



Summary of the archaeological profession Austria

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Austrian archaeology is structured in a relatively clear way, which is more or less directly reflected in the qualifications required for being eligible for being appointed to specific positions and in the eligibility to carry out specific archaeological work.

1. The legal background to Austrian archaeology

The Austrian constitution (in Art. 17 Staatsgrundgesetz 1867) defines that the freedom of academic research is a fundamental civic right. All kinds of desk-based archaeological assessment, post-excavation analysis and interpretative work are therefore open to every citizen, regardless of qualifications, as is any other kind of scientific research.

Heritage management

Where the management of archaeological heritage is concerned, the Austrian constitution (in Art. 10 [13] Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz) defines that protection of cultural heritage ('Denkmalschutz') is a responsibility of the central state. The public office responsible for executing this constitutional function is the national heritage agency ('Bundesdenkmalamt', short BDA), under the control of the ministry of science and research ('Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung'). As the BDA is responsible for the protection of all cultural heritage, regardless of whether it being known to exist or not, all archaeological fieldwork (whether invasive or- non-invasive) has to be individually licensed by it, or carried out by itself (under its direct authority), as specified in Austrian heritage law (§ 11 [1-2] Denkmalschutzgesetz). Austrian heritage law requires a degree in an archaeological subject as a necessary precondition for an applicant to be eligible to be granted an excavation licence (§ 11 [1] Denkmalschutzgesetz 1999).

The Austrian constitution (Art. 10 [13] Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz in combination with Art. 15 [1]

Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz) also defines that culture (other than the protection of cultural heritage) is a federal responsibility, but the central state can establish and maintain national cultural institutions. All Austrian federal districts thus have services for cultural affairs and as part of these operate district museums ('Landesmuseen', sing. 'Landesmuseum'). The district governors also have emergency powers for the protection of cultural heritage (§§ 11 [9] and 30 [1] Denkmalschutzgesetz), which they usually execute through their respective museum services. As part of its maintenance of national cultural institutions, the central state continues to maintain the Austrian national museums ('Bundesmuseen', sing. 'Bundesmuseum'). Amongst these are the Natural History Museum ('Naturhistorisches Museum') and the Art History Museum ('Kunsthistorisches Museum'), who both maintain significant archaeological collections. As the BDA has to deposit all portable antiquities ('bewegliche Denkmale') acquired by the state in museums or public collections with an appropriate collection policy (§ 10 and §34 [2] Denkmalschutzgesetz), finds made during excavations financed by the public purse were usually deposited with the regional museum (see below) of the federal district in which the finds were made, or with national museums. In recent years, the Bundesdenkmalamt has also established a central storage facility, where most of the finds made in recent years on excavations carried out by the Bundesdenkmalamt or by associated charities are being stored. Other finds, whether made during privately financed excavations or accidentally by members of the public need to be declared (§ 8 [1] Denkmalschutzgesetz). If properly declared, ownership is shared between the finder and the owner of the property on which they were found.

As a result of these legal requirements, the national heritage agency, the national museums and the federal district museum services employ professional archaeologists. As archaeology, and particularly field archaeology, is considered a scientific discipline requiring a university degree in the subject, archaeologists employed in the public service sector usually are employed as academic staff. This, however, is not an absolute legal requirement, and as such there have been exceptions to this convention.

Archaeological training (tertiary education)

The Austrian constitution (in Art. 17 Staatsgrundgesetz 1867) also defines that the academic freedom to teach in public educational institutions, or to establish such institutions, is a fundamental civil right of every citizen who has demonstrated his/her ability to do so by due legal process. This is detailed in the University legislation, which states that the right to academic freedom to teach in public educational institutions is granted (1) to persons who have been appointed to a professorial position at a university (according to §§ 98-99 Universitätsgesetz 2002) or (2) who have proven their qualification by having been granted a Habilitation by a university (§ 103 Universitätsgesetz 2002). Appointment to a professorial position requires a Habilitation or an equivalent academic achievement.

According to Austrian University legislation (§ 100 [1] Universitätsgesetz 2002), a university can also appoint teachers for specific subjects or skills taught as part of a curriculum if it is satisfied that the person appointed is sufficiently knowledgeable or skilled to teach that specific subject or skill. There is no definition as to what kind of qualification is required, and as such, formal qualifications are only required where they are deemed necessary by the university official(s) deciding the suitability of a candidate. For courses on academic subjects, universities usually require at least a first degree (currently the MA-equivalent Mag.phil. degree) in the subject. For skills courses where formal qualifications for the specific skill exist (e.g. photography, carpentry etc.), it is usually required by universities that applicants hold such a formal qualification to be allowed to teach that skill. For skills courses where no formal qualification for the specific skill exists (e.g. prehistoric bronze casting), applicants will usually have to demonstrate to the university that they have sufficient practical experience to teach that skill. However, there is no formal legal requirement for any such formal or demonstrated practical qualifications, exceptions to the above stated conventions thus do exist.

