

Contents: Preface to the second edition; 1. Studying the history of archaeology; 2. Classical and other text-based archaeologies; 3. Antiquarianism without texts; 4. The beginnings of prehistoric archaeology; 5. Evolutionary archaeology; 6. Culture-historical archaeology; 7. Early functional-processual archaeology; 8. Processualism and postprocessualism; 9. Pragmatic synthesis; 10. The relevance of archaeology; Bibliographical essay.

Reader should also note F. Williamson and Michael S. Bisson (eds.) *The Archaeology of Bruce Trigger: Theoretical Empiricism*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006). xvi+304 pp.

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VI. Book reviews

Gloria Polizotti Greis 2006. *A Noble Pursuit: The Duchess of Mecklenburg Collection from Iron Age Slovenia*. Cambridge, Mass: Peabody Museum Press, Harvard University. xii, 116 pp., illus. ISBN 0-87635-404-8. \$21.95.

Reviewed by Tim Murray, La Trobe University

This is a splendid little book. Hillel S. Burger's photographs of representative artifacts from the collection (in 26 colour plates) are simply beautiful and the publisher has done them and the very useful text considerable justice by opting for a high standard of production.

Gloria Polizotti Greis has some fascinating stories to tell, not just about the Duchess but also about the fate of the collection which derives from excavations she undertook in Hallstatt and in modern-day Slovenia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire) between 1905 and 1914. The Duchess Paul Friedrich of Mecklenburg (1856–1925), to give her full title, was a wealthy amateur, who for reasons Greis is unable to explain, turned from an unhappy marriage (she was forced into a kind of internal exile by her husband because of her extravagant expenditure) to archaeology. In doing so the Duchess, who can be seen in the photographs on hands and knees in excavating garb (which included a marvellously broad-brimmed hat), made contact with scholars as eminent as Montelius and Déchlette. Indeed photo T3710 is a wonderful image of the excavators in action watched over by the Duchess and by Montelius in homburg and three piece suit. The caption informs us that Déchlette was also visiting the site of Sticna that day.

The Duchess' connections with the Austro-Hungarian court were of great value in gaining access to excavation permits (especially as at the start she was almost totally ignorant of archaeological field methods). However it was her connection with another imperial court – that of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, that proved to be the most important. After 1912 the Kaiser became her principal sponsor and he fully and generously financed her excavations from then on. Greis tells the story of this unfolding relationship well, stressing through citations of letters and other documents, the role of archaeologists such as Montelius and Schuchardt in cementing the Kaiser's support of the Duchess. However the Duchess' career as an excavator was brought to an end by the Great War (the bulk of which she spent in Berlin) at the end of which she returned to Carniola to find her property confiscated by the new Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. She died impoverished.

This sad end merely marks the beginning of the history of her collection, a story that includes high-level politics, fraud, sharp dealing and suicide. Suffice to say that the bulk of the collection came to the Peabody Museum during the 1930s. As Greis relates, the difficult history of the collection has meant that much important material (particularly elements of the extensive documentation kept by the Duchess – including illustrations and plans commissioned by her) has been lost. Nonetheless a

great deal remains to provide much of the texture of this excellent introduction to the collection. But Greis has also opened a window on the practice of archaeology at the beginning of the last century that adds to our understanding of the ways in which archaeology was practiced by the emerging class of 'professionals' and the heirs to a long tradition of amateur activity.

Heather Pringle 2006. *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust*. New York: Hyperion. ISBN 0-7868-6886-4.

Reviewed by Bruce G. Trigger, McGill University

National Socialism provides a chilling example of what can happen when a modern nation state falls under the control of an organization that resembles a criminal syndicate more than it does a political party. Unfortunately, only a few papers are available in English that deal with how archaeology fared under this totalitarian regime. Now Heather Pringle has published a book which provides a narrative history of the *Ahnenerbe*, or Ancestral Heritage Foundation, a research institute founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's minister of security who was also responsible for the implementation of Nazi racial and resettlement policies. In addition to being, like other Nazis, nationalistic and anti-Semitic, Himmler was an extreme romantic who planned to use the tall, blond-haired men of his security service (*Schutzstaffel*, SS) and selected women to re-breed a pure 'Aryan' stock, and to use knowledge collected by Ahnenerbe researchers to tutor these men in ancient German beliefs and farming practices so they might live as their noble ancestors had done. He dreamed that these racially *pure*, culturally-creative Aryans would reverse the decline of the West and provide soldier-settlers who could occupy lands (including Tibet!) that he believed had once been conquered and civilized by Aryan colonists.

The first part of this book describes the Ahnenerbe expeditions that Himmler despatched to foreign countries in search of information that he hoped would permit him to play a far-sighted role in shaping Germany's future. Early work was devoted mainly to the study of written texts, folklore, and Scandinavian rock art (which was believed to be an early Aryan form of writing). In 1938, the archaeological component of the Ahnenerbe was strengthened when Himmler transferred to it the Excavation Department of the SS. This organization, whose activities are described only very briefly, had been founded, also in 1935, to train officers to direct archaeological digs that would reinforce the devotion of SS members to early German history and promote a public awareness of German greatness in prehistoric times. The most ambitious of the Ahnenerbe's expeditions was intended to prove that the site of Tiwanaku, in Bolivia, was an Aryan colony that had come from Atlantis over a million years ago. This expedition was curtailed by the outbreak of World War II.

During the war archaeologists attached to the Ahnenerbe plundered museums and archaeological sites in Nazi-occupied Poland and the Soviet Union, supposedly for the benefit of German research institutions. While these archaeologists degenerated into thieves and accomplices in clandestine sales of antiquities, Ahnenerbe specialists in 'racial science', who sought means to identify Jews using biological criteria (a totally unsuccessful endeavour) and to better treat wounded German soldiers, became involved, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, in the sadistic murder of concentration camp inmates.

Pringle is a science journalist specializing in archaeology who became aware of Himmler's interest in archaeology while researching her book *The Mummy Congress* (2001). German-speaking research assistants allowed her to consult extensive archival material, making her work valuable to scholars as well as of interest to the general reader.

While of great intrinsic interest, *The Master Plan* leaves various questions unexplored. Pringle does not discuss the development of German archaeology before the Nazis came to power in 1933 and how Rudolf Virchow's more liberal anthropological archaeology was displaced by the nationalist German