroad have found useful reflections in the works of Heidegger, Bourdieu, Foucault or Descola, the same could then perhaps be the case for us. I wish for a different theoretical inclination in German-speaking archaeology: much greater curiosity towards its own quotidian discursive environment. Issues discussed in the fields of *kritische Psychologie* (e.g. Holzkamp 1972), in the recognition-theoretical work of Axel Honneth (2003; 2014), in Koselleck's (2000) concepts of temporality or themes such as *Beiläufigkeit der Dinge* (the 'casualness' of things: Hahn 2015; Ludwig 2015) could all be creatively incorporated into archaeological discourse. Some of that happens here and there, but an energetic and controversial, but also respectful, theoretical

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

discourse has yet to develop in GSA. Rather than asking for the fresh fruit in our neighbours' gardens, we wait until the truck from the 'Anglo' supermarket drives by and order the somewhat stale product that has already travelled over long distances.

Archaeological Dialogues 24 (1) 41–44 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S1380203817000046

## From deconstruction to interpretation

*Kristian Kristiansen**

Hofmann and Stockhammer provide an exhaustive and informative overview of German-speaking archaeology (GSA) seen through a set of theoretical lenses that, as they readily admit, may leave other equally important trends in the dark. I shall therefore provide a slightly different perspective, and highlight some interpretive trends that received less coverage in their exposition. Again, it is based on my selective reading of German archaeology, which includes only part of the bibliography of Hofmann and Stockhammer, but then some other works as well. In conclusion I shall discuss what I consider one of the major obstacles for GSA to reach theoretical maturity and a wider international impact.

### The socio-economic (processual) versus the culturally particular (postprocessual) discourse

Hofmann and Stockhammer represent a more recent postprocessual thing and materiality theoretical discourse, evidenced also by the number of citations of certain researchers. I suggest that this misrepresents a rather strong, and perhaps more traditional, socio-economic materialism rooted in a general processual discourse. Here we find the 'Kiel school' headed by Johannes Müller, but again originating in earlier research traditions with a stronger science-based perspective linked to landscape studies (the Jankuhn school), and here we also find much of the settlement archaeology of recent times, such as work by Schier and Zimmermann. Interest is rather in reconstructing and explaining long-term trends in demography (Müller 2015), economy, environment and social organization (Hansen and Müller 2011). This has, of course, been supported and stimulated by the large DFG Frühe Monumentalität research project (e.g. Furholt, Lüth and Müller 2011), and the graduate school for environmental studies (Human Development in Landscapes) in Kiel. However, when flipping through dissertations from recent years it is clear that such a general social archaeology has been taken on board and with that a methodological search for quantitative parameters to support interpretations, from network analysis (Furholt 2011) to measurements of wealth and status (Endrigkeit 2014).

Opposed to this we find a more postprocessual, post-colonial theoretical interest in materiality, object biographies, cultural encounters and hybridity,

*Kristian Kristiansen, Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Email: kristian.kristiansen@archaeology.gu.se.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

linked to Joseph Maran and Stockhammer in Heidelberg (Maran and Stockhammer 2012b; Stockhammer 2012b; Stockhammer and Hahn 2015), and supported by a cluster of excellence on transculturality in Asia and Europe, as well as the Topoi cluster in Berlin (Hofmann *et al.* 2016). This discourse organizes the theoretical structure of Hofmann and Stockhammer's exposition, and the theoretical debates linked to it are therefore well referenced, in opposition to the socio-economic school, even if one finds overlaps between the two. Also as a result of this theoretical priority, there is less focus on the science turn in archaeology, and its potential role in reshaping theory and interpretations in GSA (to be discussed below in the last section).

What I wish to say is that the Anglo-Saxon theoretical debates and discourses are more than visible also in the GSA, and more so than Hofmann and Stockhammer want to admit. Yes, there is a stronger emphasis on data and methodological rigour in GSA, and there exists no single dominant theoretical school. But the world is changing, and also in English-speaking archaeology (ESA) we see a stronger emphasis on methodological rigour and data analysis, linked to the 'science turn' in archaeology, and the increasing role of big data. I have suggested that this represents a global change in the humanities and social sciences (Kristiansen 2015).

