



**DISCOVERING
THE PAST:**

**FEMALE ARCHAEOLOGISTS
FROM SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN**

AN EXHIBITION OF THE JOHANNA-MESTORF-ACADEMY AND OF THE CRC 1266

JULIA KATHARINA KOCH

Its creators would like to dedicate this exhibition to the memory of the classical archaeologist Dr Brigitte Freyer-Schauenburg (1938–2020), who shared her knowledge of one of the figures discussed here while the exhibition was being prepared, but who sadly did not live to see its completion. Dr Freyer-Schauenburg spent decades studying the sculptures and other finds of Samos (Greece), having come to Kiel as the wife of Professor Konrad Schauenburg, who held the chair of archaeology at Kiel University. Her dedication to scholarship went beyond the limits of her discipline, and for many years she headed the Kiel chapter of the Schleswig-Holstein University Society (Schleswig-Holsteinische Universitäts-Gesellschaft), which works to build bridges between the academic community and the public.



CONTENT

1	Dedication
5	Foreword
9	Preamble
10	Women's Education in the 19th and 20th centuries
11	Legislation on the professional activity of women
12	Educational paths for women
18	Prof. Dr. h.c. Johanna Mestorf
24	Käte Rieken
30	Dr. Gertrud Dorka
36	Dr. Hertha Sauer
42	Dr. Gisela Asmus
48	Dr. Johanna Brandt

*'Men will not work for what
women must make do with.'*

Johanna Mestorf 1891

FOREWORD

Across Germany, the proportion of women in the student body consistently exceeds fifty per cent, yet it can no less consistently be found to decline by the time doctorates are completed and careers embarked upon. One cause for this imbalance can surely be found in the many obstacles that can impede a woman's career in academia today. Another problem, however, is the lack of examples of female careers, both at a personal level and in the field at large. It is in this aspect that the present exhibition and the accompanying booklet seek to address by breaking the ongoing silence surrounding the achievements of female scholars. To this end, the exhibition examines the biographies of six female archaeologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who either completed their doctorates at Kiel University or who worked there or elsewhere in Schleswig-Holstein. The focus is on the achievements of these women and of the countervailing forces that caused ruptures in their lives or threw them off course. All six women may to some extent be regarded as typical specimens of their generation. Taking a closer look at these earlier scholars offers an opportunity better to understand scholars whose careers seldom followed a straight course, but whose achievements are nonetheless remarkable. Our mobile exhibition will be shown several times over the course of the next few years, as part of a variety of academic events and international conferences at the university as well as at museums and elsewhere.

Our thanks go to the two creators of this exhibition, who have brought history to life in both its content and its design. Dr Julia Koch, relying on her own extensive knowledge of the subject and the support of FemArc, the network of women in archaeology, gathered information scattered across public and private archives as well as conducting a number of revelatory interviews. Anna Carina Lange's attractive and professional design provides the setting in which these women's stories can be told.

This exhibition emerged from a contest of ideas held at Kiel University to explore new paths towards attaining equality between men and women. The remit of the contest was to work towards improving structural conditions at the university, to raise awareness of hidden or unconscious discrimination and thereby to help ensure equal opportunities for men and women. Grants were awarded to small-scale projects to be carried out decentrally and promising long-term benefit. Besides the award from the philosophical faculty, the project received financial support from the Friends of the Schloss Gottorf Archaeological Museum (Förderverein Archäologie Schloss Gottorf e.V.), whom we would like to take this opportunity to thank. The printing of the accompanying booklet and the translation of the exhibition texts was funded by CRC 1266 'Scales of Transformation – Human-Environmental Interaction in Prehistoric and Archaic Societies', thereby helping these female researchers to be introduced to an international audience.

We wish this exhibition every success and look forward to a young generation of dedicated female archaeologists picking up where their predecessors left off and bringing new female perspectives to bear on the wider field of archaeology.

Wiebke Kirleis and Johannes Müller



Study and scientific work were not a matter of course for women for a long time. We owe the acceptance of women at universities, museums, and other academic institutions to many women scientists of the 19th and 20th centuries. They defied the opposition of their time and did not allow themselves to be deterred in their scientific work. Each of the archaeologists presented here can be considered a representative of her generation of women at Kiel university.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

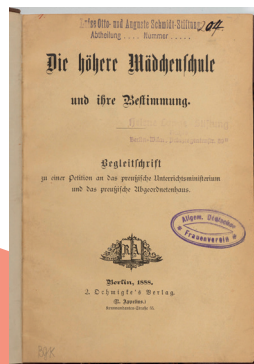
- 1802** Private secondary schools for girls as training for housewives, housekeepers, governesses and associates
- 1889** Private school for girls by Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer in Berlin
- 1893** Grammar school courses for preparation for the abitur
- 1908** Girls' school reform in the Kingdom of Prussia including admission to higher education and doctoral studies for women
- 1920** Admission of women to habilitation in the Weimar Republic
- 1933** 'Law against overcrowding at schools and universities in the Third Reich': Restriction of admission to abitur and first matriculation for women to 10% in relation to the number of men in a year group, 1935 revocation of this restriction for women
- 1946** Admission to higher education depends on school results, not on gender, nationality, or religion



The teacher and archaeologist Gertrud Dorka with her pupils in Berlin-Pankow, c. 1936 (Photo: private; from: C. von Geliéu/S. Kruse/E. Stenkamp, „...der Zukunft ein Stück voraus“. Pankower Pionierinnen in Politik und Wissenschaft [Berlin 2012]).

