



# L'archéologie **nazie** en Europe de l'Ouest

**Nazi-Archäologie in Westeuropa**

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**inFOLIO**





Fig. 1: Hans Reinert in 1937.

Fig. 1: Hans Reinert en 1937.

# Hans Reinerth: From Archaeologist to Reichsamtseiter (1918-1945)

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The discipline of German pre- and proto-historic archaeology separated itself in 1949 from the kind of politically slanted and biased archaeology that had characterised the discipline between 1933 and 1945, marking the end of the tendency for science to try to curry favour with politics, a tendency that was the result of an increase in the value of the subject within the germanocentric National Socialist state and the falsification of scientific interpretation to the detriment of critical scientific discussion. For a long time, no one questioned the responsibility of the 200 other archaeologists (apart from those in the circle around Reinerth) towards politics and society or how far scientific principles were sacrificed to ideology during this time. Recent publications<sup>1</sup> of the biographies of important archaeologists provide a new basis for understanding the events of the National Socialist era.

The archaeologist Hans Reinerth (fig. 1) readily volunteered himself in the service of National Socialist cultural politics, using the newly emerging possibilities of the ethnocentric and nationalistic imperative (Gustaf Kossinna) and national socialist imperatives (Alfred Rosenberg/Bernhard Rust) after his own academic career had stalled. Reinerth promoted only these imperatives, and enforced them with dictatorial means. He was punished for this after the war by exclusion from the academic world. Beginning with his studies in Tübingen in 1918, throughout the Weimar Republic to his expulsion from the Nazi Party in 1945, Reinerth's career path can be seen as an example of the rise and fall of an outsider and ingenious scientist, who never really became integrated into mainstream research. His career took him

from lecturer in 1923 and professor (1935-45) in Berlin and through various political offices, including "Reichsamtseiter der Abteilung für Ur- und Frühgeschichte im Amt Rosenberg" [Head of Department Pre- and Early History in the Rosenberg Office] (1934), "Reichsamtseiter im Reichsamt für Vorgeschichte der NSDAP" [Head of Department in the Head Office of Prehistory of the Nazi-Party] (1937) and finally "Leiter des Sonderstabes Vorgeschichte im Einsatzstab Rosenberg" (Head of the Rosenberg Staff Special Task Force on Prehistory) (1942) until his fall from favour.

At their first meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1949 in Regensburg, southwestern German historians unanimously distanced themselves from the "politically slanted and biased archaeology practised between 1933 and 1945 by one of its members, Professor Doctor Hans Reinerth, the former Nazi official who poses as having been persecuted by the Nazi regime and is currently lecturing in the French occupied zone"<sup>2</sup> (fig. 2). As a result of this pronouncement, Hans Reinerth (1900-1990) became "persona non grata" within the archaeological community in Germany even before he was formally denounced by the political cleansing process on 9th August 1949.

## Die Prähistoriker tagten

### Distanzierung von der NS-„Wissenschaft“

Regensburg (NZ). — Die in Regensburg auf einer Arbeitstagung versammelten west- und süddeutschen Prähistoriker haben sich in einer Resolution von der unsachlichen und tendenziösen Vorgeschichtswissenschaft distanziert, wie sie von dem ehemaligen Führer des „Reichsbundes für deutsche Vorgeschichte“ und „Reichsamtseiter“ der NSDAP, Professor Dr. Hans Reinerth, propagiert wurde, der seine Lehrtätigkeit in der französischen Zone nunmehr als angeblich politisch Verfolgter erneut aufgenommen habe. In der Entschließung wird vor allem auf die Schädigung des deutschen Ansehens in In- und Ausland durch die von Professor Reinerth vertretende Lehrmeinung hingewiesen.

<sup>1</sup> LEUBE 2002; STEUER 2001; HALLE 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Neue Zeitung* of 14<sup>th</sup> June 1949; SCHÖBEL 2002a, p. 321.

Fig. 2: Newspaper cutting, 1949.

Fig. 2: Condamnation de Hans Reinerth par les préhistoriens allemands, coupure de presse, 1949.



The lifelong exclusion from research of this scholar by his own colleagues is a unique incident in this branch of academia and was viewed as an act of self cleansing by the discipline in democratic post war Germany. Not only did this act permit a new start for a misused subject<sup>3</sup>, it also allowed distinctions to be made between the scientifically well founded and the pseudo-scientific study of pre- and proto-history in the years between 1933 and 1945. Pitched against twelve years of the misuse of archaeology by willing henchmen of the Nazi Party was a continuation of positive scientific research carried out under the protection of the SS despite the constant threat from the Rosenberg Office<sup>4</sup>.

The question of the culpability of the 200 or so archaeologists in Germany other than those in the Reinerth group<sup>5</sup> was rarely asked because their innocence was presumed on the basis of their internal power struggle against Reinerth in the context of a totalitarian regime. Based on the sources available to

them, historians R. Bollmus and M. Kater<sup>6</sup> painted a picture of groups of researchers acting and reacting in turn in their publications in the 1970s. They present different facets of ingratiation, dilettantism and popularisation on the one hand and polarisation, the taking of sides and an emphasis on quality on the other, which defined the struggle between the two groups along political and ideological lines. The scientific and personal backgrounds of the protagonists remained unexamined by Bollmus and Kater because, as historians, they were not sufficiently well versed in the threads of development within archaeology and their information came mostly from prejudiced sources. Following the opening of many archives after 1989, a more source oriented approach to the examination of the history of the subject has become possible, which throws more light on the transition from nationalism to National Socialism and Germany's subsequent self-imposed relinquishing of its role in the vanguard of European archaeology<sup>7</sup>.



