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Uta Halle. *"Die Externsteine sind bis auf weiteres germanisch!": Prähistorische Archäologie im Dritten Reich.* Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2002. 608 S. EUR 49,00 (gebunden), ISBN 978-3-89534-446-6.

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Archaeology in Troubled Times

The Externsteine, a spectacular sandstone formation located near the small town of Horn in Nordrhein-Westfalen (Kreis Lippe), is one of Germany's natural wonders, significant enough to be included among the tourist attractions pictured on the nation's *SehenswÃ¼rdigkeiten* series of definitive postage stamps (Michel Katalog no. 1407). The outcropping is adorned with a bas-relief depicting the Descent from the Cross, which recent art-historical research has dated to the early ninth century of the Common Era.[1]

Already in the sixteenth century a local pastor and antiquarian had identified the Externsteine as the site of one of the Germanic shrines reportedly destroyed by Charlemagne.[2] Given that they are located in the heart of the Teutoburg district where, according to Tacitus, Arminius had defeated a Roman army, it is not surprising that the Externsteine assumed particular importance for those participants in the *vÃ¶lkisch* movement of the early twentieth century who focused their enthusiasms on prehistory. The *vÃ¶lkisch* approach to prehistory, as exemplified by the work of its founding father, Gustaf Kossinna,[3] was a tendentious one: it sought to demonstrate that the early Germans had possessed a culture at least the equal of that of the Mediterranean peoples. Its adherents resented not only the idea that the Romans had brought a higher civilization to the Rhineland, but also the dominance of Classical archaeologists in German universities and in the Deutsche ArchÃ¤ologische Gesellschaft (DAI). They contemptuously referred to their rivals as "RÃ¶mlinge."[4]

Most prominent among the Germanomanes concerned with the Externsteine was Wilhelm Teudt, a one-time clergyman turned amateur prehistorian who wrote widely on the site's putative sacredness and Germanic character.[5] Teudt was also instrumental in the establishment in 1934 of the Externsteine-Stiftung, whose purpose was to raise funds for and administer a kind of Germanic heritage park.[6] Joining Teudt on the board of the foundation was SS chief Heinrich Himmler. Under the patronage of this group, archaeological investigations were conducted in 1934 and 1935.

The author of the volume under review, professional archaeologist Uta Halle, conceived her project following a visit to the Landesmuseum Detmold in search of com-

parative material for a study of ceramics excavated at another medieval site (p. 11). In Detmold she not only came across the material recovered at the Externsteine in the 1930s, which had never been scientifically published, but she also learned that the local Staatsarchiv contained correspondence and other records generated by numerous archaeological enthusiasts of the area. She therefore undertook a double project–to detail the results of the neglected digs, and to consider the interaction of politics and science in the study of prehistory under the Third Reich.

The first subject, although taking up almost 200 pages (chapter 7, catalogue, and plates), is of only tangential interest to readers of this list. Suffice it to say that Halle shows that the pottery and other small finds from the Externsteine were produced from the tenth through the nineteenth century of the Common Era (p. 341), and that neither these nor the architectural remains give any indication of a religious purpose for the site (p. 342). That is, there is no evidence that the Externsteine were ever a Germanic temple.[7] This disappointing result may well account for the failure of Julius Andree, who directed the 1934 excavations, to document his work fully or indeed to produce a proper publication (pp. 195, 299). In his brief note in a popular publication and in his public lectures, Andree supported the *vÃ¶lkisch* fantasy about the site, but avoided giving details that would allow this shaky interpretation to be challenged.[8]

The remainder of Halle's book is devoted to a disciplinary history of *Vorgeschichte* under the National Socialist regime. Like the practitioners of many other scholarly fields,[9] in the postwar years German prehistorians were loath to examine their record and that of their discipline during the Nazi period. Indeed, the resistance the author encountered in the 1980s and 1990s, including the refusal of Teudt's family to grant access to his *Nachlass* (p. 49, n. 175), led her to consider abandoning her study (p. 13). Thankfully, she pressed on.