LEGISLATION ON THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF WOMEN

- 1880 Ministerial decree: Introduction of celibacy for female teachers in the German Empire. If they married, they were deprived of their jobs and civil servant status. The bourgeois role of women did not include being employed for life.
- 1900 Civil Code in the German Empire: Husband or male guardian as administrator of a woman's rights
- 1949 Introduction of equal rights in Germany with Grundgesetz of the FRG Art. 3 and Constitution of the GDR Art. 7
- 1953 Federal Employee Act of the FRG: deletion of the celibacy clause
- 1976 First Act on the Reform of Marriage and Family Law in the FRG: Since then, women decide for themselves whether to accept a contract of employment



Helene Lange published an appeal for qualified women's education in 1888 with her brochure „Die höhere Mädchenschule“ (Photo: Brochure Archiv der dt. Frauenbewegung, Kassel. Photographer: H. Ziegenfusz, Historisches Museum Frankfurt).

EDUCATIONAL PATHS FOR WOMEN

It was a long struggle indeed that women fought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to secure their right to education and careers. Nor was it simply a matter of gaining access to schools, universities and professional qualifications: at stake was nothing less than full and unhindered participation in professional, cultural and academic life. Women's everyday lives were marked by a lack of self-determination. Women were not allowed to control their own assets, and women working in the civil service lost their jobs upon marriage – along with any pension entitlements associated with it. Even travel, something we take now take for granted, was something that upper and middle-class women in particular had to think twice about undertaking alone if they were not to jeopardise their respectability. For a female scholar to lecture on her findings before a male audience was long considered a social taboo.

In Prussia and the other German states, women's education grew from the girls' schools founded in the early nineteenth century. Known as *Höhere Töchterschulen* (literally 'private schools for daughters of the higher classes') and *Mädchenpensionate*, these schools aimed to prepare the daughters of the urban bourgeoisie for life as a housewife and mother or to earn a living (before or instead of marriage) as a governess or lady's companion. Another path to education was opened up in the form of teacher training colleges, which prepared young women

for careers as schoolmistresses in elementary and girls' schools. Early advocates for women's education realised that before campaigning for women to be admitted to university, it was necessary to ensure that they received an appropriate secondary education and to establish the schools that would provide it. At the beginning of this movement in Germany stands Helene Lange's pamphlet *Die höhere Mädchenschule und ihre Bestimmung* (1887). In 1889 Helene Lange established secondary-level courses for girls and in 1893 courses that prepared them for the university entry examination administered by a central board.

Yet women around 1900 still had virtually to beg actually to be admitted to a university, even merely to audit classes. Each woman minded to do so had to apply to the ministry and, if her request was granted, again to the university in question. Even then, attendance at certain lectures was at the professor's discretion. Only in 1900 did women's access to universities begin to be regulated by law, with the Grand Duchy of Baden in the vanguard. In 1908 Prussia – which at the time ruled Schleswig-Holstein and hence Kiel – followed suit with a comprehensive reform of female education. It is worth noting that the first women to enter universities as students found that women were in fact already working there – as secretaries and cleaners, occupations on which the history of education has so far had little to say.

Economic difficulties notwithstanding, the number of female students continued to grow under the Weimar Republic, only to be restricted once more under the Nazis. Although the law passed on 25 April 1933

to combat 'the overcrowding of German schools and universities' was aimed primarily and Jewish students, it combined with Nazi ideology and its idea of womanhood to lower the number of women taking the entrance exam and matriculating to one tenth of the men in each cohort. Yet the introduction of conscription in 1935 and the subsequent expansion of the military soon caused a shortage of male students, and quotas restricting access for women were rescinded in the same year. After the war, Article 7 of the constitution of the German Democratic Republic, proclaimed in 1949, declared: '[1] Men and women have equal rights. [2] All laws and regulations which conflict with the equality of women are abolished.' This meant full legal equality in East Germany, including organisational matters concerning education and professional activity. The legislators in West Germany were far less decisive. Although Article 3, Section 2 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany of 1949 likewise declared that 'Men and women shall have equal rights', it took decades for legal discrimination enshrined in other laws to be removed. In 1953 a law mandating celibacy for female teachers and civil servants – first introduced by ministerial decree in 1880 and repealed by the Weimar Republic in 1919, only to be reintroduced four years later – was finally repealed. But until 1976, when a comprehensive reform of marriage and family law was undertaken, replacing the civil code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) of 1900, a married woman still required her husband's approval to enter paid employment. Only now was it possible for women to pursue self-determined professional careers.



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Prof. Dr. h.c. Johanna Mestorf



Prof. Dr. h.c. Johanna Mestorf
(Photo: Stiftung Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesmuseen Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig).