Fig. 3: Hans Reinerth in 1908.

*Fig. 3: Hans Reinerth à l'âge de 8 ans, en 1908.*



Fig. 4: Hans Reinerth, "Rex der Coeten" (first in his year) in 1918.

*Fig. 4: Hans Reinerth maior de sa classe, 1918.*



## Reinerth's scientific career between 1918 and 1930

Karl Heinz Reinerth was born on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1900 in Bistritz, Siebenbürgen, at that time still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the son of a military officer (fig. 3)<sup>8</sup>. After a serious bout of polio, he obtained his high school diploma shortly before the end of the first World War (fig. 4). He graduated at the top of his year among all the schools in the province. As a member of the Protestant elite, he won a scholarship to Tübingen in the same year, where in the winter term of 1918 he began reading theology. According to his file he studied nine further subjects at the university, including human prehistory under R.R. Schmidt who acted as his PhD thesis advisor until he obtained his PhD on the subject of Neolithic chronology in Southern Germany in 1921. Reinerth then served as Schmidt's assistant between 1921 and 1923.

In 1922, after having legally, as a resident of Siebenbürgen, been first Hungarian and then in 1919 Romanian, he became a German citizen. Before the completion, at the age of 25, of his post-doctoral thesis on Neolithic Switzerland, he travelled as a scholar in more than 12 countries. Between 1919 and 1921 he took part in seminars led by Gustaf Kossinna in Berlin and Hans Hahne in Halle. He also conducted more than 10 outstanding excavations together with the Tübingen Research Institute. Turf cutting in the Federsee bog near Ulm had revealed a large quantity of well preserved finds and settlements that Reinerth documented in the 1920s using the best methods available at the time both on land and underwater<sup>9</sup>. Of particular merit was his photographic documentation of the excavations (fig. 6, 7) and the use of aerial photography, paleobotany, sedimen-



Fig. 5: "Die Deutsche Vorgeschichte in die Schule!" ("Get German prehistory into schools!"), 1920.

Fig. 5: « Die Deutsche Vorgeschichte in die Schule! » (« La Préhistoire allemande dans les écoles! »), 1920.

tology and zooarchaeology. He commissioned models of reconstructed houses and carried out experimental archaeology as early as 1919 (fig. 8) and began construction of an archaeological open air museum at Unteruhldingen, modelled on excavations and on the folklore museums in Scandinavia, in 1922 (fig. 9).

Like his role models Schmidt, Kossinna and Virchow, Reinerth was strongly committed to archaeological education<sup>10</sup>. The subject, still in its infancy at the time, was brought to public attention and sought support through the use of slogans (fig. 5) such as "Get German prehistory into schools!" as well as through school trips to excavations. Journals throughout Europe were supplied with popular and illustrated articles on prehistory (colour plate 1a). Early silent movies

<sup>8</sup> WAHLE 1950, pp. 1ff.; HAKELBERG 2001.

<sup>9</sup> KATER 1974, p. 81; BOLLMUS 1970, p. 167.

<sup>10</sup> PAPE 2002, p. 190.

<sup>11</sup> BOLLMUS 1970, 176, p. 220; BOLLMUS 2002, p. 22; KATER 1974, p. 182.

<sup>12</sup> BLOEMERS 2000, pp. 375 f.

<sup>13</sup> SCHÖBEL 2002, pp. 321 ff.

<sup>14</sup> REINERTH 1929, 1938; SCHMIDT 1930.

<sup>15</sup> SCHMIDT 1920; GRÜNERT 2002, p. 296; Mus. Pad. Dienst Berlin (Educational Service of Museums, Berlin) 2002.