Halle sets the stage with a consideration of the attitudes of leading National Socialist ideologues to the early past of their nation. Rosenberg (pp. 60-62) and Himmler (pp. 62-66) were enthusiastic about what they thought their forefathers had accomplished, while Hitler (pp. 57-60) was an admirer of ancient Rome[10] and referred to his Germanophile colleagues as "crazy apostles of early times (*spinnige Jenseitsapostel*)" (p. 59). The author reasonably concludes that there was no unified Nazi view of prehistory (p. 65).

Chapter 5 is devoted to a sketch of the development of prehistoric archaeology in Germany, with special attention given to the rivalry between the followers of Kossinna and the experts on provincial Roman material active with the RÃ¶misch-Germanische Kommission (RGK) (p. 102), a competition that would continue into the final year of the Third Reich.

With the *Machtergreifung* of January, 1933, partisans of Germanic archaeology felt that their time had come, and indeed under the National Socialists new chairs in prehistory were established in many German universities. Among the eager applicants for these posts was prehistorian Hans Reinerth,[11] who was, however, shunned by many in the field because they (probably mistakenly) believed that he was responsible for the opening of an investigation into peculation by his mentor, R. R. Schmidt. Shut out of university posts, Reinerth insinuated himself with Alfred Rosenberg, becoming his advisor on *Vorgeschichte*. From his post on the Amt Rosenberg, Reinerth goaded his master to importune Hitler for the creation of a Reichsinstitut fÃ¼r deutsche Vorgeschichte, an institution that the officers of the DAI and RGK perceived as a threat to their position and worked hard to forestall (pp. 447-448), enlisting in this effort Himmler and the SS-Ahnenerbe. Thus partisans of differing views as to the future of German archaeology, the Young Turk Germanic prehistorians on the one hand and traditional Classicists on the other, involved two of the most ambitious Nazi *Bonzen* in their struggle. In Halle's considered opinion, it was the scholars who attempted to make use of the influence of the Party in this dispute, rather than the National Socialists who intervened in an academic dispute on their own initiative (p. 188; cf. p. 390).

Another front in the struggle between Rosenberg and Himmler encompassed the excavation and administration of the Externsteine. After Reinerth early in 1933 had exerted the influence of the Amt Rosenberg over the local antiquarian society in Lippe, Teudt turned to Himmler as a counterweight and guarantor of his own interests in the supposed Germanic temple (pp. 250-251), and had him appointed to the governing body of the Externsteine-Stiftung. In turn, Teudt was co-opted into the Ahnenerbe.

Characteristically, the Reichsleiter soon assumed total control of the foundation, commenting "Whoever has a problem with this will be shot (*Wer jetzt noch dagegen meckert, wird erschossen*)" (p. 253). By 1935 Teudt had lost his position on the Externsteine board (p. 265), and in February, 1938 he was dismissed from the Ahnenerbe. He died in 1942. Despite this shabby treatment at the

hands of the Nazi authorities, Halle judges that the old man had made a real contribution to the triumph of the National Socialists by preparing the way for the acceptance of a significant aspect of their ideology in his writings (p. 485).

Reinerth's fate was ironic and contradictory. In February, 1945, a Party court expelled him for "impugnable conduct unbecoming a National Socialist in regard to the Jewish question (*anfechtbare, eines Nationalsozialisten unwÃ¼rdige Verhalten in der Judenfrage*)" (p. 502), primarily because of dealings he had once had with non-Aryan archaeologists before he cast his lot with the Nazis.[12] It mattered not at all that Reinerth had later denounced some of the same associates and had helped engineer their dismissal from their posts. He was imprisoned for several years after the war and became a scapegoat for the sins of prehistorians under the Third Reich (p. 513). Conversely, Reinerth's initial condemnation as "a guilty party (*Schuldiger*)" in his denazification trial of 1949 was overturned by a Freiburg court in 1953 on the grounds that he had resisted the "fantastic Germanic doctrine (*phantastische Germanenlehre*)" of Himmler![13] He was active in the running of open-air prehistoric museums until his retirement in 1973.

