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## **IMAGINARY PEOPLE – ALFRED DIECK AND THE BOG BODIES OF NORTHWEST EUROPE**

In 1976 the Danish historian, philologist and Tacitus expert Allan A. Lund dedicated his book titled »Moselig« to »Alfredo Dieck, *Magno corporum palustrium investigatori*«, indicating that he considered the German researcher the authority in the field of bog body research (Lund 1976). That was not the only homage paid to Dieck. In 1987, on the occasion of his appointment to »Ehrenmitglied der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Moor- und Torfkunde«, Professor Dr. Gerd Lüttig dedicated the following words to Alfred Dieck in his laudatio: »Das wissenschaftliche Feld, das Alfred Dieck beackert hat, ist kaum übersehbar [...]. Das darin ausgebreitete Wissen zeugt von einer Universalität, wie wir sie unter uns normalen Zeitgenossen kaum noch wiedererkennen. Es gibt Äusserungen und Berichte dieses homo universale, bei denen Zuhörer oder Leser nicht nur von Erstaunen, sondern von grösster Bewunderung ergriffen sind. In der Tat: Hier ist ein Mensch, ein Polyhistor, [...] zu welchem wir aufblicken können« (Lüttig 1988, 22-23). Shortly after, on 7 January 1989, Alfred Dieck died in his hometown Bremen at the age of 83. Again his scientific versatility was praised. In his obituary in »Die Kunde«, Professor Dr. Hermann Behrens likewise described Alfred Dieck as a universal scientist among German archaeologists: »Mit Alfred Dieck ist ein universell gebildeter Gelehrter aus dem Kreise der deutschen Archäologen ausgeschieden« (Behrens 1989, 227). So who was this versatile scientist and on what was all the praise based?

### **ALFRED DIECK (1906-1989) CIVIL SERVANT AND PROLIFIC WRITER**

Alfred Dieck was born on April 4, 1906 in Großsalze (nowadays Schönebeck a.d. Elbe, Sachsen-Anhalt). He started studying theology at the Martin-Luther-Universität in Halle a.d. Saale, but in 1933 he switched to prehistory (Ur- und Frühgeschichte). During his study he also followed lectures on ethnology (Völkerkunde) in Leipzig and Göttingen. He became a highly prolific writer, publishing articles on a wide variety of topics including history, archaeology, ethnology, ethnobotany, ethnomedicine, folktales and folk music (see Heege 1991). Archaeology was the thread in his career, in particular the archaeology of peatlands. After 1939, the year in which he received his doctorate at the university of Halle with his thesis entitled »Die Bedeutung der Moor- und Wasserfunde der ersten Jahrhunderte unserer Zeitrechnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Holzgestalten, Moorleichen und Menschenopferberichte«, he published articles on objects recovered from bogs. For fifty years he devoted dozens of articles and books to this topic – the best known is »Die europäischen Moorleichenfunde (Hominidenmoorfunde)«, which was published in 1965 and for which he even received a grant from the »Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft«. Articles on bog bodies and other bog finds appeared in journals and periodicals such as »Die Kunde«, »Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte«, »Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt«, »Telma« and »Curare«. He also contributed to publications in honour of his »Doktorvater« Walter Schulz (1958), Siegfried Schneider (1975), Martin Hell (1975) and Ullrich Fischer (1980). If there is one topic with which he was and will always be closely associated, it is that of bog bodies. He continued to write about this subject until shortly before his death. In

one of his last publications (Dieck 1986), he reports that by that time more than 1800 European bog bodies were known to him.

Alfred Dieck was praised for his diverse interests and wide reading (see for example Schröder 1986). What will also have commanded respect was that he did all his research and writing alongside his daily work, for he was not affiliated with a museum or a university that would have granted him the time he needed for his studies. At first, things had looked rather promising as far as his career was concerned. Shortly after acquiring his doctorate he joined the »Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege« in Marburg. After only six months, in October 1939, he was summoned to the frontline. As he himself writes, he emerged from the war an 80%-damaged man. He was never again to work as a professional archaeologist. For a large part of the time until his retirement in 1971, he worked as a civil servant for the »Niedersächsische Landesverwaltung« in Hanover.

In the past years the present authors have devoted a lot of time to the studies of bog bodies, one based in Lower Saxony, the other in the Netherlands. An encounter with the works of Alfred Dieck is inescapable in such research. During our studies, we gradually came to the conclusion that Dieck created an imaginary world in his publications, a world which he actually managed to maintain for many decades. We have both struggled with our findings – in accepting them and in unambiguously formulating them. After all, it is always shocking to find out that a colleague was able to hoax the scientific community for so long and was even given ample opportunity to do so. In the following two chapters, we will each describe our personal relations with Dieck and his work and how we managed to accept the deceit. As each chapter will show, we used different sets of sources in our research, and each found his own way of dealing with our findings.

## SCREENING THE BOG BODIES FROM LOWER SAXONY

In 1990, I started with the preparatory work for my M.A.-thesis at the university of Hamburg. The topic had already been chosen by my supervisor, Dr. Michael Gebühr – I was to write about bog bodies. Thanks to the mediation of Dr. Gebühr and Dr. Elke Heege, an archaeologist and a cousin of Alfred Dieck, I acquired access to Dieck's scientific legacy which had recently come into possession of the »Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege« in Hanover. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to be able to study the documents of the man who was regarded as the leading bog body expert. As Dieck's legacy is stored in the same institute which also accommodates the official files of the reports of discoveries of bog bodies in Lower Saxony, it seemed logical to geographically restrict my study to this federal state. In a publication from 1986, Dieck stated that more than 600 of the 1800 European bog bodies known to him at that time had been discovered in Lower Saxony – this state boasted the largest concentration of such finds in Europe, making it an important research area.