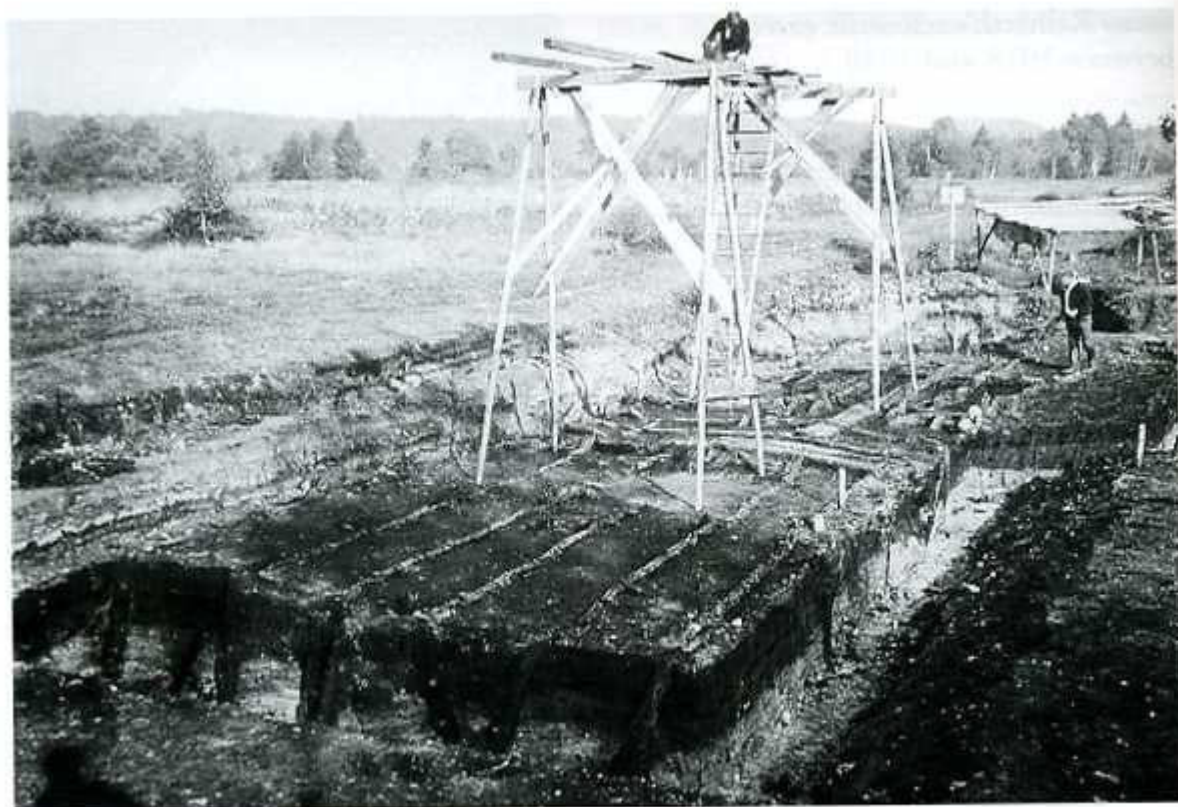


Fig. 6 : Riedschachen photo ladder, 1919.

Fig. 6 : Echafaudage pour prises de vues sur le site de Riedschachen en 1919.

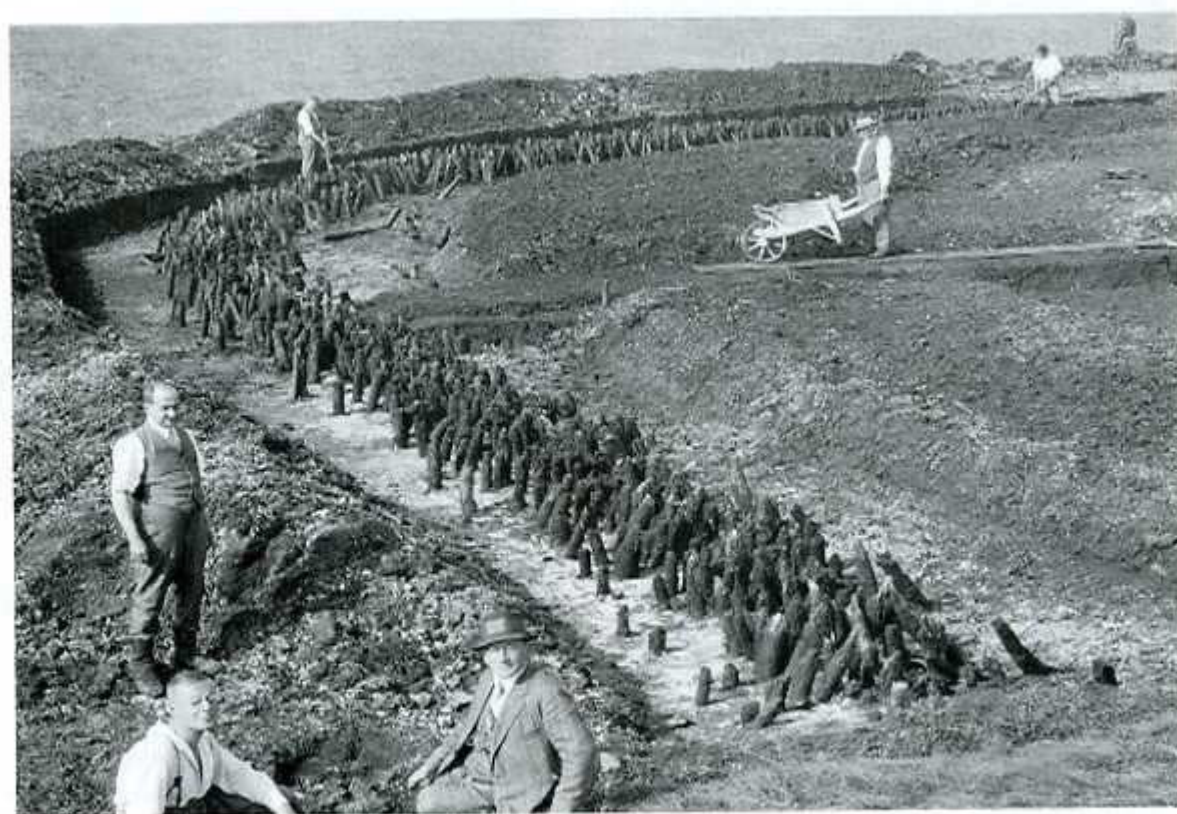


Fig. 7 : Buchau palisade, 1927.

Fig. 7 : Dégagement de la palissade du site de Buchau en 1927.





Fig. 8 : Experimental archaeology in Wildes Ried, 1919.

Fig. 8 : Archéologie expérimentale à Wildes Ried, 1919.