**Theoretical deconstruction versus interpretive narratives**

There exists a strong tradition of theoretical critique or deconstruction in German archaeology, which cuts across theoretical schools. It is partly covered under the positive heading 'self-reflexivity' in the article, but I wish to focus on some unintended negative consequences of this tradition. Certain general concepts such as migration or ethnicity are chosen for critical scrutiny, and then a battery of data is mobilized to show that it is impossible to say anything certain. The debate over ethnicity started by Sebastian Brather is a good example of this, as well as the migration debate (summarized in Burmeister 2013a; 2013b), but it is a tradition that has been nurtured by Manfred Eggert and his students, not least Tobias Kienlin (for another debate see Kristiansen and Earle 2015 versus Kienlin 2012).

The problem with this kind of theoretical and methodological critique in GSA is that it is often socially and historically uninformed. It therefore tends to revolve around the nature of archaeological data, and what can be known from a purely archaeological perspective. However, one cannot correctly interpret ethnicity or migration without understanding society, its organization and its institutions. This is necessary in order to create an interpretive bridge between theory and data that is rooted in the social organization of society. Ethnicity and migration unfold differently depending on whether we are talking about an archaic state or a tribal society. Unfortunately, such comparative anthropological/historical knowledge is often missing in GSA, as noted by Hofmann and Stockhammer, which explains the lack of interpretive progress, at least in part. Here the Kiel school marks an exception as their main focus is on social and economic organization rather than theoretical concepts per se. Thus while GSA has produced an impressive number of theoretical books (such as the Tübinger Archäologische

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Taschenbücher) and articles that deal exclusively with theory, there is a lack of interpretive implementation and progress.

We find very few examples in GSA of the kind of interpretive narratives (applied and fully integrated theory and interpretation) that are common in ESA, such as Christopher Tilley's works on phenomenology and metaphors (Tilley 1999), Richard Bradley's many interpretive narratives (e.g. 'Image and audience' – Bradley 2010), or my own contributions, such as 'The rise of Bronze Age society' (Kristiansen and Larsson 2005). On the contrary, in a recent critique Tobias Kienlin (2015a) argued that the narrative style of our book was too seductive, and therefore unscientific. It exemplifies a basic problem in GSA: not fear of flying, but fear of interpretive narratives, where you privilege some data at the expense of others, as the result of clearly formulated research questions and their implementation in a coherent interpretation.

This tradition of critical deconstruction sets an academic example that favours (and rewards?) critique rather than interpretation. As a result, interpretive narratives are considered risky, in some places unscientific, and are therefore better avoided.

## What does the future hold?

Well, if GSA can get rid of its fear of interpretive narratives (which implies choosing and interpretive consequence), and start exploiting its enormously rich archaeological and scientific database, which in all fairness is well under way, then huge progress can be achieved. But it demands a better integration of science and archaeology, of social theory and interpretation, than we've seen so far. Why is there virtually no discussion, in Hofmann and Stockhammer, of the recent dramatic progress in ancient DNA and strontium isotopic analyses (e.g. Allentoft *et al.* 2015; Haak *et al.* 2015; Mathieson *et al.* 2015; Meyer *et al.* 2012; Knipper *et al.* 2014), which provides answers to questions of migration and mobility, and elite versus commoner lifestyles and diet, debated for over a century (they refer to some strontium-based research, but without discussing its impact). By avoiding the challenge of the science turn in archaeology, their contribution is rather backward-looking, and more pessimistic than the present situation invites. However, they rightly point out the impact of large-scale research projects in Germany ('clusters of excellence') for supporting interdisciplinary research and the theoretical formulation of such research programmes. Mention should also be made of the impact of the European Research Council and its financing of large projects, such as Rebay-Salisbury on 'Motherhood and child rearing in prehistoric Europe', and Stockhammer on 'Transformations of food in the Eastern Mediterranean Late Bronze Age'. Also, a series of recent international conferences on 'big questions' such as '1600 BC in Europe' (Meller *et al.* 2013), or 'Social Transformation 5000–1500 BC' (Hansen and Müller 2011) have helped to provide a stronger research focus on historical and theoretical problems. Supported by projects such as 'Frühe Monumentalität' in Kiel, and the clusters of excellence, GPA is now in a position where it can bolster impressive high-resolution databases of certain periods and regions that should allow much more coherent interpretive narratives to be produced in the future, supported

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by both science and archaeology. The series of monographs and articles being produced by these projects are already providing evidence of this future.

Archaeological Dialogues 24 (1) 44–87 © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S1380203817000071

## From pessimism to optimism. A reply

*Kerstin P. Hofmann and Philipp W. Stockhammer**

The diversity of the comments makes it an easy and a complex task to address them. It is an easy task, since each of the commentators presented clear yet widely ranging opinions about the extent and relevance of theories in GSA, which differ astonishingly – from accusations of just presenting 'theory-lite' (Veit) to the very positive view that there is even more relevant theoretical discussion in GSA than mentioned by us (Kristiansen). The surprisingly diverse comments lead us to suppose that we have probably found a middle ground between the pessimistic and the more optimistic perspectives. However, commenting on the responses is also a complex task, because the only way of doing justice to them is by discussing them individually.