I started my study by summarizing and cataloguing all the reports of finds in Lower Saxony registered in Dieck's documents. My intention was to compare a random selection of Dieck's find reports with the official reports in the archaeological files of the Landesamt. The latter is a vast collection of documents going back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I was however unable to confirm Dieck's find reports in these files. This I found most surprising, as many of the finds concerned were quite remarkable. I therefore decided to check all 655 bog bodies of Lower Saxony described by Dieck. I also studied Dieck's other documents and checked his sources, in particular the »Moorakten«, which he claimed were in the »Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum« in Hanover. I subsequently published the results of my research (see Eisenbeiss 1992) in »Die Kunde« (Eisenbeiss 1994). An important conclusion of my – statistically based – analysis of the bog bodies of Lower Saxony is that not one of Dieck's most exciting finds (finds from a remarkable con-

text associated with spectacular objects) is confirmed by other independent sources. The finds for which I did find confirmation proved to be far from sensational. Only 63 out of the 655 bog bodies listed by Dieck bore the scrutiny of criticism.

I also found out that Dieck had on many occasions »enhanced« well-documented discoveries such as bog trackways and other bog finds by adding bog bodies to them (bog bodies of which I indeed found no mention in the official sources). His publications moreover reveal an inexplicable increase in discoveries precisely in a period in which Dieck claimed to have recorded very few finds. Of great importance in arriving at my conclusions concerning Dieck was, finally, a copy, which Dieck had written by hand, of a report of a discovery made at Wrisse II, Grossefehn, Kreis Aurich, which I discovered when I studied a collection of Dieck's documents that had not been systematically filed. I found that Dieck had altered the text so that the original find – a hafted axe – could be interpreted as part of a bog body (he turned the wooden haft into a bone; cf. Eisenbeiss 2003, 147). For me this was the decisive evidence for the fact that most of the bog bodies reported by Alfred Dieck are figments of his imagination.

Having only just graduated, I felt confronted with a serious moral problem. I had not been entrusted with Dieck's legacy for the purpose of wiping the floor with this man's life-work. Neither did I wish to acquire a reputation for myself at the expense of a deceased scientist. And I certainly did not want his widow to be confronted with this unpleasant discovery. In my opinion, Dieck had invented the great majority of his Lower Saxony bog bodies, but I could not prove it with a hundred per cent certainty. What if some of the finds should after all be confirmed by the sudden appearance of sources long regarded as lost? According to Dieck, the aforementioned »Moorakten« were among his most important sources. He claimed that this file of reports of all kinds of objects allegedly discovered in bogs was created by Hans Hahne and later updated by others. Copies of the documents were – according to Dieck – included in Hahne's legacy. Neither the original documents nor copies of them are however to be found – neither in the files in Hanover nor in Hahne's legacy (which is no longer complete). In my opinion, some doubt will always remain in such cases, and a source that cannot be traced and which nobody remembers may nevertheless have existed.

I understood that I would have to be extremely tactful in expressing my criticism, and that was also the message given to me by Dr. Gebühr. The approach I decided to adopt (cf. Eisenbeiss 1994) had two aims. In the first place I intended to present a large number of facts and observations resulting from my analysis of Dieck's Lower Saxony bog body population (and its comparison with non-suspect sources in the archaeological files of the Landesamt) that suggest fraud on Alfred Dieck's part. I however deliberately avoided using the word fraud. Instead, I referred to »imaginary sources« (Eisenbeiss 1994, 110), assuming that readers would, on the basis of the plentiful evidence in my text – including the Wrisse's find report altered by Dieck –, arrive at the obvious conclusion. Who else than Dieck could have been behind the fabrications? From talks with colleagues I understood that my message got across as intended. My second aim was to leave part of Alfred Dieck's reputation unscathed by concluding that his definition of the concept of a bog body (cf. Dieck 1965, 10) remains valid, even after his population has been drastically reduced through source analysis. (S. E.)

## FIFTEEN YEARS OF STRUGGLING AGAINST DISBELIEF

I first met Alfred Dieck on July 2, 1988, one year after I had started my study of Dutch bog bodies. We talked to another at his home in Bremen. I had visited Dieck with a specific intention: Apart from the fact that I was anxious to meet the man who had published so many articles on bog bodies, I wanted to know on what sources he had based on in including in his »Hominidenmoorfunde« bog bodies that had been found