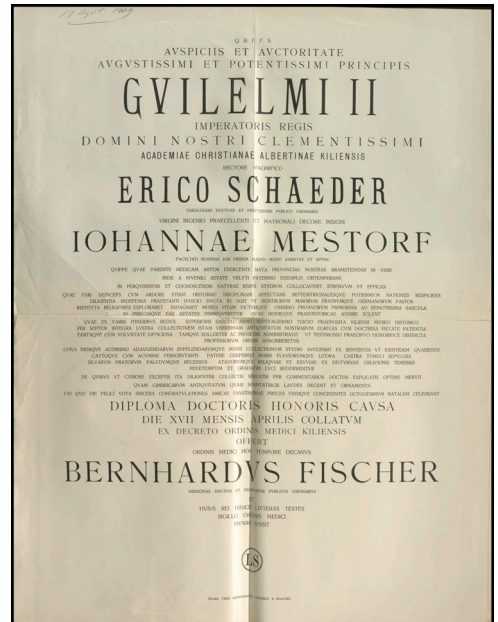
- 17 April 1828** Born in Bramstedt (Duchy of Holstein, German Confederation) to Dr Jacob Mestorf (1796–1837), a physician, and Sophia Mestorf (née Körner, 1794–1878); eight siblings, two of whom reach adulthood
- Education** Private Girls' high school in Itzehoe
- 1849** Governess to the Piper-Engsö family on Lake Malar, Sweden
- 1853** Companion to the Contessa Falletti di Villafalletto in northern Italy and the South of France
- 1859** Returns to her family, now resident in Hamburg, and begins translating works of Scandinavian archaeological scholarship
- 1867** Secretary for foreign correspondence at the C. Adler lithographic company, Hamburg
- 1869** Attends international archaeological congresses in Copenhagen (1869), Bologna (1871), Brussels (1872), Stockholm (1874), Budapest (1876) and Danzig (1891)
- 1871** Voluntary work: cataloguing of the collection of prehistoric antiquities in Hamburg
- 1873** Curator at the Museum of Patrimonial Antiquities (Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer) at the University of Kiel under the directorship of Professor Heinrich Handelsmann (1827–1891)
- 9 July 1891** Appointed director the Museum of Patrimonial Antiquities at the University of Kiel
- 17 April 1899** Appointed professor by the Prussian minister of religious, educational and medical affairs
- 1 April 1909** Retires
- 17 April 1909** Receives an honorary doctorate from the Kiel medical faculty for her research on bog bodies
- 20 Juli 1909** Dies in Kiel (province of Schleswig-Holstein, German Empire) after an illness

YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP AND JOURNEYING

Johanna Mestorf ranks among the best-known female archaeologists. She was the first woman to head a museum in the German Empire, at a time when women were still fighting for their right to education. Her own education adhered to the conventions of the middle classes. Though the early death of her father left the family in a difficult financial situation, she was able to attend a private school for girls in Itzehoe, the principal task of which was to prepare its pupils for a life as housewife. Johanna Mestorf embarked on the only other career then considered respectable for (unmarried) young middle-class women: She became a governess and ladies' companion, a path which led her abroad for ten years, first to Sweden, then to Italy and France. It was during her years in Sweden that her interest in European prehistory was awakened.

'Naturally shy of any uncleanliness (even washing a teacup requires bracing myself), I found myself compelled to cleanse objects rife with dust and rust, to polish and to mend them, and moreover to do so in the winter months, physically suffering and my limbs stiff with cold. Yet my interest in the material outweighed all other concerns.'

Johanna Mestorf 1874



Document of the honorary doctorate of Johanna Mestorf from 1909
(Photo: Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Abt. 47.6 Nr. 478).

THE HAMBURG YEARS: CAREER PROSPECTS

Having returned to live with her family in Hamburg, Johanna Mestorf began work as a translator of Swedish books on prehistory and as a foreign language secretary for a printing firm, both she could perform from home. She also began to take on assignments for journals, covering archaeological digs and reviewing literature on archaeology. She gained her expertise from books, from cataloguing the Hamburg prehistoric collection and above all from attending international conferences. The latter in particular was a challenge for a single woman, who was neither expected to travel nor permitted to attend academic conferences unaccompanied. An autodidact in archaeology, she soon became a noted presence in the male-dominated world of academia in Hamburg and far beyond. In Professor Christian Petersen (1802–1872),

the director of Hamburg City Library, and Professor Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), a Berlin physician and politician, she found mentors who encouraged her in the idea of becoming a museum curator in Schleswig-Holstein.



*The Stone Age Hall of the Kiel Museum, photographed in the 1930s, but still how it was begun by Johanna Mestorf
(Photo: Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein State Museums Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig).*

BUILDING UP A MUSEUM OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN PREHISTORY

Johanna Mestorf's opportunity came when the museum of patrimonial antiquities was attached to the University of Kiel in 1873. The position of curator was created, and her application was successful. The scope of her work on the collection is well documented in a working diary, as are the growing differences with the museum's director, Professor Heinrich Handelmann, who was impatient of her professional knowledge. Yet the layout of the exhibition and the Kiel museum's international renown are due to her. It was thus only logical that Johanna Mestorf should succeed Handelmann on the latter's sudden death, though she did not receive his salary. Her research is notable above all for two principal achievements, her publications on the urn cemeteries of Schleswig-Holstein and localising the Viking settlement of Hedeby. She received numerous honours in the last decades of her life, among them the title of professor, awarded by the Prussian government, and an honorary doctorate from the medical faculty at the University of Kiel. Since her death, a museum foundation, a street and a school in Kiel have been named after her, as well as a lecture hall and an academy at the university there.

