

Situation of Gender Archaeology in Germany

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What is the status of gender archaeology in your country?

First I should say, that I can describe generally the situation in Pre- and Protohistory with remarks to the Classics, but not to the other archaeological subjects like Archaeology of Near East.

Gender-orientated institutions

Female archaeologists interested in female prehistory are there since the beginning of Archaeology, for example Johanna Mestorf (1828-1909), one of the first paid female archaeologists, but research results about prehistoric women started to be visible first in the 1980s/90s, in reaction to the second women's movement in West-Germany.

In 1991, influenced by the English and Norwegian literature about gender and feminism in Archaeology, female students have founded the Network of archaeological working Women, first as informal network, since 2004 as registered association FemArc-Network e.V.. It is a group open to all women who are interested in Archaeology – researchers, school-teachers, journalists, private researchers of the matriarchy groups and other women. We have around 90 members at moment.

Our activities are

1. a newsletter, which is edited three or four times a year with informations about research projects, grant possibilities, call for papers, exhibition reports and literature.
2. work shops and meetings in irregular intervals, internal (which means only women) and together with other institutions (open to men).
3. a monograph-serie "Frauen-Forschung-Archäologie" (women-research-archaeology), at last with eight issues, mainly proceedings.
4. a webpage with informations to the meetings and books.

Since 2003 it exists a study group "Gender Archaeology", which organizes each second year a session at the annual meetings of one of the three German societies of Pre- and Protohistory. The study group was founded by members of our network but is an independent group. The proceedings are printed in the network-serie.

This year the German Archaeologist Society – the society of Classic Archaeology – has founded a study group "Women in Archaeology" because they have realized this year that

female archaeologists are absolutely underrepresented in the group of unlimited full-time employees and higher positions.

Gender Research

Gender research projects take place mainly at the universities. For ten to fifteen years courses to women and gender archaeology were offered irregularly – dependent on the interesting of individual professors and assistants. Gender archaeology is not common part of the archaeological curriculum. But some examine theses (master, PhD, habilitation), just running or meanwhile printed, are connected to women and gender archaeology.

Results of women research reach the museums and exhibitions, which means prehistoric women and children will get more visible in the displays and pictures, but mainly in traditional roles.

What is the professional situation of women archaeologists?

The professional situation is described in two essays:

Eva-Maria Mertens, Women's Situation as Archaeologists in (West)Germany. In: Heinrich Härke (ed.), *Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience* (Cambridge 1998) 271-284.

Mirjam Haidle/Linda Owen, Ur- und Frühgeschichtlerinnen nach der Promotion: eine schützenswerte Spezies? *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 39/3, 1998, 563-594.

I have only those statistics ten years old, but the situation has not changed so much until now. The female share of students is circa 50 %, sometimes more. This share goes down in the higher education levels. The problem is not only the low numbers of female job owners, but also the structural informal research politics which get in the way of women's career in Archaeology. For example the low number of women in editorial boards or as authors in important journals or as speakers on conferences or – very important – as excavation leaders. I think the most of you know this mechanism in your own countries, too.

But I think in future the situation in German archaeology can change in a new direction, because gender research and gender equality is wanted by the EU and the national government. For example, this year the German Research Foundation (DFG) published research-oriented standards on gender-equality. In future (starting in 2013) the grants will be handed out only to those projects and institutions which are oriented to these standards, which means gender

aspects in research and more female researchers in the project-stuff. So we will see what happen in the next years.

How can we disseminate the results of gender archaeology to a wider public?

To force the gender research in Archaeology is one side, the other is to show a wider audience why gender research is important. The one fact in Germany is, that archaeological presentations are directed mainly to a male public in their themes. The other fact is that the interested audience is half male and half female. So there is a chance, which is not used at moment.

A possibility to disseminate the results of gender archaeology to a wider public is to find new pathways to reach the interested audience through us female archaeologists – independent of the traditional institutions.

- using our own networks with non-archaeologist. How much of us do know journalists, teachers and other so called disseminators.
- starting autonomous projects about “gender in ancient times”, for example a internet exhibition.

I am sure that we will find more ideas in the following discussion.