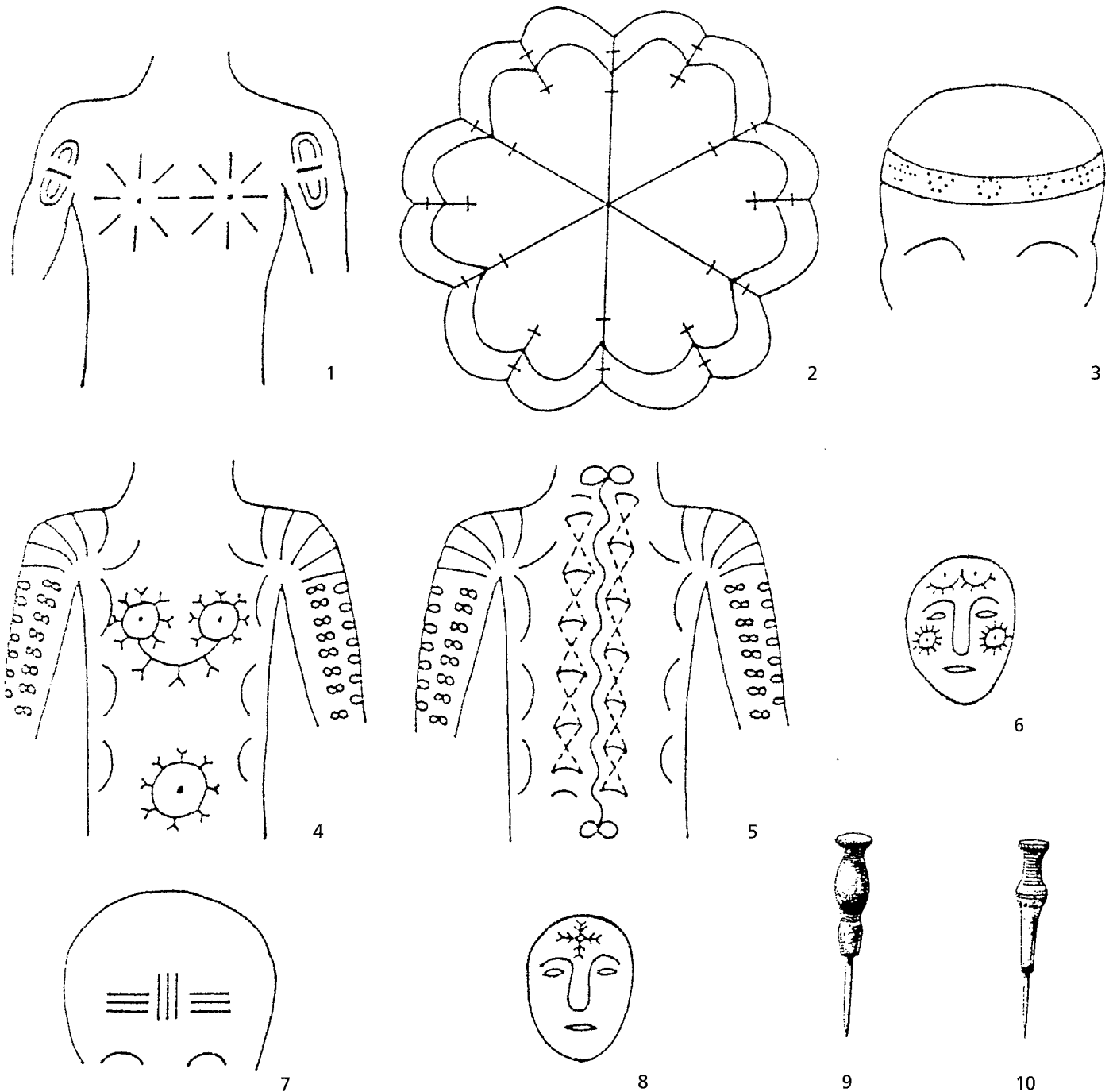
in the Netherlands but had not survived – the bog bodies which I came to refer to as »paper bog bodies«. Dr. Dieck kindly lent me all his documents on the Dutch bog body population so that I would be able to study them at my leisure at home. On a second visit he even offered me all his bog body documents. I ultimately decided to turn down his offer, believing that such a valuable set of records should remain in Germany.

Much of the information on the Dutch paper bog bodies that I found in Dieck's documents I included in my study »Mens en Moeras – veenlijken in Nederland van de bronstijd tot en met de Romeinse tijd« which was published in 1990. A lot indeed, but not everything. I eventually included 35 (from 25 findspots) of the 49 bodies listed by Dieck. I felt that around 25% of his bodies did not qualify for inclusion in the gazetteer, being for example finds based on legends, finds that could not justly be classified as »bog bodies«, finds that may have been counted twice or finds associated with »tall stories« (van der Sanden 1990, 46-47). In my gazetteer I reported that I had been unable to find confirmation of many of his paper bog bodies, for example in regional newspapers. My book was published just over one year after Dieck's death, so he was never confronted with this sifting. My impression of him at that time was that of a dedicated scientist with a great knowledge of the European bog body population who had recorded a lot of information just in time, but had not handled his information very critically or thoroughly. I found it somewhat naïve of him that he had evidently unquestioningly taken for true the hundreds of find reports he had heard or read. More important in my eyes was that he had recorded those reports for posterity so that the information would not be lost.

In the following years I spoke to Sabine Eisenbeiss and read her M.A.-thesis on the bog bodies of Lower Saxony (Eisenbeiss 1992). I quite agreed with the conclusion she drew from her research, in particular her statistical analysis – that the »paper bog bodies« for which there are no independent sources other than those quoted by Dieck are best left out of consideration without further research. On the other hand I was worried that the suggestion that all »paper bog bodies« without independent sources are to be classified as »imaginary« would involve a risk of the baby being thrown out with the bathwater: »Ohne Zweifel liegt bei vielen Meldungen ein echter Fund zugrunde« – many reports are without doubt based on real finds, I then responded (van der Sanden 1993, 137). My main criticism remained that Dieck had handled the information he had discovered and/or recorded in a careless, uncritical manner. The »tall stories« I explained as the inevitable result of repeated storytelling. A body is found somewhere in a bog, it is reburied or destroyed or lost for posterity in some other way, and the story of the discovery is told and retold until it's written down by someone who realizes its importance. In the meantime, the naked body will have acquired clothing, personal ornaments and some weapons. If you leave out all the exotic embellishments (gold coins, bronze *fibulae*, axes and swords), you are still left with a valuable grain of truth. I did therefore not attach as much importance to Dieck's alteration of the Wrisse find report (see above) as Eisenbeiss. To me this one »correction« did not immediately imply that hundreds of bog bodies were definitively to be relegated to the realm of fancy.