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Käte Rieken



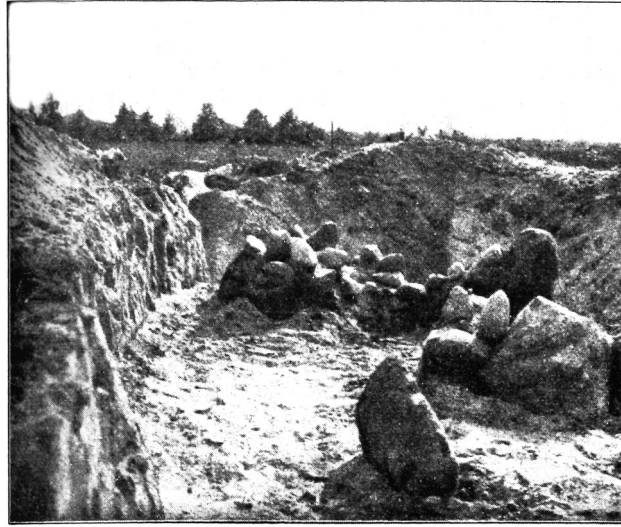
Käte Rieken (Photo: Archive Family Freen)

- 
- 15 June 1865** Born Kathinka von Preen in Schwerin (Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, German Confederation) to Major Otto von Preen (1837–1917) and Kathinka von Preen (née von Hennigs, 1845–1925); her younger sister enters a convent at Malchow
- 1895** Marries Dr Hermann Rieken, a former naval medic from Cottbus. Moves to Ülsby on the peninsula of Anglia, where Dr Rieken practises
- 1895–1900** Engaged in excavations with her husband under the auspices of the Museum of Patrimonial Antiquities at the University of Kiel
- 1900** Moves to Berlin-Wilmersdorf on account of husband's illness
- 1902** Moves to Cottbus and takes up work for the museum of the *Niederlausitzer Gesellschaft für Anthropologie und Altertumskunde* (Lower Lusatian anthropology and archaeology society) re-organising the museum and making excavations in and around Cottbus
- 1904** Excavates a Bronze and Iron Age burial site near Tauer in the district of Cottbus, publishes findings in 1906
- 1905–1909** Appointed by the city of Cottbus to direct excavation of a burial site near Klein-Gaglow in the district of Cottbus
- 9 June 1907** Appointed to the administrative committee of the Lower Lusatian Society museum as managing director of collections
- 25 May 1917** Dies in Cottbus (Prussia, German Empire) after a severe illness

IN HER HUSBAND'S SHADOW

As the daughter of Mecklenburg nobility, Kathinka von Preen received the typical education of upper-class girls in her day. Though an interest in archaeology ran in the family, academic studies – let alone a scholarly career – were considered unladylike by nineteenth-century upper- and middle-class standards. Little is known of Kathinka von Preen's life

before her marriage to Dr Rieken, and evidence for her research begins to appear only once she moved to the peninsula Anglia in Schleswig. The Rieken's jointly examined endangered monuments in the area and wrote reports for the Museum of Patrimonial Antiquities in Kiel, often accompanied by excavated objects. The annual reports of the museum and the society of antiquaries Schleswig-Holstein, however, name only Dr Hermann Rieken as the finder – Käte Rieken's work was rendered invisible.



Fund 108 und 109.

Cemetery of Klein-Gaglow near Cottbus during the excavation from 1905 to 1909. The documentation including the photographs was prepared by Käte Rieken (Photo: Rieken 1909, 223).



MAKING HER OWN EXCAVATIONS IN LUSATIA

On moving to the region of Lower Lusatia, Käte Rieken stepped out of her husband's shadow and took a leading in archaeological research in Cottbus prior to the First World War. Her main achievement is surely the excavation of the Klein-Gaglow burial site. She had the topsoil cleared by workmen and subsequently excavated each of the 240 individual graves herself, sketching them and taking photographs along the way. In so doing, she observed the principle of the 'closed find', which had been introduced in 1903 by Oscar Montelius (1843–1921). She also adhered to this principle in displaying her finds in the museum of the Lower Lusatian archaeological and anthropological society.

'Her clear and straightforward personality, which would brook no vacillation between yes and no for personal reasons, her unflagging dedication to her purpose and a clear sense of how she would get there, allowed her to use time to almost miraculous effect.'

Prof. Dr. Gustaf Kossinna 1917

CONTROVERSY AND RECOGNITION AT THE COTTBUS MUSEUM

Käte Riekens' work was supported and defended by Dr Hugo Jentsch (1840–1916), the chairman of the Lower Lusatian archaeological and anthropological society. Yet Dr Pagé, the head of collections, was outraged at not having been put in charge of excavations himself. The dispute escalated and was settled only when, in 1907, an administrative committee was installed with Käte Riekens as managing director. The collections' custodian likewise resisted the change and left a year later. Her work won respect from colleagues, however, and was praised in the reports of the relevant societies in Lower Lusatia and Berlin. Though she prepared her findings in the burial site of Klein-Gaglow for publication, she destroyed the draft before her death, 'not being satisfied by it', as an obituarist put it (G. Kossinna, 1917). The Cottbus museum, and with the finds uncovered by Käte Rieken, were destroyed in the Second World War and her work was increasingly forgotten.