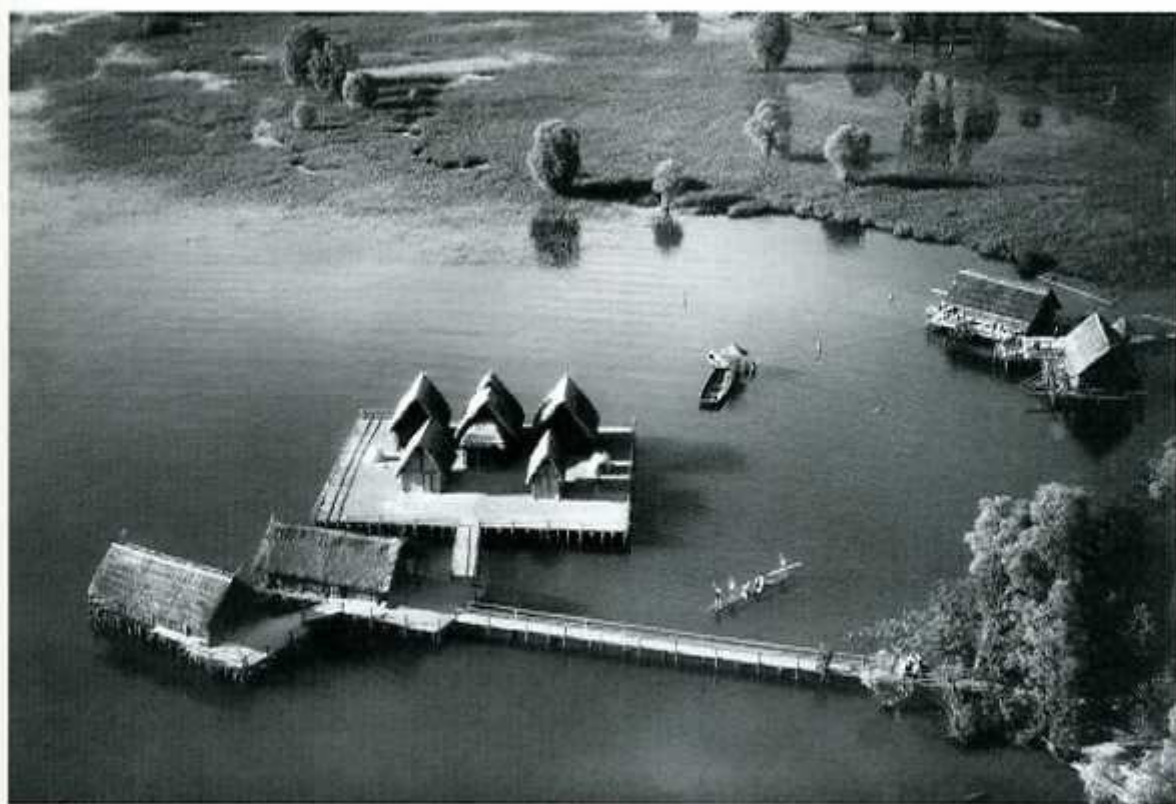


Fig. 9 : Open air museum at Unteruhldingen, 1931.

Fig. 9 : Le musée de plein air d'Unteruhldingen en 1931.





Fig. 10: Excursion with Tübingen University students to Sweden in the summer of 1930.

Fig. 10: Voyage en Suède avec des étudiants de l'université de Tübingen pendant l'été 1930.

such as the 1926 Unteruhldingen film "Nature and Love - Mother Nature the Creator" fit the concept of the popularisation of prehistory. The impact on the public of the Tübingen institute within the research community led not only to support but also to criticism of Schmidt's and later Reinerth's methods. Their eccentricity (Schmidt) and success, their interdisciplinary (German Anthropological Society), and progressive approach caused strong opposition within the archaeological establishment. In addition to the scientific publications, popular pamphlets appeared that made increasingly exaggerated ethnocentric claims about "defenders of Nordic advanced culture" against the "stronghold of humanism" and that contained references to the groundbreaking works of Kossinna. As early as the 1920s such publications illustrate the leanings of the young Reinerth and many others as well. That the enthusiastic embrace of nationalistic ideas was an opportunity for the emerging science was a widespread view in the academic world, not only in Tübingen.

In 1928 Reinerth took the job of deputy secretary of the Society for German Prehistory under Kossinna, which published "Mannus" and "Newsletter for German Antiquity". With the help of Kossinna and Schmidt, Reinerth began to look for a professorship in 1928. He was considered for chairs at the universities of Prague, Heidelberg, Jena, Hamburg, Tübingen and Berlin. Despite the fact that he had the best references and scientific credentials, he did not succeed. Times were difficult and paid jobs were rare. Only his students from Tübingen, with whom he went on an excursion to Scandinavia in 1930, (fig. 10) shared the dream that he would go to Berlin as a professor and take them with him. They were intrigued by ethnocentric and German thinking and saw a bright future for themselves as young scientists in the hated Weimar era if they could succeed in gaining ground against the representatives of Classical archaeology who were more established and had a greater presence in the world of German academia. To the right in the



picture is the institute's photographer Heinz Dürr, a member (Number 832) of the Nazi Party since 1920. From 1926 onwards he was in charge of the local branch of the party in Tübingen and from 1928 he was the head of the local SA unit<sup>11</sup>. He paved Reinerth's way into the NSDAP although Reinerth's mother also had written to him asking him to join.