Three years later, I devoted a chapter of the book accompanying the exhibition »Ansigt til ansigt med din fortid/Face to face with your past« (Silkeborg Museum 1996) to the work of Alfred Dieck. Again I expressed my serious doubts, describing his publications as »scientifically suspect«, but I still adhered to my belief in the possibility of his find reports containing valuable elements. I aptly named the chapter in question »In search of the grain of truth« (van der Sanden 1996, 62ff.), still regarding Alfred Dieck as a passionate researcher with an overly uncritical outlook.

In the following years, my attention focused on other topics – until the autumn of 2002. After research into the presence of tattoos on Dutch bog bodies had yielded no results, I decided to subject Dieck's publication on tattooed bog bodies (Dieck 1976) to closer scrutiny. Dieck describes tattooed bodies from Germany

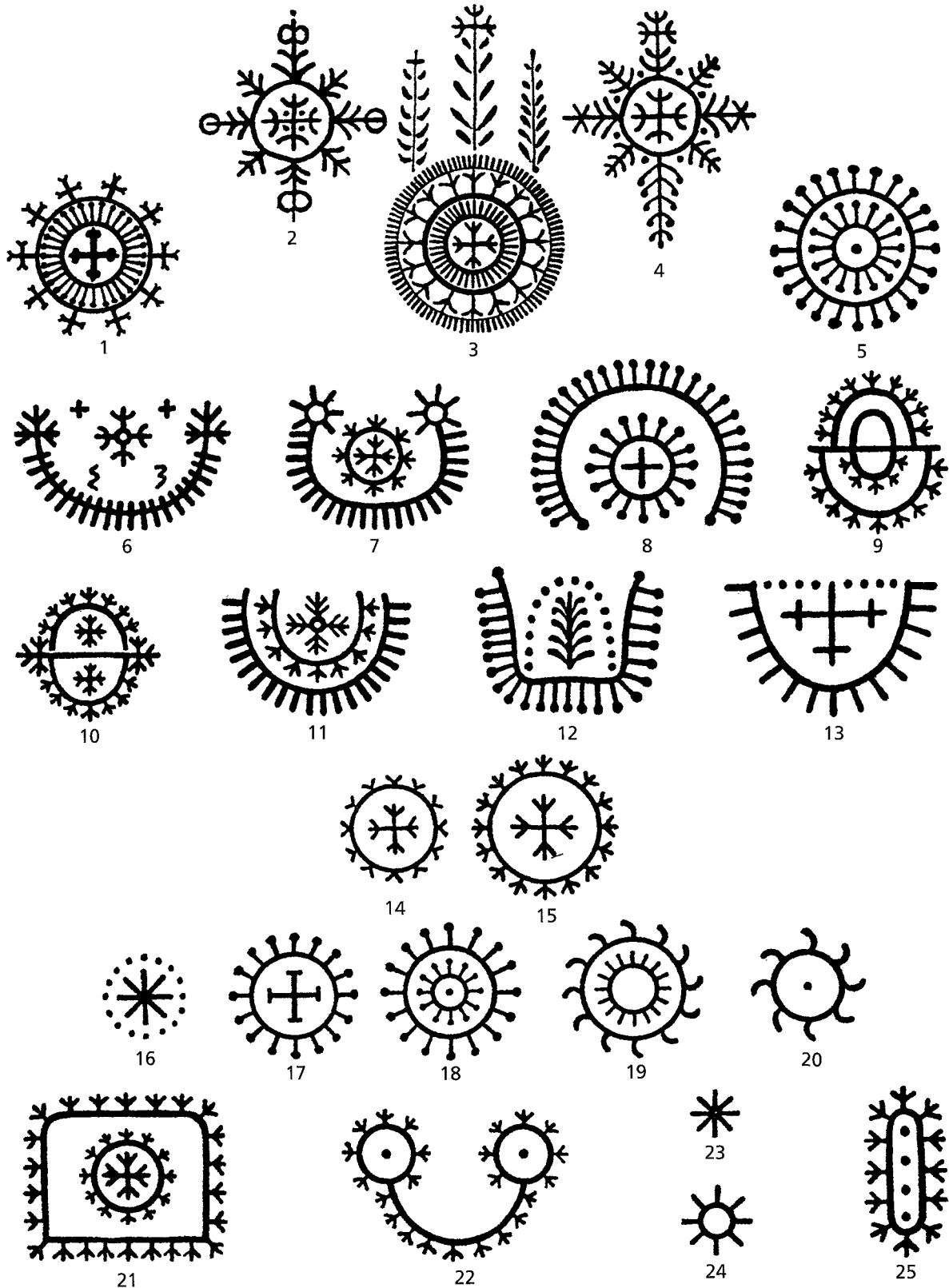


**Fig. 1** Tattoos allegedly found on German and Austrian bog bodies: 1 Bürmoos 1851. – 2 Schwerinsdorf 1861 (male body). – 3 Zwettl 1884 (female body). – 4 Zwettl 1884 (male body, front). – 5 Zwettl 1884 (male body, back). – 6 Hesel 1914. – 7 Hornhausen 1887. – 8 Damberger Filz 1898. – 9-10 Tattoo-needles from Skåne (from Dieck 1976, fig. 1).