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'The ultimate object of our laborious digs is not to obtain clay vessels, but to read the unwritten history preserved for us in by the earth.'

Käte Rieken 1906

Dr. Gertrud Dorka



Dr. Gertrud Dorka (Photo: Archive Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, SMB-SPK)

- 19 March 1893** Born in Orlau (district of Neidenburg, East Prussia, German Empire) to Wilhelm Dorka (1865–1943), a schoolmaster, and Wilhelmine Dorka (née Olschewski, 1867–1945); two brothers, both killed in the First World War
- Childhood** Elementary school and girls' secondary school in Neidenburg
- 1910–1914** Educated at the Königin-Luise-Oberlyzeum in Königsberg, graduates with a teaching qualification for Lyceen (high schools for girls)
- 1914** Outbreak of First World War, escapes Battle of Tannenberg with parents to Berlin
- 1914–1947** Teaches, first at the girls' Realschule (middle school) in Pankow (Berlin), later at other schools
- from 1919** Attends seminars on prehistory with Dr Albert Kiekebusch (1870–1935) at the Märkisches Museum, Berlin
- 1929** Passes Latin and Greek examinations
- 1930–1934** On leave from teaching, studies prehistory, historical geography, anthropology and philosophy at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Berlin
- 7 Nov. 1936** Passes Ph.D. examination at the University of Kiel (adviser: Professor Gustav Schwantes [1881–1969]) with a dissertation on the *Urgeschichte des Weizacker-Kreises Pyritz* (Early history of the Pyritz district, also known as the 'Weizacker'); turns down job offer at the Museum of Prehistoric Antiquities in Kiel, which would have required joining the Nazi party
- 1943–1946** Evacuated to Zeitz with her school classes
- 1 Sept. 1947** Appointed director of what was 'former State Museum of Prehistory', Berlin
- 1950–1952** Head of the Greater Berlin department of archaeological heritage
- 1955** The permanent exhibition is reopened at the ruins of the former ethnographical museum
- 1958** Retires, continues research on prehistory in Berlin-Neukölln
- 14 Feb. 1976** Dies after a short illness in Berlin-Niederschönhausen (GDR)

WHEN WAR COMES HOME

When Gertrud Dorka, aged 43, received her doctorate in 1936, there was little to suggest that she would be able to make a career of her passionate interest in archaeology. She had grown up in Wilhelmine Germany and embarked on a teacher training course, one of the few respectable career options open to middle-class girls at the time. She took up her first post in her home region of Masuren (now in Poland) not long before the First World War broke out in August 1914 and the hostilities on the eastern front drove her family to seek refuge in Berlin. This flight to safety from the battle of Tannenberg and the death of both her brothers in the war marked a watershed in her life and may help explain her later distance from National Socialism.



Gertrud Dorka in her office in the museum ruins
(Photo: Archive Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, SMB-SPK).

'I encountered a woman whose very first words left me in no doubt of the seriousness and idealism with which she went about her task, and of her sense of what it took to achieve it. That first meeting also acquainted me with another of her traits, a willingness to help verging on selflessness.'

Adriaan von Müller 1972



A PART-TIME STUDENT OF PREHISTORY

The Weimar Republic marked a new beginning, in which Gertrud Dorka found a new wealth of training options open to teachers. She soon began to attend the seminars on prehistory held by Dr Albert Kiekebusch at the Märkisches Museum in Berlin. Yet it was not until she passed her examinations in Latin and Greek in 1929 that Gertrud Dorka was able to enrol at the University of Berlin, for which she received four years' leave from teaching. When it came to writing her dissertation on the prehistory of the Pyritz district in Pomerania, however, she had to do so alongside her work as a teacher.

Yet as her thesis neared completion, differences with National Socialist Professor Hans Reinerth (1900–1990), who had been called to the chair in Berlin in 1934, became apparent. Gertrud Dorka instead submitted her dissertation to Professor Gustav Schwantes at the University of Kiel. She must have made a good impression in her viva, for she was directly offered a job at the Kiel museum. This post, however, was open only to NSDAP members, which is why she preferred to remain a teacher in Berlin while contributing part-time to the archaeological survey of the Oberbarnim district in Brandenburg. This second manuscript was sadly lost in the war.

A MUSEUM DIRECTOR AT LAST

Gertrud Dorka's time finally came in 1947, when she was offered the directorship of the State Museum of Prehistory in Berlin. The museum was at the time in ruins, and her efforts at reconstruction, to secure the holdings left in Berlin and to organise the return of collections stored in Lebus and Celle won her the reputation of an archaeological *Trümmerfrau* (a term used to describe the women who cleared the debris from German cities after the war). With only a small staff, she established a new museum and archaeological heritage department in Berlin. The later years of her career were troubled only by Dr Otto-Friedrich Gandert (1889–1983), who had been the archaeological heritage officer for Berlin until 1945 and felt entitled to the job on his return after the war. He went on to become Gertrud Dorka's successor. In spite of these conflicts, she continued to devote herself to archaeological research in Berlin even in retirement as well as being involved both in the association of displaced East Prussians and the German association of university women.