### Political rise and fall of Reinerth the scientist: 1930 to 1945.

A break with established science came after 1930, when Reinerth was accused of hatching a plot within the student body for the dismissal of his mentor Schmidt<sup>12</sup> - erroneously as we know today but with grave consequences for the young man, who found himself stripped of his academic prospects. On the advice of his mother and through the mediation of Dürr, Reinerth was introduced to Alfred Rosenberg at a book launch on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1930. On 12<sup>th</sup> September 1931, the eager young archaeologist joined the NSDAP and on 20<sup>th</sup> September, the day of Kossinna's death, composed his now infamous paper "Deutsche Vorgeschichte im Dritten Reich" (German prehistory in the Third Reich) which appeared in June 1932 alongside Kossinna's obituary in the *National Socialist Monthly*. It contains all the main points of his agenda up until 1945, revealing his leanings regarding methods, education and politics. Key points include: public relations, lectures, book promotion, education, homogenisation, a Reichs-institute, new academic appointments, promotion of museums and regional heritage departments, borderland archaeology, central publication for German prehistory and closer cooperation with Nordic countries. By 1933, according to his own account, Reinerth had organised three quarters of all German prehistorians, mainly young colleagues, into the "Fachgruppe für deutsche Vorgeschichte" and the "Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur". In that year the reaction of the Romano-Germanic faction to the Rosenberg Office's campaigns began to manifest itself. In the ensuing struggle for power within the community of German prehistorians over the establishment

of a central Reichs-institute and over the control of universities, heritage departments and museums, Reinerth sided with Rosenberg, while the German Archaeological Institute and the Romano-Germanic Commission aligned themselves with the Reichs-Education Minister Rust and Himmler.

Reinerth's new collaboration brought immediate success: in 1935, through the mediation of Alfred Rosenberg he became Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Berlin and achieved, through political means, his long cherished ambition. His work concerning the consolidation of the associations "Reichsbund" and "Kampfbund" and the systematic integration of propaganda and education scored him his first points in archaeology's power struggle, but that victory was countered by the SS working on Himmler's behalf. Without going into details (these have been explained by Kater and Halle) a feud followed which continued until 1945. Reinerth initially



Fig. 11 : Alfred Rosenberg and Hans Reinerth visit the lake dwellings of Unteruhldingen on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1937.

Fig. 11 : Alfred Rosenberg and Hans Reinerth visitent les palafittes d'Unteruhldingen le 16 octobre 1937.

<sup>11</sup> SCHÖNHAGEN 1991, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> STROBEL 2002, p. 333.





Fig. 12 : Opening of the exhibition "Lebendige Vorzeit" ("Living prehistory") in Berlin, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1937.

Fig. 12 : Inauguration de l'exposition « Lebendige Vorzeit » (« Préhistoire vivante ») à Berlin le 12 février 1937.

appeared to have the upper hand concerning popular education and quality of method but seemed to lose ground in the political posturing over finances. The row, which was conducted with defamatory methods typical of the period with regard imputations regarding character and scientific credibility led to a small victory for Reinerth (fig. 11) when he succeeded in taking over the open air museum at Unteruhldingen in 1937 thanks to his connections to its board of trustees, a site of great propaganda value. He accomplished this despite the fact that Himmler tried, from 1935 on, to take it under his care, as he had done with the Externsteine.<sup>13</sup> By that time in Unteruhldingen, Reinerth had already orchestrated the transformation of the "jolly lake dwellers" into fearsome Germanic warriors that were better suited to the image of prehistory as required by the new political imperative and to the promotion of ethnocentric lake dwelling tourism.<sup>14</sup> Especially between

1934 and 1938 the Reichsbund, the Nazi Teachers Association and the Berlin Institute were engaged not only in disseminating propaganda but also in reaching a wider public using the principles of reform education (Reformpädagogik) of the 1920s.

Popular editions published by the Kabitzsch Press in Leipzig quite often carried, on the fly-leaf, work by the artist Wilhelm Petersen, well known for his depictions of Germanic subjects. The paintings he supplied were the result of a competition held by the Reichsbund in 1936.

These, although scientifically accurate, were nonetheless designed to be in line with National Socialist ideology as were the guidelines for teacher training. "Germanic cultural supremacy", "military strength", the "leader-principle" and Germanic claims of expansionism and superiority, including in family life, are all in alignment with what we know of National Socialist cultural politics. Several educational publishers offer a wide selection of publications about German prehistory. The Nordic element appears on collectors' cards and classroom charts (colour plate 1b) as well as in the illustrated scientific periodical "Germanenerbe" ("Germanic Heritage"). The mobilisation of the masses was attempted at conventions of the Reichsbund for German Prehistory held between 1934 and 1939, which had more in common with party rallies than with archaeological conferences. Politicians were given an opportunity to appear at the introductions and air their views on subjects such as the ideological struggle or foreign policy with an archaeological emphasis or the change in values of German history, as was expounded by Rosenberg in Halle in 1934. For the ideological training of the population, a travelling exhibition "Lebendige Vorzeit" (Living Antiquity) was developed. In 1937 (fig. 12) this exhibition was shown under a new name: "Our Ancestors' Heritage Obliges", with the men of the Reichs-Arbeitsdienst forming an honour guard. Scale models of ancient dwellings were on display in front of a backdrop of swastika flags. Life sized Germanic warriors illustrated life in the Bronze

<sup>13</sup> HALLE 2002, p. 425; SCHÖBEL 2001, pp. 48ff.

<sup>14</sup> ALTDORFER 2004, p. 94; SCHÖBEL 2004.