(Schwerinsdorf, Hesel, Hornhausen, Marx and Damberger Filz) and Austria (Bürmoos and Zwettl; **fig. 1**). His reports relate to observations made by outsiders, who had without artificial light seen the most unusual patterns (even in colour!), whereas the bog bodies of the Dutch province of Drenthe showed nothing that could be interpreted as a tattoo, even of the most doubtful kind, under various light sources. I then noticed for the first time that the tattooed bog bodies from Schwerinsdorf and Hesel (**fig. 1, 2, 6**) were not listed in Dieck's major opus from 1965. They should have been included if he really had seen the source he quotes



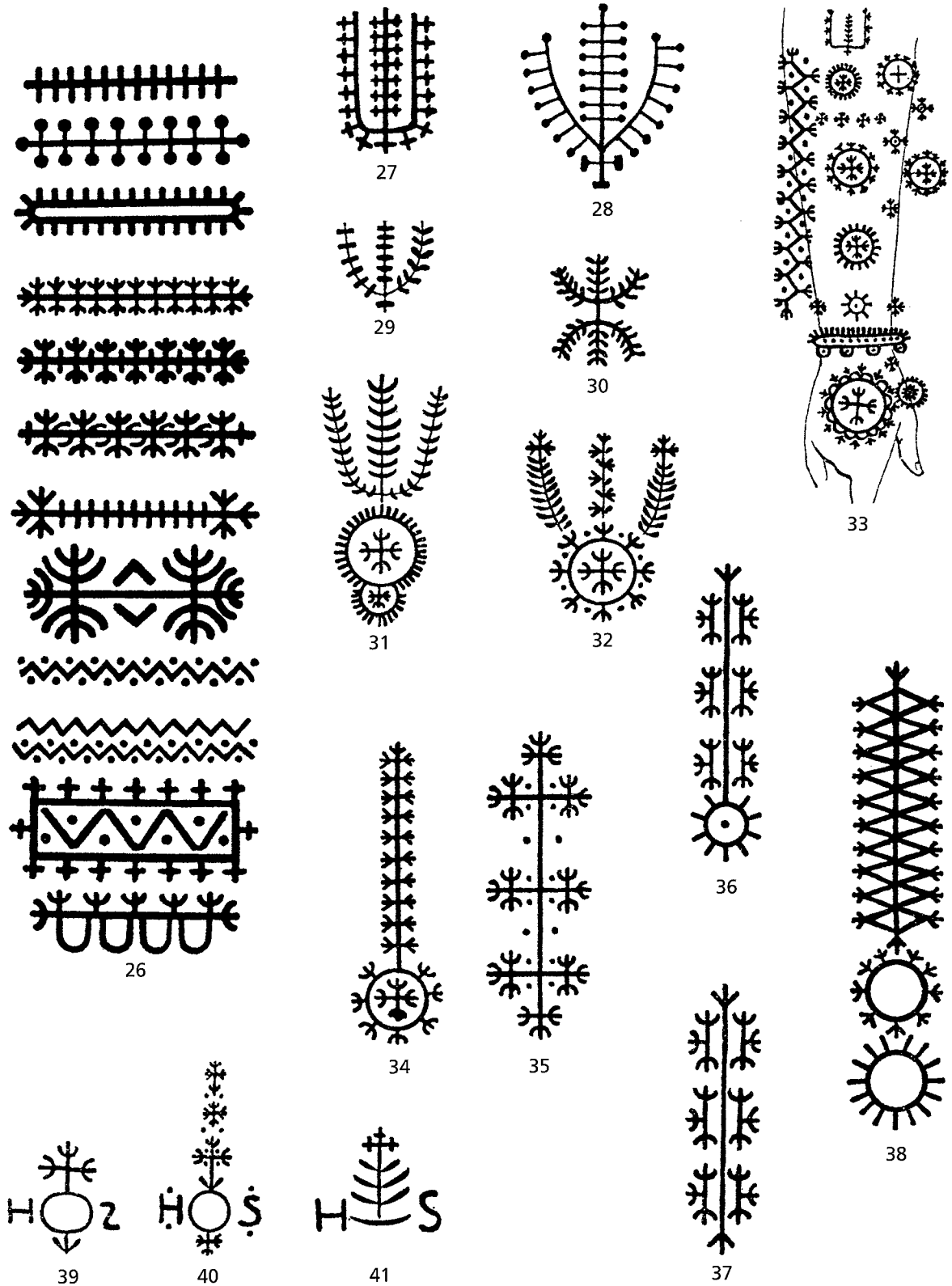
Tätowierungen



Tätowierungen in Bosnien I

1-5 Gebühliche Motive. 6-13 Halbkreisförmige Zeichen aus Handrücken-Tätowierungen der Frauen (die Ograda). 14-20 Kreisförmige Zeichen aus Tätowierungen (der Kolo). 21 Sonne. 22 Mond (Mjesec). 23 und 24 Sternchen (Zvijezdice). 25 Morgenstern (Zvijezda prehodnica).

Fig. 2 Two pages from a German-language book of unknown reference, showing several types of tattoos from Bosnia. The handwriting at the top right is Alfred Dieck's.