Gertrud Dorka and a staff member recovered archaeological artefacts in the destroyed museum in Berlin after World War II (Photo: Archive Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, SMB-SPK)

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Gertrud Dorka, Die Wiedereröffnung des Berliner Museums für Vor- und Frühgeschichte. Berliner Blätter für Vor- und Frühgeschichte 3, 1955, 89–96.

Gertrud Dorka / Max Krügel, Die vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Funde der Bezirke 1–6 von Berlin. Berliner Blätter für Vor- und Frühgeschichte 5, 1956, 57–102; 105–141.

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Müller, Adriaan von, Gertrud Dorka 80 Jahre. Ausgrabungen in Berlin 3, 1972, 5.

Dr. Hertha Sauer



Dr. Hertha Sauer (Photo: Archive Family Heinrich, Berlin)

- 15 Dec. 1896 Born in Giessen (Grand Duchy of Hesse, German Empire) to Professor Bruno Sauer (1861–1919), a classical archaeologist, and Amalie Sauer (née Engels), no siblings
- 1906 Attends the Grand Ducal (boy's) grammar school in Giessen
- 1909 The family moves to Giessen, where her father is appointed to the chair of classical archaeology at the university and director of its collection of antiquities
- 1909–1913 Attends the Kiel high school for girls
- 1913–1915 Attends the Grand Ducal (boy's) grammar school in Giessen, receives university entrance qualification
- 1915–1917 Studies classics and archaeology at the University of Kiel
- 1918 Studies classical archaeology at the University of Munich under her uncle, Professor Paul Wolters (1858–1936)
- 10 May 1919 Her father dies; continues her studies at the University of Leipzig, where her grandparents live
- 1926 Receives her Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig (adviser: Professor Franz Studniczka) with a dissertation entitled *Die archaischen etruskischen Terracottasarkophage aus Caere* (The ancient Etruscan terracotta sarcophagi of Caere)
Care of her sick mother
- 1939 Research trips to Italy and Greece
- 1941–1953 Assistant at the department of archaeology, University of Kiel
- 1943–1946 Teaches Greek language courses at the University of Kiel
Independent researches
- 1975 Dies in Kiel (Schleswig-Holstein, FRG) after a long illness

A GRADUATE OF A BOYS' SCHOOL

Hertha Sauer, the daughter of a university professor, went to school at a time when the education of girls was the subject of intense public controversy. In 1906 her parents sent Hertha, then aged 12, to the Grand Ducal Gymnasium in Giessen – a school normally reserved for boys. The family then moved to northern Germany, her father having been appointed to the chair of classical archaeology at the University of Kiel in 1909. There, Hertha attended the municipal high school for girls (Städtische Höhere Mädchenschule I, now Ricarda-Huch-Schule). This school did not, however, qualify its graduates for university entry, and Hertha, by now aged 17, returned to Giessen and her old grammar school to study for her Abitur examinations. Such an educational career, quite unusual at the time, suggests that Hertha's parents were keen that their only child should go on to study at a university, even before the Prussian educational reform act of 1908 gave women unrestricted access to higher education.

'As I knew her, she was generous and helpful, but for herself she led a modest life, growing a great deal in her large garden.'

Hiltrud Heinrich, daughter of a fellow student, one of several godchildren

FAMILY LIFE AND UNIVERSITY STUDIES

In 1915, in the midst of the First World War, Hertha Sauer matriculated as a full-time student of archaeology at the University of Kiel, the only woman to do so at the time. Yet in spite of her family's support, her studies were interrupted for several semesters at a time. The war played a part, as did her father's illness and his death in 1919. She moved to other universities, her choices being determined by relatives who lived in other parts of the country. Her uncle, Professor Paul Wolters, held the chair of classical archaeology at the University of Munich, while her paternal grandparents lived in Leipzig. It was her uncle who influenced Hertha Sauer in her approach of basing broader studies on the examination of individual objects. She received her doctorate at Leipzig under Professor Franz Studniczka for a study of Etruscan terracotta sarcophagi, in which she succeeded in identifying a forgery held at the British Museum. Yet she then had to return to her parents' villa in Kiel, her mother having fallen ill and needing care.

AN UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE AND INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Only after her mother's death was Hertha Sauer free to resume her scholarly career, making a study trip to Italy and Greece before the outbreak of the Second World War. With many men drafted for military service, an opportunity arose for Hertha Sauer to take a job as a research assistant in classical archaeology and lecturer in ancient languages at the University of Kiel. One of her principal tasks was to arrange for the removal to safekeeping of the university's classical collections. After the war, however, returning men pushed her out of her job. With a private income from legacies, shares and property rents, Hertha Sauer was able to make a life for herself as an independent scholar outside the Kiel institute and to tend to her own collection, which her father had begun to build. Her house now became the centre of her life, and she had many lodgers, over the years, many of them students, as well as the family of the prehistorian Dr Ekkehard Aner, with whom she was on friendly terms. Only after her death was the Sauer collection absorbed into the Kiel collection; her papers are held at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin.

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Hertha Sauer, Die archaischen etruskischen Terracottasarkophage aus Caere (Rendsburg 1930).