Veit's notion of theory is a very specific one and strongly contrasts with our understanding of theoretical issues in archaeology. For Veit, theory is the resistance of a small avant-garde group against the mainstream; theory cannot be a broader phenomenon, because only an intellectual elite would be capable of diving into its depths. We strongly oppose such an exclusive and elitist perspective, which runs the risk of eventually accepting only one's own and a few others' work as 'theoretical enough'. In our opinion, all theoretical thoughts are embedded in ongoing discourses and practices; they are always a reaction to pre-existing thoughts. How much societal impact does Veit expect from theory in order for it to be radical and avant-garde enough? Is his response mainly intended to raise a conflict in order to be able to classify his own work as 'theory', following his own definition? For us, there is no meaningful differentiation between 'true theoretical archaeologists' (with whom Veit would probably align himself) and 'archaeologists working with theoretically guided approaches'. There is no clear-cut difference between theory and practice, as empirical work is always loaded with theory, and theory is always empirically loaded – even if this remains inexplicit or even unconscious (cf. Hirschauer 2008).

Our goal was to shed light on explicitly theoretically oriented works in GSA – irrespective of whether they were aiming at conflict or not. For us, it just makes no sense to differentiate between 'theory' and 'normal science' as suggested by Veit. In contrast to his reading of our text we use 'antiquarianism' in a descriptive and not in a pejorative way, similar to Karl J. Narr (1990, 294, 305) and Manfred K.H. Eggert (2001, 16–17). We are also surprised by his statement that we contrast an 'antiquarian GSA' before the year 2000 with a 'theory-oriented GSA' after 2000, as we explicitly refer to theoretical approaches in GSA before 2000 even if this was explicitly beyond the scope of our article. Furthermore, we

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have already published on this topic (Stockhammer 2011b; Hofmann 2013a). Therefore we are unable to follow Veit's very particular reading of our article (e.g. 'Either the roots of theoretical archaeology go back in time much further than postulated by Hofmann and Stockhammer – or modern GSA is less modern (theoretical) than presented to us here' (p. 27)). In opposition to Veit, we would also strictly argue against the equation of 'modern' and 'theoretical' and we have consciously avoided the highly problematic notion of 'modern' and 'modernity' in our contribution. To sum up, we understand Veit's particular response as an aim to distinguish and emphasize his and a few others' works as 'theoretical' and 'avant-garde' in contrast to 'normal archaeology'. Our lines of thinking about and approaching theory in archaeology could not be more different.

In his commentary, Thomas Meier expands on the challenge and potential of differentiating a 'German-speaking' archaeological community, which we have also discussed in detail in our contribution. He emphasizes the relevance of national mentalities, research practices and institutions – going back to the 19th century. However, we did not specifically address mentalities, as they mostly remain implicit in the relevant publications. We also agree with Meier that language indeed has the potential to shape human thinking and conceptualizations of the world and therefore approaches to and narratives of the past. However, as these discussions are beyond our field of specialization, we refrained from expanding on this issue. Our aim was rather to show the broad range of inspiring theoretical publications in GSA to the international audience – not to find some 'Germanness' behind them.

In contrast to us, Meier does not see a lively theoretical debate in GSA beyond the large research centres that the Excellence Initiative has created in the last decade. It is true that many theoretical contributions were indeed written by scholars based at Berlin, Heidelberg and Kiel. However, even a short glance at our bibliography leaves no doubt that relevant contributions originated from a much wider range of scholars and universities, for example Tübingen, Leipzig and Freiburg. We have already stated in our contribution that besides single scholars with a great interest in archaeological theory, the growing number of interdisciplinary collaborative research projects since the new millennium has been a crucial factor for the further development of theoretical approaches. In contrast to Meier, we still consider the institutional transformations due to the Bologna Process as a further influential factor because it forced a stronger discourse on methods and research issues between the formerly separated archaeological disciplines.

We highly appreciate Meier's reference to the long and vibrant philosophical and sociological tradition in German-speaking academia and also its efforts to bridge the divide between the humanities and science (Hofmann 2006–7; Meier and Tillessen 2011; Krause and Stockhammer 2013). However, our aim was to shed light on theoretical writings in GSA and we have already quoted much more than we should have. We hope that theoretical writings of scholars from the German-speaking humanities and life sciences will find even more interest in GSA and beyond in the future.