Tätowierungen in Bosnien II

26 Bandverzierungen, von Weibern am Sandgesenk getragen (die Narukvica). 27—30 Grančica, Jelica (zweigförmige Motive aus Tätowierungen). 31 und 32 Jelica als Aufsas auf dem Kolo. 33 Weiblicher Unterarm mit reichlicher Tätowierung. 34—38 Der Klas (die Achse), Unterarmtätowierung aus dem Bilatale. 39—41 Christliche Symbole.

Fig. 2 Continuation.

– the diary of a certain medical doctor named Reiber (no first name given) – in 1930<sup>1</sup>. I read the articles he published between 1965 and 1975 to see whether he mentioned the finds in that period. I found them in a list in the Emden Jahrbuch (Dieck 1974). In 1976 he wrote that the two tattooed female heads had – according to Reiber’s diary – been found in association with *fibulae* dating from the Early La Tène period, while the tattooed Schwerinsdorf body had been found wrapped in a cowskin, accompanied by a pair of breeches and a spear with a bronze head. Two years earlier, he had however written: »Hesel: two heads, no further information available, and Schwerinsdorf: a clothed person wrapped in a cowskin with a stick(?) in his arm« (Dieck 1974, 10-11). According to the »Reiber diary«, a certain Hajo Frensen made a drawing (fig. 1, 2) of the Schwerinsdorf tattoo in 1861. However, no such name is to be found in the local church registers<sup>2</sup>.

In his tattoo article Dieck also mentions a find from Austria, made in 1884 in Zwettl. Reiber’s diary is again his source. The find consists of the body of a fat elderly lady with tattoos on her head (fig. 1, 3) (red! dots were still clearly recognizable) and that of a very tall man with tattoos all over his body (fig. 1, 4-5). Curiously, the find is neither mentioned in his »Hominidenmoorfunde« (1965), nor in his »Moorleichen im Land Salzburg«-article (1975). In the introduction to the latter article he writes that at that time – 1975 – he knew of only two bog bodies from Upper Austria, which were »found in 1921« and »before 1957«, respectively (Dieck 1975, 336).

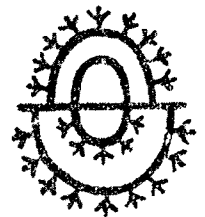
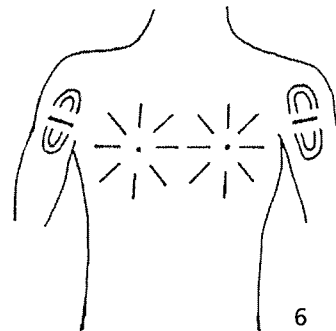
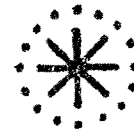
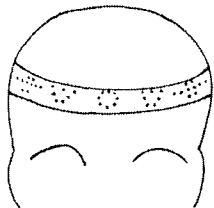
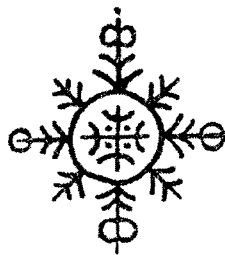
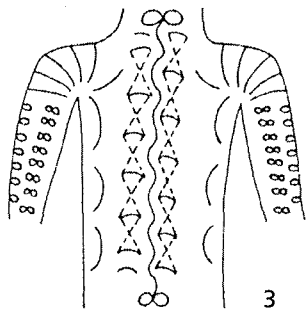
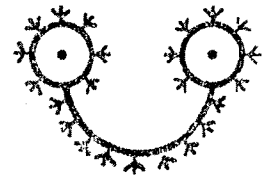
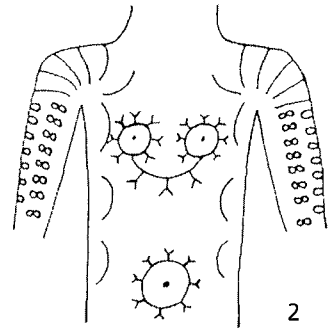
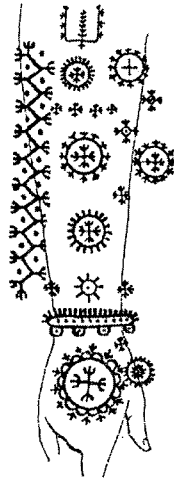
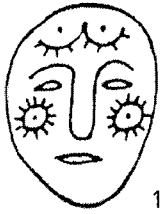
A find allegedly made in 1898 in Bavaria that is said to have comprised a female head with a tattoo on the forehead (fig. 1, 8; drawn by »Frau Schweigert«) that was wrapped in a fur cape together with the head of a dog and some personal ornaments is likewise not mentioned in his book of 1965. In 1973 he however extensively described the find in his article »Vorläufige Mitteilung über Moorleichen in Bayern« (Dieck 1973), but then he does not mention a tattoo. All the other tattooed bodies he mentions – Marx 1916, Bürmoos 1851 (fig. 1, 1) and Hornhausen 1887 (fig. 1, 7) – are equally suspect as I found the same discrepancies between descriptions given in different articles. This holds especially for his 1851 Bürmoos body: In 1975, the man had no tattoo and was assumed to date from the Neolithic on the basis of the depth at which he was found (Dieck 1975, 338). One year later, Dieck dated him to the Early Neolithic on the basis of a stone axe that accompanied him.