Halle concludes that neither the Amt Rosenberg nor the SS-Ahnenerbe really controlled the excavations of the Externsteine (p. 508), and that on the contrary, the real scandal surrounding the study of this monument is that the archaeologists brought about "a displacement of a technical scholarly problem into the political arena (*eine Verlagerung eines fachwissenschaftlichen Problems auf die politische Ebene*)" (p. 509).

This book is exhaustively researched, with extensive quotation of original records and facsimile reproductions of many key documents. The author's evenhandedness and willingness to confront an embarrassing chapter in the history of her own discipline is to be commended.

Notes

[1]. Walther Matthes and Rolf Speckner, *Das Relief an den Externsteinen: Ein karolingisches Kunstwerk und sein spiritueller Hintergrund* (Ostfildern: edition tertium, 1997), pp. 184-187. A beautiful photo of the Byzantine-influenced relief is found on p. 15.

[2]. See Uta Halle, "Die Externsteine–Symbol germanophiler Interpretation," in *PrÃ¤historie und Nationalsozialismus: Die mittel- und osteuropÃ¤ische Ur- und FrÃ¼hgeschichtsforschung in den Jahren 1933-1945*, ed. Achim Leube (Heidelberg: Synchron Wissenschaftsverlag der Autoren, 2001), pp. 235-236.

[3]. Heinz Gruenert, "Gustaf Kossinna–ein Wegbereiter der nationalsozialistischen Ideologie," in *PrÃ¤historie und Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 307-320. The title of Kossinna's 1912 book, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte, eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, is indicative of his ideological standpoint.

[4]. See Klaus Junker, "Research under Dictatorship: The German Archaeological Institute 1929-1945," *Antiquity* 72 (1988): pp. 282-93.

[5]. For example, "Die Geschichte der Externsteine," in *Wilhelm Teudt im Kampf um Germanenehre: Eine Auswahl von Teudts Schriften*, ed. Rudolf BÃ¼nte (Bielefeld: Delhagen & Klasing, 1940), pp. 65-78. On Teudt's career, see pp. 69-79 of the book here reviewed.

[6]. The "*KultstÃ¤tte*" was dedicated in the summer of 1935. Jews and their "*GenoÃen*" were forbidden entry on the grounds that they were incapable of summoning "the necessary understanding of the Germanic shrine"; see p. 359 of Halle's book.

[7]. The idea that the Externsteine have sacred significance lives on among New Agers. See the websites www.sacredsites.com and www.externstein.de .

[8]. "Zu den Grabungen und Untersuchungen an den Externsteinen bei Horn i.L.," *Aus der Vorzeit* 2 (1934): pp. 25-29.

[9]. For anthropology, see Gretchen E. Schafft, *From Racism to Genocide: Anthropology in the Third Reich* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 222-246.

[10]. See John T. Quinn, "The Ancient Rome of Adolf Hitler," *Classical Bulletin* 76 (2000): pp. 141-156. Given the FÃ¼hrer's enthusiasm, it is not surprising that fervent National Socialists were to be found among German Classicists; see Juergen Malitz, "RÃ¶mertum im 'Dritten Reich': Hans Oppermann," in *Imperium Romanum: Studien zu Geschichte und Rezeption. Festschrift fÃ¼r Karl Christ zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), pp. 519-543.

[11]. Gunter SchÃ¶bel, "Hans Reinerth. Forscher - NS-FunktionÃ¤r -Museumsleiter," in *PrÃ¤historie und Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 321-396.

[12]. The ludicrous world of scholarship and research under the Third Reich is well illustrated by an earlier

charge of *Judenfreundschaft* leveled against Reinerth: In the 1936 reprinting of an archaeological report originally published in 1929, he had not had a Jewish colleague airbrushed out of a photo of the site! See pp. 452-453.

[13]. SchÃ¶bel, "Hans Reinerth," pp. 358-359.

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