If a university wants to carry out any archaeological fieldwork (including training excavations or other practical fieldwork training), the staff member responsible for this activity needs to apply for a fieldwork license with the BDA as any other citizen would, unless the university has been directly instructed by the minister for scientific research to carry out the excavation (§ 11 [9] Denkmalschutzgesetz). As such, fieldwork modules can usually only be organised by somebody holding a degree in archaeology, who needs to have overall responsibility for the module (even though the actual teaching on the module may be carried out by anybody considered sufficiently qualified by the university). Usually, fieldwork licenses are granted to university staff unless the proposed fieldwork recklessly endangers an important national monument.

Contract archaeology

As every Austrian citizen has the constitutional civil right to carry out any kind of scientific research, and as excavation licences can be granted to any citizen with a degree in an archaeological subject, private contractors can become involved in every kind of archaeological work. Of course, such a private archaeological contractor needs to comply with all regulations covering businesses in Austrian law, but otherwise, there are no set limitations. For instance, a private citizen has in the recent past applied for a business license ('Gewerbeberechtigung') for 'treasure hunting' (an euphemism for metal detecting), and even though the case is still undecided there is no apparent reason why he should not be granted it.

If a private contractor wants to become involved in actual fieldwork or offer fieldwork services to third parties, the individual, company or registered charity offering archaeological services needs to be, employ or have as a registered member at least one person holding a degree in archaeology, to be able to be able to be granted archaeological licenses by the BDA.

Fieldwork and fieldwork licensing

Excavation licenses can only be granted to natural persons holding a degree in a relevant archaeological subject. Holding a degree in archaeology however does not guarantee a fieldwork license, as the BDA decides on the granting of licenses on a case by case basis (§ 11 [1] Denkmalschutzgesetz). As such, if anybody applies for a fieldwork license, a full description of the planned project (including, where applicable, proof of an immediate threat to the site or monument to be examined, site plans, proposed excavation methods, staff lists, etc.) needs to be submitted, based on which the BDA will decide whether it grants or does not grant a license. The BDA then has to issue in writing an official notification ('Bescheid') as to whether a license is being granted or is being refused within six months of the application (§ 52 Allgemeines Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz). If the BDA fails to issue an official notification, the legal assumption is that no license has been granted. The applicant has the right to appeal to the administrative courts in case of a license not been granted or the BDA not responding within the statutory six months.

In its decision of whether to grant a license or not, the BDA will usually consider whether the proposed measures are likely to destroy or alter the integrity of a monument, whether the monument is threatened by human-induced or natural causes, and whether the proposed measures are the best way to protect the monument for the future (in case of excavation, this is understood to be preservation by record, and thus the granting of a license will strongly depend on whether the proposed measures are likely to achieve such a record). If the BDA grants a license, it will usually only be valid for a set period and may contain restrictions on the proposed works, reduce the scope of the proposed works, or add requirements as deemed necessary by the BDA.

2. Austrian archaeology in practice

In practice, Austrian archaeology historically consists of three main strands, with a fourth strand slowly developing in the past few years. These three strands are 1) the national heritage agency

(BDA), 2) the museum services (national, federal district and local) and 3) the universities. The fourth, developing strand is the field of contract archaeology, which still can be considered to be in its infancy.

Qualifications

For practically all permanent archaeological posts (excluding support and office staff), a degree in an archaeological subject is required. At present, four universities in Austria offer archaeological degree programmes, with pre- and protohistory (Ur- und Frühgeschichte) offered at the Universities of Vienna and Innsbruck, and classical archaeology (Klassische Archäologie) at Vienna, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Graz. The University of Vienna also offers other subjects including aspects of archaeology, including Egyptology, Early Christian Archaeology, Near Eastern Studies, Celtic Studies etc., but degrees from such programmes are not usually considered to be 'full' archaeological qualifications. Graduates of the latter programmes are therefore normally not considered eligible for permanent archaeological jobs, with the exception of specialist jobs at the University of Vienna, the Austrian Academy of Sciences and Museums who have collections covering the specialist subject in question (e.g. the Egyptian collection at the Kunsthistorisches Museum may employ Egyptologists in archaeological positions). As a consequence, most appointments to permanent archaeological jobs in Austria are either prehistorians or classical archaeologists.