Although Dieck claimed to have had information on tattoos since the 1930s, he never referred to those tattoos or described them until 1976. It would seem that he made up the published tattoos in the course of 1975, shortly before he started writing the article for the »Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt«. He must have become fascinated by the phenomenon and have selected suitable bog bodies for it. Dieck may well have been inspired by a publication on the Pazyryk burials (Rudenko 1970).

Similar searches revolving around other finds – not only bog bodies, but also bog finds of an entirely different nature – all led to the same results: comparison of several sources in each case revealed irregularities. My searches for example showed that Dieck must have come up with his so-called Late Bronze Age Bentheim sanctuary, which allegedly contained a number of scalped skulls (Dieck 1987), around 1977, when he added this »find« to the manuscript he was preparing for Thames and Hudson while proofreading its English translation (there is no mention of this find in the German manuscript).

By consulting a large number of German archives, museums and libraries, I moreover found that persons mentioned in Dieck’s publications are not registered in the records, that a certain congress never took place

**Fig. 3** Several of the tattoos allegedly found on northern German, southern German and Austrian bog bodies published by Dieck show a remarkable resemblance to Bosnian tattoos from a recent past. The Latin figures I and II refer to the plates of fig. 2. – 1 Hesel (Lower Saxony, D) 1914 and Bosnian tattoos II, 33. 36. – 2 Zwettl (Upper Austria, A) 1884 and Bosnian tattoo I, 22. – 3 Zwettl 1884 and Bosnian tattoo I, 2. – 4 Zwettl 1884 and Bosnian tattoos I, 12. 13. 16. – 5 Damberger Filz (Bavaria, D) 1898 and Bosnian tattoo I, 11. – 6 Bürmoos (Salzburg, A) 1851 and Bosnian tattoo I, 9.



and that some publications don't even exist. To crown it all, at the end of April 2003, while going through his documents, I came across two pages from a German-language book of unknown reference, illustrating tattoos from Bosnia (fig. 2): he must have used these representations as examples in creating the tattoos he published in the »Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt«. The resemblance between for instance the tattoo of the Zwettl man and one of the Bosnian examples is far too great for this to be a coincidence (fig. 3). On that day in April I realized that I could give up my search for the grain of truth wrapped up in a cloak of fantasy – there is no such grain. (W. v. d. S.)

## CONCLUSION

We have, each in our own way and largely independently of one another, struggled with Alfred Dieck's published and unpublished oeuvre. The caution we have so far exercised and the reservations we have made are no longer justifiable. Dieck's publications are still quoted in present-day surveys<sup>3</sup>, but there is no longer any reason for doing so. The time has come to definitively and without reservations push aside Alfred Dieck's entire archaeological oeuvre. His archaeological legacy consists almost exclusively of entirely imaginary finds. Dieck's publications feature bog bodies that were never found and bog finds which he made up at his desk, including written or oral sources. His impressive European bog body population – amounting to more than 1800 in total – is largely a phantom population. The same holds for all his other bog finds: they are all figments of his imagination. Alfred Dieck offered us simply too many objects found outside their normal distribution area, too many bog bodies associated with valuable objects, too many untraceable diaries with lists of finds made in too many countries, too many informants without a first name, too many informants who lived too far from the place of discovery and too many drawings from different sources in the same style . . .

We are well aware of the fact that others have also in no unclear terms called attention to inconsistencies in Dieck's work. In 1981, Raddatz for example expressed serious doubts about the reliability of the tattoos published by Dieck (Raddatz 1981, 37). He was however unable to prove his suspicions. In later publications (1996; 1998) he discusses finds published by Dieck which were allegedly discovered outside the known distribution areas of the objects concerned. The Scheibenkopfnadel from Thorsberger Moor and pots and other Bandkeramik objects described by Dieck that were allegedly found in bogs in northern Germany he classifies as mystifications. Raddatz's main arguments for relegating these and other finds described by Dieck to the realm of fancy are the usually remarkably detailed nature of the sources quoted by Dieck, the fact that those same sources can no longer be consulted (because the informant has died, the letter, note or diary concerned is untraceable, etc.) and the nature of the finds, which often borders on the absurd. They are each in their own right indications for the fact that something is amiss, but they do not constitute hard evidence<sup>4</sup>.

In our opinion, there is now sufficient evidence to pass the final judgement that Dieck's work is of greater interest to psychologists than to archaeologists. This does not mean the end of our involvement with Alfred Dieck and his work. Sabine Eisenbeiss is currently working on a new, scientifically non-suspect catalogue of bog bodies of whole Germany. This research will undoubtedly yield more information on Dieck's mystifications. Wijnand A. B. van der Sanden is working on a more comprehensive study that will discuss Dieck's work in greater detail, present evidence of his fraudulent acts, and pay attention to the underlying motives and (possible) causes. The question of how things were able to proceed in this way will also be dealt with. The scientific world will have to ask itself why this deceit was able to continue in its midst for more than four decades. The scientific establishment evidently granted him that opportunity: there were a grant from

the »Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft« (1965), numerous platforms for publication and invitations for lectures, his appointment to »Mitglied der Archäologischen Kommission von Niedersachsen« (1962) and honorary membership of the »Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin« (1974) and the »Deutsche Gesellschaft für Moor- und Torfkunde« (1987). This tells us something about the critical outlook of the archaeologists and other scientists who were in contact with him. We should in this respect not underestimate the magical appeal of wetland contexts. In investigating findspots with exceptional preservation conditions, one must be prepared for the unexpected (Coles/Coles 1996, 133ff.). The archaeological community was in the past decades evidently prepared to go an awfully long way in accepting the unexpected<sup>5</sup>.