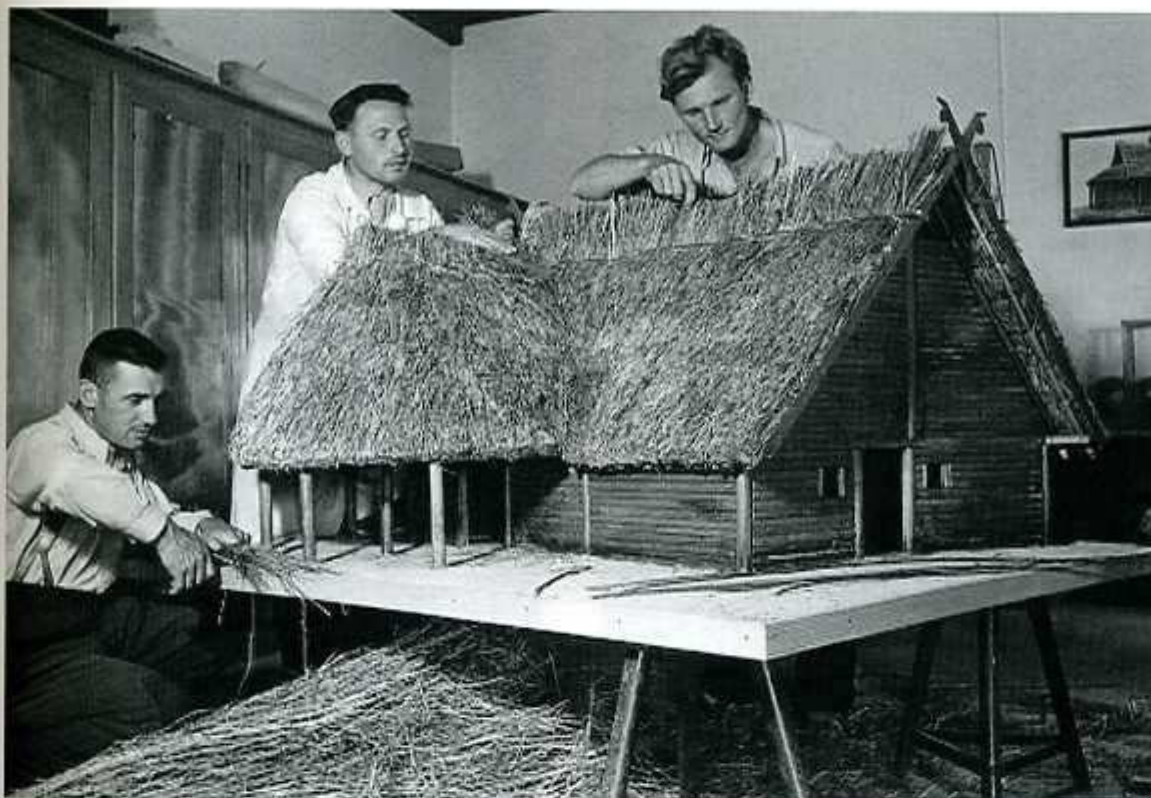


Fig. 13: The model workshop of Unteruhldingen in 1939.

Fig. 13: L'atelier de maquettes d'Unteruhldingen en 1939.

Age beneath propaganda slogans (colour plate IIa). The business of supplying replicas and reconstructions to schools and exhibitions was booming (fig. 13). Altogether, five new open-air museums were erected, from Lake Constance to Eastern Prussia and even more were planned but could not be built because of the war. In these reconstructed villages, a "Führer's house" was built in a prominent position, even when no archaeological evidence existed to support such a concept (colour plate IIb).<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Reinerth directed numerous archaeological excavations that were superior in the methods employed than those conducted by the SS, prime examples being the excavations at Dümmer Buchau and at Unteruhldingen. These successes however, could not conceal the fact that Reinerth's star was fading after 1935. Reinerth struggled as Reichsamtsleiter to assert himself politically against his colleagues despite the supposed consolidation of 104 associations with 126,000 members and despite his numerous publications, including

127 articles in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in 1935 and 64 in 1937.

In addition, Reinerth directed archaeological field schools from 1938 on in Germany and occupied countries such as Brittany (colour plates III-VIII), Alsace (Odilienberg) (colour plates X-XIII)<sup>16</sup> as well as Greece (Velesinos)<sup>17</sup>. The outbreak of World War II brought with it the possibility of research in the eastern occupied territories, authorised by Rosenberg. Between 21<sup>st</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1942, Reinerth undertook a supervisory trip to Ukraine in his capacity as chief of staff of the Rosenberg task force (fig. 14). The theft of items of cultural importance and their relocation to German museums is one of the darkest chapters in National Socialist archaeology.<sup>18</sup> Despite the conditions prevailing because of the war, exhibitions were held for the training and education of German military personnel, for example the 1942 exhibition in Charkow

<sup>15</sup> SCHÖBEL 2002b.

<sup>16</sup> SCHNITZLER/SCHÖBEL 2002, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> HÄNSEL 2000, p. 173.

<sup>18</sup> HEUSS 2002, p. 545.