Reinhard Bernbeck has drawn attention to a truly typical German phenomenon of archaeology – its division into seemingly clear-cut disciplines

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203817000071 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(e.g. prehistoric archaeology, classical archaeology and Near Eastern archaeology) and the overall acceptance of these disciplinary boundaries and competencies. We have been educated in exactly such a disciplinary system, and therefore took our respective competencies as the basis for our review, which we could indeed have called 'German-speaking prehistoric archaeology' with a strong focus on the metal ages – keeping in mind that distinctive archaeological material also has an impact on the respective theoretical discussions in this field. Nevertheless, we completely agree with him that it is the *Verbundforschung* – the collaborative research projects – which not only have changed GSA markedly since the year 2000, but also have an enormous potential to transform our discipline in the years to come. In the end, these projects could produce a comprehensive 'archaeology' by integrating disciplinary knowledge in a transdisciplinary discourse. Instead of following the romantic idea of a general scholarship (*Universalgelehrtentum*) in archaeological theory, we think that the ongoing disciplinary (sub)specialization also has important advantages as long as the interdisciplinary dialogue remains vivid.

We thank Bernbeck for his further thoughts on the important themes of space and identity, but we do not agree with him that there is an absence of reflexivity in GSA. We rather consider reflexivity as an important topic – especially with regard to the analysis of archaeology during the Second World War, which is very specific to GSA and which still serves as an important basis for reflections. Therefore theories and concepts are not reduced to a mere toolbox, but always have to be regarded in terms of their historical genesis and application (e.g. Heidegger). It is important to remember that one should not confuse this specific German 'historical reflexivity' with the 'contemporary reflexivity' of anglophone archaeology, which refers to archaeology as social and political practice and which is becoming increasingly important also in GSA.

We do not agree with his dictum that German-speaking archaeologists 'watch timidly the anglophone archaeological discourse' (p. 40) and lack a creative appropriation of theoretical literature. It is, rather, a problem that unless they are translated into English, the international reception of German-language publications, including outside archaeology, is poor. Nevertheless, he is right that German-speaking archaeologists should be more confident in their theoretical work. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to stop complaining and to act.

In his comment, Kristian Kristiansen points to the ongoing importance of what he calls the 'socio-economic (processual) versus the culturally particular (postprocessual) discourse' (p. 41) – the latter being the focus of our review. Although we have integrated quite a lot of what Kristiansen classifies as the processual tradition in GSA – most prominently manifested in the vivid research environment at Kiel – we agree with him that we are both situated much closer to what he calls the postprocessual discourse.

Kristiansen also remarks on the rejection of grand narratives in GSA, which often goes hand in hand with deconstruction only and a lack of constructive approaches. We agree with Kristiansen that there is indeed a fear of grand narratives in GSA, but we see the increasing emergence

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of small narratives – sometimes competing, but aiming to overcome an over-exaggerated deconstructivism. We agree with Kristiansen that the increasing potential of scientific approaches is essentially transforming our relationship with archaeological source material. However, we do not agree with his assessment that the growing interest in the groundbreaking results of cutting-edge scientific methods has basically changed archaeological theory, and therefore we would avoid using the term 'scientific turn'. Nevertheless, the new insights which are now possible could be taken as a basis for a discussion of different kinds of knowledge generation and their integration, as well as about crucial concepts like time, space, human identities, mobility and so on (cf. Hofmann 2016d).

At the end of his response, Kristiansen again points to the possibility and potential of large-scale collaborative research projects – completely in line with Bernbeck's and also our major argument: together with the institutional transformations due to the Bologna Process, it was the increasing establishment of large-scale collaborative research projects in GSA – with all the forces, opportunities and potentials that arose with them – which enabled and enforced a stronger theoretical interest in GSA than in the decades before. Several replies note a lack of controversial discussions and conflicts in GSA as well as in our paper. We agree that in GSA the generation of knowledge is rather progressive and cumulative and not a product of changing paradigms and concepts like in anglophone archaeology (see also Dürr 2016, 128). Furthermore, theoretical discussions are still not uniformly established in GSA. However, theory in GSA is definitely no longer only the domain of a small avant-garde club and it is more than just a local and reduced version of the anglophone discussion. Theory in GSA is vivid and creative, and has the potential to generate inspiring new insights without falling into the trap of creating one singular large-scale meta-narrative, instead allowing for the creation of competing narratives which, in our opinion, do better justice to the plurality and complexity of the past.

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