## Notes

- 1) According to Dieck, he saw the diary in 1930, in the possession of Hans Plischke, professor of ethnology at the Göttingen university, who gave him permission to copy the relevant parts. I contacted the institute of ethnology and learned that Plischke was indeed professor of »Völkerkunde« and director of the institute from 1934 until 1946 and from 1950 until 1958. Unfortunately, neither the institute nor the university library nor the university archive seem to possess this diary. The university brought me into contact with Plischke's son, who informed me that he had a lot of his father's documents, but no such thing as the diary I was interested in.
- 2) Written communication Paul Weßels to »Ostfriesische Landschaft«, Aurich, October 2, 1997; information kindly provided by Dr. R. Bärenfänger and Dr. W. Schwarz.
- 3) E.g. Groenendijk 1997, 281 note 175; van den Broeke 2005, 675 note 2.
- 4) Raddatz is (rightly) highly sceptical about Dieck's sources. That does however not mean that the mentioned persons are all imaginary. Raddatz seems to doubt the existence of the »Hütten-direktor a.D.« (W.) Witter, Halle/S., frequently mentioned by Dieck (cf. Raddatz 1996, 233; 1998, 377). But a »Hüttendirektor« of this name did indeed live in Halle, from 1926 until his death in 1949. This Wilhelm Witter was even interested in regional prehistory. He was an honorary doctor at the university of Halle (letter from R. Kuhne, Stadtarchiv Halle, to Wijnand A. B. van der Sanden on April 3, 2003).
- 5) The German/Dutch text was translated into English by S. J. Mel-lor, St.-Odiliënberg, Netherlands.

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### *Abstract / Zusammenfassung / Résumé*

#### **Imaginary people – Alfred Dieck and the bog bodies of northwest Europe**

Alfred Dieck (\* Großsalze/Schönebeck a.d. Elbe 1906, † Bremen 1989) is best known for his many studies of bog bodies of northwest Europe. The authors, who have studied bog bodies in Lower Saxony and the Netherlands as well as other bog finds, have gradually come to the conclusion that Dieck created an imaginary world, a world which he was able to maintain for many decades. Dieck's publications feature *bog bodies* that were never found and bog finds which he made up at his desk, including written or oral sources. The evidence of his deceit is partly of statistical nature, but there is also evidence that Dieck copied other sources. The »prehistoric« tattoos which he published in 1976 in the »Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt« were clearly inspired by recent Bosnian tattoos. The time has come to definitively and without reservations push aside his entire archaeological oeuvre.

#### **Imaginäre Menschen – Alfred Dieck und die Moorleichen in Nordwesteuropa**

Alfred Dieck (\* Großsalze/Schönebeck a.d. Elbe, † Bremen 1989) war der wohl bekannteste Gelehrte, der über die Moorleichen Nordwesteuropas arbeitete. Die Autoren, die Moorleichenfunde in Niedersachsen, den Niederlanden sowie andere Moorfunde untersucht haben, sind während ihrer Arbeit allmählich zum Schluss gekommen, dass Dieck eine imaginäre Welt geschaffen hatte – eine Welt, die er über mehrere Jahrzehnte aufrecht erhalten konnte. Diecks Publikationen enthalten Moorleichen, die niemals gefunden wurden, und Moorfunde, die er an seinem Schreibtisch gemacht hat – einschließlich schriftlicher oder mündlicher Quellen. Der Nachweis seiner Täuschung ist zum einen statistischer Natur, zum anderen ließ sich aber auch belegen, dass Dieck andere Quellen kopierte. So waren die »prä-historischen« Tätowierungen, die er 1976 im Archäologischen Korrespondenzblatt veröffentlichte, eindeutig von rezenten bosnischen Tätowierungen inspiriert. Es ist eindeutig an der Zeit, das gesamte archäologische Werk Alfred Diecks ohne Vorbehalte beiseite zu legen.

#### **Monde imaginaire – Alfred Dieck et les hommes des tourbières d'Europe du Nord-Ouest**

Alfred Dieck (\* Großsalze/Schönebeck a.d. Elbe, † Bremen 1989) était le chercheur le plus connu, spécialiste des corps découverts dans les tourbières d'Europe du Nord-Ouest. Après une analyse des découvertes d'hommes des tourbières en Basse-Saxe et aux Pays-Bas, les auteurs de la présente contribution en sont venus à la conclusion que Alfred Dieck avait créé un monde imaginaire, monde qu'il a maintenu pendant plusieurs décennies. Les publications de Dieck mentionnent des corps qui ne furent jamais exhumés et des objets qu'il créa de toute pièce, en incluant des sources écrites et orales. La preuve de cette supercherie est d'ordre statistique, mais il est également évident que Dieck copia d'autres sources. Les tatouages préhistoriques qui furent publiés en 1976 dans les »Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt« sont clairement inspirés de tatouages bosniaques récents. Le temps est désormais venu de mettre définitivement de côté la totalité de l'œuvre archéologique d'Alfred Dieck.

*E. M.*

### *Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés*

Germany / The Netherlands / Austria / bog bodies / tattoos / Alfred Dieck / fraud  
 Deutschland / Niederlande / Österreich / Moorleichen / Tätowierungen / Alfred Dieck / Fälschung  
 Allemagne / Pays-Bas / Autriche / hommes des tourbières / tatouages / Alfred Dieck / contrefaçon

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