**Fig. 14:** Fortification erected by the Goths (Götenburg) in Ukraine, 1942.

*Fig. 14: Visite d'une fortification des Goths (Götenburg) en Ukraine en 1942.*



**Fig. 15:** Archaeological exhibition in Charkow (Ukraine) in 1942.

*Fig. 15: Exposition archéologique à Kharkow (Ukraine) en 1942.*

(fig. 15). In 1947, the stolen items were returned from Munich<sup>19</sup> but the seizure of these artefacts and their handling played a major part in Reinerth's de-nazification after the war. The existence of these objects was produced as evidence of his illegal activities during excavations and of the theft of artefacts. Reinerth's permits for the excavations were dismissed as invalid, as was his claim that he had taken the objects into safekeeping against the ravages of war. The appropriation for safekeeping of artefacts from Ukraine gave Reinerth and the Rosenberg Office some importance within the feuding community of prehistorians. Despite the closure of all facilities not vital to the war effort, storage units were established such as Schloss Höchstädt<sup>20</sup> in Bavaria and Schloss Salem in Baden and staffed with scientific personnel. However, in 1942 The Reichssicherheitshauptamt (SS headquarters) in Berlin damaged Rei-

nerth's reputation with a series of publications discrediting him, painting him as a fantasist and a scientist of low credibility, especially over the "Pfahlbau question" (the argument as to the whether the lake dwelling houses were on stilts in the water or built on dry land) – wrongly so, as we now know. In a clever PR move (fig. 16), in 150 publications, from Strasbourg to Vienna to Lemberg in Ukraine, he was scorned as "Reinerth the stilt house romanticist". In January 1945, despite all his efforts, an internal party investigation was begun against him by Reichsleiter Martin Bormann. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1945 he was expelled from the Nazi Party. The reasons given were friendship with Jews such as Gerhard Bersu (former director of the RGK) and Moritz Vierfelder, the head of the Jewish community in Buchau besides "dishonouring veterans of the movement", in particular those functionaries who supported the Rhineland

<sup>19</sup> SCHÖBEL 1999.

<sup>20</sup> SCHNEIDER 2002.



faction of archaeology. The initiative for this procedure came from circles within the SS who were eager to rid themselves of an unwanted political competitor. Reinerth as Rosenberg's protégée ultimately failed despite his attempts to ingratiate himself with those in power and his manipulation of archaeology to fit the ideology of the day.

## 1945 and after: how did archaeology solve its problem?

Characteristic of Reinerth's attempts to adjust his research according to the changing political climate are the labels he used for a Bronze Age house in the open air museum at Unteruhldingen (fig.17): the "Herrenhaus" (mansion) built in 1931 became the "Führerhaus" (leader's house) in 1937 and appeared in 1951 in the first post-war museum guide as the "Haus des Dorfoberhauptes" (House of the village headman).

He was unable to change his own label so easily however. He had been a staunch opponent of Wirth and Teudt (cf. articles by Löw and Halle). He had been a hunter of the RGK and was himself hunted by Bormann and Himmler. He was an ardent admirer of Kossina and an accomplished excavator but he was also an "ambitious ethnic German from Romania". In March 1946 he was arrested by the French military police at Lake Constance after being denounced by his colleagues and in 1949 he was classified as a perpetrator of the Nazi regime by the allies. After the required period of penance he was rehabilitated in the eyes of the law but not in those of his colleagues. The second half of his life, from 1945 until his death in 1990 (fig.18), was spent as director of the open air museum in Unteruhldingen at Lake Constance except for the period of his internment, which was spent at the hospital at Überlingen, and the period during which he was prohibited from practising his profession.

So who or what was the real Reinerth? – scientist, activist or opportunist in a totalitarian system? Does the harsh judgement of his colleagues after the war help us to answer the question, or was this merely self exculpatory on their part?



Fig. 16: The "lake dwellings controversy" ("Pfahlbaustreit"), 1942-1943.

Fig. 16: La « controverse des palafittes » (« Pfahlbaustreit »), 1942-1943.

A.F. van Scheltama, one of Reinerth's students, a native of Amsterdam who was responsible for the work on the Oseberg ship, stated on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1946:

"At some considerable risk to his own person and to his position as leader of the Reichsbund for German prehistory, Reinerth repeatedly stood up for me against fierce attacks from Party and SS circles and proved that he, as a person and as a researcher, did not allow himself to be influenced by opportunistic and political considerations at a time when showing this kind of character was dangerous."<sup>21</sup>

G. Bersu, the former director of the RGK who had been defamed because of his Jewish family ties and was prematurely pensioned, wrote as follows from Dublin on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1948:

<sup>21</sup> Quotes: Scheltama, Hawkes, Bersu, Vierfelder: *Pfahlbaumuseum-Archiv*.



"If I am commenting on the case of Hans Reinerth, it is with the intention of trying to prevent renewed damage to German prehistory. It is also to prevent Reinerth from being given the opportunity to work in Germany again and once more abuse the hospitality of the German people. I would not be surprised if this characterless opportunist now portrays himself as an alleged victim of National Socialism ... Mr. Reinerth was the man who, as a scientist, delivered the material for Mr. Rosenberg's false doctrines by knowingly falsifying facts and who was rewarded in the form of his appointment as Professor of Prehistory at the University of Berlin. ... It is clear that in decisive ways he was the intellectual originator of the teachings of the "special representative of the Führer for spiritual and ideological education in the Nazi Party" (Rosenberg Office)."

C.F. Hawkes of Oxford University stated on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1948:

"I want to give testimony as a foreign observer, which makes me more qualified, that everywhere where his career and writings were known, Reinerth's name was inextricably linked with the opinion, voiced by some in Germany, that prehistory is clearly a nationalistic science, which means that it should not be called an objective science but that it, above all other professions, justifies and supports the subjective German claims to racial and cultural predominance. It is true that the Germans were not the only people to put such a patriotic gloss on their science of prehistory, but such an inflation of national ambition and the attempt to create from this a system by promoting and pushing to the fore, everything "Nordic", "Aryan" or "Germanic" and declaring the treatment of German prehistory as a prominent national task, are the deeds of a special faction of a German doctrinal school of thought founded and developed by Gustav (sic?) Kossinna and after Kossinna's death became a fundamental part of the political philosophy of the Nazis. That such men are also capable of conduc-



Fig. 17: House 16: "Herren-, Führer-, Dorfoberhaupt-Haus" (mansion, leader's house, village chief's house) (1939-1951).