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Dr. Gisela Asmus



Dr. Gisela Asmus - no photograph available

- 17 June 1905** Born in Teterow (Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, German Empire) to the physician Rudolf Asmus (1875–1965); two brothers, the elder of whom, Wolfgang Asmus (1908–1993), studies prehistory and becomes head of the department of prehistory at the Hanover State Museum (1953–75)
- School** Details unknown
University Studies physical anthropology and prehistory at the University of Kiel
- 1937** Obtains Ph.D. under advisers Professor Hans Weinert (1887–1967) und Professor Gustav Schwantes (1881–1960). Her Dissertation is entitled *Die vorgeschichtlichen rassischen Verhältnisse in Schleswig-Holstein und Mecklenburg. Ein Beitrag zur Rassengeschichte des urgermanischen Raumes* [Racial conditions in Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg in ancient times. A contribution to the racial history of ancient Germanic territories]
Works on skeletal series for the Museum of Prehistoric Antiquities in Kiel (Haithabu) and the State Museum of Prehistory in Berlin (Lossow), and also for museums in Schwerin and Breslau
- 1942–1944** Works at *SS Ahnenerbe* in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, deputised to the Anthropos-Institute in Brünn (Brno) under the direction of Dr Hermann Schwabedissen (1911–1994)
- 1946–1949** Employed at the ministry of education and the arts (Kultusministerium) in Hanover
- 1950er** Employed at the refugee claims office (Heimatauskunftstelle) of the ministry of refugees and displaced persons of the state of Lower Saxony
Researches in Lower Saxony
- 1960** Research assistant at the institute of prehistory at the University of Cologne under Professor Hermann Schwabedissen
- 1965** Retires, continues publishing anthropological articles into the 1980s
- 4 April 1981** Dies in Cologne (North Rhine-Westphalia, FRG)

A FAMILY INTERESTED IN PREHISTORY

Though a long list of publications in prehistoric anthropology is attached to her name, we know of the life of Gisela Asmus only in fragments. It would seem that her interest in prehistory was awakened at home, since her father, who practised as a doctor in Teterow, was a noted amateur historian of his local Mecklenburg country. What education she received at home or school remains unknown. Both her younger brothers studied medicine and prehistory; she herself united both interests by choosing to pursue her studies in physical anthropology. In 1937, a year after her brother Wolfgang Asmus, she likewise received her doctorate from the University of Kiel under Professor Hans Weinert, the head of the department of anthropology.



The Kiel Museum of Patrimonial Antiquities (later: Prehistoric Antiquities) in Kattenstraße was the central place for prehistoric research in Schleswig-Holstein from 1873 to 1944. Also Gisela Asmus studied and worked here (Photo: Stiftung Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesmuseen Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig).

A FEMALE CAREER LAUNCHED IN THE THIRD REICH

Her dissertation signals Gisela Asmus's acquisition of her discipline's methodological principles, the mainstay of which was the measurement of skeletons and their classification according to the standards of racial 'science'. This remained the foundation of her research into the 1970s. After obtaining her Ph.D., she analysed skeletal series at the museums of Berlin, Schwerin and Breslau before joining Dr Hermann Schwabedissen and Dr Karl Hucke at *SS Ahnenerbe* in Brünn (Brno) in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The part she played in the intrigue surrounding the Palaeolithic excavation site at Unterwisternitz (Dolní Věstonice), where nothing less than the supposed origins of the 'Nordic race' was at stake, has yet to be examined. She certainly was, however, involved in removing the finds, which were destroyed, as the war ended, in a fire in their interim storage at Nikolsburg (Mikulov) Castle in Moravia.



'Miss Asmus must be given the opportunity as soon as possible to work in her learned profession, in which she has already done so much good and which she has not been able to practise for so long due to the hardship of the times.'

Rafael von Uslar to Hermann Schwabedissen 17 June 1959

POST-WAR NETWORKS

At some point soon after the end of the war in 1945 she moved to Hannover to join her brother, who became head of department at the state museum there. For her part, she worked at the ministry of education and the arts (Kultusministerium) and at the refugee claims office (Heimatauskunftstelle) of the ministry of refugees and displaced persons of the state of Lower Saxony. She used these positions to conduct anthropological studies of living persons while also examining prehistoric material, notably bog bodies at Hunteburg (Osnabrück district). Only in the last five years before her retirement did she hold a permanent university position. Her old colleague Professor Hermann Schwabedissen, who had become head of department at the University of Cologne, recruited her as part of his effort to rebuild the institute of prehistory, including its programmes in the natural sciences. Her own research during this time focussed mainly on skeletal series from the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras in Europe and the Mediterranean. Though she continued to publish after her retirement, no trace of her subsequent personal life is known. No obituary was published.

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Schäfer, Martina, Die Geschichte des Institutes für Ur- und Frühgeschichte an der Universität zu Köln. 1925 bis zur Emeritierung von Hermann Schwabedissen. Unpublizierte Magisterarbeit Universität Köln 2002.