At present, the first degree in archaeology is the 4 year Magister der Philosophie (roughly MA / Mphil, contains both a strong taught and an extensive research thesis element), which can be followed up by a 2 year Doktor der Philosophie (PhD) degree. In practice, the average time spent on degrees is considerably higher than the numbers given above, average study times are about 6.5 years for the MA/MPhil-equivalent Magister and roughly the same again for the PhD. After the PhD, those considering a professorial career can also apply for a Habilitation (previously awarding the title Universitätsdozent [short. Univ.-Doz.], since the introduction of the Universitätsgesetz 2002 the title Privatdozent [short PD]).

The academic system is currently being changed to come into line with the Bologna-System, so future archaeology degree will follow the 'standard' European progression of 3 year BA (Baccalaureus), 2 year MA (Magister artium) and 3 year PhD, with the possibility to add a Habilitation as an additional qualification remaining in place.

All other jobs in the wider archaeological field either require no training at all, or specialist training as required by a specific post (e.g. photographers will have training in photography).

Financing

Financing predominantly comes from the public sector, even though in recent years, there has been an increasing influx of private money from building companies to finance large scale excavations, to be guaranteed that they can be completed within a timescale suitable to the developer, rather than within the limits set by public funding constraints. Austria has as of yet not ratified the Valetta convention (European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage) and thus has not introduced polluter financing into archaeology as a legal requirement. Nonetheless, the increasing availability of private funding has allowed for a small commercial sector to be established.

Research funding is mostly provided by the national funding agency (Fond für wissenschaftliche Forschung) administered by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, other research funding bodies (including federal district cultural agencies and local councils) and increasingly also by European funding programmes. Most research is still carried out by the main university departments. University archaeology is again funded mostly by the public purse, with only a small amount coming from student fees. Museums are also mostly funded by the public purse.

3. Estimate of archaeologists for comparison with the total ascertained during the project

At present, there are no reliable figures for the number of archaeologists working in Austria. However, a rough estimation is possible. A recent study (Tomedi 2002) has referred to Austria as a 'failed state' with regards to the numbers of archaeologists employed by the Austrian state in the protection of cultural heritage, calculating the area that a single archaeologist has to cover for Tyrol at c. 15,000 square kilometers (compared to an average of c. 2000 square kilometers for archaeologists employed by the German federal state heritage agencies). Another study (Sonus 2007) has given a figure of c. 12,000 square kilometers per archaeologist for Upper Austria. In total, Austria employs 12 archaeologists in the national heritage protection agency, to which another c. 60 can be added working for national, federal district and local museums. At the Austrian universities, another 91 archaeologists are employed in full time positions, with another 102 in various part time positions (with partial part time staff overlaps between universities), bringing up the total to c. 250 archaeologists working in the three main strands of Austrian archaeology. Archaeological contractors have in recent years probably employed almost as many people in archaeology in Austria, even though most as fieldworkers and only very few on long-term or permanent contracts. As these have never been properly assessed, it can only be guessed at how many people they actually employ, even though rumour has it that the largest Austrian archaeological contractor employs c. 160 people, with all others employing far less than that. A rough estimate of people working in archaeology in Austria is therefore in the range of only a couple of hundred, c. 500 seeming a reasonable guess.

Interestingly, the expected distribution of jobs in the 4 sectors of Austrian archaeology is not reflected in the rate at which posts are advertised. Since November 2003, the inception of the archaeology internet job resource operated by the Austrian project partner (see <http://archaeologieforum.at/jobnew.php>), a total of 32 adverts for archaeological jobs in Austria have been posted. Of these, 23 were in the university sector, 2 for museum jobs, 1 for a post in the Austrian national heritage agency, and only 6 for fieldwork. While adverts seem to reasonably reflect the job market in the museum and state heritage protection sectors, the adverts for jobs at universities indicate a relatively high turnover of staff. The latter can mostly be explained by adverts for guest professorships or temporary teaching / research assistance contracts. The fieldwork / commercial sector on the other hand, which is likely to have the highest staff turnover rates due to the often very temporary / project based nature of archaeological fieldwork jobs, is vastly underrepresented. As it is particularly in the area of fieldwork, where transferable excavation skills are likely to be largely universal and allow for greater transnational mobility, lack of advertising to allow mobile European citizens to apply for excavation jobs in Austria may form one of the main barriers to transnational mobility.

4. References

- Sonus 2007. Arbeitsbereiche der Archäologie in Oberösterreich. *Sonus* 2/2007, 12-14.
Tomedi, G. 2002. *Fern von Europa: zur Situation der Denkmalpflege in Tirol*. Archaeo Tirol, Kleine Schriften 4, 17-30.