Fig. 17: La maison 16, successivement nommée: « Herren-, Führer-, Dorfoberhaupt-Haus » (résidence seigneuriale, maison du Führer du village, maison du chef du village) (1939-1951).

ting excellent excavations of lake dwellings and writing and publishing books that contain useful details goes without saying. The Russians, too, have occasionally conducted very good excavations and their publications often include very interesting material. Skills and experience in this field are wide spread today. We are far more concerned about interpretation, ideas and pedagogy ..."

Moritz Vierfelder, who emigrated to Youngstown, Ohio and was the former head of the Jewish community in Buchau as well as a member of the Board of Directors of the Buchau Heritage Association until the expulsion of its Jewish members in 1934/35 and had excavated with Reinerth, stated on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1947:



"... Dr. Reinerth has always been a character who did not allow himself to be influenced and in all cases acted in a humane and fair manner. Dr. Reinerth is accused, so I have heard, of having been a great Nazi. I was in Germany until 1939 and, as a Jew had to suffer, together with my family. ... But I can prove that Dr. Reinerth never, not even in the Nazi period, changed his political disposition. He always remained what he used to be for me, during the years of scientific cooperation before 1933, a true and good friend who always stood up for me. ... When in the autumn of 1938, the synagogue in Buchau was burned and destroyed, it was again Dr. Reinerth who made it possible for the important valuable cultural items and documents from the synagogue to be saved from the Nazi plunders and took them for safekeeping to the Federsee Museum. I can furthermore testify that, at my request, Dr. Reinerth returned the 18 valuable Torah scrolls to the Jewish community."

Professor Herbert Kühn, University of Mainz, who had been denounced as a Jew, wrote as follows to Reinerth on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1950:



Fig. 18: Hans Reinerth in 1979.

Fig. 18: Hans Reinerth en 1979.

"But I believe that your views are dangerous because they are false, not only for science but also for politics, and you demonstrated in a horrific way that they were like this, with endless blood and tears. Also, scientific things lead, when they are wrong, to death. I believe therefore that the opinion about the supremacy of the North must inevitably lead to death simply because it is not true. Had I written this to you some years ago and expressed such views, I would have been arrested and would have perished in a concentration camp.... National sentiment is justified and necessary and I have those national feelings in a very strong way, but such circulars as I once saw published against Bersu already hint at mental illness and something began there akin to a medieval witch-hunt. ... I have viewed your condition rather as an illness, as a feverish madness, a misfortune that came over you."<sup>22</sup>

Reinerth allowed himself to be influenced by politics from 1930 onwards and was consequently engaged in "contemporary history" according to Eggert. This was born out of his everyday experience and had ties to the present<sup>23</sup>. Under the influence of his socialisation by Kossina, he used ethno-theoretical means to support this politically motivated scholarship.<sup>24</sup> Reinerth used politics to pursue his scientific goals. As a representative of a small academic discipline he politicised the spirit of scholarship by applying principles from history to the present.<sup>25</sup> Initially everyone (cf. the Kampfbund) was enthusiastic about such a course of action. He operated in a more international and populist way than his colleagues in the SS. This made it easy to ostracise him. He was no fantasist and no racist member of some secret order but a precise archaeologist and Nazi who utilised the labels "Führer", "Nordic" and "Aryan" initially to his own advantage. For him, the end justified the means and this included the defamation of colleagues like Bersu and Kühn and partial responsibility for driving them from office.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Kühn to Reinerth, private correspondence Reinerth APM.

<sup>23</sup> EGGERT 2002, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> BERTEMES 2002, p. 115.

<sup>25</sup> DOLL 2003, p. 995.

<sup>26</sup> KRÄMER 2002, pp. 40ff.; KUNOW 2002, p. 158.



While this does not make him a sympathetic character, at the same time out of friendship and cultural understanding he supported the Jews of Buchau. His personal style and his increasing role as an outsider in the politically fading Rosenberg Office made it easy both before and after 1945 to condemn him.

The Kossinna and Schmidt school of thought that had stood in opposition to the RGK no longer existed after 1945. For misusing archaeological research, Reinerth and his students, predominantly women, were punished with exclusion. The same was not true however for the many SS scientists who as members of a former military elite were exonerated by the Allies, and following their political cleansing continued to work in high positions.

The general need for a scapegoat and a form of methodical self-amputation eased the way for a new beginning within a democratic Germany after 1945, satisfied the outside world and rendered further internal and external probing and evaluation unnecessary. The biographies of archaeologists other than Reinerth remained under wraps for a long time. The complexity of the situation, which so far has not revealed any resistance fighters but merely different degrees of collaboration with the Nazi regime, makes it difficult today to judge guilt or innocence in the sense of ethical principles. The continuation of source-oriented analysis is therefore still necessary for historical accuracy.

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## Origin of the figures

Fig. 1-4, 12, 14, 15: Pfahlbaumuseum.

Fig. 6-8, 10, 13: Pfahlbaumuseum/H.Dürr.

Fig. 9: Pfahlbaumuseum/L.Strähle.

Fig. 11, 18: Pfahlbaumuseum/S.Lauterwasser.

Fig. 5, 16, 17: Pfahlbaumuseum/G.Schöbel.