Dr. Johanna Brandt



Dr. Johanna Brandt (Photo: Archive Institut Ur- und Frühgeschichte CAU Kiel)

- 9 June 1922 Born in Preetz (province of Schleswig-Holstein, German Empire) to Wilhelm Peters, a postal official, and Emma Peters (née Bock); two siblings
- 1928–1938 Wilhelminenschule Preetz, graduates with middle school diploma
- 1938–1940 Meisterschule des deutschen Handwerks Kiel, graphic class
- 1939–1945 Technical assistant at the Museum of Prehistoric Antiquities in Kiel
- 1941–1944 Private evening sixth-form college in Kiel and external Abitur examination (university entrance qualification)
- 1942 Deputised as a draughtswoman to the department of prehistory at the Reichsuniversität of Strasbourg
- 1945–1949 Studies prehistory at the Universities of Kiel and Marburg
- 1950 Excavations in the North Frisian islands; marries Karl-Heinz Brandt, a fellow student from Herne, and birth of a daughter
- 1950–1951 Excavation of the urn burial field at Preetz
- 20 June 1951 Obtains Ph.D. at the University of Kiel (adviser: Professor Ernst Sprockhoff) with a dissertation entitled *Die vor- und nachchristliche Eisenzeit auf den Nordfriesischen Inseln* (The Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age in the North Frisian islands)
- 1953 Birth of a second daughter; husband obtains Ph.D.
- 1954 Moves to Bremen, where Dr Karl-Heinz Brandt takes job at the Focke Museum
- 1956 Birth of a third daughter
- 1964 Divorces Dr Karl-Heinz Brandt
- 1965 Moves to Rommerskirchen-Sinsteden (North Rhine-Westphalia) with her daughters and employee to the archaeological survey in the district of Grevenbroich
- 1980 Returns to Preetz and teacher at the Preetz Volkshochschule (adult evening centre), excavations in Preetz, founding of Preetz local history society and museum (opened 1993)
- 10 Feb. 1996 Dies in Preetz (Schleswig-Holstein, FRG) after a stroke

A SWIFT ENTRY INTO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROFESSION

Although she was greatly interested in archaeology, as the daughter of a postal official of modest means, Johanna Peters could not take a university education for granted. On completing middle school, she initially went on to take a vocational course at Meisterschule des deutschen Handwerks Kiel (now Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design). The outbreak of war meant an earlier entry into professional life than she had expected. Even before her final examinations, her enthusiasm for archaeology caused her to be taken on as technical assistant the department of antiquities for the province of Schleswig-Holstein. She was not, however, content with the tasks of a draughtsman and completed her university entrance examinations during the war. Only with the resumption of university courses in the winter semester of 1945/46, however, could she begin to study ancient and early history at the universities of Marburg and Kiel.



*Johanna Brandt at the documentation of the urn cemetery of Preetz in the 1960s
(Photo: Archive Family Brandt).*

YEARS OF WANDERING WITH FAMILY

Having gained considerable practical experience beforehand, Johanna Peters began work on her dissertation on prehistoric finds in the North Frisian islands in her first semester. Her research included excavations on the island of Amrum, which she continued to run in spite of her pregnancy. The completion of her studies in Kiel in 1950/51 and her doctoral examinations coincided with her marriage and the birth of her first daughter. In the following years, Johanna Brandt tried to balance her commitments to scholarship and family, first in her home town of Preetz, then in Bremen. In Bremen, however, she began to shift towards supporting her husband's work at the Focke Museum, as was expected of a wife at the time. The idea of continuing to work together as an academic couple did not prove viable in the long term. After her divorce and with the support of Professor Hermann Schwabedissen (1911–1994), she resumed work on her projects of her own on archaeological sites in the Rhineland – as a single mother of three daughters.

'Her character is such that we may expect much from Miss Peters in our field of research. Of particular note are the extraordinary energy and the diligence with which Miss Peters has applied herself to her studies and her work.'

Karl Kersten 1945



FOUNDING A MUSEUM IN HER HOME TOWN

By now of retirement age, Johanna Brandt returned to Preetz in 1980, where she continued to pursue archaeological projects with remarkable vigour. Her work on construction sites contributed to the inventory of finds from Preetz's eighteenth-century potteries. As a lecturer at the local adult education centre, she succeeded in building support for her key project. As early as 1950, when the town's ancient urn burial site was discovered, there had been talk of a museum, but only with the formation of a local history society in 1985 did the project take shape. Much dedicated work and fundraising on Johanna Brandt's part went into founding the Preetz local history museum, which opened in 1993. Johanna Brandt is commemorated in an archaeological society and a street, both of which bear her name. Her estate is preserved in the Schloss Gottorf archaeological museum.



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Johanna Brandt, Das Urnengräberfeld von Preetz in Holstein (2. bis 4. Jahrhundert nach Christi Geburt). Untersuchungen aus dem Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesmuseum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Schleswig NF 16 (Neumünster 1960).

Johanna Brandt, Kreis Neuss. Archäologische Funde und Denkmäler des Rheinlandes (Köln 1982).

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From Preetz, Johanna Brandt has undertaken many excursions to introduce those interested in archaeology to the history of Schleswig-Holstein (Photo: Archive Family Brandt).

IMPRINT

Discovering the Past: Female Archaeologists from Schleswig-Holstein
Brochure on the exhibition of Johanna-Mestorf-Academy, Kiel University
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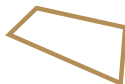
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